

Summary of meeting outcomes

Meat Industry Consultative Council

10 July 2019

The Meat Industry Consultative Council (MICC) held a meeting in Sydney on Wednesday 10 July 2019. Specific issues considered at the meeting are detailed below.

Attendees

Meat Industry Consultative Council: Stephen Bignell (NSW Farmers' Association), Sarah Britton (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer & Group Director Animal Biosecurity, NSW DPI), Brian Calderwood (Pepe's Ducks Pty Ltd), Peta Easey (NSW Farmers' Association), Vivien Kite (Australian Chicken Meat Federation), Collin Naidu (Baiada Poultry Pty Ltd), Andrew Robertson (Australian Pork Limited), Lauren Ross (Inghams Enterprises Pty Ltd), Peter Talbot (Australian Meat Industry Council), Ryoko Uchida (Senior Industry Analyst, International Engagement Unit, 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), David Cusack (Manager, Food Standards & Programs), Mark Mackie (Manager, Regulatory Operations Unit), Sus Perkins (A/Manager, Communications and Stakeholder Engagement), Jenine Ryle (Senior Policy & Programs Officer).

Apologies: Katherine Balding (Inghams Enterprises Pty Ltd), Will Barton (Australian Meat Industry Council), Heather Channon (Australian Pork Limited), Annabel Johnson (NSW Farmers' Association), Ian Sanders (Director, International Engagement Unit, NSW DPI), Bruce Christie (Deputy Director General, Biosecurity & Food Safety, NSW DPI), Craig Shadbolt (Manager, Food Incident Response & Complaints).

Industry updates

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

A common issue of concern raised by members continues to be disruptive activities by animal activists. This is happening across all sectors of the industry with vigils outside plants, drone surveillance, multiple break-ins and theft of animals, and privacy breaches. This type of activity has ramifications for biosecurity as well as food safety with unauthorised entry into these facilities being a potential vector for the introduction of diseases.

Other industry discussions included consumer survey and perceptions for retail butchers, chicken meat usage and attitude surveys and tag free exemptions for goat producers. Members also discussed the growing market for substitute plant-based products and naming conventions (use of the terms 'meat', 'chicken' and 'milk') and potential for consumers to be misled by product names. Members are also keeping a watching brief on the development of synthetic products that are compositionally and genetically equivalent to natural products e.g. laboratory grown meat.

Control Order - Biosecurity Act 2015

Sarah Britton provided a verbal update on the pending Control Order. The Control Order will be introduced to minimise and manage the biosecurity risk posed or likely to be posed by the spread of *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE) within New South Wales.

The Control Order will apply to all egg and poultry production facilities licensed by the NSW Food Authority and will be in place for two years from the date of commencement.

Consultation on the draft Control Order has occurred with peak industry groups including

NSW Farmers, Australian Eggs Limited and the Australian Chicken Meat Federation. The Department has undertaken mock audits on multiple properties to test the Control Order from an implementation and outcome perspective.

The Control Order will help ensure consistency in the biosecurity practices applied at poultry and egg production premises to prevent the further spread of SE. Members were advised that compliance officers will visit every licensed egg and poultry production facility in NSW to assist licensees to meet their property's licensing requirements and to implement the new Control Order.

Department resources including guidelines and factsheets will be available to help producers meet the measures required under the Control Order. Weblinks to industry bodies resources will also be made available in one easy to find resource hub.

Food safety compliance report

A report was presented on meat industry compliance activities during the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019. It was noted there has been a 1% increase in compliance over the year with a compliance rate of 96% for the meat industry sector during this reporting period. 1639 audits and 720 inspections were conducted with 48 failed audits and 55 failed inspections. There were 158 enforcement actions including 3 warning letters, 128 Improvement Notices, 26 Penalty Notices and one prosecution of a butchery for offences relating to breaching the Food Standards Code by adding preservative (SO₂) to minced meat.

Process control (e.g. storage temperature, time/ temperature parameters for cooking RTE products, pH records, fermentation time etc), construction and maintenance and pre-requisite programs (failing to document a testing program; failing to conduct testing as required by the NSW Food Safety Schemes Manual), continue to be the main areas of non-compliance in the meat sector where critical Corrective Action Requests (CARs) are being raised.

A new feature of the compliance report is the inclusion of investigation and enforcement action data from the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS). 95 investigations were conducted over the financial year reporting period with 29 warning letters being issued for non-compliance.

Overall, the Department is pleased with the high compliance rate for the meat industry sector over this period.

Cold Store Food Safety Program

Members noted an information paper regarding a new document that would satisfy both regulatory and business food safety program requirements for cold food stores (storing both meat and non-meat products). It is in the same format as the NSW Retail Meat Food Safety Program launched in 2016.

Members were advised that the format will make it easier for businesses to comply with cold store food safety requirements as all relevant information will be contained within the one document which can then be easily presented during their next audit.

The NSW Cold Store Food Safety Program and diary will be available to purchase from 29 July 2019 at a cost of \$55.00. The document is also be available to download free of charge from the Authority's website.

Australian Meat Regulators Working Group (AMRG) update

The meeting received an update on activities of the Australian Meat Regulators Working Group (AMRG).

Members noted progress on two significant projects, the Post-Mortem Inspection project and the development of a response document to facilitate national implementation of the poultry process hygiene criteria. The AMRG is due to meet again in August 2019.

National PIC (Property Identification Code) project update

David Cusack presented an update of the PIC project *Property Identification Reforms: enhancing agricultural traceability*. This work arose from the review of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB) led by panel Chair Dr Craik in 2017.

Australian agriculture ministers responded to the independent panel's final IGAB report, *Priorities for Australia's biosecurity system* in late 2018 and made a specific commitment to examine property identification codes nationally in animal and plant products industries; to develop a set of consistent business rules by the end of 2019 and to harmonise legislation to give effect to national PICs across animal and plant products industries by the end of 2022.

The presentation also outlined other current traceability reviews including the National traceability project (<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/market-access-trade/traceability-project>), SAFEMEAT reforms to Australia's livestock traceability and the Food Exports Review (<http://www.agriculture.gov.au/ag-farm-food/food/regulation-safety/food-export-review>).

Members were advised that they can provide their views on the project principles and recommended changes to their respective industry representative group or in writing to the Australian Government Department of Agriculture's *Have Your Say* webpage shortly. The Secretariat will circulate the weblink to members once the consultation phase commences.

Biosecurity Update (Further to earlier discussion)

The meeting also received a brief update on work being undertaken by the Department's compliance team since expansion of its function to include auditing of programs in the biosecurity area as well as food safety areas. The compliance team itself has doubled in size (50 field staff across the state within three regions), and whilst work with the food programs remains unchanged, officers are now involved in implementing audit programs in other areas such as exhibited animals, zoos, animal research, poppies, medicinal morphine, hemp, interstate movement of fruit and vegetables and cannabis ID.

African Swine Fever

Sarah Britton provided a verbal update on projects being undertaken to assist with NSW preparedness regarding African swine fever, including interaction with Queensland and Victorian counterparts (looking at preapproved pig movement routes), meetings with NSW Farmers Pork Committee, completion of surveillance and response plans and swill feeding enhancement project with Local Land Services.

Further information on African swine fever can be found on the Department's website <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/animal/info-vets/african-swine-fever>

International Engagement update

The Department's International Engagement Team supports agriculture through a variety of activities including input to government missions and delegations. The team promotes

NSW's agricultural capability, informs investment responses, identifies new markets and industries, and provides input to missions and delegations, and agriculture policy at both state and federal levels. The team actively promotes the high-quality biosecurity and food safety credentials of NSW food and fibre products, meeting the demands of premium consumers in particular the Asian market.

The Team's Senior Industry Analyst Ms Ryoko Uchida introduced herself to members and indicated that she would be attending most meat, dairy and egg consultative committees to explore opportunities to increase the export of Australian agricultural produce to the overseas market.

The date for the next meeting of the Meat Industry Consultative Council in 2020 is to be advised.