

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

Questions placed on notice at the Additional estimates hearings 15 February 2005

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

26/08/2005 10:46 AM

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5	MS	1	O'Brien	(Advertising) Can the department provide details of advertising campaigns run by the department so far this financial year. I would like to know how much has been spent so far this financial year on advertising and the details of any campaigns planned for the rest of the financial year.
10	F & A	1	O'Brien	(Sustainability Grant) Senator O'BRIEN—I want to turn to the minister's recent announcement that payment of the second tranche of sustainability grants will be delayed. Can you confirm that the amount in question is \$73 million? Mr Pittar—The second tranche amount was \$73 million. Senator O'BRIEN—Are media reports saying that this translates to an average of around \$7,000 per grower roughly accurate?
12	F & A	2	O'Brien	(Regional Advisory Groups) During estimates, Mr Mortimer, you told the committee that \$7.5 million had been allocated for the industry oversight group, the regional advisory groups and the sugar executive officers but you could not then provide a breakdown between those groups that you had funded. Can you do so now?
12	F & A	3	O'Brien	(Regional Advisory Groups) Can you provide—and I am sure you will need to do this on

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				notice—a list of the regional advisory groups that have actually been established and their jurisdiction, if I can put it that way.
14	F & A	4		(Sugar Farmer's grants) Can you give us a breakdown by region of the 48 successful applicants? ...Can you get us a breakdown by region of the 248 applicants, the 48 successful applicants, the 87 rejected applicants and the 113 applicants with pending applications?
15	F & A	5		(Sugar Farmer's grants) How many farmers are expected to avail themselves of re-establishment grants in each of the out years? Mr Mortimer—That is something that we re-examine from time to time. Clearly, the experience to date has been that the grants have not been taken up to the extent that was anticipated. It is possible that there are a few reasons for that including movements in sugar prices, the fact that income support has been available and farmers might be wishing to avail themselves of that while it is there before they come to the next decision about whether they stay in the industry, and farmers might make decisions based on the fact that the quantum of the exit grants is provided on a sliding scale, which reduces for each year over the three years. It is something that we reappraise regularly. It is a very difficult one to pick. Clearly, our earlier projection was incorrect, and so we have to modify it as we go along. Senator O'BRIEN—Is the answer, no, you have not really done one, because it is very difficult to make that assessment? Mr Mortimer—We make the best assessments we can. Senator O'BRIEN—I am asking what they are.

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16	F & A	6	O'Brien	(Regional Sugar Plans) Can the committee see copies of the regional plans?
18	F & A	7	O'Brien	(Sugar Package) Do you know how many intergenerational transfer events were estimated in the estimation of the \$23 million?
21	F & A	8	O'Brien	(Sugar Package: Business Planning) Can we get a breakdown of the successful applicants who were in receipt of income support and the number of successful applicants who were not in receipt of income support?
22	F & A	9	O'Brien	(Dairy Industry Restructuring Package) Now that the document is effectively in the public arena by fact that it was obtained under FOI by the <i>Australian</i> , could the committee be provided with a copy of it?
26	F & A	10	O'Brien	(Citrus Canker Assistance package) What is the total cost of the new assistance package? Can I get a breakdown? Is there a breakdown between the two categories of income support and interest rate subsidies?
27	F & A	11	O'Brien	(Citrus canker assistance package) Is there an estimate of how many growers are likely to take up the Commonwealth offer?
33	BA	1	Heffernan	(Beef Imports) How many countries are there in the world that are major exporters

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				of meat that are free of BSE and foot-and-mouth disease? Dr Banks—In South America alone there is the Brazilian FMD- and BSE-free zone. I am asking which ones have dual accreditation of being free. Dr Banks—That is what I am answering. The whole of the country, not portions. I would suggest New Zealand Dr Banks—Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay—I will take the rest of it on notice.
43	BA	2	O'Brien	(Beef Imports) So the policy itself is not available?
43	BA	3	Heffernan	(Beef Imports) Could we be provided with the decision-making process in 1998 and who partook of that process?
43	BA	4	O'Brien	(Beef Imports) Is there a formal process which kept the minister informed about these considerations?
44	BA	5	Heffernan	(Beef Imports) What is the arrangement with the Bolivian border, where there is foot-and-mouth? Dr Banks—Our understanding is that border controls are in place to prevent the introduction. —What are they? Every cattleman in Australia wants the answer.

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45	BA	6	Heffernan	(Beef Imports) Could you provide to the committee the foot-and-mouth history of Brazil over the years—how it has built up, built down or come and gone—and could you provide the foot-and-mouth history of the adjoining countries. You can provide it in written form.
57	MA	1	O'Brien	(MOU with UAE) Is the memorandum with the UAE a public document? Mr Morris—The protocol that is attached to that, which outlines the import conditions, is certainly a public document. We have not made the MOU itself publicly available, because it is a government to government agreement. If you were to request that agreement, we would check with the UAE. If they were comfortable with our providing you with that agreement, I would be happy to do so.
64	PIAPH	1	O'Brien	(Eradication of the red fire ant) Is there a budget that the committee could be supplied with that shows the breakdown for the expenditure of that money?
66	PIAPH	2	Heffernan	(APVMA) So you are projecting a \$2.9 million loss for this year?
66	PIAPH	3	Heffernan	(APVMA) So you do not think the organisation has become top-heavy? I noticed in 2001-02 there were 124 employees, which cost \$9.38 million. Dr Smith—I would have to confirm that, but it sounds about right. —And now you have 134? Dr Smith—I would have to double-check the number of full-time

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				employees, but the organisation has not become top-heavy.
66	PIAPH	4	Heffernan	(APVMA) According to this document, it costs \$1.8 million more to run that side of it than it did for an extra 10 employees. I have some questions here that I will put on notice so you do not have to guess them. How many companies have products registered with the APVMA? Dr Smith—I would have to take that on notice, but we have some 700 active constituent chemicals approved with the APVMA, and that relates to in excess of 7,500 chemical products. —Do you have any idea of how many of these companies would have what you would call smaller annual sales, say, less than \$5 million?
35	AQIS	1	Heffernan	(Beef Imports) When it was brought into the country, why do you think they scattered it around amongst a whole lot of other people? Dr Banks—I do not know the answer to that question. Senator O'BRIEN—Who were they talking to? Dr Banks—There is a level of commercial-in-confidence on that. Senator O'BRIEN—Why? What is commercially confidential about the importation of a small shipment of beef? Dr Banks—As a rule, AQIS do not divulge the names of permit holders. That is a standard rule. CHAIR—I was actually going to ask you who the others were. Can you not tell us that? I think there is a national interest at stake here. Dr Banks—I would have to take it on notice as to whether I can

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				give you those names. CHAIR—You might, with great respect—and, if need be, in confidence—supply the committee with the names of the main players, because there is a series of questions that flow on.
43	AQIS	2	Heffernan	(Beef Imports) How often do we import fresh meat? When was the last time fresh meat was imported?
46	AQIS	3	Heffernan	(Beef Imports) So you will provide us with all the other imports— Ms Stanton—Can I just clarify please exactly what you are asking for here. Are you asking for information on other imports that may have come from Brazil? —No, just the history of fresh meat importation. Ms Stanton—Are we talking about all countries here? —We are wondering what else is back there that we do not know about. This may have been repeated several times—the system has gotten away without discovery, for all I know; it may not have. Ms Stanton—I understand that what you are asking for is details, since 1998, of all red meat imported into Australia. —Fresh or frozen—uncooked. Ms Stanton—I can take it on notice. Senator O'BRIEN—All red meat or do you just want beef? —Beef.
70	AQIS	4	O'Brien	(Herbs and Spices) Is it the case that, since 17 August 2004, virtually all dried herbs

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				and spices being imported into the country are now treated as high-risk products and that a regime involving laboratory testing of a sample batch of each import is required? ... I understand that, prior to that date, the only dried herbs and spices that were treated as high risk and were routinely subject to analysis were cinnamon, pepper and paprika. I want to know what the risk associated with imported herbs and spices is; what process was used to determine that these products pose a greater risk than was previously thought; and what the basis was for the decision to place the products in a high-risk category.
92	AQIS	5	O'Brien	(Fishers quarantine) In the minister's press release of 31 January, it says: A commitment is also given to boost quarantine arrangements for fishers and their vessels by providing additional AQIS monitoring and surveillance and pest and disease surveys. What additional resources are being provided to meet this commitment and where are they coming from?
75	ABARE	1	Allison	(Vehicle Emissions) I do not know if you can answer this or not, Dr Fisher. The report claims that 50 per cent of ethanol and biodiesel plants will be located in Australian major cities and urban centres that are at particular risk from particulate emissions from vehicles. Can you explain why that remark was made and what justification you have for it? And, if there is some data, scientific or otherwise, can you provide that?
76	ABARE	2	Allison	(Particulates generated by industry) I want to go to the claim that particulates generated by industry in

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				regional and rural communities represent an equal risk—if not a greater risk—as particulate emissions from vehicles in major urban centres. Why was that claim made, and what is the data that backs it?
82	RPI	1	O'Brien	(Exceptional Circumstance) Could you get me a breakdown of the estimates for each exceptional circumstances region and the now-budgeted figure for the region?
83	RPI	2	O'Brien	(Rural Policy and Innovation Responsibilities) Senator, if the division title is causing you some confusion we would be happy to provide you with a list of those issues that we are responsible for, if that would be helpful. Senator O'BRIEN—Yes, I think that might be helpful. It will not help me today but it might be helpful in the future.
87	F&F	1	O'Brien	(Fisheries Resource Research Fund) In which areas are there significant reductions expected?
88	F&F	2	O'Brien	(Illegal Fishing) What about charges laid against crews? Have you any statistics on that?
89	F&F	3	O'Brien	(Illegal Fishing) What proportion of those apprehended actually end up receiving jail terms in Australia?
93	F&F	4	O'Brien	(Illegal Fishing) How many boardings did not lead to an apprehension or a catching gear forfeiture?

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				Mr P. Murphy—I would have to take that on notice. —How many boardings were requested? On how many occasions did you request pursuit and apprehension of a vessel?
93	F&F	5	O'Brien	(Ghost nets) If you could give us those figures on notice I would appreciate it. Back to ghost nets. On 1 December the minister announced an allocation of \$2 million for the removal of abandoned foreign fishing nets and debris from the Gulf of Carpentaria. Is that the same \$2 million that was announced for the same purpose back on 28 July?
94	F&F	6	O'Brien	(Ghost nets) What is the process of removal of the ghost nets?
95	F&F	7	O'Brien	(Ghost nets) Has the process started?
95	F&F	8	O'Brien	(Illegal fishing patrols) When did the <i>Oceanic Viking</i> commence patrolling our southern fishery? Senator Ian Macdonald—We can give you the dates of past patrols on notice, but don't ask about future patrols. You understand. —How many voyages has the <i>Oceanic Viking</i> made into our southern fisheries to date? Mr Hurry—It has made one patrol so far. —When you are giving me the other information you can tell me how much actual time was spent there. Senator Ian Macdonald—This information is certainly available. Apparently we do not have it, but we will give you the dates and

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				duration of both the <i>Aurora Australis</i> and the <i>Oceanic Viking</i> .
96	F&F	9	O'Brien	(The Oceanic Viking) When does the two years run from? 1 July, 1 November, 1 January?
98	F&F	10	O'Brien	(Aquaculture Initiative) Where is the Aquaculture Initiative up to at the moment? I recall that it aimed to find a better-structured aquaculture science and policy research and it was scheduled to conclude sometime this financial year.
104	F&F	11	O'Brien	(Tasmanian Forestry: areas protected) I am asking when the work commenced on preparing these various forms of descriptors of the areas sought to be protected. Senator Ian Macdonald—I think the officer said it is ongoing. —No. I am asking when it commenced. It is ongoing from a certain date. I want the date.
104	F&F	12	O'Brien	(Tasmanian Forestry) When before the election did you commence work on these maps and various documents describing the area of 170,000 hectares? Can you give me a date?
111	F&F	13	O'Brien	(Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement) Were that to occur, is the extended agreement protected under the regional forest agreement? I think the answer is yes. Mr Quinlivan—I would say that is a speculative question because it would depend on the terms of the extension and so on. It would be a matter of agreement. —Are there any provisions of the legislation which have specific

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				impact on such an extension?
112	F&F	14	O'Brien	(Tasmanian forestry boundaries) Can you provide us with a map showing the boundaries of the Tarkine?
114	F&F	15	O'Brien	(Tasmanian Pulp Mill) Has there been consultation with this department to date about that matter?
115	F&F	16	O'Brien	(Tasmanian CRC) What is the status of funding for the CRC? What programs have been funded and for how long?
NA	MS Additio nal	1	Carr	Please provide a table listing details of all consultancies for the 2003/04 financial year, for the department and all associated agencies. Please include the following: • The costs for all completed consultancies, both budgeted and actual; • The costs for ongoing consultancies, both budgeted and for the current financial year; • The total costs for all consultancies, both the amount expended in the current financial year, and the total budgeted value of all consultancies running in the current financial year; • The nature and purpose of the consultancy; • The method by which the contract was let; The name and details of the company and/or individual who is carrying out, or carried out, the contract.

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NA	AQIS Additional	2	Cherry	(Exotic Plants Species) Could you provide the total number and list of the species of exotic plant species proposed for import into Australia for each financial year until 2003/04 since the <i>Quarantine Proclamation, 1998</i> came into force?
NA	BA Additional	3	Cherry	(Exotic Plant Species) Could you provide the total number and list of the species of exotic plant species that were rejected for import into Australia due to them failing a Weed Risk Assessment for each financial year until 2003/04 since <i>Quarantine Proclamation, 1998</i> came into force?
NA	BA Additional	4	Cherry	(Exotic Plants) Could you provide the total number and list of the species of exotic plant species that were accepted for import into Australia due to them passing a Weed Risk Assessment for each financial year until 2003/04 since <i>Quarantine Proclamation, 1998</i> came into force?
NA	BA Additional	5	Cherry	(Exotic Plants) Could you provide the total number and list of the species of exotic plant species that were unable to be assessed by Weed Risk Assessment for each financial year until fy 2003/04 since <i>Quarantine Proclamation, 1998</i> came into force?
NA	AQIS Additional	6	Cherry	(Exotic Plants) Could you provide the total number and list of the species of exotic plant species that were permitted for import into

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				Australia by virtue of them being a permitted genus or species on Schedule 5 for each financial year until fy 2003/04 since the <i>Quarantine Proclamation, 1998</i> came into force?
NA	AQIS Additio nal	7	Cherry	(Exotic Plants) Could you provide the total number and list of the species of exotic plant species (including type of plant) that were imported into Australia through a permitted genus on Schedule 5 for each financial year until fy 2003/04 since the <i>Quarantine Proclamation, 1998</i> came into force?
NA	AQIS Additio nal	8	Cherry	(Exotic Plants) Could you provide the total number and list of the species of exotic plant species that were previously not known to be present in Australia, that were imported into Australia through a permitted genus on Schedule 5 for each financial year until 2003/04 since the <i>Quarantine Proclamation, 1998</i> came into force?
NA	PIAPH Additio nal	9	Heffernan	(Uhrig Report and APVMA governance) You are aware of the Uhrig Report and the Government's initial response to Uhrig Report? I will quote from the Finance Minister's response (source below) "By applying the Uhrig templates to all government agencies, and thereby ensuring there are clear lines of accountability from the Minister down to the agency, the Government can implement better corporate governance in the public sector without the need for an additional layer of regulation. ...The assessment of all Australian Government agencies against the templates

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				is expected to be completed by March 2006." What are Department's plans for undertaking this review for the APVMA? When will you be commencing?
NA	PIAPH Additio nal	10	Heffernan	(Small Business and the APVMA) a) How many companies have products registered with the APVMA? b) How many products are registered with the APVMA by these 'small' companies? c) What proportion of these products are used in agriculture? d) What proportion of these products are high risk? What proportion are low risk? e) How much did APVMA's defence of this matter cost (including officer resource time)? f) Would these costs ultimately be drawn from other companies participating in the Agvet chemical sector? g) Given the Administrative Appeals Tribunal's comment that – quote – "swimming pool disinfectants would not ordinarily be regarded as agricultural chemical products and their sale would not ordinarily

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				be expected to be regulated by an Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority pursuant to an Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Code" – how many other categories of non-agricultural veterinary product is the APVMA attempting to regulate? h) What measures has the agency put into place to reduce the small business regulatory burden?
NA	PIAPH Additio nal	11	Heffernan	(Agency Operating costs/expenditure - APVMA) a) Can the Department explain the mechanisms in place to ensure the application of Commonwealth financial management principles and budgetary restraint are being adhered to at the APVMA? b) Can the Department explain how this situation has arisen in light of the fact that APVMA had in excess of \$9.5M in reserves at the end of the 2000/01 financial year? c) The Department recently circulated a Cost Recovery Impact Statement that sets out proposals to reform the cost recovery framework for the APVMA. The proposal also seeks to increase APVMA revenue to \$24.26 Million in 2005/06 (i.e by about \$5.3 Million over 2004/05). The fact that all of the APVMA funding comes from industry – not government – does not justify unrestrained growth in agency size and costs.

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				d) Can the Department justify the increase? e) If the increase is to fund new programs, what scrutiny have these new programs been subjected to – are they subject to review by Treasury and/or Department of Finance?