Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-010

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: GM DNA

Written Question on Notice

Senator Siewert asked:

a) What objective criteria are there by which the routine presence of GM DNA or protein detected in a processed product would also trigger a requirement for the product to be labelled and/or recalled?
b) If GM DNA or protein were detected in a processed food product, how many times, how often and according to what criteria would that product be retested to ascertain whether or not the GM presence was adventitious rather than routine?
c) If the GM presence were judged to be routine, what action would result?

Answer:

a) Foods containing GM ingredients are required to be labelled where novel DNA or novel protein is detectable in the final food. Where a manufacturer has sought to use non-GM ingredients, a tolerance level of 1% per ingredient applies without the need to label as containing GM material.

b) This is a matter of compliance and therefore is a decision for individual State and Territory enforcement agencies. Routine testing is not within FSANZ responsibilities.

c) See answer to b).