

Meat Industry Consultative Council - Summary of meeting outcomes 21 July 2021

The Meat Industry Consultative Council met via video conference on Wed 21 July 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), 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: Amanda Black (Senior Veterinary Policy and Project Officer), Peter Day (Director Compliance & Integrity Systems), Andrew Davies (Manager Local Government Unit (Acting Chair), Eric Davis (Manager Food Policy & Partnerships), Jaime Garcia (Secretariat), Mark Mackie (Manager Regulatory Operations Unit), Ryoko Uchida (Senior Industry Analyst, International Engagement Unit), Petrea Wait (Veterinary Officer, Animal Welfare Unit).

Apologies:

Sarah Britton (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer and Group Director Animal Biosecurity), David Cusack (Manager Food Standards & Programs), Vaibhav Gole (Australian Pork Limited), Suzanne Robinson (Director Animal Welfare), Ian Sanders (Director International Engagement), Helen Schaefer (Team Leader Animal Welfare Policy & Programs), Lisa Szabo (Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority (Chair)).

Industry updates

Members provided the following updates on key and emerging issues/concerns in their respective sectors:

- Concern about COVID-19, resulting lockdown orders and their impacts on industry.
- Possible use of Rapid COVID-19 testing and its potential to help processors and manufacturers better manage their workforce and meet obligations such as animal welfare. More discussion with NSW Health is needed on this issue.
- Industry expressed its gratitude for the hard work by DPI, especially Peter Day, in achieving the great results that delivered appropriate exemptions from the current Public Health Orders to allow industry to use essential employees from the Fairfield, Canterbury-Bankstown and Liverpool local government areas. The issue of carpooling among workers who work together while at work was identified as an issue requiring further discussion and clarification by DPI and NSW Health.
- Delays in receiving Covid-19 test results is also an issue of concern.

Food Safety Compliance Report

The Committee noted a report on meat industry compliance activities for the 2020-21 financial year. 94% of the licensed meat businesses recorded an acceptable audit and/or inspection result with 2,427 audits & inspections in total, 1282 audits compliant, 84 with some non-compliance, 982 inspections compliant and 76 with some non-compliance. This compares with a 93% compliance rate for FY 2019-20. In addition, all businesses with some non-compliance at their initial 2020-21 compliance audit/inspection demonstrated compliance at follow up audits/inspections, indicating that licensees are implementing effective corrective actions. COVID-19 has had a major impact on audit/inspection statistics as resources were re-deployed to undertake COVID-19 inspections.

Animal Welfare update

Petrea Wait gave a verbal update on animal welfare issues.

Animal Welfare Reform

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act amendment was passed by the NSW Parliament on 10 June 2021 <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-reform/increasing-penalties-and-improving-court-orders>. The amendment increases financial penalties and jail time for key animal welfare offences and makes a number of other changes.

- Animal Welfare Reform Discussion Paper is due to be launched shortly to inform consultation on proposed changes to NSW animal welfare laws. Feedback on the Discussion Paper will be used to refine reform proposals and inform the drafting of the new animal welfare legislation.

Review of national Standards & Guidelines (S&Gs)

- Poultry – DPI is expecting the Independent Poultry Panel’s proposed Poultry S&G and Decision Regulation Impact Statement to be provided in August 2021 for consideration by agriculture senior officials and ministers.
- The Independent Poultry Welfare Panel has advised the Stakeholder Advisory SAG that the Panel’s proposals for the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry have been finalised and that the Standards and Guidelines will be provided to the heads of agriculture departments (AGSOC) before being presented to agriculture ministers.
- The document will then undergo final formatting for presentation to governments alongside a regulation impact statement (RIS). The panel’s secretariat (Commonwealth DAWE) is managing this process and has undertaken to keep stakeholders informed of the progress and outcomes of consideration by governments.
- Information on the poultry S&G process and poultry panel is available at –
<http://www.animalwelfarestandards.net.au/poultry/>
<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/animal/welfare/standards-guidelines/poultry>
- Land Transport - Horse standards review - initial targeted consultation is complete and DPI anticipates further consultation on proposed draft S&Gs around August or September 2021.
- Processing Establishments – a literature review is being undertaken to inform development of the S&G.

Engagement program with livestock market chain

- The objective is to improve understanding and “ownership” of legislated roles and responsibilities through presentation, discussions, facilitation of communication across the sector.
- The program will commence next month with the following:
 - 1) addressing a regional Stock and Station Agent Association meeting,
 - 2) conducting a presentation/Q&A event at a Regional Livestock Exchange (open to all stakeholders).

- Funding has been obtained to replace the plastic “Fit to Load” signs distributed to saleyards across the state by Local Land Services last year, with new 2mm aluminium versions to increase durability.
- Funding has also been obtained to develop signs regarding Bobby Calf welfare to display at relevant saleyards. The signage will help those who transport and sell bobby calves through NSW saleyards to understand animal welfare legislation and bobby calf handling requirements. These will also be on 2mm aluminium, ensuring these important messages are presented in a high quality, durable format.

Communications update

Nil

Biosecurity update

Peter Day provided a verbal update and advice on how the current Public Health Orders and restrictions are affecting various sectors. Members were advised that DPI is working closely with NSW Health to help find solutions.

International Engagement update

Ryoko Uchida gave a verbal update on the impact COVID-19 is having on export statistics for international markets.

Note: re export values below, June stats are not released yet so these figures are as of May this year, with changes in trends if any.

Source: IHS Markit

Beef

- NSW's total export values as of May decreased by 25% to A\$611 million, reflecting tight supply.
- Australia's trends are different to NSW but for NSW, China remained the highest value export market, at A\$208 million, followed by Japan, Korea and the US. The big four markets still dominated trade, accounting for 77% of total value as of May.

Sheepmeat

- Lamb production outlook is promising. NSW sheepmeat trade is also positive with combined lamb and mutton up slightly on last year at A\$436 million, as of May.
- The top two markets remain China and the US.
- The third largest market for NSW product was South Korea, where lamb exports have grown in recent years. As of May, sheepmeat exports to Korea reached A\$29 million, followed by Japan at A\$24 million.

Pork

- NSW exports increased 13% year on year, at A\$8.7 million, with Singapore remaining the largest market.
- Exports to the Philippines rose to A\$1.4 million, as the second largest export market, along with growth in exports to Korea as the fourth largest market (at A\$815,670).

Poultry

- Poultry exports were down 57% year on year, at A\$3.9 million, although exports to Vanuatu increased to over A\$1 million.

Other

- COVID-19 is of concern in some markets, including Southeast Asia and North Asia. Some impact on demand is expected as COVID-19 restrictions impact food service sectors in these countries.
- DPI's International Engagement Team continues to work with industries to engage with international markets in this difficult time. (Please feel free to contact the team if there is anything we can do to assist in international engagement space).
- Also, a reminder that assistance is available to industry through the Agricultural Trade and Market Access Cooperation (ATMAC) Program <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/market-access-trade/atmac> designed to help industry explore new international markets. The International Engagement Team can also assist industry with these enquiries.

The date for the next meeting of the Meat Industry Consultative Council is to be advised.