

---

**From:** Higgins K (Kate)<Kate.Higgins@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 15 September 2020 17:13  
**To:** [redacted]<[redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk>  
**Cc:** [redacted]<[redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk>; [redacted]<[redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: M and S and Scotbeef

Thanks [redacted]

And that is a great outcome.

The reason I raised it was because I know how committed M and S are to Scottish farm produce and sourcing and to then see it all labelled as British in a Scottish store was disconcerting.

Thanks for following up

Kate Higgins  
Special Advisor to the First Minister  
Rural Economy and Connectivity  
[redacted]

Please follow the public health guidance on coronavirus at  
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>  
If your business is impacted by coronavirus, and you need support, visit  
<https://www.mygov.scot/non-domestic-rates-coronavirus/>

Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House, 2 Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG  
Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot).

---

**From:** Higgins K (Kate)<Kate.Higgins@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 15 September 2020 17:13  
**To:** Burgess WG (George)<George.Burgess@gov.scot>; [redacted]<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]<[redacted]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** FW: M and S and Scotbeef

To see

Kate Higgins  
Special Advisor to the First Minister  
Rural Economy and Connectivity  
[redacted]

Please follow the public health guidance on coronavirus at  
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>  
If your business is impacted by coronavirus, and you need support, visit  
<https://www.mygov.scot/non-domestic-rates-coronavirus/>

Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House, 2 Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG  
Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot).

---

**From:** [redacted]<[redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk>  
**Sent:** 15 September 2020 14:32  
**To:** Higgins K (Kate)<Kate.Higgins@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [redacted]<[redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk>; [redacted]<[redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk>  
**Subject:** RE: M and S and Scotbeef

Hi Kate,

I hope you are well.

I had a call earlier this afternoon with [redacted] and [redacted] at M&S about the labelling issue you raised. In preparation for the call I visited M&S to check the Scotch beef & lamb range and shared details of this on the call. The M&S team have committed to review the fresh meat labelling as there were some products they identified that should be packaged as Scotch but were labelled as British. [redacted] said he thought this may be due to a hangover from the initial Covid panic buying period when much of the range was labelled as British to ensure maximum volumes were processed.

I have agreed to review the in-store range in the coming weeks to monitor the Scotch brands and report back to M&S. [redacted] will revert back once he has looked into the issue.

M&S reiterated their support for Scottish farmers and processors, stating [redacted] of the UK sourcing on beef and lamb comes from Scotland.

Regards,  
[redacted]

[redacted]

Mob: [redacted]  
Email: [redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk  
Website: [www.qmscotland.co.uk](http://www.qmscotland.co.uk)

---

**From:** Higgins K (Kate)<Kate.Higgins@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 08 September 2020 22:07  
**To:** Burgess WG (George)<George.Burgess@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: M and S and Scotbeef

Ok thanks for explaining

Kate Higgins  
Special Advisor to the First Minister  
Rural Economy, Islands and Connectivity  
**[redacted]**  
Sent with BlackBerry Work  
(www.blackberry.com)

---

**From:** Burgess WG (George)<George.Burgess@gov.scot>  
**Date:** Tuesday, 08 Sep 2020, 5:57 pm  
**To:** Higgins K (Kate)<Kate.Higgins@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: M and S and Scotbeef

Kate

Not sure this is particularly new. M&S don't want to label beef as Scotch beef, and there is nothing that would require them to do so. Of course, they couldn't do it the other way round and label non-Scotch as Scotch – and that is probably why they want the flexibility rather than having all their labels printed with Scotch Beef and then running into supply problems.

Of course we'd want M&S to label Scotch Beef as Scotch Beef, and we and QMS can make the case about how it increases the value/prestige of the product both in Scottish stores and the rest of the UK, and point to what nimbler retailers like Lidl are able to do. But if we were to insist that Scotch Beef can only be labelled as such, we run the risk that M&S go elsewhere for their supplies.

George

---

**From:** Higgins K (Kate)<Kate.Higgins@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 08 September 2020 17:49  
**To:** Burgess WG (George)<George.Burgess@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** FW: M and S and Scotbeef

Just to be aware. I am sure there is a perfectly understandable explanation but I was also asked by **[redacted]** a few months ago about whether I thought it would be ok for some of our Scotch beef to be branded as British – without any context – and told him I thought that wouldn't be something Ministers would want to support and anyway wouldn't it dissipate the Scotch beef brand?

And also him saying that [redacted] was keen to explore this space (or similar)

So now I am adding 2 and 2 and hoping not to have come up with 4.

If QMS are aware that Scotch beef is being branded and sold in Scotland as British beef we have a problem.

Kate Higgins  
Special Advisor to the First Minister  
Rural Economy and Connectivity  
[redacted]

Please follow the public health guidance on coronavirus at  
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>  
If your business is impacted by coronavirus, and you need support, visit  
<https://www.mygov.scot/non-domestic-rates-coronavirus/>

Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House, 2 Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG  
Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot).

---

**From:** [redacted]<[redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk >  
**Sent:** 08 September 2020 15:51  
**To:** [redacted]<[redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk >  
**Cc:** Higgins K (Kate)<Kate.Higgins@gov.scot>; [redacted]<[redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk >  
**Subject:** RE: M and S and Scotbeef

No problem, I'll speak to [redacted] and then update Kate.

Thanks,  
[redacted]

[redacted]

Mob: [redacted]  
Email: [redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk  
Website: [www.qmscotland.co.uk](http://www.qmscotland.co.uk)

**From:** [redacted]<[redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk >  
**Sent:** 08 September 2020 15:22  
**To:** [redacted]<[redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk >  
**Cc:** Kate Higgins<kate.higgins@gov.scot>; [redacted]<[redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk>  
**Subject:** Fwd: M and S and Scotbeef

[redacted] Would you speak to Kate [redacted] can give you the answers

[redacted]

Get Outlook for iOS

---

**From:** Kate.Higgins<Kate.Higgins@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 8, 2020 4:37 pm  
**To:** [redacted]<[redacted]@qmscotland.co.uk>  
**Subject:** M and S and Scotbeef

Selling Aberdeen Angus and other beef products in Scottish stores marked as British beef – is this non Scotch beef? Or have they stopped labelling it as Scotch beef even though it is.

Because it's not on really.

Kate Higgins  
Special Advisor to the First Minister  
Rural Economy and Connectivity  
[redacted]

Please follow the public health guidance on coronavirus at  
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>  
If your business is impacted by coronavirus, and you need support, visit  
<https://www.mygov.scot/non-domestic-rates-coronavirus/>

Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House, 2 Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG  
Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot).

---

[redacted]

By email: [redacted]

---

Our ref: [redacted]

14 August 2019

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your correspondence of 4 August 2019, addressed to Scottish Ministers, with regard to Scottish branding rules. I have been asked to respond.

Country of origin information requirements for food fall under 3 main areas and these are: EU specific rules, general labelling rules and rules for regional products.

Under EU specific rules which apply to certain foods, origin information must appear on labels for beef and veal, pork, lamb and goat meat, poultry, most fruit and vegetables, honey, olive oil and eggs. For example 'Origin UK' may be used for lamb which has been produced from an animal born, reared and slaughtered in the UK. In the case of sea fish, an indication of the catch area e.g. Northern North Sea is needed.

From a general labelling perspective, the EU Food Information to Consumers Regulation requires that food labelling information should not mislead the consumer as to the characteristics of the food and, in particular, as to its nature, identity, properties, composition, quantity, durability, country of origin or place of provenance, method of manufacture or production. Where no other rules apply, origin information may be provided voluntarily for other foods, mainly processed foods, as long as it does not mislead the consumer as to the true origin of the food. For example, the French Flag or a French image (Eiffel Tower) could create an expectation that the food is from France, but if this is not the case, the true origin of the food would need to be given.

Rules for regional products cover foods which are registered under EU law and enjoy protection against imitation in the EU which is either on a geographical or traditional recipe basis. 'Scotch beef', 'Arbroath Smokies' and 'Orkney Cheddar' are examples of Scottish products which have been recognised as having special characteristics linked to a particular geographic area. For this it is mandatory to display specific designation logos on food and agricultural products whereas it is optional for spirit drinks and aromatised wines.

Following the decision by the UK Government that the UK should leave the EU, work to adapt the EU legislation to enable it to remain workable in the UK after exit from the EU is almost

complete. For example, the same requirement to avoid misleading consumers under the general food information rules will continue. However, there will need to be changes in some areas such as where Scottish and other UK products are currently being described as 'EU'. Scottish Regulations have also required updates and the current consultation by Food Standards Scotland may interest you: <https://consult.foodstandards.gov.scot/regulatory-policy/eu-exit-no-deal-scenario/>.

The Scottish Government pledged £7.5 million over three years to support the Ambition 2030 food and drink industry strategy, and to help grow markets across the UK for Scottish produce we are working closely with retailers to increase support for Scottish produce.

The Scottish brand – whether the saltire or 'Scottish' label – is a key provenance mark and a signal of quality. We know consumers and retailers value the Scottish brand and we encourage all retailers to continue to showcase Scottish produce, both here in Scotland and throughout the rest of the UK.

I trust this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

---

**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 04 August 2019 10:08:28

**To:** Scottish Ministers

**Subject:** Scottish Economy

[redacted]

I try to buy Scottish produce whenever I can, sometimes there is no Scottish version.

When I see the Saltire I expect it to be Scottish.

Tesco are selling a variety of cheeses, so I bought the Scottish one. The label is confusing at best!!

Are there Rules on Scottish Branding?

[redacted]

---

[redacted]

---

Our ref: [redacted]  
09 July 2018

Dear [redacted]

I refer to your correspondence of 16 June 2018 addressed to Nicola Sturgeon MSP, First Minister, regarding labelling of Scottish produce. I have been asked to reply.

The Scottish brand – whether the saltire or ‘Scottish’ label - is a key provenance mark and a signal of quality, at home, in the rest of the UK and throughout the world. We know consumers and retailers value the Scottish brand, with retail sales of Scottish food and drink brands in Great Britain alone growing by 52% (£727 million) since 2007.

Under current specific EU legislation, Member State Country of origin information (i.e. UK) must be provided on several foods including beef and veal, pork, sheep and goat meat, poultry, most fruit and vegetables, honey, olive oil and eggs. Origin information may be provided for other foods so long as it does not mislead the consumer.

Additional information may also be provided voluntarily (e.g. Scotland, Perthshire) again providing that it is not misleading and does not detract from the mandatory information. The use of a flag is entirely at the discretion of the food business or retailer, as long as it is not misleading.

Scotland Food & Drink, through the work of Ambition 2030, are looking at what more can be done to develop and protect the Scottish brand further. This work is on-going and is fundamental to the overall delivery of Ambition 2030 as a whole. You can view the industry led strategy at the following link: <http://www.foodanddrink.scot/media/78129/strategy-brochure-smaller-size.pdf>.

Your sincerely

[redacted]  
[redacted]



---

**From:** [redacted] <mailto:[redacted]@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** 16 June 2018 10:57  
**To:** First Minister  
**Subject:** Fwd: Scottish raspberry branding

[redacted]

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** [redacted]<mailto:[redacted]@icloud.com>  
**Date:** 16 June 2018 at 10:52:42 BST  
**To:** Nicola.Sturgeon.msp@parliament.scot<mailto:Nicola.Sturgeon.msp@parliament.scot>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Scottish raspberry branding

Dear Nicola  
Copy of email sent to [redacted] of Tesco about branding of Scottish raspberries.

[redacted]

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** [redacted] <mailto:[redacted]@icloud.com>  
**Date:** 16 June 2018 at 10:20:15 BST  
**To:** [redacted] <mailto:[redacted]@uk.tesco.com>  
**Subject:** Scottish raspberry branding

Dear Sir

I have just come back from my local Tesco in Prestwick which I use frequently and was disappointed to see Scottish soft fruit branded as British. The Scottish brand particularly in soft fruit at this time of year is a sign of quality and should not be submerged in an overall UK brand.

I buy many products that are specifically originating from other parts of the UK, i.e. Stilton, Jersey potatoes and Welsh lamb because of their quality and a respect for their provenance.

But this desire to label purely Scottish produce as British is one I do not approve of. There is already a backlash in Scotland against Sainsbury and M&S for similar follies, must Tesco be added to this list.

Yours Faithfully

[redacted]

---