

Summary of meeting outcomes

Egg Industry Consultative Committee

16 August 2023

The Egg Industry Consultative Committee met via video conference on Wednesday 16 August 2023. Specific issues considered at the meeting are detailed below.

Attendees:

Egg Industry Consultative Committee: Kylie Jackson (Egg Farmers of Australia), Brett Langfield (NSW Farmer's Association), Peter Matuszny (Manning Valley Free Range Eggs), Franko Pirovic (Pirovic Enterprises), Mini Singh (Australian Eggs), Georgie Trowbridge (NSW Farmer's Association).

NSW DPI – Biosecurity & Food Safety: Joanna Blunden (Development Officer, Poultry Eggs), David Cusack (Manager, Food Standards & Programs), Eric Davis (Acting Chair - Manager, Food Policy & Partnerships), Jaime Garcia (Secretariat), Patrick Phillips (Team Leader, Regulatory Operations Unit), Anne Mcintosh (Manager, Food Incident Response & Complaints), Helen Schaefer (Team Leader, Animal Welfare Policy & Programs), Brendan Sharpe (Senior Veterinary Policy & Project Officer Animal Biosecurity).

Apologies: Jo Coombe (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer and Group Director Animal Biosecurity), Grant Dearden (Pace Farm), Melinda Hashimoto (Egg Farmers of Australia), Mark Mackie (Manager, Regulatory Operations Unit), Josephine Parrett (Manager, Customer Service Strategy & Operations), Lisa Szabo - Chair (Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority), Greg Vakaci (Director, Compliance).

Industry updates

Egg demand is still strong despite tight supply. Farmers can use funds received against the continued increase in production costs and put them towards maintenance plans.

Egg producers are starting to look at future expansion plans.

Industry advised that following completion of the Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Poultry (Poultry Standards and Guidelines), State and National Farming Organisations have either met or are seeking to meet with State Ministers to discuss how the Poultry Standards and Guidelines will be implemented.

NSW Farmers Association has met with the NSW Minister for Agriculture. The Poultry Standards and Guidelines were intended to deliver national harmonisation and the fact harmonisation did not eventuate has been frustrating for industry and also means that farmers remain in limbo. It is concerning that some states will likely implement the Poultry Standards and Guidelines while others continue with the earlier Model Code, a situation industry had strenuously sought to avoid in its engagement with the Australian Agriculture Senior Officials Committee (AGSOC) and respective Governments.

Some jurisdictions are grappling with the situation that their producers may have to phase out cage eggs, which disadvantages these farmers, while cage eggs produced in other jurisdictions can still come in and be legally sold.

The next Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) meeting in relation to its review of Standard 4.2.5 – Primary production and processing standard for eggs and egg product will be held in Canberra on 31 August 2023. The meeting will discuss the risk assessment outcomes and proposed risk management framework that will inform the Regulation Impact Statement (RIS).

Egg Farmers of Australia (EFA) is updating some of its policies in relation to Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) specifically Avian Influenza (AI). One policy which the poultry EADRA signatories are reviewing relates to the cost sharing deed developed during the Victorian AI outbreak. It is hoped that the outcomes of this review can be reflected in the current EADRA deed. Industry is also working to catalogue all AI resources in a single location given many groups are working on AI preparedness.

Egg Farmers of Australia has had some board changes. Greg Quinn has replaced John Coward and Andy Crocker is the alternative Director for Greg Quinn. Ian Wilson (WA Director) has stepped in as Deputy Chair and Company Secretary.

The Gen Egg lunch and EFA's Annual General Meeting and Awards ceremony will be held in NSW on the 14 November 2023, in conjunction with the Australian Eggs Forum.

Food safety program compliance report

Patrick Phillips provided an update on the egg industry compliance activities for the 2022 – 2023 financial period. 94% of licensed egg industry businesses recorded an acceptable audit and/or inspection result. A total of 397 audits and inspections were conducted during this period with a combined total of nine regulatory actions undertaken (improvement notices, penalty notices, prohibition orders, or warning letters). The lower compliance activity rate compared to the previous year is due to increased surveillance & monitoring to manage Salmonella Enteritidis and the honey bee Varroa mite emergency response.

Animal welfare update

Helen Schaefer gave a verbal update on the following,

Animal welfare reform

Poultry Standards & Guidelines

- The Australian Agriculture Senior Officials Committee (AGSOC) met on 15 June 2023 and agreed to progress the Poultry Standards and Guidelines to the Agriculture Ministers Meeting (AMM) for consideration.
- The Poultry Standards and Guidelines were endorsed by all Ministers at the AMM in Perth on 13 July 2023 and were published in August 2022.
- Each jurisdiction will determine how and when the Standards and Guidelines will be implemented having regard to the specific circumstances in each jurisdiction and Jurisdictions are currently considering their implementation options.
- Ministers noted cost of living and supply concerns and acknowledged that many consumers and major retailers have already commenced a transition away from cage eggs.
- Ministers agreed that implementation will be reported through the Animal Welfare Task Group.

Livestock Processing Establishment Standards & Guidelines (Livestock Standards and Guidelines)

- The final meeting for the independently facilitated stakeholder advisory group (SAG) was held in December 2022 and drafting of the Livestock Standards and Guidelines has commenced.
- Public consultation on draft documents is expected to occur mid-2023
- A Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) for the Livestock Standards and Guidelines will be prepared.
- Livestock Standards and Guidelines are due to be finalised in 2024.

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

Biosecurity update

Brendan Sharpe gave an update and advised that DPI continues to report weekly to the Poultry Health Liaison Group in relation to notifiable diseases, which allows industry time to make biosecurity adjustments where and when required. DPI is still seeing a small number of Infectious laryngotracheitis (ILT) cases across layer, broiler and back yard flocks.

NSW DPI Biosecurity is planning an online AI preparedness exercise for September 2023. Key stakeholders Australian Eggs, Egg Farmers of Australia, NSW Farmers Egg Committee, and consulting veterinarians that are practising in NSW egg industry will participate in this exercise.

This exercise will focus on what's happening in the rest of the world, what risk factors industry currently faces and what we can learn from recent overseas experiences. It will test what an AI response looks like for industry according to our EADRP requirements, with particular focus on the first 72 hours. It will indicate what industry can expect as a result of the response plan with a strong focus on destruction, disposal and disinfection. At present the exercise is in the planning stages.

The Biosecurity (Salmonella Enteritidis) SE control order is due to expire on the 30 June 2024, DPI will start planning for this. More generally, NSW DPI Animal Biosecurity currently has a strong focus on the five key emergency animal disease threats to Australia, Avian Influenza (AI), Lumpy skin disease (LSD), Foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), African swine fever, (ASF) and African horse sickness (AHS). DPI is looking at vaccination options as a part of a response plan for each of these, should the need arise.

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