

Summary of meeting outcomes

Meat Industry Consultative Council

28 August 2018

The Meat Industry Consultative Council (MICC) held a meeting in Sydney on Tuesday 28 August 2018. Due to the large number of apologies received, a quorum for the meeting was not met. For the purposes of this meeting, members present agreed to act as a sub-committee (as provided for under its terms of reference in the *MICC Charter and Procedural Guidelines*), with any decisions being referred to the next full meeting for ratification.

Specific issues considered at the meeting are detailed below.

Attendees

Meat Industry Consultative Council: Katherine Balding (Inghams Enterprises Pty Ltd), Brian Calderwood (Pepe's Ducks Pty Ltd), Collin Naidu (Baiada Poultry Pty Ltd), Paul Freeman (Senior Veterinary Officer, NSW DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety), Jennifer Shillabeer (NSW Farmers' Association), Ryoko Uchida (Senior Industry Analyst, International Engagement Unit, NSW DPI).

NSW DPI – Biosecurity & Food Safety: David Cusack – Chair (Manager, Food Standards & Programs), Mark Mackie (Manager Audit Systems & Verification), Matt Campbell (Audit and Compliance Officer), Scott Barrett (Manager, Projects & Programs, Policy Legislation Performance & Consultation).

Apologies: Will Barton (Australian Meat Industry Council), Sarah Britton (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer and Group Director Animal Biosecurity, NSW DPI), Heather Channon (Australian Pork Limited), Annabel Johnson (NSW Farmers' Association), Vivien Kite (Australian Chicken Meat Federation), Robert Mollison (Australian Meat Industry Council), Bruce Christie (Deputy Director General, Biosecurity & Food Safety, NSW DPI), Lisa Szabo (Group Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority), Peter Day (Director Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance), Emily Staniforth (Director Customer Service & Engagement), Craig Shadbolt (Manager, Food Incident Response & Complaints), Ian Sanders (Director International Engagement), Geneveive Bonello (Manager, Stakeholder Engagement & Communications, NSW DPI).

Food safety program compliance report

A report was presented on meat industry compliance activities during the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018. During this period 1,987 audits and 824 inspections were conducted with 77 failed audits and 82 failed inspections. Enforcement actions included 7 warning letters, 156 Improvement Notices, 75 Penalty Notices, three Prohibition Orders and three seizures. Although these figures are high, this is offset by the high number of licensees in the meat sector. Overall during the reporting period there was a high level of compliance in the meat industry sector of 95% which is a pleasing result. This is an 8% increase over the last three years.

A detailed breakdown of compliance data and comparative trend analysis showing an increase in compliance rates for the top four licence permissions over the last five years was noted. During the reporting period the top three audit items that had higher observed levels of Critical Action Requests (CARs) issued were within process control (28%), hygiene and sanitation (16%) and analytical testing (14%). Targeted education and training programs on these areas will continue to be provided to licensees.

Industry survey feedback

A report was tabled on feedback received from a survey sent to industry consultative committee members to assist the NSW DPI's Biosecurity & Food Safety (BFS) Compliance team in determining where to target its work priorities for 2018/19. There was a 40% response rate from MICC members with 21 responses received from all committees. Overall members were positive that the team is working well with the broad range of biosecurity and food safety compliance activities and programs being conducted.

Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance Regulatory Priorities 2018-19

A paper was tabled for information on the Regulatory Priorities for the Department's Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance team during the 2018-19 period. These priorities are reviewed annually and are determined in consultation with stakeholders. Critical Core Functions for the team include:

- Audit, inspection and certification services to verify a safe and secure food supply, the welfare of exhibited and research animals and to maintain and provide access to markets for NSW primary producers;
- Investigation of unlicensed/unregistered operations and complaints;
- Responding to and investigating foodborne illness outbreaks and pest and disease issues and assisting in emergency management operations as necessary.

Other priorities for the period have been set under the areas of Biosecurity, Food Safety, System Enhancement and Performance Enhancement. One of the priorities for the red meat sector is to conduct a traceability project from property to property (P2P) to enhance compliance and verification systems at key points in the supply chain for sheep, cattle, pigs and goats. In relation to food safety there are no dedicated projects looking at the red meat sector which is reflective of the high compliance rates, but there is still scope for the team to react to issues that may occur. Development of a Gold Licensee program is also being planned to trial self-assessment reporting for high performing food businesses engaged in low risk activities.

Update on development of NSW DPI Antimicrobial Resistance Policy

The meeting was advised that the NSW DPI's draft Antimicrobial Resistance Policy went out for consultation with key industry stakeholders and comments are continuing to come back from industry organisations. In summary the main feedback being received relates to concerns about duplication and making sure the policy is aligned with the National Strategy. The meeting was assured that NSW DPI will be working consistently with the National Strategy to ensure that the policy is aligned with the national program.

The other issue mentioned was the importance of the language used in terms of emphasising responsible use of antibiotics and stewardship. It is recognised that antibiotics have a role to play but it is important to ensure they are used correctly to minimise impacts on residues.

The DPI will take on board all feedback received on the draft policy and circulate an updated draft for further comment.

Update on National Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021

The meeting received an update on the National Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021. Since the last meeting of the MICC there has been a significant review of the document previously circulated following extensive stakeholder feedback. The final document was endorsed at a meeting of the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation in June 2018. This public document may be accessed at:

<http://foodregulation.gov.au/internet/fr/publishing.nsf/Content/aus-foodborne-illness-reduction-strategy-2018-2021-Jun-2018>

Of specific relevance to the meat industry is the part of the strategy concerning poultry meat. A review of Chapters 3 & 4 of the Food Standards Code has been flagged to occur which will encompass Standard 4.2.2 (Primary Production and Processing Standard for Poultry Meat) and Standard 4.2.3 (Primary Production and Processing Standard for Meat). FSANZ has yet to commence this work.

The other issue highlighted is the national implementation of poultry process hygiene criteria (chicken meat only). This will be managed by the Australian Meat Regulators Working Group over 2018/19. The primary focus will be to promote consistency in terms of application and response. A copy of the poultry process hygiene criteria as provided in the FSANZ *Compendium of microbiological criteria for food* was tabled for information. Further updates will be provided to the Council as they progress.

Animal Welfare update

An update on work currently underway in the NSW Department of Primary Industries in the animal welfare area was tabled for information. This included:

- Release of the *Animal Welfare Action Plan (AWAP)* in May 2018 to modernise and streamline current legislation. This will enable the Department to deliver an animal welfare system that is focused on targeted outcomes and reflects evolving animal welfare science and community expectations.
- Release of a discussion paper for public consultation on *Improving the Current Legislation – Penalties and Critical Situations*. Feedback from this will assist in delivering against one of the goals of the AWAP which is to improve the effectiveness of animal welfare compliance and enforcement efforts.
- The *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Saleyards and Depots* have been finalised by Agricultural Ministers and NSW is currently considering their implementation into law.

Work is progressing on *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Livestock and Processing Establishments* as well as development of the revised *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry*.

Australian Meat Regulators Working Group (AMRG) update

The meeting received an update on work being undertaken by the Australian Meat Regulators Working Group (AMRG). The main focus of their recent work has been to look at reforming Schedules 2 and 3 of the Australian Standard 4696:2007 concerning hygienic processing of red meat. A lot of this work has been driven by industry to up-date processes so that they reflect current science. At its recent meeting in August the group considered Post mortem inspection and carcass disposition judgement work under Schedules 2 and 3 of the Standard. Other issues considered at that meeting included national implementation of poultry process hygiene criteria; Standard 4.2.3 *Guidelines for the management of Listeria*; and *Guidelines for the safe production of dry aged meat*.

Overall 13 applications for reform to Schedules 2 and 3 have been approved by the AMRG and a listing of these was tabled for information. Schedule 2 applications will be rolled out in all states and territories during October 2018. Further information will be provided on roll out of Schedule 3 applications which require more work on implementation.

Update of the Food Safety Schemes manual

The meeting noted a paper advising that the NSW Food Authority's Food Safety Schemes Manual has recently been reviewed to ensure that all requirements of Food Regulation 2015 are included and to modernise the format for easier reading. The updated chapter relating to the Meat Food Safety Scheme was tabled for information and noted.

Communications update

The meeting was updated on recent communications and stakeholder work of the NSW DPI, including current work on an Operational Plan to let people know that biosecurity is a shared responsibility. They are working with industry to get targeted messages to the right groups and are dealing with different issues as they arise. Ongoing training is being undertaken by NSW DPI authorised officers on general biosecurity duty.

The current drought situation has shifted priorities of their biosecurity messaging to issues directly related to the drought, including use of feed from interstate, and residues.

Biosecurity update

The meeting 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, 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. In future farm audits will be a "one-stop shop" for all compliance issues.

Dates for the 2019 meetings of the Meat Industry Consultative Council to be advised.