

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-107

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: INTERNATIONAL OPINION ON ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE MARKER GENES

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Senator Siewert asked:

What were the dates of the advice from the World Health Organization and the Expert Advisory Group on Antimicrobial Resistance in relation to antibiotic resistance marker genes?

Answer:

Advice on antibiotic resistance marker genes was originally provided by the World Health Organization in 1993. Further consideration of this issue was published in 2000, to inform the development of guidance documents by the Codex *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Taskforce on Foods Derived from Biotechnology.

On 31 July 2001, Professor John Turnidge, the then Chair of the Expert Advisory Group on Antimicrobial Resistance, advised the Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council that the use of antibiotic resistance marker genes in GM crops presented no public health and safety concerns.

References

WHO (1993). Health aspects of marker genes in genetically modified plants, Report of a WHO Workshop. World Health Organization, Geneva.

WHO (2000). Safety aspects of genetically modified foods of plant origin, Report of a Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation, 29 May-2 June 2000. World Health Organisation, Geneva.
http://www.who.int/foodsafety/publications/biotech/en/ec_june2000_en.pdf