

Meat Industry Consultative Council

The primary objective of the Meat Industry Consultative Council is to contribute to the Food Authority's goal of ensuring the production and sale of meat products that are safe and suitable for human consumption, by advising on policy and practices introduced into provisions of the Meat Food Safety Scheme as it relates to meat and developed through a consultative process. Other government agencies may seek to use the broad expertise and experience of the Council members to obtain advice on matters beyond the scope of the provisions of the meat food safety scheme.

Summary of outcomes

Meat Industry Consultative Council

30 July 2025

The Meat Industry Consultative Council met via video conference on Wednesday, 30 July 2025. Issues considered at the meeting are outlined below.

Attendees

Meat Industry Consultative Council: Brian Calderwood (Pepe's Ducks Ltd), Ash Cooper, (NSW Farmers' Association), Stuart Fuller (Australian Meat Industry Council), Vaibhav Gole (Australian Pork), Susy Klein (Ingham's Enterprises Pty Ltd), Lizzie Sarks (NSW Farmers' Association), William Stacy (NSW Farmers' Association), Verity Price (Australian Chicken Meat Federation), Sue Viana (Australian Meat Industry Council).

NSW DPIRD – Biosecurity & Food Safety: Andrew Davies (Acting, Director, Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority) (Chair), Eric Davis (Manager Food Policy & Partnerships), Kiri Boad (Project Manager, Sheep & Goat Traceability), Jaime Garcia (Secretariat), Jade O'Neill, (Acting, Team leader Regulatory Operations), Brendan Sharpe (Acting, Manager Animal Biosecurity Preparedness Response), Jocelyn Todd (Acting, Veterinary Policy & Program Officer), Linda Cafe (Acting Team Leader, Animal Welfare Policy & Programs (Livestock)).

Apologies: David Cusack (Manager, Food Standards and Programs), Ian Hayes (Australian Meat Industry Council), Mark Mackie (Manager Regulatory Operations Unit), Trevor Moore (Northern Co-operative Meat Company Ltd), Anthony Pavic (Baiada Poultry Pty Ltd), Antonio Sgro (Sgro Enterprises Pty Ltd), Mary Wu (Australian Chicken Meat Federation), Greg Vakaci (Director, Compliance).

Conflict of interest declaration

Members confirmed they had no conflicts of interest.

Members provided updates on key and emerging issues/concerns:

Australian Pork Limited (APL) provided the following updates:
APL has received a DAFF grant to develop the PigPass App. This project aims to develop a PigPass mobile app that can trace animal movements in real-time and replicate the processes of the e-National Vendor Declaration lifecycle as in the current PigPass website. It enables real-time tracking of pig movements, enhancing biosecurity and traceability within

the Australian pig industry. The project has involved several consultation sessions with stakeholders, including producers, processors, and transporters, to gather feedback that has informed the app's design and development.

The project has completed its alpha testing phase and is now in beta testing phase (user acceptance testing [UAT]), during which more than 300 tests have been conducted. UAT is expected to be finalised by late August and the app ready for use by industry in mid-September 2025. The final reporting deadline is 1 November 2025, which includes an extension period for developing user guides.

The Australian Chicken Meat Federation (ACMF) provided the following updates: ACMF continues to collaborate with the Victorian government regarding implementation of the Poultry Welfare Standards, set to take effect on 1 January 2026. ACMF is also working with other states and territories to ensure a uniform approach.

Work continues around Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Control, including destruction, disposal, and decontamination of poultry facilities. ACMF has been contracted by Australian Eggs to deliver a third exercise, which will include the depopulation of spent layer hens using liquid nitrogen. Additionally, ACMF continues to develop policies and guidelines related to avian influenza control, including vaccination.

ACMF is collaborating with Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) to review guidelines for controlling *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* in chicken meat. It is also working with other states on food safety strategies related to *Campylobacter*.

The Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) provided the following updates: AMIC has released the fourth version of AMIC's Industry Animal Welfare Standard for Livestock Processing Establishments Preparing Meat for Human Consumption [AAWCS Version 4](#). This new version includes a requirement for mandatory CCTV installation in certified Livestock processing establishments, effective from January 2026.

The complete set of standards is currently under review, led by an independent review committee that includes industry experts and representatives from both industry and government. The fifth version is expected to be finalised by the end of the 2025/26 financial year. Establishments that fulfil the requirements of the Standard may seek certification in accordance with the Australian Animal Welfare Certification System (AAWCS) requirements.

AMIC reports that the delay in the National Minimum Standards for the Meat Processing sector is of concern for the industry. Currently, NSW uses AAWCS as a reference for domestic abattoirs.

AMIC members have expressed concerns about implementation of the Sheep and Goat Electronic Identification (eID) for sheep and goats in Australia, particularly regarding the current NSW procedures. At present, animals from NSW that arrive at abattoirs without tags or with incorrect tags must be retagged with an emergency NLIS tag before processing. In order to address these concerns and improve overall efficiency, staff from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and the tag manufacturers (Integrity Systems) are in discussion to review existing regulations and develop virtual tags.

The European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) requires that, from 1 January 2026, Australian cattle producers seeking to export beef or hides to the European Union (EU) must be enrolled in the Livestock Production Assurance system and opt in to share geolocation data, according to Meat and Livestock Australia. EUDR places significant emphasis on

traceability to ensure that commodities imported into the EU were legally produced on land that has not been deforested.

1) Matters raised relating to the Meat Food Safety Scheme

Food Safety Compliance Report

The DPIRD Compliance and Integrity Systems Unit provided an update on meat industry compliance activities for the 2024-25 financial year. 95% of licensed meat industry businesses recorded an acceptable audit and/or inspection result, representing no change from the previous financial year. A focus on the retail meat sector resulted in increased audits and inspections during the first half of FY 2024-25, with 3,121 audits and inspections conducted in total. This focus will continue into next year. These activities form a critical part of our risk mitigation measures.

A total of 223 sanctions were issued, including improvement notices, penalty notices, prohibition orders, seizure notices, and warning letters.

2) Other matters raised

Remake of the Meat Industry Levy Regulation

The DPIRD Policy and Programs Team put forward a paper on the Meat Industry Levy Regulation 2016 (MIL regulation), which will be repealed on 1 September 2025 (under the *Subordinate Legislation Act 1989*) unless it is remade.

It is planned that the Meat Industry (Meat Industry Levy) Regulation will be remade with some administrative amendments.

The meat industry levy (MIL) provides for NSW meat producers to make a proportionate and appropriate contribution towards the food safety work undertaken by the NSW Food Authority for the overall benefit of the NSW meat industry sector.

The MIL is charged annually to NSW Local Land Services (LLS) ratepayers who are liable to pay the animal health rate and is calculated based on the notional carrying capacity of the land. The MIL is collected by LLS on behalf of the Food Authority.

Public consultation on the proposed Meat Industry (Meat Industry Levy) Regulation 2025 (draft Regulation) occurred from 5 May to 1 June 2025, with feedback generally supporting the draft Regulation. The Food Authority thanks members for their submissions.

The draft Regulation is expected to be finalised on or before 1 September 2025. It retains the current MIL contribution of \$5 plus 0.6 cents per stock unit of notional carrying capacity, with the following administrative amendments to reduce red tape, reduce costs and simplify MIL operation:

- Change the date for issuing meat producers with MIL notices to 31 March – to align with the issue of LLS rate notices.
- Simplify the notification process for changes in land occupancy/ownership – to align with LLS.
- Remove a redundant \$5 fee for seeking information about MIL due and payable on a piece of land - only the LLS fee will be required in future.
- Clarify that the certificate issued by LLS to inform a person about MIL due and payable can be provided in a format designed by LLS.

- Reduce costs for producers and government by allowing disputes about the validity of a MIL to be heard in the Local Court instead of the District Court.
- Set the interest rate for overdue levies – to align with LLS.
- Remove reference to paper-based methods of keeping the MIL book.
- Remove prescribed forms and replace with forms approved by the Food Authority which will be published on the Food Authority website.
- Modernise drafting.

Animal welfare update

DPIRD Animal Welfare Unit updated members on the following:

Virtual Fencing

National work:

- The Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) is currently finalising the Australian Animal Welfare Guide for Virtual Fencing (the VF AAW Guide). This is occurring on behalf of and in collaboration with the Animal Welfare Task Group, and with advice from a Stakeholder Reference Group.
- The AAW Guide is expected to be published on the DAFF website late in 2025.
- Updates can be obtained here: [Virtual fencing technology - DAFF](#).

NSW:

- The NSW Government's response to the Inquiry into the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Virtual Stock Fencing) Bill 2024 committed to legalising virtual fencing. The Minister for Agriculture announced in April 2025 a commitment to undertake consultation and amend legislation by the end of 2025 to allow the use of virtual fencing for cattle.
- The VF AAW Guide is expected to inform VF consultation with key stakeholders, which commenced on 14 July and will continue through August 2025.

Australian Animal Welfare Standards & Guidelines (S&G) for Livestock at Processing Establishments

New “Australian Animal Welfare Standards & Guidelines for Livestock at Processing Establishments.” drafted by the Animal Welfare Task Group (AWTG) - led by QLD DPI will replace the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animal Livestock at Slaughtering Establishments 2001.

DATE	ACTIVITY
2023	Engagement with the SAG and other targeted stakeholders, including visits to livestock processors, informed practical and technical aspects for the first draft version of the standards. Substantial feedback on this first draft was provided by members of the SAG and AWTG and targeted stakeholders
2024	Based on feedback from Draft 1, a second draft was provided to key stakeholders, feedback collated. Work commenced to procure a consultant for Regulation Impact Analysis.
2025	Preparation of Draft 3 is to occur. Anticipated to be released for public consultation later in the year. The National process is continuing, and timelines are not yet finalised.

Increase in Animal Welfare Incident Reports from export processing plants

An increase has recently been observed in the number of Animal Welfare Incident Reports (AWIRs) from export processing plants for livestock from NSW PICs. These have predominantly comprised livestock found dead or down on arrival at plants, with low body condition being identified by on-plant veterinarians as a leading contributing factor.

Summary of statistics comparing the period January to July 2024 vs 2025:

- Incident surge: 2025 - 200% increase in cases.
- Number of animals impacted: 978 animals affected in 2025 - up 670% from 127 in 2024.
- Sheep: Incidents have doubled, a 500% increase in the number of animals affected
- Goats: None reported in 2024, 2025 - 5 incidents, 174 animals.
- Cattle: Incidents more than doubled; 600% increase in the number of animals affected though overall numbers remain small.
- LLS Regions: Western (significant) Southeast, and Central Tablelands have recorded incidents for the first time in 2025 with a notable number of livestock.
- Saleyard involvement: Increased from 2 cases in 2024 to 7 in 2025.

In response to the observed increase, the Animal Welfare branch developed a short communication article ([Transport of sheep during tough times](#)) as a reminder of key livestock transport considerations. This was distributed to LLS, NSW farmers, the Australian Livestock & Property Agents Association (ALPA), and MLA, requesting distribution where relevant.

Poultry Standards and Guidelines (S&Gs)

- The “Australian Animal Welfare Standards & Guidelines for Poultry” were published in August 2022.
- The Australian Animal Welfare S&Gs for Poultry were endorsed by all agriculture ministers at the Agriculture Ministers’ Meeting in Perth on 13 July 2023.
- G&G implementation and timing will occur at the state and territory level having regard to the specific operational environments of each jurisdiction.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulation 2025 came into effect on 1 February 2025 and included greater welfare requirements for layer poultry, such as prescribing improved cage requirements for new installations, which are in line with the S&G.

More information on national animal welfare policy and regulatory matters can be found at the Animal Welfare Task Group - <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/animal/welfare/awtg>.

Animal Welfare and Trespass Update

The Compliance team provided an update on recent trespassing incidents and activist activities at NSW red meat processing establishments. Members were reminded of the importance of maintaining site security, including the use of monitored and reviewed CCTV cameras.

Additionally, compliance with animal welfare requirements is essential. This includes adherence to industry animal welfare standards, Australian regulations, and Food Authority license conditions. Each facility must have a documented animal welfare policy within their Food Safety Program, which should be internally monitored by the facility representative or manager to ensure that all requirements are met.

The date for the next meeting of the Meat Industry Consultative Council is to be advised.