

Leo McGuire [REDACTED]

Retail Grocery Industry (Unit Pricing) Code of Conduct

To: Unit Pricing Review

Dear Sir / Madam.

From Leo McGuire

A lot of the technical side of the Retail Grocery Industry (Unit Pricing) Code of Conduct is way above my legal understandings.

But this submission is submitted, with respect, from the viewpoint of a confused consumer who seeks clarity at the time my wife and I make decisions to purchase a item from a grocery store (Coles, Woolworths, Aldi, IGA, or similar) or a 'fruit shop'.

In particular, I refer to inadequate information upon which to make an informed decision, based around description of the item, or weight of the item, and then the size of the font size used to advise the consumer.

Inadequate description

Recently we were looking to purchase 'white vinegar' at Woolworths in Hadfield, Victoria. On offer was: Cornwells 'White Vinegar, 1 litre, Ingredients 'White Vinegar' for \$2.00;

Fehbergs 'Double Strength' White Vinegar, Extra Concentration, Ingredients 'White Vinegar', 1 litre, for \$3.00;

Unbranded 'White Vinegar', (Woolworths house label?), White vinegar, ingredients 'White Vinegar', 2 litre, for \$1.20.

Which is the 'best buy'? How can the consumer decide in the total absence of information?

What is 'single strength white vinegar', and what is Fehbergs 'double strength'? Double what - on the information presented for the consumer by the retailer/ manufacturer.

Your inquiry may address this issue for the benefit of consumers.

Inadequate information on weight of products.

A. For Example - Quilton Toilet Rolls

We have used at home 'Quilton 3 ply' toilet rolls for many years now. But significant pressure has been placed upon manufacturers to produce products 'at a cheaper price', so that Coles, and other retailers, can sell the 'product at an attractive price' to gain the attention of consumers to their retail stores.

I believe 'Quilton 3 ply' toilet rolls are now smaller in width of the sheet, smaller in number of sheets in a roll, and thus smaller in diameter of the roll.

But how can I prove this when there is NO WEIGHT of the contents shown on the packaging?

How can we comparatively evaluate the value of product between manufacturers when the only clue shown is between '2 ply', '3 ply' or '4 ply'? Yes, manufacturers do show the number of sheets in a roll, but not the total length of the roll or the weight.

Your inquiry may address this issue for the benefit of consumers.

B - Fruit and Vegetables

Loose grapefruit and oranges, grapes and cherries, are sold by weight, as are potatoes and bananas. Avocados are sold '\$2.00 each, 3 for \$5.00', etc. Cauliflowers and cabbages, and cantaloupes are sold 'each' - without reference to weight. etc, etc.

How can a consumer evaluate the value of the purchase between retailers when one retailer advertises cauliflowers for \$2.00 each, comparative to \$3.00 in another retailer.

Another retailer advertises avocados for \$2.00 each, the opposition advertises avocados for \$1.50 each. Both retailers do not show weight. How can the consumers evaluate this pricing structure?

A 'full celery' is sold by the 'bunch' - without reference to weight. A 'half a bunch of celery' is just that. 'Half' of what unknown quantity. Without reference to weight. This is not fair on the consumer who is forced to 'guess' between items.

A 'bunch of celery' is obviously different in weight to a 'bunch of parsley, and is the number of' component's making up 'the bunch'. But retailers are not compelled by those we trust to enforce 'fairness in consumer trading' to show the weight of these and similar items.

To me, it is logical that ALL fruit and vegetables should be sold by weight - dollars per kilogram.

C - Bread

Many bread products are widely sold across many outlets without reference to weight. My submission is that bread should be 'sold by weight' to enable the consumer to make an informed decision.

D - Hot Roasted Chickens

Again another product delivered to the consumer without reference to weight.

Coles may sell their product for \$10, Woolworths may sell their similarly described product for \$11.00, and the local Roast Chicken may sell their product for \$12.00. Which is the 'best buy' for the consumer when there is no reference to weight?

This industry further confuses the consumer by the use of such terms as 'small', 'medium', 'large', 'extra large', and 'family'. Is a 'medium roast chicken' in Coles, the same weight as a 'medium roast chicken' in Woolworths? What is the weight of an 'extra large' roasted chicken?

I took this issue of weight of 'roast chicken' up with Consumer Relations at Coles. The staff member's response was that 'the roast chicken was difficult to weigh, and therefore that was the reason Coles did not weigh the product.'

My response was that all the roast chickens we had purchased from various businesses were all missing both their heads and feet - making the chicken 'easy to catch' and 'weigh' prior to sale. She was not impressed with my response, as she terminated our telephone conversation.

Your inquiry may address this issue for the benefit of consumers.

Font Size

We are having increasing difficulties 'reading small font' sizes (around 3 point) which are just too small to decipher, particularly when they are attached to shelves at 'knee or ankle heights'.

Your inquiry may address this issue for the benefit of consumers.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this enquiry.

Yours Faithfully

Leo McGuire