



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Trade Sub-Committee

**MEDIA ALERT**

Issued: 8 September 2015

Chair: Hon Bruce Scott MP

Deputy Chair: Maria Vamvakinou MP

## **Australian Food and Grocery Council to discuss the billion-dollar agri-food trade with the Middle East**

The Australian Food and Grocery Council will discuss growing Australia's nearly \$3 billion trade in agri-food exports to the Middle East with federal parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade at a public hearing in Canberra tomorrow.

The Trade sub-committee's inquiry into trade with the Middle East will hear from the Council representing Australia's food, beverage and grocery manufacturing industry about the potential of Australia's largest manufacturing sector to help feed a region with a population of more than 350 million.

The strong demand for imported food in the Middle East and North Africa will grow largely due to the region having scarce arable land and water for domestic food production alongside rising per capita incomes and consumer spending, proliferation of supermarkets, larger populations and a growing tourism hospitality sector.

While Australian agri-food exports to the Middle East have traditionally been focussed on bulk commodities such as grain and live animals, the growing tourism and related services sectors in Middle East economies has underpinned growing exports of processed food products from Australia according to the Council.

Australia's food, beverage and grocery manufacturing industry has an annual turnover of approximately \$111 billion, directly employs almost 300,000 people, with half of those in rural and regional areas, and generates \$24 billion in exports.

Australia's exports of processed food products to the Middle East averaged 23 per cent growth over the years 2009 to 2013, mostly due to strong demand in the United Arab Emirates. Australia's exports of processed food to the UAE increased from \$34 million in 2009 to \$101 million in 2013 at an average annual growth of 32 per cent.

### **Public hearing**

<b>Date/Time</b>	Wednesday 9 September 2015, 11:05 am
<b>Location</b>	Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra
<b>Organisation</b>	Australian Food and Grocery Council

Live audio broadcast will be available at [www.aph.gov.au/live](http://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](http://www.aph.gov.au/jfadt) or by contacting the committee secretariat on **(02) 6277 2313** or emailing [jscfadt@aph.gov.au](mailto:jscfadt@aph.gov.au).