

# Meat Industry Consultative Council

Wednesday 13 March 2013

## Summary of meeting outcomes

The Meat Industry Consultative Council (MICC) held a meeting in Sydney on Wednesday, 13 March 2013. Specific issues considered by the Council at its meeting are detailed below.

### **Food safety program compliance report July to December 2012**

The Authority provided an update on its compliance, enforcement and inspection activities during the period 1 July 2012 to 31 December 2012. It was noted that issues still remain in terms of compliance by some meat retailers, with the 14% failure rates substantially coming from the meat retail sector. The Authority has implemented an audit improvement program to deal with businesses with poor compliance records. The MICC discussed the introduction of iPads for the Authority's field officers and the efficiencies this will bring across the Authority's audit and compliance program.

The MICC noted the compliance report.

### **Animal welfare standards in NSW red meat and poultry abattoirs and Food Amendment (Recording of Abattoir Operations) Act 2013**

The MICC noted and discussed a paper prepared by its poultry industry representatives in response to options put forward at the previous meeting for improving compliance with animal welfare standards in NSW abattoirs. Members also discussed the draft Greens bill entitled *Food Amendment (Recording of Abattoir Operations) Act 2013* which, if approved, would amend the *Food Act 2003* to include a requirement for all abattoirs and knackereries in NSW to make video and audio recordings of the movement, holding and slaughter of animals at their facilities. It was acknowledged that around 60% of domestic red meat abattoirs in NSW already have cameras installed, with discussion around their effectiveness as a compliance tool in monitoring animal welfare practices of employees. Issues raised included the differences in processing operations in the red meat and poultry meat industries and the technical difficulties this poses in terms of installing cameras in dark and humid environments where there is constant movement and frequent obstruction. Members supported stringent training programs for all staff as the most appropriate mechanism for achieving better animal welfare outcomes and indicated that training and procedures were in place in many facilities. The Authority undertook to arrange further meetings between industry representatives in the red meat and poultry meat sectors to address their specific concerns.

### **Product substitution**

The MICC noted a paper outlining the NSW Food Authority compliance strategy for product substitution.

### **Lamb branding regulation**

The MICC noted a paper regarding NSW regulations for lamb branding which had been prepared by the Authority in response to a misconception by some NSW meat processors that NSW has a different definition for lamb than other states. It was noted that the Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) would be addressing this issue at its forthcoming retail meeting and the AMIC representative undertook to seek feedback from the relevant groups at that meeting and to provide an update on this to the Authority. The Food Authority would also consult further with NSW Farmers around the proposed changes to the regulation.

**Primary Production and Processing Standards (PPPS)**

The MICC received progress reports on the PPP Standards for Poultry Meat and for Meat and Meat Products. It was noted that the National Poultry Standard is at a critical stage of implementation and meetings had been arranged with poultry farmers by the NSW Farmers' Association to help alleviate concerns. The MICC poultry members raised several concerns in regard to the requirements of the processor microbiological verification program and it was agreed that further discussions would be held with the poultry industry sector to address these issues. In regard to the Meat and Meat Products Standard, it was noted that work is currently underway to reference the Australian Standards in the FSANZ Food Standards Code as part of the meat PPPS in response to issues raised by industry and regulators.

*The next meeting of the MICC will be held on Wednesday 28 August 2013.*