

Mark Drakeford AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Minister for Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-530
Ein cyf/Our ref MD/00725/14

William Powell AM

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

19 February 2014

Dear William

BILINGUAL LABELLING PETITION

Thank you for your letter addressed to Alun Davies, AM, Minister for Natural Resources and Food, seeking his views on the petition from Simon Foster urging the Welsh Government to enact legislation to enable bilingual labelling of all food products sold in Wales.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has policy responsibility for food labelling and standards matters in Wales, and I am responding as Welsh Government Minister with portfolio responsibility for FSA Wales.

Food information and labelling legislation is largely a matter of EU competence. The legislation sets clear requirements for food businesses on what information they must provide consumers, and how to present it, which helps consumers understand what information they can expect to be provided with to inform their food purchasing decisions.

The relevant EU Directives in relation to food labelling (Directive 2000/13, 90/446/EEC, and their forthcoming successor EU Regulation 1169/2011) provide that Member States may stipulate that food labelling particulars shall be given in one or more languages from among the official languages of the EU.

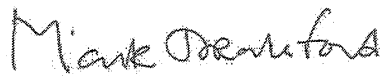
The official languages of the European Union are listed in the European Council Regulation No.1 of 15 April 1958, as amended. Although Welsh does have official status in Wales as confirmed in section 1 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, it is not an official language of the EU as provided in the 1958 Regulations.

Each individual piece of EU legislation carries its own requirements which must be transposed into domestic law by the Welsh Ministers. It is therefore not possible for domestic legislation to impose a blanket requirement that all food labelling is to be in English and Welsh, instead each piece of EU legislation (both current and future) needs to be considered on an individual basis to ascertain whether bilingual labelling is permissible.

Where food businesses voluntarily provide food labelling information in non-EU official languages, such as Welsh, the Welsh Government is keen to encourage them to do so.

I trust this helps clarify the legal framework around food labelling legislation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mark Drakeford AC / AM

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Minister for Health and Social Services