Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2014

Agriculture

Question: 18

Division/Agency: Australian Chief Veterinary Office

Topic: Timing on antibiotics being used in the livestock industry

Proof Hansard page: 92 (28/05/2014)

Senator SIEWERT asked:

Senator SIEWERT: Where it says the study found very low frequencies of resistance to other critically important human antimicrobials including—I cannot say these words—

Dr Martin: The fluroquinolones, yes.

Senator SIEWERT: Is that a good sign? At the moment it is very low frequencies of resistance.

Dr Martin: That is right, yes.

Senator SIEWERT: Although that is a relatively good sign, how quickly does the level of resistance ramp up for some of the critical antibiotics? What time frame have we got?

Dr Martin: Australia has already put in measures, so certain antibiotics have already been restricted and have never been used. Very few of the sort of later generation antibiotics are being used in the livestock industry. They are the ones that are of critical importance for the medical fields. So, we have already put things in—

Senator SIEWERT: You have already put things in place.

Dr Martin: Yes. I guess on timing I would have to take that on notice.

Senator SIEWERT: If you could.

Dr Martin: Because I am not an expert on how quickly—

Senator SIEWERT: If you could, that would be appreciated. What happens after the strategic plan goes to government? Will it be signed off or will it go out for public comment?

Dr Martin: The plan is that it would be publically released.

Senator SIEWERT: For comment or just publically released?

Dr Martin: I think they are planning that it will be for comment.

Senator SIEWERT: I do not mean to be pedantic but is the end of year where it is released for public comment or is a draft released prior to that consultation is finished?

Question: 18 (continued)

Dr Martin: I would have opt take that on notice as to when. My understanding is that it will be towards the end of the year. We will just check whether it will actually be finalised then.

Senator SIEWERT: That is appreciated.

Answer:

How quickly resistance develops to antibiotics is very much dependant on the circumstances in which they are used. Penicillins have been used widely in the dairy industry for mastitis treatment and prevention in Australia for over 60 years. Ongoing surveys indicate that the very low resistance to penicillins has not changed in that time. Alternatively where antibiotics are used inappropriately (for example: underdosing, overdosing, missing doses, and/or inadequate treatment duration) in challenging environments (for example: in hospitals, or where the bacterial load is high and diverse) resistance can develop quickly. The urgency with antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is that most antibiotics were developed in the 1950s and 1960s, resistance to them is reaching severe levels in human pathogens, and no new antibiotics are in the pipeline for commercialization.[1]

The Australian Government Department of Health and Department of Agriculture are developing a National Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy for Australia. A discussion paper *Developing a National Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy* is to be released for public consultation. This paper will be used to inform the National Strategy.

[1] A summation on issues surrounding AMR can be found in the Australian Government Office of the Chief Scientist Paper *Meeting the Threat of AMR: Building a New Frontline Defence* (Occasional Paper Series, Issue 7, July 2013).

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2014

Agriculture

Question: 19

Division/Agency: Australian Chief Veterinary Office

Topic: Hendra Outbreak

Proof Hansard page: 90 (28/05/2014)

Senator FARRELL asked:

Senator FARRELL: Just stopping there. What was the role of this program in the Hendra outbreak?

Dr Martin: It has funded some very specific research projects; just a small amount. I would actually have to take on notice the actual projects that it funded.

Answer:

Between 1998 and 2012, the Commonwealth through Wildlife Exotic Disease Preparedness Program, contributed funding to seven research projects into Hendra virus.

A list of the projects and funding in each year is attached.

Year	**Project Title**	**Commonwealth funding contribution**
1998/1999	Surveillance of Mega- and Microchiroptera in Northern and Western Australia for Evidence of Infection with Australian Bat Lyssavirus, Hendra Virus, Menangle Virus, Japanese Encephalitis Virus and Specified Arboviruses	No records remain
1999/2000	Surveillance of Mega- and Microchiroptera in Northern and Western Australia for Evidence of Infection with Australian Bat Lyssavirus, Hendra Virus, Menangle Virus, Japanese Encephalitis Virus and Specified Arboviruses	No records remain
2001/2002	Investigation of the dynamics of Hendra Virus Infection and Excretion in Flying Foxes	No records remain
2008/2009	Identifying and mapping Hendra Virus Strain Diversity	$9613.00
2009/2010	Identifying and Mapping Hendra Virus	$37 000.00
2010/2011	Identifying and Mapping Hendra Virus	$53 181.00
2011/2012	Identifying and Mapping Hendra Virus	$52 000.00