

## Summary of meeting outcomes

### Egg Industry Consultative Committee

7 April 2021

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The Egg Industry Consultative Committee met via video conference on Wednesday 7 April 2021. Specific issues considered at the meeting are detailed below.

#### Attendees

**Egg Industry Consultative Committee:** Brett Langfield (NSW Farmer's Association), Melinda Hashimoto (Egg Farmers of Australia), Peta Easey (Egg Farmers of Australia), Peter Matuszny (Manning Valley Free Range Eggs), Rowan McMonnies (Australian Eggs), Paul Pace (Pace Farm), Franko Pirovic (Pirovic Enterprises).

**NSW DPI – Biosecurity & Food Safety:** Lisa Szabo - Chair (Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority), Mark Mackie (Manager, Audit Systems & Verification), Sarah Britton (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer and Group Director Animal Biosecurity), Suzanne Robinson, (Director Animal Welfare), Ryoko Uchida (Senior Industry Analyst, International Engagement), Rachel Gordon (Policy and Project Officer), Joanna Blunden (Development Officer (Poultry Eggs), Ian Sanders (Director, International Engagement Unit), Eric Davis (Manager, Food Policy & Partnerships), Geneveive Bonello (Manager, Communications Strategic Programs & Partnerships), Greg Vakaci (Manager, Compliance Investigation, Biosecurity Compliance & Integrity Systems), Alison Imlay (Manager, Food Science), Jaime Garcia (Secretariat).

**Apologies:** Peter Day (Director Compliance & Integrity Systems), David Cusack (Manager, Food Standards & Programs), Sus Perkins (Acting Manager, Communications Strategy), Amanda Black (Senior Veterinary Policy and Project Officer), Anne Macintosh (Food Incident Response & Complaints).

#### Industry updates

Members provided updates on key and emerging issues, with members noting that Egg Farmers of Australia have been very focused on the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and guidelines submissions to the Regulatory Impact Statement.

Rowan Mcmonnies advised members that Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has started to review the Primary Production and Processing (PPP) Standard for Eggs and Egg Products, with DPI's involvement welcomed by industry. Members agreed this is a great opportunity for industry to put forward its concerns and ideas.

Members representing the egg industry expressed concerns about the risk to industry posed by the keeping of backyard hens and industry aspirations to remove current NSW exemptions for egg stamping. Members noted the 2016 Productivity Commission review on the regulation of agriculture recommended the opposite i.e. removing the egg stamping requirement altogether. Members noted that the staged repeal of Food Regulation 2015 is underway and provides industry with the opportunity to put forward ideas. Members were reminded that removing egg stamping exemptions would represent an increase in regulation and require a regulatory impact statement including a cost/benefit analysis. It was noted that the goal is to remake the Food Regulation by 1 October 2022.

#### Food safety program compliance report

Mark Mackie presented a report on egg industry compliance activity for the July to December 2020 reporting period. Members noted that 78% of licensed egg producers recorded an

improved audit and/or inspection result compared with the 58% compliance rate the previous year (a 6% improvement in compliance rate compared to the same period last year). Members were advised DPI's goal to have all licensees compliant by the end of FY 20-21 remains on track with most licensees already compliant. Only regional and remote licensees are yet to be visited.

### **Small Farms Egg Survey**

NSW licenses all egg producers who sell eggs but those selling less than 20 dozen eggs per week (around 657) are required to notify DPI of their operations, nature and location, but are not required to operate under an egg Food Safety Scheme.

Lisa Szabo presented a paper on a DPI survey of notified NSW egg producers selling less than 20 dozen eggs per week. Members noted that of 657 producers contacted, 46% responded to the request updating details of their current activities. DPI is currently contacting producers that did not respond by phone. This information will provide useful baseline information to inform the staged repeal of Food Regulation 2015 which is due to be completed by October 2022.

### **Egg Stamping Exemptions**

All eggs for sale in NSW must be stamped with a unique identifier unless the enterprise concerned produces less than 20 dozen eggs per week and the eggs are only sold directly from the farm gate. This means all eggs in the retail market-place must be stamped.

Melinda Hashimoto presented a paper on Egg Stamping Exemptions, with members noting the aspiration to remove all current NSW egg stamping exemptions and to establish a national standard to ensure all eggs can be traced quickly.

Members were also advised that Australian Eggs is currently working on a Tractability Manual to provide guidance to smaller producers who do not have effective tractability practices in place. It was agreed that DPI would assist in this project as needed. Members noted that stamping exemptions and traceability remain of concern to industry.

### **Land Use Planning and Biosecurity**

Jenny Thompson presented a paper on DPI's approach to managing animal welfare, biosecurity and food safety risks in land use planning matters. Members noted that there is no legal requirement for development proposals to be assessed and approved by DPI in relation to animal welfare, biosecurity and food safety risks. However, many pieces of primary legislation administered by DPI provide powers and tools for DPI to take action as quickly as necessary where such risks arise. DPI's focus is on making sure that development proponents are fully aware of any legislative requirements, available guidance material, and how to seek advice about their development proposal.

Members were advised that last year DPI released a guideline for managing biosecurity risks in relation to land use planning and the process for developing new planning guidance material on animal welfare, animal research and exhibited animals. This is due to be released within the next three months.

### **Animal welfare update**

Suzanne Robinson updated the Committee on animal welfare issues including:  
NSW Animal Welfare Reform

- Member were advised that in May 2018 the NSW Government released the [NSW Animal Welfare Action Plan](#). The NSW Government is continuing to progress the Plan, with the intention to introduce new legislation in late 2021.
- Members noted the consultation period for the NSW Animal Welfare Reform: Issues Paper closed on 21 June 2020. DPI has been analysing the feedback and developing policy proposals in response to the issues raised. There will be further opportunities for public consultation shortly and in future phases of the project.
- Members noted that 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. The Bill proposes penalty increases for cruelty, aggravated cruelty and failure to provide food, drink or shelter offences. It also proposes for the court to be able to make interim orders, and that court orders be available for animal cruelty and related offences under the Crimes Act. Information on the Bill is available at - <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/bills/Pages/bill-details.aspx?pk=3816>.

#### NSW Parliament Inquiries

- Members noted that in August 2019 the NSW Parliament established an Inquiry into NSW animal cruelty laws to consider the effectiveness of POCTA administration and enforcement arrangements. Its final report was released on 4 June 2020 and the NSW Government's response was released on 4 December 2020. Information is available at - <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/listofcommittees/Pages/committee-details.aspx?pk=263>

#### Animal Welfare Advisory Council

- The Animal Welfare Advisory Council (AWAC) 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. The reshaped AWAC has been appointed and has had its first meeting.

#### Australian Animal Welfare Standards & Guidelines – Poultry

- Members noting that draft standards are due to be circulated in mid-March for targeted consultation with Stakeholder Reference Group members and the standards finalised and delivered to Agriculture Ministers in May 2021. Once finalised and endorsed by Agriculture Ministers it is then a policy decision for each state and territory jurisdiction to implement the poultry standards in legislation.

#### International Engagement update

Ian Sanders provided a verbal overview and outlined exports statistics with members noting the following:

\*The values below are Australian trade values (in Australian \$), to provide the members with the latest broader trends.

#### Birds Eggs in Shell (HS code 0407)

- New South Wales was the third largest export state behind Queensland and Victoria.
- \$4.9 million worth of eggs in shell was exported last year, down by 23%.
- Singapore and Hong Kong (top two markets) saw an increase with Singapore increasing by \$1.3 million to a total of \$2.1 million, which represents 43% of total export values.
- United States with 18% of our total export values was down for the year.
- Nauru, Kiribati and the Pacific also considered important markets.

Birds Eggs Not in Shell (HS code 0408)

- New South Wales was the third largest export state behind Victoria and Queensland, with a total of around \$2.1 million, up 29% year on year. – *Again, this and other figures are Australia's trade value.*
- New Zealand was the largest export market in 2020, accounting for 74% of total exports, doubling from previous year.
- Papua New Guinea increased to \$154,000 up from \$40,000 the previous year.
- United Arab Emirates had \$21,000 for 2019, increased to \$44,114 in calendar year of 2020.

Members were advised of grants available to industry through the Agricultural Trade and Market Access Cooperation Program (ATMAC) with further details available on the Department of Agriculture Water and the Environments website.

*The next meeting of the Egg Industry Consultative Committee will be held on Wednesday 18 August 2021.*