



# **Temporary measures on origin labelling of foods in FINLAND**

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Counsellor Ari Hörman, Permanent Representation of  
Finland to the EU



# Rationale of the national measures on origin labelling in Finland

- ❑ Consumers have a growing interest in where their food comes from, where and how it was produced, and the stages it went through before ending up on their plate
  - a majority of consumers have expressed a wish to have more comprehensive information on the origin of food
- ❑ Finland has stressed in various contexts in the EU institutions that the requirements concerning the origin labelling of food should be further developed in EU legislation
- ❑ The provision of origin information on a voluntary basis is not sufficient to fulfil consumers' right to access to sufficient and correct information on the country of origin of food and its ingredients
- ❑ As EU legislation concerning origin labelling of food has not developed at the pace hoped for, Finland considered it necessary to lay down national provisions on origin labelling of certain foods



# Decree of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry 218/2017 on indicating the country of origin of certain foods

## Scope

- ❑ Pre-packed foods intended for consumers or mass caterers and manufactured in Finland

## Mandatory origin labelling of

- ❑ Meat used as an ingredient in food
- ❑ Milk and milk used as an ingredient in dairy products

## Fixed-term pilot project

- ❑ The Decree was originally in force **1.6.2017 - 31.5.2019**, but the pilot period has been extended until **31.3.2020**



## Mandatory origin labelling

- **Meat** used as an ingredient in food
  - beef, pig swine, sheep, goat and poultry meat (incl. meat used as an ingredient of meat products and meat preparations)
  - ‘country of rearing’ and ‘country of slaughter’
    - country of rearing definition as laid down in relevant EU-legislation.
- **Milk** and **milk** used as an ingredient in dairy products
  - dairy products within the scope listed in the Annex to the Decree
  - ‘country of milking’
- No threshold for meat and milk used as an ingredient
- Possibility to indicate the country of origin by the expression ‘several EU countries’ or ‘several non-EU countries’ or ‘several EU and non-EU countries’
  - meat has been obtained from animals reared and/or slaughtered in several or various EU or non-EU countries or milk has been collected in several or various EU or non-EU countries

# Report on the application of the Finnish Decree on origin labelling



- The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry compiled the report on the motivations and impacts of the national measures from stakeholder inputs received by the Ministry
  - results of a September 2018 consumer attitude survey
    - Taloustutkimus Oy (independent full service market research company) conducted a consumer survey to establish Finnish consumers' attitudes towards the current origin labelling and to find out whether country of origin affects consumers' interest in buying meat and dairy products
  - observations from the largest meat companies about the meat and meat products markets (autumn 2018)
  - views of the members of the Finnish Food and Drink Industries' Federation (survey conducted in December 2018)

# Report on the application of the Finnish Decree on origin labelling

## **Finnish consumers' attitudes**



- Consumers are highly satisfied with the increased availability of country of origin information
- Consumers want to see origin labelling on both meat and dairy products
  - 89 % of consumers consider the indication of the country of origin of meat used as an ingredient very important or somewhat important (67 % consider it very important)
  - 87 % of consumers consider the indication of the country of origin of milk used as an ingredient in dairy products very important or somewhat important (62 % consider it very important)
- Consumers mostly check origin information
  - 78 % of consumers check the origin labelling of meat used as an ingredient always or almost always
  - 75 % of consumers check the origin labelling of milk and milk used as an ingredient in dairy products always or almost always

# Report on the application of the Finnish Decree on origin labelling

## **Observations from the Finnish food industry**



### **Dairy companies**

- Mandatory origin labelling had little impact on their previous practices
  - most respondents reported that milk and milk used as ingredient in dairy products was entirely or mainly domestic

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## **Observations from the Finnish food industry**



### **Meat industry** 1/2

- Mandatory origin labelling does not appear to have had a significant impact on the market in general
  - other factors affecting the market, such as brand power, trade and industry negotiations, various offers and rebates and other campaigns
- There has been no significant change in the consumer price of meat since the introduction of mandatory origin labelling
  - the price-setting strength of domestic meat has slightly increased but, ultimately, domestic industry prices are always based on the current EU price level



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## **Observations from the Finnish food industry**



### **Meat industry 2/2**

- Meat consumption has increased slightly
  - this was expected, regardless of the introduction of mandatory origin labelling
  - the share of domestic meat consumption has slightly decreased
- Mandatory origin labelling has had
  - a positive impact on domestic pork demand for meat products
  - no significant rise on demand for domestic poultry and beef
- food companies that traditionally used large amounts of imported meat have not switched to using domestic meat due to mandatory origin labelling
- a few companies that previously used both domestic and imported meat have, since the introduction of mandatory country of origin labelling, switched to using exclusively domestic meat

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## **Observations from the Finnish food industry**



### **Challenges reported**

- ❑ National and EU legislation are not harmonised
  - domestic operators are in an unequal position vis-à-vis foreign competitors
  - consumers might be confused because origin labelling is used for some meat and dairy products but not for others
  - raw materials are not continuously available
  - packaging materials are not procured at the same pace as raw materials
- ❑ Lack of space on packaging for additional information

# Report on the application of the Finnish Decree on origin labelling

## Conclusions



- Maintaining mandatory origin labelling is considered to be justified
  - consumers are highly satisfied with the increased availability of information on country of origin
    - consumers are accustomed to getting the information and mostly check the information when buying foodstuffs
  - according to the feedback received from the industry side, mandatory origin labelling does not appear to have had a significant impact on the market in general
  - the pilot period of the Finnish Decree has been extended until 31.3.2020
- **Harmonised EU legislation on origin labelling would be preferable**
  - implementing acts would ensure the appropriate application of labelling requirements in all EU Member States
  - **we hope to have this issue on the agenda of the next Commission**



***Thank you  
for your attention!***



Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland