

Meat Industry Consultative Council - Summary of meeting outcomes 13 July 2022

The Meat Industry Consultative Council met via video conference on Wednesday 13 July 2022. Specific issues considered at the meeting are outlined below.

Attendees

Meat Industry Consultative Council: Jessie Doolan, (NSW Farmers' Association), Clair House (Australian Meat Industry Council), John Houston (Pepe's Ducks Pty Ltd), Susy Klein (Ingham's Enterprises Pty Ltd), Anthony Pavic (Baiada Poultry Pty Ltd), Olivia Pineau (NSW Farmers' Association), Craig Wright (Australian Meat Industry Council).

NSW DPI – Biosecurity & Food Safety: Elizabeth Braddon (Team Leader Policy & Programs Animal Biosecurity), Eric Davis - Acting Chair (Manager Food Policy & Partnerships), Jaime Garcia (Secretariat), Peter Gray (Senior Veterinary Policy and Project Officer), Mark Mackie (Manager Regulatory Operations Unit), Petrea Wait (Veterinary Officer, Animal Welfare Unit), Greg Vakaci (Director Compliance & Integrity Systems).

Apologies:

Ben Antenucci (NSW Farmers' Association), Geneveive Bonello (Manager, Communications Strategic Programs & Partnerships), Sarah Britton (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer and Group Director Animal Biosecurity), David Cusack (Manager, Food Standards and Programs), Peta Easey (NSW Farmers Association), Vaibhav Gole (Australian Pork Limited), Vivien Kite (Australian Chicken Meat Federation), Helen Schaefer (Team Leader, Animal Welfare Policy & Programs), Lisa Szabo (Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority).

Members provided updates on key and emerging issues/concerns:

- Industry reported challenging times for farmers along the Hawkesbury region following the NSW floods, with isolated farms and the need to use helicopters to move stock & feed to those farms in need, making things difficult.
- Pepe's Ducks Pty Ltd had their first export of Grand Breeder Stock Fertile Eggs to South Korea, with more orders expected soon.
- The Meat Processing sector is working with Animal Health Australia on their Biosecurity preparations for Lump Skin Disease (LSD) and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) with the finalisation of their Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan with upcoming workshops still to come. Also working with DPI through the Stakeholder Advisory Group in the development of new Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines.
- The recent potential Biosecurity threats and the return of labour shortfalls and Covid-19 illness related absentee are of concern and a challenge for industry.
- It's becoming more and more difficult to find qualified butchers.
- Industry has seen an improvement in Bird health attributed to the new Biosecurity measures restricting access to farms.
- Environmental factors and the recent extreme weather conditions in NSW and QLD is affecting cattle condition for farmers in the North Coast and Hunter regions.

Food Safety Compliance Report

Mark Mackie updated the Committee on the meat industry compliance activities for the 2021-22 financial year to date. 95% of licensed meat industry businesses recorded an acceptable audit and/or inspection result, an increase of 1% on the previous year's comparable period. 2,527 audits & inspections were conducted in total.

COVID-19 and NSW Floods have impacted on audit/inspection statistics.

In total there were 130 improvement notices, penalty notices, warning, letters, seizure notices, prohibition orders, prosecutions, sanctions were issued.

Animal welfare update

A parliamentary committee reviewed the Draft Animal Welfare Bill 2022 as part of the Inquiry into Animal Welfare Policy in NSW. The interim report from the Inquiry into AW Policy in NSW (the Draft Bill) was released 15 June 2022. There are 2 recommendations contained within it, which the Government has three months to respond to.

The report can be accessed here: [Animal welfare policy in New South Wales](#)

Livestock Processing Establishments S&G

- Meetings of the Stakeholder Advisory Group are being conducted monthly.
- To date, general principles common to all species have been discussed (e.g. interaction with Transport S&Gs, stock handling/ competency, pre-slaughter handling, stunning, management of vulnerable animals, emergency slaughter etc).
- Consideration of species-specific issues now being conducted
- NSW DPI is a member of the SAG Observers Group (jurisdictional representatives).
- Public consultation on draft documents is expected to occur late 2022/early 2023.

Poultry S&G

AGSOC considered the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry, developed by the Independent Poultry Panel, at its meeting on 28 April. AGSOC has subsequently submitted their response to DAWE for consideration regarding the way forward.

More information on national animal welfare policy and regulatory matters, can be found at [Animal Welfare Task Group \(AWTG\)](#)

February 2022 flood inquiries

- *2022 NSW Flood Inquiry*
In March 2022, the NSW Government commissioned an independent expert inquiry into the preparation for, causes of, response to and recovery from the 2022 catastrophic flood event across the state of NSW:
<https://www.nsw.gov.au/nsw-government/projects-and-initiatives/floodinquiry>
- *Select Committee on the response to major flooding across New South Wales in 2022.* The select committee was established on 23 March 2022 to inquire into and report on response to major flooding across New South Wales in 2022. The select committee's inquiry is different to the NSW Government's independent flood inquiry.

Livestock market chain engagement

The Animal Welfare livestock team is continuing to prioritise engagement with stock agents and saleyard management, in partnership with LLS, to promote practical application of welfare legislation, and collaboration of relevant agencies and industry groups.

The team will also be focussing on improving the animal welfare incident reporting process and outcomes over the next 12 months re: animal welfare issues identified at export licensed abattoirs.

Biosecurity update

Members were updated on the recent detection LSD and 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.

The NSW State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) will be conducting an exercise in September 2022 looking at LSD and FMD from a NSW Government perspective.

Cattle welfare issues as a result of the recent QLD/NSW floods has prompted DPI to start to

push the message out to those producers in affected areas, Cattle should be going to the most appropriate place such as saleyard or abattoir depending on animal condition and health.

The Japanese Encephalitis outbreak that was detected in February 2002 in piggeries across NSW, QLD and VIC is still being monitored by DPI.

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