

Summary of meeting outcomes

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee

25 October 2023

The NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee met via video conference on Wednesday 25 October 2023. Specific issues considered at the meeting are outlined below.

Attendees:

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee: Helen Dornom (Dairy Australia), Ruth Kydd (Dairy Connect), James Neal (Dairy NSW), Phil Ryan (NSW Farmers' Association), Bimi Singh (Bega Cheese Limited), Su Zhang (Star Combo Australia Pty Ltd).

NSW DPI: Andrew Davies (Manager, Local Government Unit – Acting Chair), Emily Doyle (Manager, Animal Bio Surveillance & Engagement), Jaime Garcia (Secretariat), Ken Garner (Manager, Dairy Livestock Systems Branch), Mark Mackie (Manager, Regulatory Operations Unit).

Invited attendees: Iain Fee (The Riverina Dairy Pty Ltd), Tammy Warnock (The Riverina Dairy Pty Ltd).

Apologies: Sheena Carter (Dairy Industry Advisory Unit), Michael Cains (Percora Dairy), Jo Coombe (NSW Chief Veterinary Officer and Group Director Animal Biosecurity), David Cusack (Manager, Food Standards & Programs), Eric Davis (Manager, Food Policy & Partnerships), Susan Stanton (Norco Foods), Helen Schaefer (Team Leader, Animal Welfare Policy & Programs), Lisa Szabo (Director Food Safety & CEO NSW Food Authority), Greg Vakaci (Director, Compliance), Justin Wilson (The Riverina Dairy Pty Ltd).

Members provided updates on key and emerging issues/concerns:

In October 2023, Helen Dornom attended the International Dairy Federation's World Dairy Summit in Chicago, USA. Key topics included residues and chemical contaminants in dairy products across different regions of the world, nutrition, sustainability, safe and affordable food, and community access to high-quality, nutritious products.

DPI's Dairy Unit is conducting a project to improve the response to natural disasters by enhancing data sharing and management with the dairy industry.

Unannounced NSW Food Authority audits of businesses that hold a Food were discussed. These evaluate the business's food safety program to ensure it complies with requirements and all other requirements in the *Food Regulation 2015*. Inspections

typically assess compliance with the [general provisions of the Food Standards Code](#), particularly Food Safety Requirements in Chapter 3, including maintaining hygiene, temperature control, structural requirements, and having adequate facilities.

The Food Authority is dedicated to maintaining a high level of compliance with the *Food Act 2003* and Regulations as enforcing this legislation helps effectively manage food safety risks and prevent misleading conduct in connection with the sale of food.

Food Safety Compliance Report

Mark Mackie updated the Committee on the Department's Dairy industry compliance activities for the 2022-23 financial year. Dairy sector compliance recorded a 4% drop compared to the previous reporting period with 94% recording an acceptable audit or inspection result. A total of 454 audits & inspections were conducted during this period, with a combined 22 Improvement notices issued for the same period. Biosecurity Food Safety Compliance may need to adjust its planned activities and frequency of compliance monitoring depending on emerging risks and strategic priorities.

Animal welfare update

Helen Schaefer presented a paper on animal welfare activities.

1. Livestock Processing Establishment Standards & Guidelines (S&G)

- The processing establishments' independent scientific literature review was published on the [Animal Welfare Task Group \(AWTG\) website](#) under 'Current work priorities' in March 2022.
- A Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG), drafting group, and independent facilitator for the S&G development were appointed. The independent facilitator managed stakeholder engagement across the stakeholder consultation processes.
- NSW DPI (as an Animal Welfare Task Group (AWTG) member) was an observer to the SAG.
- SAG meetings were conducted February-December 2022.
- Drafting of the Standards has been completed.
- Public consultation on draft documents is expected to occur in late 2023.
- A Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) for the S&G will be prepared.
- Finalisation of the S&G is due 2024.

More information on national animal welfare policy and regulatory matters, can be found at [AWTG website](#).

2. Virtual Fencing

- In March 2021, *[then]* Minister David Littleproud wrote to state and territory Agriculture Ministers seeking support for a national examination of the issues related to virtual fencing technology, with a view to nationally harmonised regulation. The Agriculture Senior Officials' Committee (AGSOC) referred this issue to the AWTG which is currently considering the issue.

- The AWTG Virtual Fencing (VF) subgroup, of which NSW is a member, was established in February 2022.
- All available information from manufacturers of virtual fencing systems, international, and domestic virtual fencing experience and trials, has been collated and examined to ensure that informed recommendations can be made at a national level regarding the use of virtual fencing.
- Any in-principle national agreement on regulating the use of virtual fencing would still need to be implemented in respective state and territory legislation.
- Every effort is being made to consider all the evidence available, as thoroughly and as expediently as possible to ensure updated legislation is defensible and will negatively impact animals.
- With the agreement of the VF subgroup, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) commissioned a literature review on the animal welfare implications of virtual fencing technology. This was received by DAFF earlier this year.
- Subject to dealing with 'commercial in confidence' issues with virtual fencing manufacturers, and subject to agreement of AWTG members, the final literature review will be published on the AWTG website in the near future.
- Meetings of the VF subgroup have been on hold due to competing priorities but are due to resume in December 2023.
- Further information on national consideration of virtual fencing is available on the [AWTG website](#) under Work Priorities and Communiques.

3. Drought

- Seasonal conditions are deteriorating with increasing areas of NSW identified as drought affected, (ref maps following, as per the NSW DPI Combined Drought Indicator) in drought or experiencing intense drought.
- DPI, including the Animal Welfare team, is collaborating closely with Local Land Services, support agencies, and industry to encourage preparedness, provide technical advice and support as required, and to encourage producers to act early to minimise both animal and human welfare issues.
- It is well recognised that many producers and families are experiencing the impacts of “cumulative adversity”, with depressed livestock market prices a key difference to the last drought adding increased strain and stress.
- (ref maps following, as per the NSW DPI Combined Drought Indicator, and <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/dpi/climate/seasonal-conditions-and-drought/nsw-state-seasonal-update>)

Biosecurity update

Emily Doyle updated members on the following:

- Jo Coombe was appointed as the new NSW Chief Veterinary Officer and Group Director Animal Biosecurity on July 1, 2023.
- The NSW Government has introduced a bill to amend the Biosecurity Act 2015 and establish NSW's first independent Biosecurity Commissioner. The proposed Biosecurity Amendment (Independent Biosecurity Commissioner) Bill 2023 has

been developed after extensive consultation and aims to enhance the efficiency and accountability of the department's pest and weed biosecurity programs. The commissioner, with the support of the NSW Department of Primary Industries, will oversee the management of pests and weeds in NSW by collaborating with stakeholders and providing impartial advice to the NSW Government on the effectiveness of these programs.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/biosecurity-commissioner-bill#:~:text=%E2%80%9C%27d%20like%20to%20acknowledge,the%20development%20of%20this%20bill.%E2%80%9D>

- Avian influenza was recently discovered in wild migratory birds in Antarctica. This has led to concerns for Australia due to possible migration over Australia.
- DPI continues to manage Varroa mites in bees and Red Imported Fire Ants pose a concern of entering NSW from Qld.
- The detection of lumpy skin disease (LSD) at a cattle farm in South Korea in early November 2023 has put Australia on high alert. Officials are using vaccination as a response to manage the outbreak.
- As of June 2023, preparations for dealing with foot and mouth disease (FMD) and LSD have been completed, resulting in significant progress in FMD and LSD readiness. The focus has been on legal frameworks, as well as development and implementation of pilot programs to test animal disposal and destruction techniques for large numbers of animals. Additionally, social research has been conducted to inform communication and response activities.
- On 17 October 2023, a discussion exercise was held regarding rollout of an FMD vaccine. The Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (EMAI) is currently working on the proof of concept stage for mRNA LSD vaccine.
- The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has issued an emergency use permit for Bovilis Lumpyvax-E (Attenuated LSDV Neethling antigen) for use in cattle and buffalo to protect against LSDV in the event of an outbreak. This permit can be accessed from the APVMA website. DAFF is still working on the import permit and conditions.
- An emergency animal disease (EAD) and response course has been developed for veterinarians and para-veterinary staff who are interested in participating in an EAD response. This course is free and available on DPI's website.
<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/components/module/accordion/biosecurity/animal-biosecurity/information-for-vets/training-and-resources/training-and-resources-details>
- Work on development of Sheep and Goat Individual Electronic Identification continues. NSW DPI and representatives from across the sheep and goat industries have worked closely to develop an implementation plan for mandatory sheep and goat eID's in NSW. All representatives sit on the NSW eID Sheep and Goat Reference Group.
- The Animal Biosecurity Surveillance & Engagement team from DPI will attend a workshop on Feral Animals 1-2 November.

- DPI staff recently participated in a simulation exercise called "Exercise Milky Way," which was led by Animal Health Australia (AHA). The exercise simulated a foot-and-mouth disease scenario. The main objective of the exercise was to test the key components of the [AUSVETPLAN](#) Response strategy, specifically for Foot-and-mouth disease. The goal was to ensure that the strategy is practical and fit for purpose when used in combination with jurisdictional requirements and legislation.

The main goals were to achieve the following objectives:

1. validate the movement controls, including the movement control matrix from the [AUSVETPLAN](#) Response strategy: Foot-and-mouth disease and the supporting logic matrix, for raw milk movements during a foot-and-mouth disease response.
 2. enhance the raw milk movement control sections of the [AUSVETPLAN](#) Response strategy: Foot-and-mouth disease, or the raw milk logic matrix, as appropriate, following consideration of exercise outcomes.
- A total of 45 people participated including milk processors, dairy farmers, and government biosecurity specialists. Exercise participants confirmed that the controls for raw milk movement in the FMD AUSVETPLAN response strategy are functional and fit for purpose. Several suggestions were made to improve the practicality of implementing the movement controls during an outbreak.

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