

Meat Industry Consultative Council

Wednesday 21 November 2012

Summary of meeting outcomes

The newly structured Meat Industry Consultative Council (MICC) held its inaugural meeting in Sydney on Wednesday, 21 November 2012. Specific issues considered by the Council at its meeting are detailed below.

Food safety program compliance report (2011-12)

The Authority provided an update on its compliance, enforcement and inspection activities during the period 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2012. This included a breakdown on total audits and inspections conducted and percentage of critical CARS (corrective action requests) issued by category, reasons for audit failures, and enforcement activities. It was noted that overall the Authority is comfortable with the compliance program in the red meat and poultry industry sector. Main areas of non-compliance are with food safety programs and process control, particularly in the red meat sector. The Authority has been working with the Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) on educational programs aimed at improving compliance and will be focussing on these areas in the next 12 months in addition to animal welfare issues in abattoirs.

The MICC noted the compliance report and were invited to provide feedback and suggestions for information they would like to have presented in future reports.

Pilot program for poultry processors – establishing key food safety indicators (KFSIs)

The MICC noted and discussed a paper seeking feedback on the launch by the Authority of a pilot program requiring poultry processors to collect data on *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* levels in poultry meat from facilities that process over 50,000 birds per year. This data will be used to assist in establishing industry benchmarks for KFSIs and in determining how to use the Authority's compliance and enforcement resources more effectively in poultry processing.

Concern was expressed at the possible outcome of reduced auditor presence on sites as from an industry perspective it is good to have an external process in place. The MICC was advised that collection and monitoring of data was seen as an effective compliment to audits, allowing collection of data in real time to allow appropriate and timely intervention if processes exceeded specifications. The Authority would welcome discussions with companies concerned both individually and as a group. The Baiada representative undertook to facilitate a meeting with technical staff from Baiada, Inghams, Red Lea and Pepe's Ducks to initiate discussions and report back to the Authority. It was noted that the Authority is also looking at ways in which similar programs can be rolled out into other vertically integrated industries such as the red meat and dairy industries.

Resolved: *The MICC noted the paper and supported the recommended industry discussions action and continued dialogue with the Authority. Whilst the MICC agrees in principle with the program, they have concerns in relation to the detail of the frequency of the sampling program.*

Animal welfare standards in NSW abattoirs

The MICC noted a report on measures being implemented in NSW by the Authority to improve animal welfare outcomes in red meat abattoirs and a review of animal welfare systems in NSW poultry abattoirs proposed for 2013 following consultation with that sector. The importance of good animal welfare practices being exercised within industry has been highlighted this year through several

incidents of concern both within Australia and in the live export market. Due to the critical implications for companies caught in this animal welfare scenario, the Authority has reminded all industries of their obligations to comply with animal welfare standards and has implemented training requirements within the red meat sector, married up with export requirements for EU markets.

The MICC discussed the issue of ritual slaughter and noted this is being addressed through the National Primary Industry Steering Committee. Meetings on this matter have also been held between the Authority, the NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) and RSPCA to discuss compliance.

The MICC discussed the use of video cameras in abattoirs and processing plants as a risk mitigation tool. Members were asked to consider the options raised in the report and provide comment to the Authority for further discussion at the next MICC meeting.

Compulsory Property Identification Codes

The MICC noted legislation in relation to the Property Identification Codes (PIC) system in NSW which was introduced on 1 September 2012 requiring anyone who keeps livestock to obtain a PIC for the land on which the livestock are kept. Members sought further detailed information on this issue from NSW DPI. PIC information may be accessed from the LHPA dedicated PIC page

(<http://www.lhpa.org.au/identifying-and-tracing-livestock/property-identification-codes>)

, including the three methods of obtaining a PIC; submitting a form on-line, downloading a form and lodging with a local LHPA office or contacting the local LHPA office.

AQIS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The MICC noted a paper on current arrangements under a new MOU between the Authority and AQIS (now DAFF) for regulatory audits of export meat establishments. Under the MOU, the Authority will undertake regulatory audits on behalf of DAFF for red meat export abattoirs (tier one), poultry abattoirs and game meat harvesters. DAFF will audit on behalf of the Authority, red meat (tier two) export abattoirs.

Primary Production and Processing Standards (PPPS)

The MICC received progress reports on the PPP Standards for Meat and Meat Products and for Poultry Meat. It was noted that the Meat and Meat Products Standard had been "parked" because of issues around animal welfare. A meeting had been held with AMIC and relevant NSW DPI and other State authorities to develop an outcomes based industry standard for animal welfare but this will not come into effect for a couple of years. In regard to the Poultry Meat Standard, Council noted that whilst this commenced in May 2012, it will not commence in NSW until amendments to the Meat Food Safety Scheme have been passed by the NSW Government. Once the Standard commences in NSW, affected poultry growers will have two months from that date to apply for a licence and six months to develop a Food safety Management Statement (FSMS). A finalised FSMS template for small independent poultry producers that can be customised and downloaded free is available at the Authority website: <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry-sector-requirements/meat/poultry/>

IPART Licensing Review

Council noted an information paper regarding a review currently underway by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) of all licences in NSW. IPART is seeking information on licences that are unnecessary, have excessive requirements or are poorly administered in NSW. All of the Authority's industry committees have been made aware of this review and the 12 December 2012 closing date for submissions.

Guidelines for the safe retailing of meat and meat products

Available for purchase (\$10) on the MLA publications website:

<http://www.mla.com.au/Publications-tools-and-events/Publication-details?pubid=6020>

The next meeting of the MICC will be held on Wednesday 13 March 2013.

