

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Treasury Portfolio
Budget Estimates
2017 - 2018

Division/Agency: Small Business and Consumer Policy Division
Question No: 257
Topic: Free-range Egg information standards
Reference: Hansard page 84 (30 May 2017)
Senator: Rhiannon, Lee

Question:

Senator RHIANNON: Just to finish up: when you are undertaking this work, I imagine you are looking at other jurisdictions. Have you come across any other jurisdictions which determine that 'free range' can be a stocking level up to 10,000?

Ms Martin: Other jurisdictions?

Senator RHIANNON: Other countries.

Ms Martin: I am not aware of any other countries that have a maximum stocking density of 10,000 hens per hectare.

Senator RHIANNON: Did you look at other countries?

Ms Martin: I am aware that there are different stocking density levels in our countries, yes.

Senator RHIANNON: What are they—the ones that you looked at?

Ms Martin: I would have to take that on notice.

Senator RHIANNON: Do you know of any free range egg accreditation scheme in other countries and what their maximum is?

Ms Martin: We would have looked at those things in informing consumer affairs ministers, but I would have to take on notice what they actually are.

Senator RHIANNON: I imagine you would agree that it would be very significant, considering that the most controversial aspect of this whole decision was the maximum level. You would have information on it. Is that correct?

Mr Lonsdale: What Ms Martin is saying is that we would have information. You are right, Senator. These are the sorts of issues that would be brought to ministers attention in making decisions, but we do not have a comprehensive list of acreage for free range hens across countries here. If you would like that, we are happy to take that on notice.

Answer:

- The Decision Regulation Impact Statement for Free Range Egg Labelling discussed two international approaches: the European Union and the United States of America.
- European Union (EU) - Commission Regulation (EC) No 589/2008 of 23 June 2008 sets out detailed rules for implementing Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007. The EU standards require continuous daytime access and a maximum outdoor stocking density of 2,500 hens per hectare (with exceptions).
- United States - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires that egg producers be able to demonstrate that 'free range' egg layers have been allowed access to the outside.