
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Advisory Report on the Agricultural and
Veterinary Chemicals Legislation
Amendment Bill 2012

House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry

February 2013
Canberra

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ISBN 978-0-642-79861-9 (Printed version)

ISBN 978-0-642-79862-6 (HTML version)

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Foreword

I welcome the opportunity for the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry to provide an advisory report to the House on the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. The Bill seeks to make reforms to the approval, registration and reconsideration of agricultural and veterinary (AgVet) chemicals. This will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the National Registration Scheme (NRS) for AgVet chemicals and products overseen by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

The Bill was referred to the Committee by the Selection Committee on 29 November 2012. The Committee subsequently adopted the inquiry and called for written submissions. A public hearing was held in Canberra on 4 February 2013 with a range of stakeholders, some of whom had concerns with the Bill.

The issues raised with the Committee included stakeholders highlighting their concerns that aspects of the Bill would impact the AgVet chemicals sector. Stakeholders highlighted areas including the proposal for a preliminary assessment process and also the proposal for a system of mandatory re-registration and re-approval for AgVet chemicals and products.


The Committee found that the proposed preliminary assessment process has been designed to increase the quality of applications provided to the APVMA. While acknowledging concerns that this process may create some costs for applicants for registration of AgVet chemical and products, the Committee stated that the process would allow the APVMA to concentrate its resources on providing more timely assessments of applications and reduce delays in evaluating deficient applications.

Over the course of the inquiry, the Committee heard that some AgVet chemicals and products had been in use in Australia for well over 40 years. The Committee was concerned that many of these chemicals and products had not been tested against contemporary standards for human, animal and plant health and safety. This underscores the importance of provisions in the Bill for a mandatory system of AgVet chemical and product re-registration and re-approval based on the risk profiles of each chemical or product as determined under guidelines published by the APVMA.

Australia needs to have a robust, systematic and efficient system of AgVet chemical and product regulation. The reforms proposed in this Bill will allow the APVMA to build on its already well-regarded regulatory credentials and ensure Australia retains its international competitiveness in the AgVet sector.

The Committee has recommended that the Bill be passed.

Hon Dick Adams MP
Chair



Membership of the Committee

Chair Hon Dick Adams MP

Deputy Chair Mr Alby Schultz MP

Members Mr Darren Cheeseman MP

Mr Rob Mitchell MP

Mr George Christensen MP

Mr Dan Tehan MP


Mr Geoff Lyons MP

Mr Rowan RamseyMP* (from 29/11/12)

* Denotes supplementary member, appointed to the Committee for this inquiry only.

Committee Secretariat

Secretary	Mr David Brunoro
Inquiry Secretary	Mr Muzammil Ali
Research Officers	Mr Nathan Fewkes
Administrative Officers	Ms Jazmine Rakic
	Ms Louise Goss



Terms of reference

The Terms of Reference comprise the text of the Bill and without limiting the scope of these Terms of Reference, the Committee has resolved to target a number of key areas for consideration:

- Initial assessment and registration processes (Schedule No. 1 of the Bill), including:
 - ⇒ Factors that affect efficient regulation, including the risk assessment process;
- Re-approval and re-registration of agricultural and veterinary chemicals (Schedule No. 2 of the Bill), including:
 - ⇒ The need for re-approval /and re-registration;
 - ⇒ The process and practical effects (including the financial impacts) for all stakeholders including the regulator;
- International comparisons and trade issues, including the effects on small companies; and
- Consultation processes and outcomes:
 - ⇒ Including intergovernmental consultations.



List of abbreviations

AgVet	Agricultural and Veterinary
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
APVMA	Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority
ARFF	Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry
the Bill	Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Legislation Amendment Bill 2012
BRCWG	COAG Business Regulation and Competition Working Group
Canadian PMRA	Health Canada – Pest Management Regulatory Agency
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
Committee	Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
MORAG	Manual of Requirements and Guidelines
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NRS	National Registration Scheme
OBPR	Office of Best Practice Regulations

RIS	Regulation Impact Statement
US EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
VFF	Victorian Farmers Federation
WWF Australia	World Wildlife Fund Australia



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Set up a troika taskforce of Industry, the Department and the APVMA to urgently evaluate and improve the internal systems within the APVMA to increase the regulators efficiency and effectiveness and the speed of review of at risk chemistries.52

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