

## NSW Meat Industry Consultative Council - Summary of meeting outcomes

10 March 2021

The Meat Industry Consultative Council held a meeting via video conference on Wednesday 10 March 2021. Specific issues considered at the meeting are outlined below.

### Attendees

**Meat Industry Consultative Council:** Ben Antenucci (NSW Farmers Association), Peta Easey (NSW Farmers Association), Vaibhav Gole (Australian Pork Limited), John Houston (Pepe's Ducks Pty Ltd), Susy Klein Inghams Enterprises Pty Ltd, Vivien Kite (Australian Chicken Meat Federation), Tony Pavic (Baiada Poultry Pty Ltd), Craig Wright (Australian Meat Industry Council).

**NSW DPI – Biosecurity & Food Safety:** Lisa Szabo – Chair (Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority), Peter Day (Director Compliance & Integrity Systems), Ian Sanders (Director, International Engagement Unit), Sarah Britton (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer & Group Director Animal Biosecurity), Suzanne Robinson (Director Animal Welfare), Mark Mackie (Manager, Regulatory Operations Unit), Eric Davis (Manager Food Policy & Partnerships), David Cusack (Manager, Food Standards & Programs), Jenine Ryle (Senior Policy & Programs Officer).

### Industry updates

Members provided updates on key and emerging issues in their respective industry with COVID-19 remaining a focus of discussion. Members agreed that the biggest risk was still at the processing level and the potential impacts should an employee contract COVID-19.

Members noted the Department's activities in response to COVID-19 and the shift of focus to enable industry resilience and ensure industry compliance with COVID-19 related Public Health Orders. This included the development and implementation of a workforce management plan (precursor to a COVID-19 Safety Plan) for food processors, particularly industries identified as high risk to a COVID-19 outbreak such as abattoirs, meat processors and dairy processors.

Members noted the request for licensees (and Association's members) to complete the user review survey as part of the consultation phase of the statutory remake of Food Regulation 2015. The Food Authority has contacted licensees directly with access to the online survey.

### Food Safety Compliance Report

The Committee noted a report on meat industry compliance activities for the July to December 2020 reporting period. Members noted that 94% of the licensed meat businesses recorded an acceptable audit and/or inspection result. In comparison, the compliance rate in the meat sector for the previous six months was 93%. Of the businesses that failed their compliance audit and/or inspection during the reporting period, all subsequent follow up audits and/or inspections demonstrated compliance, indicating that licensees are implementing effective corrective actions in response to audit failures.

### Proposed Change of Licence Conditions for UCFM makers

Peter Day presented an agenda paper which outlined proposed changes to the current assessment and approval process for manufacturers of Uncooked Comminuted Fermented Meat (UCFM). The requirements follow a Food Authority review which identified issues surrounding novel meat species and unauthorised UCFM manufacturing (without nitrite/nitrate or without approved proforma).

Members noted that the Food Authority has developed a new *Manual for Manufacturing UCFM* that captures the existing approval processes and requirements in a single document to assist manufacturers to produce UCFM products safely.

### **Biosecurity Management Plans and Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) preparedness at abattoirs and knackeries**

Members were updated on the implementation program to assess compliance with Biosecurity Management Plans for all licensed, domestic red meat abattoirs and knackeries in NSW. The Biosecurity Management Plan Implementation Program was developed and put in place at each plant in 2020 to help licensed abattoirs and knackeries apply measures that reduce the biosecurity risks involved with operations.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries has a responsibility to ensure that operations such as abattoirs and knackeries meet the requirements of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

All licensed abattoirs and knackeries will be inspected for biosecurity management in 2021 and will be an ongoing requirement as part of regular compliance audits by an authorised officer. The inspection and compliance program ensures industry has a robust system in place to maintain biosecurity which is consistently applied, and risk based.

The Biosecurity Management Plan implementation guidance factsheet and other useful resources were distributed to industry via [General Circular 02/2021](#).

### **Animal Welfare update**

Suzanne Robinson updated the Committee on animal welfare issues including:

- The [NSW Animal Welfare Action Plan](#) which identifies areas of reform to modernise the policy and legislative framework for animal welfare in NSW.
- On 9 February 2021, the Minister for Agriculture and Western NSW, the Hon Adam Marshall MP introduced the [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Bill 2021](#) into Parliament. The Bill makes critical changes to animal welfare laws ahead of the longer-term reform.
- A [NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Animal Cruelty Laws in NSW](#) was established in August 2019 to inquire into and report on the effectiveness of the arrangements for the administration and enforcement of *Protection Of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*. The final report was released on 4 June 2020. The NSW Government response was released on 4 December 2020.
- On 17 June 2020, the NSW Legislative Council's Portfolio Committee No. 4 - Industry commenced an inquiry into the provisions of the [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment \(Restrictions on Stock Animal Procedures\) Bill 2019](#). The Bill proposed banning mulesing and mandating pain relief for certain livestock procedures. The final report which was released on 24 September 2020 recommended that the Bill did not proceed.
- The inaugural meeting of the reshaped [Animal Welfare Advisory Council](#) will occur shortly. The Council is a non-statutory body established to provide independent expert scientific advice to the NSW Government on animal welfare matters and proposed regulations to support the delivery of the NSW Animal Welfare Action Plan.
- Queensland is leading the development of *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Livestock at Processing Establishments* including horses. Queensland is also leading a review of the suitability for horses of the existing *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for the Land Transport of Livestock*. National targeted consultation has commenced.
- Development of the *Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry*.

### **Biosecurity update**

Peter Day updated members on the implementation of the NSW biosecurity case management system called MAX. The decision to implement MAX was primarily driven by a national push to align all jurisdictions on a common data collection platform for biosecurity case management.

The system will be a shared platform that captures data for DPI and Local Land Services for both routine and emergency biosecurity operations. It will be used day-to-day for routine and regulatory work as well as in responses, taking advantage of the latest in technology including real-time decision making, mobile and spatial capability.

Peter also indicated that traceability remains a focus within the Department with ongoing compliance projects underway primarily in red meat abattoirs.

### **International Engagement update**

Ian Sanders gave a verbal update to members including market access notifications and impacts following the Victorian avian influenza outbreak. NSW poultry exports for 2020 were up 43% and reached \$17M, pork exports were down 4% and beef exports were down 13 % year on year, partly due to herd rebuilding.

*The next meeting of the Meat Industry Consultative Council will be held on Wednesday 21 July 2021.*