



**Countryside
Alliance
Foundation**



The **Countryside Alliance Foundation** is calling for mandatory country of origin meat labelling that is **HONEST, FAIR** and **SIMPLE**.

Consumers in Britain will then be able to make an informed choice and have confidence in the products they buy.

British livestock farming, which operates under some of the highest welfare standards in the world, will also be supported.



90%
of people support
our campaign

74% of
people think
it's important
that the meat
they buy is of
British origin

“ Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) figures for 2010 show that a total of 406,000 tonnes of bacon was sold in the UK. 31% of this came from pigs bred, reared and processed in the UK (126,000 tonnes). For the remainder (280,000 tonnes), we are unable to differentiate whether the bacon has come from pigs bred and reared abroad and then processed in the UK, or bred, reared and processed abroad. ”

Jim Paice MP, Minister of State for Agriculture and Food,
House of Commons, June 2011

Only **39%** of
people know
what a British
flag means under
current labelling
legislation

“ I think labelling in Great Britain is a disgrace. Categorically. We are run by the EU on labelling. For instance, you can have a product that says on the front of the pack 'Sourced from the UK', and then on the back, in the tiniest font, 'Made in Denmark'. ”

**Jamie Oliver, House of Commons
Health Select Committee, 2008**

Honest

Food labelling should be honest – a British flag on a meat product must mean born, reared and slaughtered in the UK

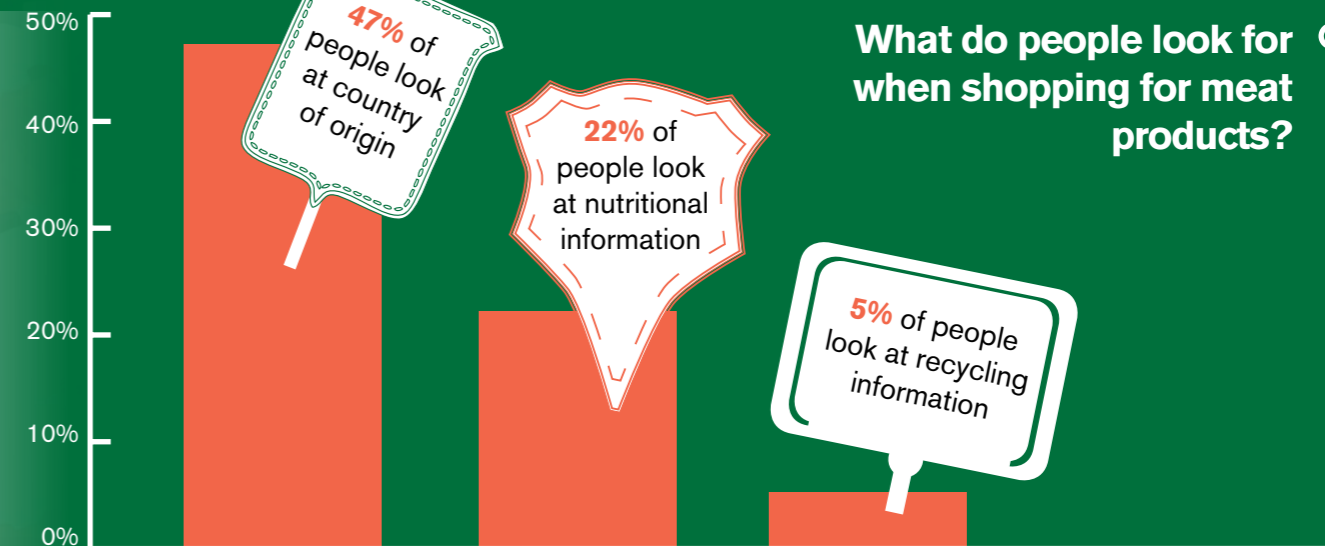
The current labelling system undermines higher animal welfare standards, deceives consumers and hurts British farmers. Under current European Union (EU) legislation country of origin labelling (COOL) is voluntary. A country shown on a meat label refers to the place the product last underwent a significant process or change. Therefore, sausages made in a British factory using Danish pork can legitimately be labelled as 'British'.

Research from The Countryside Alliance Foundation (TCAF) showed that COOL is the third most looked at component on a meat label after cost and sell/use by dates. 47 per cent of people check the country of origin when shopping for meat products. In contrast only 22 per cent of people look at nutritional information and 5 per cent recycling information.

However, almost half of consumers who look at COOL may be unwittingly buying meat that is not from the country they believe it to be. TCAF research showed that only 39 per cent of people knew what a British flag on a meat product meant under current legislation. 43 per cent of people however believed a British label on a meat product indicated that the animal was raised in Britain.

Livestock farming standards in the UK are much higher than those in the EU, or indeed in the rest of the world. It is concerning that almost half of people think a British flag indicates that the animal was raised in Britain and therefore under the higher welfare and production standards. In fact under current labelling procedures, a British label on meat products does not in any way guarantee that the meat was raised in Britain.

We need an honest food labelling system, so that a British flag or 'British' is not used on meat products that contain imported meat.



39%

of people think a British flag on a meat product means the animal was processed in Britain

43% of people believe a British label indicates that the animal was raised in Britain

On a meat label, if a country or flag is shown, it refers to the place the product last underwent a significant process

Fair

Food labelling should be fair – for farmers, producers and consumers

British farmers produce meat to some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world. They also maintain the countryside, improve biodiversity and meet a high level of environmental stewardship. Consequently British farmers have had more regulation imposed on them than other EU and non-EU producers. However, the products produced under these higher standards are not easily distinguishable when they are on the shelves of supermarkets and retailers.

The high standards associated with British livestock farming have not gone unrecognised by consumers. 74 per cent of people think it is important that meat products they buy have a British origin. However, they are currently unable to make an informed choice over which products are of British origin.

The high standards of animal welfare and environmental stewardship that are at the heart of British livestock farming cannot be overstated. Nowhere is this clearer

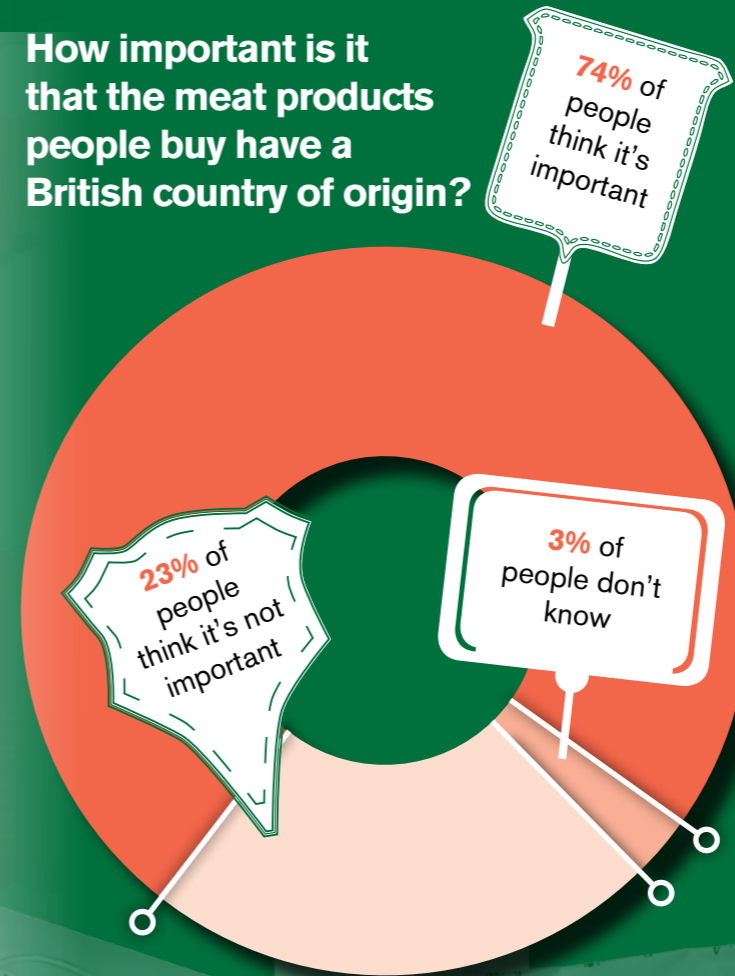
than in British pig farming. Sow stalls have been banned in the UK for a decade. Elsewhere stalls are common farming practice, even for pregnant sows. International farming organisations have concluded that UK pigs are better-off than European pigs because of superior welfare standards.

The declining profitability of pig farming in the UK and falling number of pigs has meant that more pork is being imported. There has been a 40 per cent contraction in the British pig breeding herd in the last 10 years. Furthermore it is estimated that 70 per cent of these imports would fall below the legal standards set for home production. This imported meat can also be labelled as 'British'.

It is deeply unfair that it is possible to label as 'British', imported meat that is not reared under the high animal welfare and production standards imposed on British farmers.

We need a fair labelling system for farmers, producers and consumers, which does not undermine high animal welfare and production standards but supports them.

How important is it that the meat products people buy have a British country of origin?



74% of people think it's important

23% of people think it's not important

3% of people don't know

International farming organisations have concluded that UK pigs are better off than European pigs because of superior welfare standards

It is estimated that

70%

of pork imports would fall below the legal standards set for home production

Oxford Farming Conference, 2007

The current situation is deeply unfair to farmers and producers

Simple

Food labelling should be simple – not unclear, confusing or misleading

Research shows that the majority of people do not know what a British flag or 'British' on a meat label means under current legislation. The current labelling system does not support higher animal welfare and production standards. There needs to be a change.

Simplicity is crucial in any change. Under current rules country of origin labels on meat products can be unclear, confusing and misleading. TCAF's investigation into misleading labels highlighted the extent to which consumers are not being given the full picture on the provenance of their meat.

Our survey of meat products found on the shelves of local shops and national supermarkets, numerous examples of unclear, confusing and misleading meat labels. Common practice was to state the meat came from the EU, without stating a specific country. With livestock farming regulations varying

between all the 27 countries within the EU, consumers could not make an informed choice over whether to purchase the products based on animal welfare considerations; or make a choice to support British farmers and producers. Similarly on several chicken products it was stated that the chicken came from South America but did not state the specific country. Other labels were even more misleading; stating boldly on the front that a product was made using meat from one country, while the small print on the back stated it contained different meat from other countries.

TCAF's investigation updates and confirms previous meat product market research. A study carried out by the Meat and Livestock Commission in 2008 found that three in five meat packs selected for testing communicated the country of origin in an unclear or confusing manner.

We need Simple meat labelling so that a single country label means the animal was born, reared and slaughtered in that country.

90%

of people support the proposal that a British flag should only be given to meat products where the animal has been born, reared and slaughtered in Britain

Under current rules country of origin labels on meat products can be unclear, confusing and misleading

Research shows that the majority of people do not know what a union flag or 'British' on a meat label means under current legislation

Under current European Union legislation country of origin labelling is voluntary

Meat product survey



SALT EQUIVALENT 2.2g 1.1g

OUR SAUSAGES ARE MADE WITH GREAT TASTING MEAT FROM THE UK AND THE EU.



Produced in the UK using Scottish beef and Italian, German and French pork and stock produced using British bones for Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd, London EC2N 2HT.

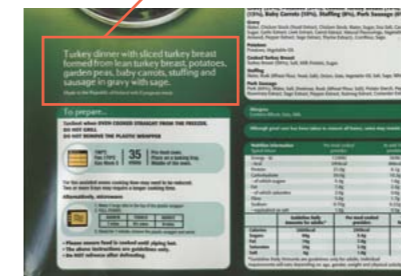


Packed in the U.K. using pork from the E.U. for Tesco Stores Ltd., Cheshunt EN8 9SL, J.K. © Tesco 2010. SC3864

Produced using pork from: U.K.



Turkey dinner with sliced turkey breast formed from lean turkey breast, potatoes, garden peas, baby carrots, stuffing and sausage in gravy with sage.



Produced in the U.K. using chicken from the E.U. and Thailand for Tesco Stores Ltd., Cheshunt EN8 9SL, U.K. © Tesco 2010. SC0306



*These are Adult GDAs based on GDAs for women.

Country of Origin
This product is made in the UK using chicken sourced from selected partners in the UK, EU and South America.

The Countryside Alliance Foundation is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales number 5669451 and a registered charity number 1121034. Registered office: 1 Spring Mews, Tinworth Street, London, SE11 5AN

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,799 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 11th - 12th May 2011. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

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