

Summary of meeting outcomes

Egg Industry Consultative Committee

8 April 2020

The Egg Industry Consultative Committee (EICC) held a meeting via teleconference on Wednesday 8 April 2020. Specific issues considered by the Committee at its meeting are detailed below.

Attendees

Egg Industry Consultative Committee: Brett Langfield (NSW Farmers' Association), Jennifer Shillabeer (NSW Famers Association), Melinda Hashimoto (Egg Farmers of Australia), Rowan McMonnies (Australian Eggs), Paul Pace (large egg processors' representative, Pace Farm), Franko Pirovic (large egg producers' representative, Pirovic Enterprises).

NSW DPI – Biosecurity & Food Safety: Lisa Szabo - Chair (Group Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority), Peter Day (Director Compliance & Integrity Systems), Mark Mackie (Manager, Audit Systems & Verification), Myles Parker (Program Leader, Salmonella Enteritidis), Craig Shadbolt (Manager Food Incident Response & Complaints), David Cusack (Manager, Food Standards & Programs), Suzanne Robinson, (Director Animal Welfare), Jenine Ryle (Senior Policy and Programs Officer), Jaime Garcia (Secretariat).

Apologies: Sarah Britton (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer and Group Director Animal Biosecurity), Bruce Christie (Deputy Director General, Biosecurity & Food Safety), Ian Sanders (Director International Engagement Unit), Raymond Chia (Australian Eggs), Peter Matuszny (Free range egg producers' representative, Manning Valley Free Range Eggs), Annabel Johnson (NSW Farmers' Association), Ryoko Uchida (Senior Industry Analyst, International Engagement), Mark O'Brien (Director Engagement and Industry Assistance).

Industry updates

Members provided updates on their key and emerging issues, with COVID-19 being the focus of discussion. Members outlined its impact on their industries and discussed their planning and contingencies to address COVID-19, particularly the impacts if employees contract COVID-19.

Members noted that COVID-19 is spread via person-to-person transmission and good hygiene practices and compliance with social distancing requirements are the best way to prevent spread and protect businesses.

[Note: The Department has published [advice for businesses](#) on food safety aspects of COVID-19, workforce management and regulatory obligations.]

Food safety program compliance report

The Committee noted a report on egg industry compliance activities for the July – December 2019 reporting period. During this reporting period 145 audits and 53 inspections were carried out with one failed audit and 40 failed inspections.

The 12% drop in the compliance rate from the previous six months is directly linked to the increased surveillance and monitoring to manage *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE). Increased enforcement actions included seven Improvement Notices, one Penalty Notice, 21 Biosecurity Directions and two Prohibition Orders.

Animal welfare update

Suzanne Robinson updated the Committee on animal welfare issues including:

- advice and resources on animal welfare requirements for transport livestock, including fitness to load, have been developed by DPI and are being shared with industry;

- Animal welfare reform [issues paper](#) has been released for public consultation - Submissions close 21 June 2020;
- Implementation of the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Saleyards and Depots is being considered for adoption in NSW legislation;
- Queensland will lead the national development of the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Livestock at Processing Establishments;
- Queensland will lead a review of the suitability for horses of the existing *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for the Transport and Sell of Livestock*. The standards are mandated in NSW under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act;
- A national working group lead by Queensland and Victoria will develop a proposal for a national horse register.

Mandatory *Salmonella* Enteritidis testing

Myles Parker presented a paper proposing mandatory *Salmonella* Enteritidis (SE) testing for all NSW licensed layer farms/facilities, with the testing regime equivalent to the National *Salmonella* Enteritidis Monitoring & Accreditation Program (NSEMAP), administered by NSW DPI).

Members noted that approximately 30% of NSW licensed egg businesses (covering 75% of commercial layer hens in NSW) participate in voluntary programs that include SE testing through NSEMAP (32 NSW businesses). Members noted that the Egg Standards Australia (ESA) program only introduced SE testing in November 2019.

Members agreed that the recommendation to mandate SE testing for every licensed layer farm/facility will help capture the remaining 25% of commercial layer hens in NSW that are not currently testing for SE. All current SE infected properties in NSW fall within this group. DPI will consider the legislative options.

Privacy laws and disclosure of information to egg farmers

Melinda Hashimoto presented a paper outlining industry's concerns about sharing of information between agencies when a health/biosecurity incident occurs, in particular details of properties infected with SE during the recent outbreaks. Members noted that a draft SE response plan addressing these concerns is to be distributed to members through a national consultation process by 17 April 2020.

Biosecurity update

Peter Day provided a verbal update of the inspection program being undertaken by the Department's Authorised Officers of licensed egg production and processing facilities to determine baseline compliance with the SE Control Order. Follow-up inspections are scheduled six months after the initial inspection to confirm if licensees have complied with any corrective actions issued to achieve compliance with the Control Order. He also updated members on initiatives being undertaken to communicate African Swine Fever preparedness and prevention information to a variety of potentially impacted stakeholders in NSW.

The next meeting of the Egg Industry Consultative Committee is to be on Wednesday 12 August 2020.