

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2016

Agriculture and Water Resources

Question: 242

Division/Agency: Trade and Market Access Division

Topic: Beef and sheep meat exports to Singapore

Proof Hansard page: 104

Senator STERLE asked:

Senator STERLE: Did Senator Edwards ask the question about whether we can send sides of lamb to Singapore and other places?

Mr Morris: He passed that question to me; we are going to handle the sides of lamb and beef. We will answer that question and give you a written response on it.

On 9 February 2016, Senator EDWARDS handed a written question to Mr Morris asking: This is NOT an Estimates question but can you get Bill to ask the DAFF officials what, if any, are the restrictions on the import of full sides of beef or sheepmeat from Aus into Singapore. That is boned in, not packages of boned out meat.

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is not aware of any quotas or import restrictions being applied to beef and sheep meat exports to Singapore.

Under Australia's *Export Control Act 1982*, all beef and sheep meat exports to Singapore must be sourced from an Australian government registered export facility and conform to Australian Standards and Australian monitoring programs such as the National Residue Survey (NRS) and Escherichia coli (E. coli) and Salmonella Monitoring Program.

Listing for Singapore is not required for export-registered slaughter and boning establishments producing beef and sheep meat for export to Singapore, however producers and exporters must comply with the relevant Singaporean legislation regarding food imports.

There are no tariffs for beef and sheep meat to Singapore.

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Agriculture and Water Resources

Question: 243

Division/Agency: Trade and Market Access Division

Topic: Kangaroo market access to California

Proof Hansard page: 113-114

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Ms Bie: The Australian government is talking with a range of Californian government lawmakers on the matter of kangaroo market access to California.

Senator RHIANNON: Could you provide details of the government lawmakers you are working with.

Ms Bie: There are many meetings with many of them on a whole range of market access issues. I could not provide details of specific people.

Senator RHIANNON: Even the leading people that you would be meeting with? There would be some key people. Can you provide those details please.

Ms Bie: The representative in Market that has been leading on the meetings, including representations that have happened with Ambassador Beazley and ministers Turnbull and Hunt, met with Governor Brown and senators Lara and de Leon, but they are just a couple amongst a range of senators.

Senator RHIANNON: Could you take it on notice and provided the list please.

Ms Bie: We could take the question on notice.

Answer:

Since May 2014, Australian Government officials have engaged with a range of Californian Government officials on market access matters where the issue of kangaroo access may have been raised. Key Californian legislators with whom kangaroo market access was directly raised are the Speaker of the Assembly Toni Atkins, Assembly Member Marc Levine, Senate President Pro Tempore Kevin de León and Senator Ricardo Lara.

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Agriculture and Water Resources

Question: 244

Division/Agency: Trade and Market Access Division

Topic: Complaint filed to Californian Fair Political Practices Commission

Proof Hansard page: 114

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Ms Bie: The appropriate resolution of the matter before the Fair Political Practices Commission, is that what you refer to? There have been a number of meetings in relation to that and interactions where they have asked for the process that we have been following. They asked about the grant. We have provided factual information and then the Fair Political Practices Commission determines the appropriate outcome. Perhaps I am misinterpreting your question.

Senator RHIANNON: That is useful. I am trying to understand the process and who you have been meeting with. Can you provide details of who you have met with?

Ms Bie: I would have to take that on notice. I have not had the meetings myself.

Senator RHIANNON: And also who the Australian personnel at those meetings were?

Ms Bie: Yes, I can take that on notice.

Answer:

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) officials from the Australian Consulate-General in Los Angeles, met with officials from the Californian Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Mr George Arandi (Special Investigator, Enforcement Division) and Mr Neal Bucknell (Senior Commission Counsel, Enforcement Division) on 27 October 2015. A DFAT official from the Australian Consulate-General in Los Angeles also met with Ms Galena West (Chief Enforcement Officer), Mr Arandi and Mr Bucknell to discuss the matter further on 19 November 2015.

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Agriculture and Water Resources

Question: 245

Division/Agency: Trade and Market Access Division

Topic: Funding for research project

Proof Hansard page: 114

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Senator RHIANNON: The CEO of the KIAA, Mr John Kelly, was funded \$236,664 from 2008 to 2011 for an RIRDC project called Research to assist market development for kangaroo products in California and New York. The department has advised that the majority of this funding, just over \$200,000, was used by the project provider, Mr Kelly, to 'engage a firm of US consultants to develop and implement a process to inform Californian and New York legislators in 2009 and 2010 as to the regulation and sustainability of the kangaroo industry.' Who were the firm of US consultants referred to there?

Ms Bie: In 2009?

Senator RHIANNON: Yes, and 2010.

Ms Bie: I am not familiar with that particular report. I will have to take that on notice.

Senator RHIANNON: There is nobody here who has this information? It is an issue we have been dealing with at estimates. It is a lot of money that has been allocated to one aspect of an industry that is not huge.

Ms Bie: I have experience of the grant that is \$143,000, but not that particular report that you are referring to.

Senator RHIANNON: You do not know who the consultants are. You will take it on notice?

Ms Bie: I will.

Answer:

The \$236 664 grant was provided by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) to the Kangaroo Industry Association of Australia (KIAA). RIRDC has advised the department that the firm of US consultants engaged by the KIAA for the activities referred above was Manatt, Phelps and Phillips, LLP (Limited Liability Partnership).

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Question: 246

Division/Agency: Trade and Market Access Division

Topic: Placement of these new counsellor positions

Proof Hansard page: 116

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Senator RHIANNON: Was the Kangaroo Industry Association of Australia, or any other kangaroo industry representative, consulted as to its preference for the placement of these new counsellor positions?

Answer:

No. Neither the Kangaroo Industry Association of Australia nor other representatives of the kangaroo industry were consulted on their preferences for the placement of the new overseas counsellor positions.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2016

Agriculture and Water Resources

Question: 247

Division/Agency: Trade and Market Access Division

Topic: How many kangaroos are there in Australia?

Proof Hansard page: 116

Senator EDWARDS asked:

Senator EDWARDS: How many kangaroos are there in Australia?

Senator RHIANNON: Do you want that broken down by species?

Senator EDWARDS: Two hundred-and-how-many million?

CHAIR: Can you put them on notice?

Ms Bie: I think there were 44 million in 2014, but I might have to take that on notice.

Senator EDWARDS: But it has been a better season since then.

Ms Bie: In 2014 there were 49.3 million.

Answer:

In 2014, the Department of the Environment estimated the total domestic kangaroo population of the four species approved for harvest within commercial harvest zones at 49.3 million. The four species are the red, eastern grey, western grey and common wallaroo or euro. A population estimate for 2015 is not yet available.

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Agriculture and Water Resources

Question: 248

Division/Agency: Trade and Market Access Division

Topic: Californian ban on import of kangaroo parts

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

1. The Australian government and KIAA were unable to find a Californian lawmaker, including last year's sponsor Assemblyman Mike Gipson, willing to sponsor their new bill to lift California's ban on kangaroo imports to that state by the Friday 19 February deadline.

Will the Australian Government and its representatives be again supporting a repeat of the 2015 attempt to insert the Australian bill into an existing California bill via the "gut and amend" process?

2. Does the Australian Government agree with Californian commentary in 2015 that the "gut and amend" process used in its 2015 attempt to permanently lift California's ban on imported kangaroo parts was a deliberate attempt to subvert Californian due lawmaking process?
3. Which Australian representatives, or their agents, have made representations to Californian lawmakers to lift the current ban this year?
4. What representations by the industry this year have been facilitated, funded or introduced by Australian government representatives?

Answer:

1. The Australian Government may consider undertaking further work on kangaroo market access with the Californian legislature in 2016 should opportunities arise.
2. The Australian Government always seeks to fully abide by the local laws of the countries in which it operates. We would not, and have not, sought to deliberately subvert the Californian lawmaking process.
3. The Australian Government and its representatives have not made any formal representations to Californian lawmakers on the issue of kangaroo market access to California in 2016.

Question: 248 (continued)

4. The Australian Government and its representatives have not facilitated, funded or introduced any formal representations to Californian lawmakers by the kangaroo industry on the issue of kangaroo market access in 2016.

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Additional Estimates February 2016

Agriculture and Water Resources

Question: 249

Division/Agency: Trade and Market Access Division

Topic: Agricultural counsellors

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

1. Provide an update on the work undertaken by the new trade counsellors
2. The departmental website provides little information about the new agriculture counsellors – why is this?
3. What is the cost of the new agricultural counsellors?
4. What was the selection process for the new counsellors?

Answer:

1. The overseas network works to remove distortions to international trade, progress and resolve market access issues and market disruptions for portfolio industries, facilitate targeted technical assistance and agricultural cooperation in support of portfolio interests, and influence the development of international standards for portfolio products/industries.
2. The departmental website does provide information about the department's overseas network, its role and current locations. The link is <http://agriculture.gov.au/market-access-trade/overseas-network>. It also provides an email address to contact an overseas counsellor.
3. Five new agriculture counsellors in key overseas markets and seven additional locally employed staff will help industry maintain existing and achieve new market access, at the cost of \$16.3 million over four years.
4. The selection process for the new counsellors involved an internal request for expressions of interest from appropriately qualified and experienced departmental officers. The applicants provided a statement of claims against the selection criteria and nominated two referees. A selection panel assessed the applications against the selection criteria and, where the criteria were met, interviewed referees to verify the applicants' skills, abilities and experience. A final list of candidates was then considered by the Department's Executive before officers were offered positions.