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## Better Beef labelling for NSW consumers

The NSW Farmers' Association Cattle Committee has welcomed Minister Steve Whan's announcement that the *Food Amendment (Beef Labelling) Act 2009* will commence on 31 August 2010.

NSW Farmers' Association Cattle Committee Chair Richard Chamen said the move gives consumers a more reliable and consistent description of beef quality, which will help them to make informed purchasing decisions.

"The development of the Domestic Retail Beef Register for the retail sector and underpinning of the AUS-MEAT language in State legislation means consumers are now able to have confidence in the way beef is labelled," Mr Chamen said.

"We believe this Legislation together with the beef grading system, Meat Standards Australia (MSA), will now give consumers better information about how to cook their beef, which will give them a better eating experience," Mr Chamen said.

From January 2011, if retailers use age as a description, beef needs to be described as *Yearling* (<18months), *Young* (18 months to 2.5 years), *Intermediate* (2.5 years to 3 years), *Mature* (3 to 3.5 years) or *Economy* (> 3.5 years).

"Younger beef is generally tender and the flavour increases as the animal gets older," Mr Chamen said.

"*Yearling* beef would be ideal for steaks, whereas *Economy* meat is ideal for casseroles, stews and curries.

"Under the old system, some descriptors of beef such as *Prime*, *A Grade* and *Grain Assisted* had no standard meaning and are no longer allowed to be used when describing beef," Mr Chamen said.

The NSW Farmers' Association outlined strong concerns with the Bill to Northern Tablelands MP Richard Torbay and other Members of Parliament before it was passed in Parliament in late 2009.

"The Association has worked with Richard Torbay and the Beef Labelling Reference Group, to ensure a good outcome for producers and consumers," Mr Chamen said

Mr Torbay first introduced the *Food Amendment Bill* into Parliament to ensure truth in beef labelling.

The Cattle Committee welcomes the Government's consumer education campaign to be launched in January next year, which will help consumers understand the new terms.

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