

Unlabelled clone meat allowed on shop shelves as food safety proposals are ripped up

By [Sean Poulter](#)

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Food from the offspring of cloned animals, including meat and milk, has been approved for sale without labels.

The Food Standards Agency yesterday tore up proposals that would have required it to go through a safety assessment.

It comes despite research showing eight in ten shoppers oppose the cloning of farm livestock.



Shoppers will have no idea if meat has come from cloned animals after the Food Standards Agency approved its sale without labels

Unlabelled food produced using the offspring of clones, such as dairy products, meat pies and ready meals, can now go on sale without any threat of legal action.

But animal welfare groups say the cloning technique is cruel, with a high number of miscarriages, deformities and gigantism.

And consumer groups say labels are essential to give shoppers choice.

The FSA's decision is in line with Government policy, which supports clone farming and clone food without labels.

Ministers argue the offspring of clones are the same as animals produced through conventional breeding. They claim existing animal cruelty laws are sufficient to deal with any problems.

Advocates claim cloning can create herds of supersize animals able to produce vast amounts of milk and meat, so boosting profits.



There are at least 100 offspring from cloned cows in the UK, mot of which are reared on this farm in Nairn, North-East Scotland

Supporters of the sale of food from clone offspring include Dairy UK, which represents the country's biggest milk and cheese producers, the Food and Drink Federation, which speaks for manufacturers, and the British Meat Processors Association.

But Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's, Morrisons, the Co-op, Marks & Spencer and Waitrose have responded to customer concerns by pledging not to use meat or milk from clone offspring in their own-label products.

Until yesterday, the FSA had argued that meat and milk from the offspring of clones would have to be studied to ensure it was safe. But now the watchdog has concluded that there is 'currently no evidence' that it poses a food safety risk.

At least 100 clone offspring cattle are being reared on farms in this country. Most are at Newmeadow Holsteins, a dairy herd based at Nairn, North-East Scotland.



The cows are being reared for milk by Steven Innes and his family, who intend to sell the farm's output on the British high street.

The FSA will retain a policing regime for food derived from clones created in the laboratory.

The organisation has stressed that it has no responsibility for food ethics and animal cruelty. This is the role of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which has ruled in favour of cloning.

Richard Lloyd, executive director of consumer group Which?, described the FSA decision as 'a disappointment for the eight in ten people who don't want to eat cloned food'.

He said: 'It's vital that the FSA and the Government respect people's desire to know what they're eating and control the use of cloning technology in food. As well as an approval process, we want to see a tracking system and clear labelling of these goods on the supermarket shelf.'

Emma Hockridge, head of policy at the Soil Association, which supports organic farming, animal welfare and consumer choice, said she was 'appalled' by the decision.

'Not only are there insufficient long-term studies on the impacts on human health, cloning is cruel and damaging to animal welfare at all stages of the process,' she said.

A spokesman for Defra said it was up to retailers and producers to decide on a voluntary basis whether to label the foods involved.

She added: 'Compulsory labelling would be unenforceable because there is no way to tell the descendants of clones from other animals.'

Organisations:

[Food and Drink Federation](#)

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More Frankenfood. Where is it all going to end? Watch "the Truth about Aspartame" by Dr Russell Blaylock. also "The Dangers of Genetically Modified Food" by Jeffery Smith. Both available to watch online.

- Alan, Durham, 27/5/2011 20:58

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Watch for "Western" governments to make it illegal to label non-cloned meat as such. Just like the USA did with genetically modified foods.

- Thebes, Santa Fe, NM, 27/5/2011 20:22

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Cloned animals are wrong. This is all driven by profit and we need to take control by voting with the choices we make. But wait, we want it cheap and lots of it. There is a huge gap in our education about what is really going on with food. If the supermarkets and the other corporations involved in food production could sell you your own excreta back to you they would and with many forms of food they sell it looks as if they do. I ate meat for many years and enjoyed it. However, I had an awakening experience realising that the animals we consume are sentient and soul bearing beings and to an extent so is everything on the physical plane. However we don't need that extreme to make sure that animals, domesticated and wild are treated with respect rather than as an object to be manipulated and rendered without a care. Ironically, it would appear from my studies that we humans are also farmed, manipulated and rendered.

- Bob, Leeds UK, 27/5/2011 19:53

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Well, I see that not content with trying to sell-off our forests, Spelman it at it again! Perhaps some of the same medicine we used last time will put her back in her box. The arrogance of this woman is breathtaking. I am sure you readers are aware of her history of lobbying on behalf of and close links to a major GM food manufacturer. In my view, this makes her a biased and therefore unsuitable candidate for her ministerial position. People have a right to know whether they are eating cloned animals because ultimately it may affect their health. The potential risks to human health of consuming cloned meat products are as yet unknown. This fact should be clearly pointed out to the consumer at the outset. Only in this way will the government and the supermarkets manage to avoid costly compensation claims when the ill effects become apparent years down the line as I am sure they will...

- Brad, London, 27/5/2011 14:26

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@ BThompson So you are saying that people ('consumers') should have no say whatsoever in how the food they buy is produced? Isn't it also being highlighted that in fact it is harmful in regard to animal welfare and that (reasonably) long-term studies are needed to rule out harm to humans or farm animals that will eat the cloned meat? What problem do you have with labels and choice? Are you secretly a clone? ;-D

- LondonJames, London, 27/5/2011 13:46

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Does cloned meat come with clingons?

- hi plains drifter, soaking up the countryside, 27/5/2011 12:20

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