

Summary of meeting outcomes

Meat Industry Consultative Council

11 April 2018

The Meat Industry Consultative Council (MICC) held a meeting in Sydney on Wednesday 11 April 2018. Specific issues considered by the Council at its meeting are detailed below.

Attendees

Meat Industry Consultative Council: Will Barton (Australian Meat Industry Council), Brian Calderwood (Pepe's Ducks Pty Ltd), Heather Channon (Australian Pork Limited), Vivien Kite (Australian Chicken Meat Federation), Ray Lee (NSW Farmers' Association), Robert Mollison (Australian Meat Industry Council), Collin Naidu (Baiada Poultry Pty Ltd), Sarah Britton (A/Group Director Animal Biosecurity & Welfare & Chief Veterinary Officer, NSW DPI).

NSW DPI – Biosecurity & Food Safety: Lisa Szabo, Chair (Group Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority), Peter Day (Director Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance), Julia Harvey (Director Stakeholder Engagement & Customer Service), Craig Shadbolt (Manager, Food Incident Response & Complaints), David Cusack (Manager, Strategic Policy & Projects), Matt Campbell (A/Manager, Audit Systems & Verification Unit).

Apologies: Katherine Balding (Inghams Enterprises Pty Ltd), Annabel Johnson (NSW Farmers' Association), Bruce Christie (Deputy Director General, Biosecurity & Food Safety, NSW DPI), Ryoko Uchida (Senior Industry Analyst, International Engagement Unit, NSW DPI), Mark Mackie (Manager, Audit Systems & Verification Unit), Geneveive Bonello (Manager, Stakeholder Engagement & Communications, NSW DPI).

Industry updates

Members provided updates on key and emerging issues in their respective industry sectors.

Will Barton advised members that Kevin Cottrill, former CEO of AMIC and MICC member, had sadly passed away in December 2017. Members expressed their condolences and acknowledged the enormous contribution Mr Cottrill had made over his lifetime of dedication to the industry.

Concerns were raised on possible areas of miscommunication industry-wide in relation to Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL) as industry are seeing some processes in NSW where there could be conflict with ACCC requirements. As CoOL is no longer under the remit of the NSW Food Authority, members were advised to direct concerns to the ACCC and the Department of Fair Trading. The NSW DPI will update AMIC and meat retailers on this change and will raise industry's concerns with ACCC and the Department of Fair Trading.

Food safety program compliance report

Members noted a report on meat industry compliance activities between 1 July 2017 to 31 December 2017. During this reporting period 1,120 audits and 420 inspections were conducted with 43 failed audits and 40 failed inspections. The compliance target of 95% for the sector is being met, with the meat industry recording a high compliance rate of 96% for the period. There were 139 enforcement actions, including the issue of five warning letters, 96 improvement notices and 38 penalty notices. These figures are reflective of the large numbers of licensees in the meat industry which is one of the biggest sectors regulated by the Department. One foodborne illness investigation was conducted during this time.

It was noted that trend graphs over the period are continuing on a steady path, which is indicative that the audit programs are effective, with no decrease in compliance. Audit data analysis showed that the top three audit items with higher observed levels of critical issues were within process control (failure to complete monitoring records at required frequency and to identify cross contamination risks), hygiene and sanitation (failure to keep equipment, fixtures and fittings, walls, tiles and ceilings clean), and analytical testing (failure to correctly document a testing program or to conduct testing as required by the NSW Food Safety Schemes Manual). Overall the high level of compliance for the sector during this period is a pleasing result.

NSW DPI Antimicrobial Resistance risk assessment

The Council received an update on work currently underway in NSW DPI to develop a joint DPI/Local Land Services (LLS) policy on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) that will fit in with the national AMR Strategy. A working group with DPI, LLS and external stakeholders has developed an AMR risk assessment to determine the role of the NSW government in the use of antimicrobials in animals that create AMR threats to human and animal health and the environment. Recommendations from this AMR risk assessment will underpin development of the AMR policy together with consultation with relevant stakeholders which will take place during June.

Industry members expressed concerns that this policy should not become a separate State strategy but should feed into and be aligned with the overall national strategy. They were assured that the DPI policy will not duplicate work that has already been done and the Department will work closely with industry throughout this process.

National Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy

A draft strategy for reducing foodborne illness in Australia which had been put out for consultation between 12 February to 29 March 2018 was tabled for information. The draft strategy was developed by jurisdictions following a meeting in April 2017 of the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation who identified the need to develop a nationally-consistent approach to reduce foodborne illness, particularly related to *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*, as the first of three priority areas to focus on for 2017-2021. There have also been targeted consultations with various groups, particularly the poultry industry and egg industry, and the draft strategy has been circulated to all Food Authority industry consultative committees. The Chair thanked people who have put in submissions on the strategy to the Food Regulation Secretariat. These submissions will be used to further develop the strategy.

It was noted that in NSW there has been a 54% decrease in notification rates for *Salmonella Typhimurium* since 2014. This can be attributed to the large amount of work the Department has done through education on improved handling, sanitation and management of eggs on farms and raw egg products at retail level. This work provides scope for further consideration as to how the Department can share and broaden those learnings across Australia.

Members still wishing to comment on the strategy were encouraged to provide feedback to the Food Authority.

Update on draft *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry*

Members noted an update on work that has been underway since 2015 to draft national standards and guidelines for poultry for adoption in all Australian jurisdictions. They went out for public consultation in November 2017 and submissions closed in February 2018. An independent consultant is reviewing the submissions and will provide a report to Animal Health Australia. The submissions and report will be considered by the drafting group and the national Animal Welfare Task Group. The standards will then be revised, if appropriate, for consideration by the Stakeholder Advisory Group. The document will then progress to the Animal Welfare Task Group for finalisation before it goes to the Ministers.

Report from Australian Meat Regulators Working Group (AMRG)

A report was tabled for information on the Australian Meat Regulators Working Group which was formed in 2016 and consists of senior officers from most jurisdictional regulatory authorities with responsibility for meat safety, as well as FSANZ and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR). The group generally meets twice a year and NSW provides the chair and secretariat. Its aims are to provide a conduit between industry and meat regulatory bodies regarding food safety regulatory tools and guidance which support Australian meat industries; and to promote consistency across jurisdictions of issues management regarding food regulatory matters in the meat sector.

Members briefly discussed applications currently under consideration and noted an AMRG Guideline outlining the process to assess proposals for Australian Standards Equivalence.

National adoption of poultry process hygiene criteria

Members received an update on progress in relation to national adoption of poultry process hygiene criteria following consultation with the poultry industry in March. NSW and Queensland already have regular reporting around poultry processes and criteria which works well. As part of the strategy they are supportive of this being rolled out nationally through the AMRG to achieve uniform consistency and set a national benchmark to see how plants perform and to help drive performance. This material can also be used for trend analysis.

Retail Food Safety Program / Retail Diary Translated Versions

Following a comprehensive re-write last year by the Food Authority of the Retail Food Safety Program and Retail Diary, members were advised that translation of these documents into six additional languages has recently been completed. The documents are now available in Arabic, Turkish, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese Simplified, and Chinese Traditional and can be downloaded from the NSW Food Authority website. It is hopeful that this will lead to improved compliance in the retail meat area.

Communications update

Members were updated on communications in the meat and poultry industry sector since the last meeting. This included:

- Translated versions of the Retail Food Safety Program and Retail Diary.
- Recalls across the whole food area, mostly around processing issues.
- On-going pro-active communications on uncooked comminuted fermented meat products (UCFMP's).



- Liaising on implementation of the Biosecurity Act and supporting biosecurity awareness and behaviours.
- Continued work on the Country of Origin (CoOL) interactive portal on the website.

Biosecurity update

The Council noted an update on work on-going in relation to implementation of the new Biosecurity Act. The Department has recently conducted a large emergency exercise with Queensland (Exercise Border Bridge) to test its systems and assess how NSW and Queensland can respond to a biosecurity incident occurring across both jurisdictions. There was a good outcome from this exercise.

The Commonwealth is currently conducting a National Traceability Review looking at where gaps are across all industries and will target horticulture and grains as well. There will also be a Cow Catcher 2 Exercise in June and further information on this will be sent to industry groups.

The next meeting of the Meat Industry Consultative Council will be held on Tuesday 28 August 2018.