

Minister Welcomes Food Forum Decision

Food Safety Minister Kate Wilkinson has welcomed a decision by the trans-Tasman Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation that could help innovative food businesses develop new foods for health.

Health claims on food packaging was top of the agenda at the Forum's meeting in Canberra yesterday, which Ms Wilkinson attended.

The Forum previously considered proposals requiring all health claims to be pre-market assessed, but yesterday the group decided to explore additional options for 'general level health claims'.

These are claims that refer to health, but not to a specific disease or disorder.

"Businesses have raised concerns with me that requiring all health claims to be pre-market assessed would be overly prescriptive for general level health claims," Ms Wilkinson says.

"The decision today signals that the Forum is listening to stakeholder concerns. It is a step in the right direction, and means that we can explore additional options for general level health claims with stakeholders in a collaborative process.

"New Zealand produces some really innovative foods for health and so it's important we develop a framework for label claims that supports our innovative producers and provides confidence for consumers".

The Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation is a gathering of Ministers from all Australian States and Territories, the Australian Commonwealth Government and New Zealand.

Source: Beehive