

Mr T Leake

*www.change.org*

21 January 2011

Dear Mr Leake

I am writing in response to the petition that you have raised on the website <http://www.change.org/> about the labelling of food that comes from the descendants of cloned animals.

In the European Union, the marketing of products obtained from cloned animals is subject to authorisation under the EU regulation on novel foods, Regulation (EC) 258/97. Novel foods are only authorised after a detailed risk assessment and the authorisation will include any necessary labelling provisions.

To date no applications have been made for the authorisation of food from cloned animals or from their descendants.

In the UK, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is the department that has the lead responsibility for novel foods. Responsibility for food labelling is shared with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

FSA deals with labelling in relation to food safety (for example date marking or allergen labelling) and Defra deals with labelling in relation to consumer choice.

In its meeting on 7 December the FSA Board agreed that, for food safety purposes, mandatory labelling of meat and milk obtained from the descendants of cloned cattle and pigs would be unnecessary and disproportionate, providing no significant food safety benefit to consumers. The full statement can be found at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2010/dec/boardcloning>

Following the Board discussion on 7 December, the FSA Chair, Lord Rooker, wrote to Government Ministers and asked them to consider what information should be provided to the public about the ethics and welfare implications of animal cloning.

Defra has confirmed that it will make information on cloning available on its website but that mandatory labelling of meat or milk products derived from animals with a clone in their ancestry would be unenforceable and impracticable. This is because there is no traceability system that can be applied to either imported or home produced products from descendants of clones. Moreover, as there are no food safety issues, the cost of introducing such a system, which could not in any case deal with imported food or with food derived from descendants of clones already present in the EU, cannot be justified.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Sandy Lawrie**  
**Novel Foods Unit**