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FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

To: Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene,
Legislative Council

Attn: Mrs. Constance Li,
Clerk to Panel

From: Ms. Karen Woo

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Page(s): 2 (Including this page)

Date: 3 April 2003

Subject: **Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Meeting on 29 April 2003 – Food Labelling**

Dear Madam,

Thank you for your letter of 28 March 2003 (Your Ref.: CB2/PL/FE) to our Dr. Lew Young concerning the captioned meeting.

We regret that we may not be able to attend the captioned meeting to be held on 29 April 2003 due to prior committment. However, we would like to submit our comments on Food Labelling (LC PaperNo. CB(2) 1511/02-03(04)) for the Panel's consideration, as follows:

Food Labelling for Nutrition Information

WWF Hong Kong supports the implementation of a mandatory nutrition labelling system so as to protect the public health and ensure the food safety is up to international standard and practice. We understand that the implementation would be on a voluntary basis initially and then the requirements for nutrition labelling would be made mandatory in phases.

However, we consider it too long to take 5 to 10 years for the stakeholders to familiarize with the new prescribed format under the new regulations. We consider a period of 12 - 24 months would be sufficient for them to follow the new format.



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Food Labelling for GM Food

WWF Hong Kong welcomes the proposed introduction of a mandatory pre-market safety assessment requirement for GM ingredients which would help Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) monitor and determine whether the new GM food would be safe for human consumption before they are importing to Hong Kong.

We note that a grace period would be granted to those GM products that are already in the market and consider a grace period of 12 months would be appropriate and sufficient.

Furthermore, we also support the formulation of a set of guidelines on the labelling of GM foods recommending that when and what ingredient of the product is significantly changed in composition, nutritional value or intended use.

Nevertheless, WWF Hong Kong calls on government to take a strong precautionary approach to the regulation of GM food and implement mandatory labelling of GM food to help promote public awareness and informed decision takings. In particular, we suggest that GM food suppliers and manufacturers should label all the GM ingredients in their food products no matter whether the GM ingredients are on the list of approved GM ingredients or not.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours faithfully,

Karen Woo
Conservation Officer
WWF Hong Kong