

## Summary of meeting outcomes

### Egg Industry Consultative Committee

19 April 2023

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The Egg Industry Consultative Committee met via video conference on Wednesday 19 April 2023. Specific issues considered at the meeting are detailed below.

#### Attendees:

**Egg Industry Consultative Committee:** Bede Burke (NSW Farmers' Association), Melinda Hashimoto (Egg Farmers of Australia), Peter Matuszny (Manning Valley Free Range Eggs), Rowan McMonnies (Australian Eggs), Georgie Trowbridge (NSW Farmer's Association).

**NSW DPI – Biosecurity & Food Safety:** Joanna Blunden (Development Officer (Poultry Eggs), David Cusack (Manager, Food Standards & Programs), Eric Davis (Manager, Food Policy & Partnerships), Miriam East (Senior Policy & Programs Officer), Jaime Garcia (Secretariat), Peter Gray (Senior Veterinary Policy & Project Officer), Mark Mackie (Manager, Regulatory Operations Unit), Anne Mcintosh (Manager, Food Incident Response & Complaints), Helen Schaefer (Team Leader, Animal Welfare Policy & Programs), Lisa Szabo - Chair (Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority).

**Invited attendees:** Daniel Popovski (NSW Farmers' Association).

**Apologies:** Sarah Britton (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer and Group Director Animal Biosecurity), Brett Langfield (NSW Farmer's Association), Paul Pace (Pace Farm), Franko Pirovic (Pirovic Enterprises), Greg Vakaci (Director, Compliance & Integrity Systems), Petrea Wait, Team Leader, Animal Welfare Policy & Programs.

#### Industry updates

- Industry advised it supports the removal of the Biosecurity (*Salmonella Enteritidis*) (SE) control order that is due to end on 30 June 2024.
- Egg Farmers Australia advised that production remains tight despite Egg producers having a strong Easter. Overall production costs for this sector have come down slightly.
- Egg industry discussions with Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Egg Standard Development Advisory Group (SDAG) in March 2023 were highly valued and allowed industry to discuss key issues and share perspectives. Further meetings with SDAG are scheduled and industry hopes to discuss issues which they consider to be critical such as egg traceability, farm entry, people movement, spent hen management and whether SE is considered endemic.
- Industry hopes the lessons learnt from previous SE outbreaks are considered when FSANZ reviews Standard 4.2.5 – Primary production and processing standard for eggs and egg products. Industry is keen to understand how this FSANZ process will unfold.

- Australian Eggs presented the web based 'Egg Trace' traceability tool to the ISFR Egg Implementation Working Group following the March SDAG meeting.
- Concerns about mandatory temperature control for eggs sold in stores and the challenges this presents to industry was flagged as an issue for consideration.
- Avian Influenza (AI) preparedness was discussed, with Industry further considering AI preparedness and working on containment measures with an emphasis on larger farms and their ability to continue to trade should AI be detected on one part of the farm. Industry is also considering mass AI vaccination and what would be required to implement this.
- There is significant work being done in relation to mass destruction and disposal of AI infected birds. A mock AI scenario was held in Toowoomba, where NSW representatives participated and shared their experience and knowledge from earlier AI outbreaks. Industry considered this exercise valuable and highlighted some substantial practical difficulties, particularly when infected bird numbers are large e.g. over a million birds.

#### **Food safety program compliance report**

Mark Mackie provided an update on the egg industry compliance activities for the July to December period 2022. 94% of licensed egg industry businesses recorded an acceptable audit and/or inspection result. A total of 89 audits and inspections were conducted during this period with a combined total of five regulatory actions undertaken (improvement notices, penalty notices, prohibition orders, or warning letters). The Varroa mite emergency response impacted business as usual activities, and has resulted in fewer audits and inspections. Compliance activities in the meat industry will continue and these activities form a critical part of the risk mitigation measures.

#### **Animal welfare update**

Helen Schaefer gave a verbal update on the following,

##### **Animal welfare reform**

- A parliamentary committee reviewed the Draft Animal Welfare Bill 2022 as part of the Inquiry into Animal Welfare Policy in NSW. The [First Report](#) from the Inquiry into AW Policy in NSW (the Draft Bill) was released 15 June 2022. It contained two recommendations, which the Government responded to in September 2022 - the response can be seen [here](#)
- The NSW Government is considering all stakeholder and community feedback provided on the Draft Animal Welfare Bill through the inquiry process and will work towards developing draft regulations for public and stakeholder feedback - consistent with Recommendation 1 of the Committee's First report.

#### **Livestock Processing Establishments Standards & Guidelines (S&G)**

- The final meeting of the independently facilitated stakeholder advisory group (SAG) was held in December and drafting of the Standards has commenced.
- Public consultation on draft documents is expected to occur mid-2023.

**More information** on national animal welfare policy and regulatory matters, can be found at [Animal Welfare Task Group \(AWTG\)](#)

#### **Proposed remake of the Food Regulation**

Miriam East gave an update the proposed remake of the Food Regulation and advised that public consultation will occur later in the year for at least three weeks.

The current Food Regulation 2015 has been reviewed internally by the Food Authority and has been found to be fit for purpose. It provides a regulatory framework to achieve the objects of the NSW *Food Act 2003* and plays an integral role in ensuring food is safe for consumption and that consumers are adequately informed prior to making purchase decisions.

The Food Standards and Programs team is proposing the following Food Regulation amendments (relevant to the egg industry) when the Regulation is remade:

- Removing exemptions for small egg producers to align these operations with requirements of other egg producers.
- Including a *Salmonella Enteritidis* testing requirement, to begin after the Biosecurity (*Salmonella Enteritidis*) Control Order 2020 finishes on 30 June 2024.
- Shorten the timeframe for food businesses to notify the Food Authority of samples which fail to meet microbiological standards in the Food Safety Schemes Manual. The proposed timeframes are - verbal notification as soon as practical and written notification within 48 hours.
- An increase in fees, charges and penalties in line with the Consumer Price Index.

The Food Standards and Programs team seeks feedback from members of the Egg Industry Consultative Committee on the proposed amendments.

The Food Authority will alert members of the Egg Industry Consultative Committee when the proposed Regulation and Regulatory Impact Statement opens for public consultation.

The Food Authority will provide further updates on progress of this work at the next Egg Industry Consultative Committee meeting in August.

### **Biosecurity update** ***Salmonella Enteritidis* (SE)**

Anne Macintosh gave an update on the recent SE outbreak in Queensland. Only one egg producer was affected and the flock has been de-populated. There were no egg movements traced to NSW and the affected producer does not supply eggs into NSW. The SE strain detected in QLD is very closely related to the 2018-19 NSW outbreak strain (5 SNPs difference). Industry members queried if consideration of national action on SE will occur.

*The date for the next meeting of the Egg Industry Consultative Committee is  
16 August 2023.*