



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Dear Chris,

Thank you for your email of 20 October and further emails to the Secretary of State about legislation for the labelling and marketing of bread. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area and I apologise for the delay in doing so. Defra is currently dealing with high volumes of correspondence due to COVID-19. Thank you for your understanding during this challenging time.

The Government has made an unequivocal commitment in our manifesto not to compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards. The high standards that we have long held have not been weakened by our exit from the EU and we have ensured they remain underpinned in statute through the European Union (EU) (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and our other EU Exit legislation. This provides a firm basis for maintaining the same high level of protection for both domestic and imported products.

The retained Regulation 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, taken together with requirements also retained from EU legislation on the control of additives in food production, ensures that food is produced safely and labelled effectively in order for consumers to make informed choices on the food they buy and consume. Bakers, including traditional and artisan bakers of high quality bread, have the ability to effectively market their products on their own merits and legislation supports such marketing so long as it is non-misleading.

The Government is already reviewing food labelling to see how it can help tackle obesity and to examine what can be done through labelling to promote high standards and high animal welfare across the UK market. The Government's National Food Strategy White Paper will set out where we can go further, particularly in contributing to the outcomes to Henry Dimbleby's final report of his independent review of the food system which is due later this spring.

We also intend to conduct a review of the Bread and Flour Regulations 1998 in England taking into consideration wider regulatory issues raised by industry and any outcomes following on from joint UK Government and Devolved Administrations consultation on the proposed additional requirement to fortify flour with folic acid. We hope that we might start this in the near future now the transition period has ended.

Yours sincerely,
John Gardner
