

Summary of meeting outcomes

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee

15 June 2022

The NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee met via video conference on Wednesday 15 June 2022. Specific issues considered at the meeting are outlined below.

Attendees

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee: Alison David (Norco Foods), Helen Dornom (Dairy Australia), Ruth Kydd (Dairy Connect), Sarah Mandelson (Serendipity Ice Cream), Bimi Singh (Bega Cheese Limited), James Neal (Dairy NSW), Phil Ryan (NSW Farmers' Association), Justin Wilson (The Riverina Dairy Pty Ltd), Su Zhang (Star Combo Australia Pty Ltd).

NSW DPI: Sheena Carter (Dairy Industry Advisory Unit), Eric Davis (Acting Chair - Manager Food Standards and programs), Emily Doyle (Team Leader Policy & Programs), Jaime Garcia (Secretariat), Mark Mackie (Manager Regulatory Operations Unit), Helen Schaefer (Team Leader Animal Welfare Policy & Programs), Greg Vakaci Director (Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance).

Apologies: Geneveive Bonello (Manager Communications Strategic Programs & Partnerships), Sarah Britton (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer and Group Director Animal Biosecurity), Michael Cains (Percora Dairy), David Cusack (Manager Food Standards & Programs), Lisa Szabo (Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority), Amanda Walker (Senior Veterinary Policy & Project Officer).

Members provided updates on key and emerging issues/concerns:

- Supply chain issues caused by COVID-19 restrictions and the recent NSW/QLD floods. Also increasing costs of locally and overseas ingredients. Labour shortfalls due to Covid-19 illness related absentee continues to be a core challenge.
- Increasing pressure on all industry sectors due to transport challenges and difficulties in milk quality/production due to environmental factors and the recent extreme weather conditions in NSW and QLD.
- The committee discussed benefits of reduced milking intervals on production, animal welfare and longevity.
- Lack awareness about preventing/controlling mastitis and lameness is an issue of concern for quality milk production and animal health/welfare.
- The Dairy National Response Group has been reviewing and revising it's messaging around COVID-19 to ensure dairy farm businesses and the broader dairy supply chain continue to operate effectively through this period.
- A review of the Tank Driver Training program is also underway. This will look at ways to reduce cost and time required to complete the course, and how to attract more skilled workers and improve course uptake. A new module is also being considered to improve tanker driving skills and safety with an emphasis on understanding the dangers of driving a tanker with unsecured loads/liquids compared with one that is fully loaded.

- The changing requirements by industry to comply with the new packaging, re recycling and energy reduction targets is impacting the manufacturing side as well as other sections of the industry. A short supply of the required new packaging is causing real problems.
- In October 2021, the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation launched the 'Australian Dairy Sustainable Packaging Roadmap to 2025' alongside Dairy Australia and Australian Dairy Products Federation. This project will look at how the industry can meet national targets for packaging to be recyclable, reusable, or compostable by 2025, or sooner.
- Australian dairy farmers voted during the 2022 Dairy Poll (February - March 2022) to retain the current levy at the rate of 2.8683 cents per kilogram of milk fat and 6.9914 cents per kilogram protein. The independent Levy Poll Advisory Committee (LPAC) had recommended a 20% increase. The dairy service levy is invested by Dairy Australia in services to benefit dairy farmers and protect the right to farm.

Food Safety Compliance Report

Mark Mackie updated the Committee on the Department's Dairy industry compliance activities for the period July to December 2021. Dairy sector remained high with 98% recording an acceptable audit and/or inspection result (a 1% decrease over the previous reporting period). A total of 163 audits & inspections were conducted, which is fewer than normal due to field officers focusing on the impacts of COVID-19 and NSW floods. Four licensees received warning or improvement letters for non-compliance.

Animal welfare update

In January 2022, the NSW Government released the Draft Animal Welfare Bill 2022 (Draft Bill), in line with the NSW Government's commitments under the NSW Animal Welfare Action Plan, to streamline and modernise NSW's animal welfare legislative framework.

The Draft Bill was developed following two rounds of public consultation, with almost 6,000 submissions received from stakeholders and community. Most recently, from August – September 2021, the NSW Government sought public feedback on the *NSW Animal Welfare Reform: Discussion Paper*, which set out the key proposals for the Draft Bill. The Department received over 4,800 responses to the Discussion Paper from a wide range of community members and stakeholders.

The release of the Draft Bill marked the third opportunity for stakeholders and the community to have their say in shaping animal welfare laws in NSW. Submissions closed 28 February 2022.

A parliamentary committee is currently reviewing the Draft Animal Welfare Bill 2022 as part of the Inquiry into Animal Welfare Policy in NSW. The committee's interim report is due by 30 May 2022. More information regarding this inquiry is available at the Parliament of NSW website.

The NSW Government will consider all feedback received on the Draft Bill, prior to its introduction into Parliament.

Information on the animal welfare reform, including a copy of the Draft Bill and consultation outcomes report, is available on DPI website at <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-andlivestock/animal-welfare/animal-welfare-reform>

Biosecurity update

Members were updated on the recent detection of Lump Skin Disease (LSD) and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Indonesia and DPI's Animal Biosecurity preparations should the disease be detected in Australia, with surveillance, early detection and awareness a top priority. A LSD and FMD task force has been established with significant resources and extra funding to help protect industry should an emergency response be needed.

Availability of LSD vaccines is being considered with a view of developing mRNA vaccines locally. The availability of FMD vaccine and its potential roll for industry was also discussed.

Japanese Encephalitis (JE) is still being managed by DPI and will be right until the next mosquito season.

The date for the next meeting of the NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee is to be confirmed.