

Food Authority

Summary of meeting outcomes

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee

26 October 2022

The NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee met via video conference on Wednesday 26 October 2022. Specific issues considered at the meeting are outlined below.

Attendees:

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

NSW DPI: David Cusack (Manager Food Standards & Programs), Eric Davis (Manager Food Policy & Partnerships), Emily Doyle (Team Leader Policy & Programs), Jaime Garcia (Secretariat), Patrick Phillips (Team Leader Regulatory Operations Unit), Lisa Szabo (Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority - Chair).

Invited Attendee:

Gabrielle Cook (Manager, Science Surveillance & Technical Services, Dairy Food Safety Victoria).

Apologies: Geneveive Bonello (Manager Communications Strategic Programs & Partnerships), Sarah Britton (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer and Group Director Animal Biosecurity), Sheena Carter (Dairy Industry Advisory Unit), Helen Dornom (Dairy Australia), Mark Mackie (Manager Regulatory Operations Unit), James Neal (Dairy NSW), Helen Schaefer (Team Leader Animal Welfare Policy & Programs), Greg Vakaci (Director, Compliance & Integrity Systems).

Members provided updates on key and emerging issues/concerns:

- Rules in place concerning imported raw cheeses and whether they are held to the same rules and processing standards for raw cheeses processed in Australia were discussed. It was agreed that Michael Cains would check if his concerns about the rules and processing standards of imported cheeses have been raised and addressed with the appropriate authorities before The Food Authority follows up on any concerns he might have.
- Members extended their commiserations and support to Su Zhang from Star Combo Australia Pty Ltd regarding the recent fire at one of its facilities.
- Concerns were expressed around the recent flooding events in NSW and Victoria and the resulting welfare and Biosecurity risks this raises for cattle.
- The explosion in mosquitos as a result of the recent floods was also discussed. Members were advised that mosquitos don't pose a clinical risk to cattle.

- Industry has received advice from drug suppliers about possible shortages of Mastitis and Foot rot treatments for cattle.
- It was acknowledged that the messaging in relation Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and the potential Biosecurity risks should the diseases enter Australia is causing angst among Dairy farmers. DPI has agreed to look at the way this messaging is delivered.

Food Safety Compliance Report

Patrick Phillips updated the Committee on the Department's Dairy industry compliance activities for the 2021-22 financial year to date. Dairy sector compliance remained high with 98% recording an acceptable audit and/or inspection result (There was no change compared to the previous reporting period). A total of 477 audits & inspections were conducted during this period, with a combined 13 Improvement notices, penalty notices and warning letters issued for the same period.

Animal welfare update

Animal welfare reform

The NSW Parliament Standing Committee on State Development has reviewed the Draft Animal Welfare Bill 2022 as part of the Inquiry into animal welfare policy in New South Wales.

The NSW Government has provided a response to the Committee's interim report, which is available on the Parliament of NSW website, [Parliament of NSW - Reports and government response](#)

The Government is committed to delivering streamlined, modern animal welfare laws that are fit-for-purpose for all people who live and work with animals in NSW. It is considering all stakeholder and community feedback that was provided on the Draft Animal Welfare Bill through the inquiry process and is working towards developing draft regulations for public and stakeholder feedback – consistent with Recommendation 1 of the Committee's interim report.

There will be further opportunities for stakeholders and the community to have their say on the shape of our animal welfare laws.

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/search?query=nsw+animal+welfare+reform+discussion+paper>

Livestock Processing Establishment Standards & Guidelines (S&G)

- Meetings of the Stakeholder Advisory Group are being conducted monthly.
- 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 is nearing completion.
- Drafting is due to commence in the next few weeks
- 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.

More information on national animal welfare policy and regulatory matters, can be found at <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/animal/welfare/awtg>

2022 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.

The Final Report and NSW Government response can be found [here](#)

Select Committee on the response to major flooding across New South Wales in 2022

A select committee was established on 23 March 2022 to inquire into and report on response to major flooding across New South Wales in 2022. Note that the select committee's inquiry is separate to the NSW Government's independent flood inquiry.

The [Final Report](#) was tabled in Parliament on 09 August 2022. The government has until 09 November 2022 to respond.

Regulatory Tech Program

Gabrielle Cook from Dairy Food Safety Victoria gave a presentation on their Digital Regulatory Technology Program and the use of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to develop and implement an alternative compliance arrangement for licensees who demonstrate sustained compliance and a positive food safety culture. This program was Co-designed with industry, taking a “human-centric development” approach (i.e. people before paper). Currently there are 16 registered businesses participating in this program with the hopes of more to join in the future. This is a voluntary program.

Testing requirements for milk analogues

A question was raised about testing requirements for milk analogues. Members were advised that manufacturers of milk analogue products such as soy milk, almond milk and oat milk are captured under the Manufacturer Wholesaler Inspection Program (MWIP) and are inspected in accordance with Compliance and Integrity Systems (CIS) procedures.

MWIP businesses are required to implement a food safety program specific to their product and business, and to develop and implement suitable and effective food safety control measures. Such measures usually include regular verification testing. The CIS inspection form for MWIP businesses includes a question about analysis and testing. The Authorised Officer can evaluate the program implemented at each business being inspected. Testing requirements for MWIP businesses are not specified in the Food Safety Schemes Manual.

Biosecurity update

Emily Doyle further updated members on foot and mouth disease (FMD) and lumpy skin disease (LSD). Both have been detected in Indonesia and DPI's Animal Biosecurity is making preparations should the disease be detected in Australia, with surveillance, early detection and awareness top priorities.

Government and industry are collaboratively undertaking significant FMD preparedness activities to make sure that if an FMD incursion occurs, it can be contained and eradicated as efficiently as possible. There are comprehensive plans in place to deal with an FMD outbreak. These include detailed response planning and a comprehensive whole-of-government approach to make sure resources are available from a wide range of agencies.

The Australian Veterinary Plan or [AUSVETPLAN](#) FMD Response Strategy is a robust national plan which will guide response to any FMD outbreak in Australia. Australia's and NSW's state of preparedness is under continuous review and improvements are constantly being implemented. Simulation exercises are held regularly to test plans and train those who would be involved.

Further information on LSD and FMD preparedness can be found on DPI's website <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/beef-cattle/health-and-disease/viral-diseases/fmd>

It was noted that Australia remains free of FMD and LSD.

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