



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Trade Sub-Committee

MEDIA ALERT

Issued: 2 December 2014

Chair: Hon Bruce Scott MP

Deputy Chair: Maria Vamvakinou MP

Department of Agriculture's role in exporting \$4 billion worth of produce to the Middle East

The Department of Agriculture will outline its key role in Australian trade with countries of the Middle East at a public hearing in Canberra tomorrow.

In its submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry into trade and investment with the Middle East, the Department highlighted that Australia exports more than \$4.4 billion in agricultural produce to the region every year.

The Department, which has an agriculture consul based in Dubai, has oversight of quarantine and export certification services, biosecurity reforms, international market access, live animal exports, economic research and policy development.

The Middle East and North Africa region continues to be a significant market for Australian produce. In 2012-13, it received some 10 per cent of all Australian agricultural exports, including wheat and barley, frozen and chilled red meat, powdered milk, livestock and horticulture.

While Australia is facing continuing competition from north and south American, New Zealand and European suppliers, the Department believes Australian farmers enjoy a strong reputation in the region due to supplying high quality and safe food with few pest and disease issues and having a long history of agricultural cooperation.

The Department's submission forecasts that the physical limitations of climate, suitable land and scarcity of water in the Middle East will continue to challenge development of agriculture in many areas. With more than 350 million people to feed, food security dominates the priorities and economic planning of Middle Eastern governments. There is also shifting demand from traditional staple foods to imported higher-value products that Australian farmers will hope to provide.

Public hearing

Date/Time	Wednesday 3 December 2014, 11:05 am
Location	Committee Room 1R6, Parliament House, Canberra
Organisations	Department of Agriculture

Live audio broadcast will be available at www.aph.gov.au/live

For media comment: contact the Trade sub-committee Chair, the Hon Bruce Scott MP on (02) 6277 4949 (Parliament House)

For background information: Further details about the inquiry, including the full terms of reference and how to contribute, can be obtained from the committee's website at www.aph.gov.au/jfadt or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 2313 or emailing jscfadt@aph.gov.au.