

## Summary of meeting outcomes

### Egg Industry Consultative Committee

10 August 2016

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The Egg Industry Consultative Committee (EICC) held a meeting in Sydney on Wednesday, 10 August 2016. Specific issues considered by the Committee at its meeting are detailed below.

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

The Committee received a report on food safety compliance in the egg industry sector for the period 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016. During this period there had been 161 acceptable rated audits with 86% A rated, 12% B rated and 2% C rated; 8 failed audits (4.7% failure rate); and 81 inspections (6.2% failure rate). It was noted that the egg industry sector has maintained a steady compliance rate with around 95% of businesses recording acceptable audit results for the previous financial year which is a good outcome. Again, there were no consecutive audit failures with all businesses that failed a compliance audit passing their follow up audit, which indicates that corrective actions are being implemented by licensees.

The report also included an update on the egg stamping program which was introduced in November 2014. It was noted that the Food Authority has issued 1088 free egg stamps to egg businesses. During the reporting period, 44 egg stamping failures were reported however at least five of these were linked to one licensee battling old equipment. In all these cases the Food Authority worked closely with licensees to ensure traceability systems were in place until stamping machines were repaired. The Food Authority is also working with businesses to encourage them to invest in new machinery.

Audit data analysis presented for the period indicated that the top three audit items with higher observed levels of critical issues in the egg sector continue to be mainly focussed on construction and maintenance issues, pre-requisite programs and process control. Follow up audits have shown that in all cases where Corrective Action Requests (CARs) were issued these are being closed out.

Enforcement action taken during the period included the issue of 8 improvement notices, 3 penalty notices, 3 warning letters and a prohibition order on an egg farm where serious hygiene and labelling issues were identified. This order has been lifted following the rectification of these issues. Several food borne illness investigations were carried out during the period into egg-related Salmonella outbreaks, mainly associated with the preparation of raw egg mayonnaises and sauces.

#### **Biosecurity Act 2015 update**

Members received a brief update on the development of the new legislation under the Biosecurity Act 2015 being conducted by the Department. It was advised that following wide-range feedback from discussion papers released late in 2015 on the legislation, a second release of consultation and supplementary papers has been completed to provide opportunity for further clarification. An assessment on feedback from the first round of papers is available on the Department's website, and an analysis of the second round is currently being prepared.

The project for the sub-legislation is underway, involving drafting of the Regulations and development of a Regulatory Impact Statement. Throughout the process Directors and staff from Biosecurity & Food Safety have held a number of briefings and meetings through Local Land Service (LLS) community advisory groups with key industry stakeholders. The final

statutory consultation engagement process is expected to be over six weeks towards the end of this year with the hope that the Regulation will be finalised for the new Act to start in early 2017.

It has been apparent through feedback and discussions with industry that they are very aware of biosecurity issues and have fed back into the discussion papers through the engagement process; however it has been identified that some smaller community and interest groups, smallholders and the public in general don't have such a good understanding of biosecurity issues. In the interim the Department is developing communication material to targeted groups to engage the broader public and is also undertaking attitudinal research across a range of urban, regional and rural areas to help understand where to focus their education and engagement. The attitudinal survey will be released to industry committees.

It was noted that there will not be a lot of change in the legislation which will impact the egg, poultry meat or livestock industries in general; the main change will be in how the DPI and LLS deal with issues such as weeds, invasive species and pests in terms of control and mitigation steps. Emergency response systems currently in place will not change.

The Food Authority will continue to update the Committee on this process and will include more biosecurity issues in future meeting agendas. Members were invited to contact the Food Authority if they have any feedback or questions on this issue.

### **Third Party Auditor Workshop**

The Committee was advised that the NSW Food Authority will be hosting a Third Party Auditor (TPA) workshop on 24 & 25 August 2016. This will provide a forum in which to outline improvements in the TPA program including standardisation of reporting systems and audit processes, as well as discussion on industry developments, emerging trends in auditing, auditing performance, and other food safety specific topics related to the daily duties of TPAs. Presentations will be received from industry representatives on their areas of expertise. The Food Authority has consulted extensively with TPAs and industry stakeholders in finalising the agenda for this workshop.

### **Food Safety Program Guidance**

A revised Retail Food Safety Program guidance document recently developed by the Food Authority for retail meat businesses was tabled for information. This was prepared to assist businesses to comply with food safety requirements. The revised guidance document is outcomes based with 14 specific outcomes in which butchers will need to demonstrate compliance. A targeted implementation program is being planned in which the Food Authority's auditors will explain the document to licensees on an individual basis and so far the feedback has been very positive. Whilst this guidance document is retail meat business focussed, the outcomes based layout will allow for this to be rolled out across other food safety schemes including the egg industry sector. The document is available on the Food Authority's web site and will also be made available in multiple languages.

### **National Anti Microbial Resistance Strategy 2015-2019**

The Committee received a presentation on the national strategy developed by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Department of Agriculture in partnership with government and industry stakeholders to minimise the spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and to ensure that over time there is continued access to effective antimicrobials. This strategy has been developed because of global issues with increasing resistance to modern drugs and medicines in both human and animal health.

The key objectives of the strategy are to increase awareness and understanding of AMR and its implications; to implement effective AMR practices across human health and animal care

settings to ensure appropriate prescribing and use; to develop nationally coordinated surveillance of AMR and antimicrobial usage; and to conduct further research and partner on development of new antibiotics.

In NSW preliminary scoping work to progress the national AMR strategy has been undertaken between NSW DPI and NSW Health, and further workshops will be held to determine next steps and responsibilities. In terms of potential impact on egg producers, there may be some sort of review of antibiotics currently used by the industry and there could be opportunities for monitoring through surveillance of the prevalence of organisms such as *Salmonella* and use of testing data from individual producers. Further updates on this work will be provided to the Committee.

### **Regulation of Australian Agriculture – Productivity Commission report**

The Committee noted an update on the review currently being conducted by the Productivity Commission of the regulation burden on Australian farm businesses. Links were provided to submissions received following the release of an issues paper for public consultation in December 2015, and to a draft report that was released for public consultation on 21 July 2016. This report is open for public comment up to 18 August 2016 and provides opportunity for relevant groups to provide information on the impact of regulation on their industry.

### **Communications update**

Members received an update on work the Food Authority's communications team has been doing since the last meeting in relation to the egg industry sector, including the release of *Foodwise* issue 40, social media posts relating to egg safety, and the update of *Food Safety Guidelines for the Preparation of Raw Egg Products*.

Members discussed the reference in the *Food Safety Guidelines for the Preparation of Raw Egg Products* to the use of pasteurised egg products as a safer alternative to raw eggs in foods which are not cooked, and said that there is a general misconception about the retail pack size and availability of these types of products which are not produced in small quantities. The Food Authority will provide further guidance to council Environmental Health Officers around this issue.

The next meeting of the Egg Industry Consultative Committee will be held in early 2017 (date to be advised).