

# BOOKER

10<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Mr Shand,

Thank you for your note to Charles and your patience while I looked into this.

Firstly, I'd like to reassure you that we take food safety and labelling very seriously. We are a proud supporter of the British Meat Industry selling a wide range of British and Irish beef and lamb. Recently, we have launched our own-brand 'Blackgate Signature' premium range that only sources from British and Irish farms to offer our catering customers the very best British products.

We also operate our own butchery counters in our branches. We understand the important role that Butchers play in the supply chain and also for our customers, which is why we have created and developed our own butchery training programme. Supporting the development of these vital skills remains a top priority and this includes:

- Over 500 Level 1 Colleagues passing our Internal Training Program
- We currently have over 50 colleagues achieving Level 2 and Level 3 of the Government Apprenticeship Schemes
- In partnership with the Institute Of Meat we have developed an exclusive Booker and Makro Craft Butcher accreditation, with over 70 colleagues achieving this standard
- 13 of our colleagues are Master Butchers which have been accredited by the Institute of Meat – which is 25% of the UK's total
- Our training programmes have been recognised by IGD as we won the Award for Training and Development in 2019

As with all businesses, we have been managing the current pandemic with a dramatic change in demand and the returning of stock from customers. This, along with other challenges, have impacted on our availability which we have been managing locally. We are pleased to report that we have had several EHO visits during this time and these have not identified any issues.

Turning to your letter, please see the following points:

- *Original source label for imported Uruguayan beef has been intentionally over-labelled with one from your own corporation.*

This is not common practice around the estate and not in line with our required procedure. We believe that this was human error and not deliberate. We would like to thank you for drawing this to our attention. We have picked up directly with our teams nationally both via a conference call and our branch communication portal and reiterated to our colleagues the correct procedures. We will now be carrying out spot checks.

- *Also covered are the details with regard to freezing and shelf life of the product. If this beef was to appear back on your shelves for sale as an unfrozen product, can you confirm that your labelling system would acknowledge and inform that the product was not for refreezing?*

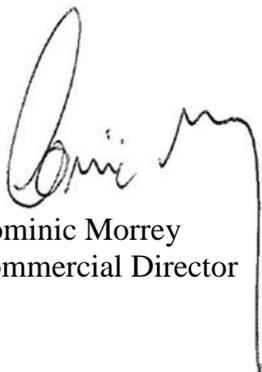
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Booker Group do not allow tempering of frozen products. It is standard practice for the frozen food industry to give a two year shelf life on frozen beef, lamb and pork which is frozen at source.

The Australian Beef Primal labelled JBS in your picture, is a deep-chilled product (meaning it has never been frozen) which has a shelf life of 140 days from production. Once the product is removed from the back up chiller for display, Booker Group follow FSA Guidelines on Clostridium Botulinum and the ten day shelf life rule applies. Our Booker Group Butchery Standard Handbook provide the Butchers with the correct procedures for Booker Group to stay Safe, Secure and Legal. We will happily supply you with one of our handbooks.

Once again, I would like to thank you for drawing these points to our attention and reassure you of the action we have taken and the lessons we have learnt. If there is anything further that you would like to discuss, please do get in touch.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dom', with a long vertical line extending downwards from the end of the signature.

Dominic Morrey  
Commercial Director