

Summary of meeting outcomes

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee

Tuesday 22 May 2018

The NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee held a meeting in Sydney on Tuesday 22 May 2018. Specific issues considered by the Committee at its meeting are detailed below.

Attendees

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee: Erika Chesworth (NSW Farmers' Association), Allison David (Norco Foods), Ruth Kydd (Dairy Connect), Michael McNamara (Director, Pecora Dairy), Sarah Mandelson (CEO Serendipity Icecream), Yasser Mohamed (Bega Cheese Limited), Sarah Britton (Group Director, Animal Biosecurity & Welfare & Chief Veterinary Officer, NSW DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety), Ian Sanders (Director, International Engagement, NSW DPI).

Guest observer: Jen Shillabeer (NSW Farmers' Association).

NSW DPI – Biosecurity & Food Safety: David Cusack, Chair (Acting Group Director Food Safety & Acting CEO NSW Food Authority), Peter Day (Director Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance, NSW DPI), Emily Staniforth (Director Customer Service & Engagement), Greg Vakaci (Manager, Compliance Investigations), Margaret Figueroa (Secretariat).

Apologies: David Bremner (The Riverina Dairy Pty Ltd.), Helen Dornom (Dairy Australia), Jane Sherborne (Dairy NSW Chair), Bruce Christie (Deputy Director General, Biosecurity & Food Safety, NSW DPI), Lisa Szabo, (Group Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority), Mark Mackie (Manager, Audit Systems & Verification Unit), Craig Shadbolt (Manager, Food Incident Response & Complaints), Ryan Moore (A/Manager, Audit Systems & Verification Unit), Geneveive Bonello (Manager, Stakeholder Engagement & Communications, NSW DPI), Ryoko Uchida (Senior Industry Analyst, International Engagement, NSW DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety).

Food safety program compliance report

The Committee noted a report on dairy industry compliance activities between 1 July 2017 to 31 December 2017. During this reporting period 370 audits and 64 inspections were conducted with 13 failed audits and 6 failed inspections. The compliance target of 95% for the sector is being met, with the dairy industry recording a high compliance rate of 96% for the period and no repeat failures.

Enforcement action taken during the period was relatively low with three warning letters and 16 improvement notices issued. Audit data analysis shows that the top three audit items that had higher observed levels of critical issues for the reporting period were within process control (monitoring records), analytical testing (failure to conduct or document required product testing programs) and pre-requisite programs (failure to correctly implement or document calibration programs).

Overall the verification program is targeting normal performance indicators with nothing in the report of significant note. This indicates good compliance across the sector. There were a small number of antibiotic notifications and pathogen detection notifications received during the period and all cases have been followed up by the Food Authority. There were no foodborne illness investigations in the dairy sector during the reporting period.

Industry Survey Feedback

A report was tabled on feedback received from a survey sent to industry consultative committee members to assist the NSW DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety (BFS) Compliance team in determining where to target its work priorities for 2018/19. Responses received from Dairy Industry Consultative Committee members indicated a need for more interaction at the farm level. Members discussed the challenges for compliance staff in the current changing environment in maintaining engagement with dairy farmers and key industry stakeholders and this will be an area targeted over the next year by the Compliance team.

The Committee also discussed broader communication strategy opportunities that are being considered by the Department, including regular production of articles on topical issues for industry and publication of articles in media outlets. Other innovative measures such as a regular monthly video with the Chief Veterinary Officer on issues of interest are also being investigated. Members were encouraged to pass on any suggestions on how to improve engagement with the industry.

NSW DPI Antimicrobial Resistance risk assessment

Members noted a report on work currently underway in NSW DPI to develop a joint DPI/Local Land Services (LLS) policy on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) that will fit in with the National AMR Strategy. A working group with DPI, LLS did a risk assessment with external stakeholders to assess the role of the NSW government in the use of antimicrobials in animals that create AMR threats to human and animal health and the environment. The recommendations from this risk assessment will underpin development of the AMR policy together with consultation with relevant stakeholders which will take place during June. A draft policy is currently circulating internally and can be sent out of session to members for feedback when available.

Concerns were raised on the importance of providing information to vets on drugs and vaccines available to the industry, as they do not always receive this through their pharmaceutical representatives. The need for avenues to be explored to provide regular updates to vets on veterinary medicines was reiterated.

National Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021

Members discussed a draft strategy for reducing foodborne illness in Australia which had been put out for consultation between 12 February to 29 March 2018 and was previously circulated to all Food Authority industry consultative committees. The draft strategy was developed by jurisdictions following a meeting in April 2017 of the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation who identified the need to develop a nationally-consistent approach to reduce foodborne illness, particularly related to *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*, as the first of three priority areas to focus on for 2017-2021. There have also been targeted consultations with various groups, particularly the poultry industry and egg industry.

It was noted that in NSW there has been a 54% decrease in notification rates for *Salmonella Typhimurium* since 2014. This can be attributed to the large amount of work the Department has done through education on improved handling, sanitation and management of eggs on farms and raw egg products at retail level. This work provides scope for further consideration as to how the Department can share and broaden those learnings across Australia.

Members still wishing to comment on the strategy were encouraged to provide feedback to the Food Authority.

Botulism cattle deaths NSW January 2018

A paper was tabled on behalf of the NSW Farmers' Association Dairy Committee regarding an outbreak of botulism that occurred in January 2018 on a dairy farm in NSW where a significant number of cows were lost. This matter was put forward for discussion as the incident provided a good test of NSW's disease response and biosecurity processes and there were some key lessons to be learned from the event.

Members discussed the way in which the response was managed and areas that could have been improved, particularly in relation to co-ordination of information flow to industry. A further report on the learnings and review of this incident will be circulated to members and to the NSW Farmers' Association Dairy Committee.

Package Assisting Small Exporters (PASE) Project

The Committee noted an information paper on a joint project the Department is currently involved in with Dairy Australia to develop and pilot a Package Assisting Small Exporters (PASE) to provide training and education on developing a successful dairy processing business and to teach what is involved in becoming a small exporter. The first pilot session will be held in Sydney on 24 May and will be followed up by another session in Wagga Wagga on 30 May 2018. These pilot sessions will inform development of a broader package to be rolled out to industry in NSW, Victoria and Queensland. Further information on this project will be provided to the next meeting of the Committee.

NSW Dairy Food Safety Scheme Evaluation Summary Report

A report was tabled, and a presentation was also given, on an evaluation conducted by the NSW Food Authority of the NSW Dairy Food Safety Scheme. The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Document the implementation of the Dairy Food Safety Scheme since 2004;
- Compare the Scheme's objectives with its achievements and recommend improvements;
- Determine the efficiency of the delivery of the Scheme; and
- Document benchmarks at key control points in the supply chain.

Analysis of data focused on a five-year period from July 2011 to June 2016.

The evaluation found that the Scheme had met its primary objective which is to ensure that NSW dairy food sold for human consumption is safe to eat, and it also highlighted some areas where additional activities may be undertaken.

The full report of the *NSW Dairy Food Safety Scheme Evaluation* is to be published on the NSW Food Authority's website at:

<http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/aboutus/science/evaluating-what-we-do>

Food Amendment (Raw Milk Products) Regulation 2018

A paper on the Food Amendment (Raw Milk Products) Regulation 2018 which had previously been circulated to members out of session was tabled for information. The paper outlined the purpose of the proposed Regulation which is to target the source of the supply chain for raw cow milk and all subsequent points from there and to require such product to be licensed by the Food Authority and subject to conditions of licence. This will allow officers to take preventive action on the sale and supply of raw milk as a food. Draft legislation is in the process of being enacted and a communications package is being prepared to

accompany the Regulation which will target licensees, retail food businesses and general consumers.

Communications update

Members received a brief update on the NSW Animal Welfare Action Plan recently launched by the Department. The plan details key actions for the next 12 months and will look at legislative reform in the animal welfare area. This will be a priority project for the Department and a program team has been set up which will be headed by Dr Kim Filmer, Chief Animal Welfare Officer. They will continue to work with the industry committees and key industry stakeholders throughout this process and a stakeholder engagement strategy is being developed.

Biosecurity update

The Committee was updated on work that has been on-going in relation to implementation of the new Biosecurity Act which was rolled out in 2017, including training and education for the Department's authorised officers. Dairy producer members spoke of the difficulty in enforcing their on-farm biosecurity policy for visitors to their properties. They discussed the importance of being able to demonstrate that they are following biosecurity measures by requesting visitors, including service and delivery people, vets and auditors, to heed signage at the front gate and wear appropriate shoe covers. Members were directed to the range of educational material on the Department's website around the Biosecurity Act and the principle of shared responsibility and general biosecurity duty.

The Department has recently conducted a large emergency exercise with Queensland (Exercise Border Bridge) to test its capacity and ability to work with another state jurisdiction in responding to a biosecurity incident occurring across both jurisdictions. There was a good outcome from this exercise.

The next meeting of the NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee will be held on Tuesday 18 September 2018.