

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 193

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines

Proof Hansard page: 32-33

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Mr Glyde: The work on transforming the model codes of practice into standards and guidelines, which is a shared responsibility with the states and territories, is continuing. That work is under way. There are a number of codes of practice that are going through that process. There are a number of regulatory impact statements out there. We could provide you with that information, I think, in terms of where we are up to. It is probably quicker for us to take it on notice, but it is up to you.

Senator RHIANNON: I will ask you about the domestic poultry one. But could you take on notice as to where the development of the model code is up to when it actually moves over to the standards. I am interested in that in terms of the timeline, the staffing, the funding and the resources that are provided. Could we have some details about the model code for domestic poultry and where it is up to? Maybe we could start with the timeline process.

Answer:

Draft standards and guidelines for cattle and sheep and associated Regulation Impact Statements were released for a 150 day period of public consultation on 7 March 2013. Feedback is being considered by the cattle and sheep standards and guidelines writing and reference groups. The standards and guidelines for cattle and sheep are expected to be considered by the Standing Council on Primary Industries (SCOPI) in May 2014.

The New South Wales Department of Primary Industries is leading the development of exhibited animals standards and guidelines and these are expected to be considered by SCOPI in May 2014.

The Victorian Department of Primary Industries is leading the development of national standards for the welfare of livestock at saleyards and depots and these are expected to be considered by SCOPI in May 2014.

The scope of the review of the poultry model code is being considered by the Animal Welfare Committee of SCOPI. Preliminary views on scope have been sought from Egg Farmers of Australia and the Australian Chicken Meat Federation Inc. Timelines and costs are yet to be determined.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

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Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 194

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Australian Animal Welfare Advisory Committee

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

Given the abolishment of the Australian Animal Welfare Advisory Committee, what will be the status of future projects?

Answer:

The Australian Animal Welfare Advisory Committee provided advice on the expenditure of funds under the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS). On 6 December 2013, the department advised stakeholders of the government's decision to cease funding of projects under the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy. This includes those projects recommended by the Australian Animal Welfare Advisory Committee for the 2013-14 funding round. Commitments to previously contracted multiyear projects will be met.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 195

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Australia Livestock Exporters Council's Protocol Committee

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

1. Has the Australian Livestock Exporters Council's Protocol Committee met this year?
2. Did departmental officials attend this meeting?
3. Can you please list which trading partners are key priorities?

Answer:

1. Yes, the Australian Livestock Exporters Council's Protocol Committee met on 21 May 2013 and on 29 October 2013.
2. Yes.
3. The priorities identified by Protocol Committee in draft minutes of its most recent (29 October 2013) meeting are:

Priority 1 markets

- Algeria – cattle and sheep
- Cambodia – feeder and breeder cattle
- China – breeder cattle
- China – breeder sheep and goats
- China – feeder and slaughter cattle
- Customs Union (Russia/Kazakhstan/Belarus) – breeder, feeder and slaughter cattle and breeder sheep and goats
- Egypt – feeder and slaughter cattle and sheep
- Indonesia – breeder, feeder and slaughter cattle
- Indonesia – slaughter sheep and goats
- Iran - feeder and slaughter cattle and sheep

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- Iraq – cattle and sheep
- Papua New Guinea – feeder and slaughter cattle
- Thailand - feeder and slaughter cattle
- Turkey - cattle
- Vietnam - feeder and slaughter buffalo

Priority 2 markets

- Japan – breeder and feeder cattle
- Mauritius –feeder and slaughter cattle
- Mexico – cattle

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Question: 196

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Animal welfare legislation

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

Can you update the committee on any developments with Macau authorities with relations to animal welfare legislation and associated programs, including re-housing strategies?

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture has been monitoring developments in Macau through the Australian Consulate-General in Hong Kong. In April 2013, the Australian Consulate-General was advised by the Macau Government that the Canidrome had started an adoption program for retired dogs. On 14 October 2013 the department requested the Australian Consulate-General to seek further updates from the Macau Government when possible on its plans to introduce animal welfare legislation and general animal welfare programs.

Agriculture

Question: 197

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: CCTV in abattoirs

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

There have been calls from various quarters for mandatory CCTV in all Australian meat processing facilities (including abattoirs) as a matter of good quality and hygiene control, as well as in regards to animal welfare oversight, including from industry representatives.

- a) What consideration has been given to this matter?
- b) What are the barriers to this being applied nationally, and what discussions are being had with stakeholders and states to address these barriers?
- c) Which offshore abattoirs have introduced CCTV in response to animal welfare abuses in those abattoirs? What consideration of CCTV in abattoirs within the ESCAS chain has been made? May I have the details please?
- d) What are the prospects for introducing such requirements in onshore and offshore facilities?

Answer:

States and territory governments have responsibilities for abattoirs they license and regulate.

a) Abattoirs operating under the supervision of the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture consistently achieve full compliance with the animal welfare requirements of their licence. Requiring mandatory CCTV would impose additional costs on those operators with no demonstrated need for these.

b) See response to (a) above

c) CCTV monitoring in offshore facilities is a matter for exporters importers and importing governments to consider. The regulatory framework under the Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System puts the obligation on the exporter to ensure that international animal welfare standards are met. Regular audits are required to provide an assessment of the exporters' arrangements in meeting regulatory obligations. International animal welfare standards do not require CCTV monitoring.

d) See responses to (a) and (c) above.

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Agriculture

Question: 198

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: AusAWAC

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

1. The Australian Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AusAWAC) represented a wide range of stakeholders with knowledge and expertise across key animal welfare issues. It advised the Minister for Agriculture and drove the implementation of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy.
 - a) Given the importance of the AusAWAC's expertise and independence to producers, welfare advocates and expert advice to the Minister, what equivalent source of information and expert advice will replace the AusAWAC?
 - b) May I have a list of the tasks and responsibilities the AusAWAC carried out, and where those tasks and responsibilities will be taken up in other agencies?
 - c) What gaps in animal welfare processes and advice to the Minister have been identified as resulting from these changes?
 - d) What concerns have been expressed about the disbanding of the AusAWAC and the freezing of funding for AAWS programs?
 - e) The AusAWAC partnered and coordinated its efforts with a number of state agencies regarding domestic animal welfare issues. What processes or agency will pick up this national linkage role with specific regard to domestic animal welfare issues?
2. May I have details of each of the projects that have been suspended as a result of the freeze on AAWS programs, including where those projects were up to, the aims, expected outcomes and value of each of those projects?

Will those projects be funded in the future? When?

Answer:

1.

a. The department, through the Australian Chief Veterinary Officer provides advice to the Minister on technical animal health and welfare matters.

b. The AUSAWAC provided advice to the Minister on the expenditure of funds under the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy (AAWS). The Committee had oversight of the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy Implementation Plan and was responsible for driving its implementation. The Committee developed an annual work plan that aligned with the AAWS

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objectives. The Committee met three times per year. The Committee's functions will not be replaced.

c. None.

d. A small number of stakeholders have requested reconsideration of the decision to abolish AUSAWAC and the status of grant funding under the Australian Animal Welfare Strategy for 2013-14.

e. The states and territories have responsibility for domestic animal welfare and this will continue irrespective of the decision to abolish AUSAWAC. The development of nationally consistent animal welfare standards and guidelines is a matter for the Standing Council on Primary Industries and individual jurisdictions. The Australian government will continue to participate in the Animal Welfare Committee of SCOPI and to deliver its regulatory responsibilities in relation to animal welfare.

2. No previously approved projects have been suspended. Projects that were recommended by the AUSAWAC for funding in the 2013-14 financial year will not be funded (list attached - **Attachment A**).

Agriculture

Question: 199

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Importation of eggs

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

What is a recent example of a risk assessment process - such as the importation of hatching eggs - and how was science used in that process?

Answer:

Animal and plant scientists undertake risk assessment activities that inform both import and export policies that facilitate the safe movement of plants and animals and their products into and out of Australia. These risk assessments are informed by the best and most up to date scientific information available. As part of the science-based process, these risk assessments are made available to stakeholders so that they may provide any additional scientific evidence.

Relevant scientific literature is examined and this information is taken into account when assessing the biosecurity risks. Risk management measures are applied to manage the biosecurity risks in accordance with Australia's appropriate level of protection (ALOP).

For example, the draft review of biosecurity policy for the importation of hatching eggs of domestic hens and turkeys with regard to avian paramyxovirus 2 and 3 (APMV-2 and APMV-3) considered:

- That, as APMV-2 does not qualify as a hazard as defined in the World Organisation for Animal Health Terrestrial Animal Health Code (the Code), risk management is not required.
- That there is evidence that APMV-3 may cause disease in turkeys and is therefore a hazard as defined by the Code. A risk assessment concluded that the biosecurity risk of this agent was 'extremely low' and hence below Australia's Appropriate Level of Protection. Therefore, risk management is not required.

The draft policy review recommended that the requirements for testing for APMV-2 and APMV-3 be deleted from the Conditions for the Importation of Fertile Eggs (Domestic Hen) and the Conditions for the importation of Fertile Eggs (Domestic Turkey).

The department is considering submissions received in response to the draft policy review before finalising the policy on the risk management of these two agents.

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AUSAWAC Recommended Projects

Project Descriptions		(Up to value) (GST Excl)	GST	(Up to) Total (GST Incl)
1	This project would enable realisation of the strategies, targets and goals of the Australian Working Dog Industry Action Plan. Funding would enable implementation of the strategies and activities to consolidate the new relationships emerging within and between the Australian Working Dog Industry sectors (Private, Government, Assistance and Sporting).	\$ 25,000	\$ Nil	\$ 25,000
2	This project would conduct consultation and develop a series of agreed strategies, targets and goals to form <i>The Australian Horse Welfare & Wellbeing Action Plan</i> for Australian horses for organisations to support.	\$ 30,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 33,000
3	This project would determine the effects of visitor interaction on arboreal primate welfare in zoos. In addition, it will highlight any opportunities to enhance arboreal primate welfare in zoos through novel adjustments to enclosure design or visitor control.	\$ 17,728	\$ 1,772	\$ 19,500
4	This project would collect prevalence information on breed-related disorders of dogs and cats in Australia. These ongoing data would be analysed to reveal critical information about trends in the prevalence of inherited disorders that affect the welfare of companion animals. The information would inform breeders, veterinarians and the public and guide the development of improved breeding practices.	\$ 60,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 66,000
5	This project would implement a National Animal Registry Taskforce to work to improve the current system of identification of animals and their safe return to their owners.	\$ 20,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 22,000
6	This project would collect comprehensive information about the pet-keeping practices currently engaged in by Australian pet owners, as well as information about practices thought to be ideal by experts and the general community.	\$ 26,842	\$ 2,684	\$ 29,526
7	The purpose of the project is to better understand landholder views on kangaroo impacts and gain a thorough understanding of the impacts of a male-only harvest. This information is urgently needed so that harm to kangaroos can be minimised while still achieving the desired outcomes of the harvest. It will also inform policy development and harvest regulation.	\$ 50,000	\$ Nil	\$ 50,000
8	This project would develop standards for the care and handling of ornamental fish in a retail environment. It would also review current methods employed by retail shops when sending fish home with consumers and recommend best practices to ensure the fish are transported home correctly and acclimated to their new environment.	\$ 38,192	\$ 3,819	\$ 42,011
Totals		\$ 267,762	\$ 19,275	\$ 287,037

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

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Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 200

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Abolishing the Australian Animals Welfare Advisory Committee

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator STERLE asked:

Can the Minister explain to the Committee the Government's decision to abolish the Australian Animals Welfare Advisory Committee?

Answer:

The Australian Government is simplifying and streamlining government and reducing red tape. This includes the abolition or rationalisation of non-statutory bodies with advisory functions that had either finished their tasks or conducted activities that were not consistent with the Government's priorities.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates November 2013

Agriculture

Question: 201

Division/Agency: Animal Biosecurity Division

Topic: Live Export Industry Public Image

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

1. What projects or workshops has the Department or any of its agencies funded to help the live export industry improve its image and to address domestic public concerns about cruelty in the live export trade?
2. May I have details of those projects, and funding amounts please?

Answer:

1. Funding was provided for a project that included three workshops that brought together stakeholders associated with livestock exports. The purpose of the project was to educate and inform exporters of the changed societal views on livestock production and livestock export issues to enable industry to better communicate with the public and welfare advocates. .
2. The amount of funding provided was \$69 300. Further details are available on the department's website at www.daff.gov.au/about/obligations/grants-reporting-requirements, Grants 2012-13 update spreadsheet, project ID AW1213-20.