

During this time five beef packing plants closed in Ontario and others across Canada, and the Ontario and Quebec feed lot industry is put under further pressure.

Finally in March 1991, after two years of pressure the minister responded: "I have instructed my officials", to take the necessary steps to require the United States, whether with graded or ungraded beef, to identify it for consumers. We believe Canadian consumers have the right to know the exact grade and origin of their beef, and we are going to ensure that happens". That was in March 1991.

The regulations have been changed but they only require the container to be marked as ungraded and not the meat. This is a fraud because Canadian consumers still will not know the grade of product they are buying.

Further to this in his answer on May 6 the minister stated that Canada is working with the United States to harmonize our inspection systems. This is clearly unacceptable.

As was shown on ABC *Prime Time Live* on April 30, the United States streamlined inspection system is a disaster. The plants have their own inspectors and carcasses that have fallen on the floor or are contaminated with faeces are allowed to pass after they wash off the faeces. These conditions are deplorable and are even worse in the poultry industry according to media reports from within the United States.

I ask this government again: Will it ensure Canadian consumers and producers that our health and inspection standards will never be compromised, and that we place the health of our people first and foremost; that it will bring in regulations that will require that all imported meat must be clearly marked with the Canadian grade equivalent and the country of origin in a manner that is clearly visible to Canadian consumers.

Finally, I am appalled that in the midst of all these pressures some of the few remaining feed lot operators are still waiting for their third and fourth quarter payments for 1991 under the tripartite stabilization program. How can our Canadian producers compete under such conditions?

Adjournment Debate

Mr. Murray Cardiff (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to my hon. colleague's concerns.

On April 5, 1992 a regulatory amendment became effective requiring imported beef to be clearly identified with the grade of the exporting country if the product was graded or to be marked ungraded if that were the case. In essence, all beef entering Canada must now have this labelling requirement clearly indicated. This regulatory amendment is enforced at all federally registered establishments in Canada.

• (1810)

The requirement for beef grade identification at the consumer level is one that is within the jurisdiction of our colleague, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs of Canada. It is my understanding that retail guidelines have been issued by my hon. colleague to ensure that labelling and advertising requirements relating to beef are clearly understood by all sectors of the Canadian meat retail industry.

In addition, Agriculture Canada will be participating in a meeting with officials from industry and C&CAC, as well as the Ontario Minister of Agriculture and Food, to determine what action can be taken at the provincial level to further inform the consumer of the considerable progress that has been made in regard to better informing the Canadian consumer.

Continued efforts by both the department and all those affected will assist the consumer in making an informed choice when selecting beef at the supermarket. Under no circumstances will the Canadian government allow our inspection system or the quality of our products to be compromised in any way. We know that prime time television on April 30 did a program which was somewhat sensationalistic, and inaccurate statements were made on that segment about the U.S. beef industry. It is damaging to the meat industry whether it be in Canada or in the United States, and it did not serve the Canadian producers of beef in any way.

Mr. Milliken: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): There are no points of order heard during the late show.