

Summary of meeting outcomes

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee

12 June 2019

The NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee held a meeting in Sydney on Wednesday 12 June 2019. Specific issues considered at the meeting are detailed below.

Attendees

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee: Helen Dornom (Dairy Australia), Ruth Kydd (Dairy Connect, dairy producer), Michael McNamara (Director, Pecora Dairy), Jane Sherborne (Dairy NSW Chair, dairy producer), Allison David (Norco Foods), Sarah Mandelson (CEO Serendipity Icecream), Robert McIntosh (NSW Farmers' Association, dairy producer).

NSW DPI – Biosecurity & Food Safety: Lisa Szabo (Group Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority), Darren Waterson (Team Leader Regulatory Operations Unit, Northern Region), Paul Freeman (Senior Veterinary Officer, Wollongbar), Ryoko Uchida (Senior Industry Analyst, International Engagement Unit).

Apologies: The Riverina Dairy Pty Ltd, Bega Cheese Limited, Erika Chesworth (NSW Farmers' Association), Bruce Christie (Deputy Director General, Biosecurity & Food Safety, NSW DPI), Sarah Britton (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer and Group Director Animal Biosecurity), Mark Mackie (Acting Director Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance), Craig Shadbolt (Manager, Food Incident Response & Complaints), David Cusack (Manager Food Standards & Programs), Ian Sanders (Director International Engagement), Emily Staniforth (Director Customer Service & Engagement), Geneveive Bonello (Manager, Stakeholder Engagement & Communications).

Industry updates

Members provided updates on key and emerging issues in their respective industry sectors. Issues raised included:

- industry members indicated that due to a shortage of product there has been an increase in retail outlets such as cafes purchasing their milk supplies from supermarkets rather than refrigerated delivery vendors. The Food Authority will highlight this recent trend and provide information to all NSW local councils through its Food Regulation Partnership so that Environmental Health Officers can address this issue when speaking with food business owners and conducting inspections. This will include appropriate references to the Food Standards Code and safety messages for ensuring the appropriate temperature control of potentially hazardous foods, including milk and milk products.
- biosecurity concerns with people and service providers coming onto farms. The NSW DPI is currently preparing a draft protocol which will outline how farmers can safeguard their properties and meet their biosecurity obligations when people are coming and going onto their farms. The Food Authority will endeavour to circulate this document to the committee for comment out of session.
- a common issue of concern raised by members is the increasing level of disruptive activities by animal activists. Members also noted that this is happening across other industries with vigils outside meat processing 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. Members discussed the requirement to display a physical address on food products and

traceability requirements. Members were advised that the NSW DPI has a project targeted for this year to look into these issues and will work together with industry on this.

- Current drought conditions continue to put lots of pressure on industry in terms of milk supply. Members reported that the quality of feed being fed to cattle is also presenting challenges on milk quality.
- Feed contamination issues are also introducing weeds to properties and pose a health risk to animals possibly already stressed under drought conditions. Donated feed may not always come with a fodder declaration making traceback or product difficult.
- discussion regarding the use and safety assessment of glyphosate; update of the Dairy Australia's Countdown App - a tailored app to help manage mastitis control in herds; use of miniaturised spectrometers to instantly measure fat content, moisture, sugars, protein in milk and milk products
- members are keeping a watching brief on applications to import raw milk cheeses into Australia and implications of free trade agreements; the role of regulation and how it interacts with changing delivery/supply models across the dairy chain

Food Safety Compliance Report

Members noted a report on dairy industry compliance activities between 1 July 2018 and 31 December 2018. During this period 285 audits and 42 inspections were conducted with 5 failed audits and 3 failed inspections. The compliance rate for the dairy industry for the period was 97.5%, which is an increase of 1% from the previous six-month period, which is a great result. The low level of enforcement activity during the period is reflective of a highly compliant industry.

Construction and maintenance were the main CAR issued across the dairy processing sector. This indicates that auditors are identifying issues requiring improvement in areas such as equipment and facility maintenance.

There were a small number of antibiotic notifications and pathogen notifications received during the period. The Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance team is very satisfied with the high compliance rate recorded for the dairy industry sector.

Botulism in Cattle incident, Pyree, January 2018

The Food Authority will circulate the Biosecurity newsletter (Winter 2019 Edition – Issue 3) which published an article *Botulism in Cattle*.

<https://www.foodwise.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/biosecuritynewsletter/issue3/index.html>

The article also provides a link to the DPI Primefact sheet published in February 2018 (previously circulated to members and distributed widely to the local community following the January incident).

Information for farmers on veterinary chemicals

An information paper was tabled regarding the resources that are available to dairy industry members regarding veterinary chemicals and drugs. Members noted that the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is the national body who oversees the registration of veterinary and agricultural chemicals. Companies apply to the APVMA for registration however the APVMA is not charged with communicating with individual industries on new products or label changes.

The responsibility for making industry aware of changes is shared between the companies who produce the products, the resellers, industry bodies and the state and national governments, where appropriate.

Due to the frequent label changes and new products getting registered and the large number of products that the APVMA deals with makes it an onerous task to communicate with individual producers on those changes and it is usually resellers and veterinarians who would advise the dairy producers of label changes and new products .

The paper outlined several resources available to the dairy industry for researching products including:

- APVMA website (www.apvma.gov.au) which includes a search function for registered products;
- APVMA fortnightly newsletter *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Gazette*;
- Animal Medicines Australia (peak industry group for manufacturers of veterinary drugs and chemicals) website (<https://animalmedicinesaustralia.org.au/about/>);
- Australian Veterinary Association website (<https://www.ava.com.au/library-resources/other-resources/>) - technical resources that can be of use in finding out information on veterinary drugs and prescribing policy;
- University libraries (where access is available) and product identification via Google to then search the APVMA or manufacturers' website.

Importantly, the paper notes that dairy producers risk severe fines and damage to export markets for milk and meat if using an unregistered product in dairy animals and that veterinarians with an ongoing relationship with the individual herd are best placed to speak to about veterinary drugs or chemicals.

Raw Milk Products Regulation

The committee received an update on the enforcement of the Food Amendment (Raw Milk Products) Regulation 2018 requirements. There have been no applications received to date for businesses wishing to set up a raw milk product supply, storage or distribution business.

The purpose of the regulation is to minimise the risk of unpasteurised cows milk being consumed when labelled or marketed as not being for human consumption. It arose from incidents of food poisoning from numerous bath milk products including the death of a child in Victoria in 2014.

Biosecurity Update (Further to earlier discussion)

Committee members were updated on the steady increase in *Salmonella* Enteritidis cases in humans in NSW since May 2018. The illness is usually linked to people who have come into contact with the organism overseas, however there are now over 200 reported cases in Australia with no history of international travel.

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.

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 invited members to contact her to explore the opportunity to increase the export of fresh milk to the overseas market.

The date for the next meeting of the NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee is Tuesday 10 September 2019.