

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2014

Agriculture

Question: 68

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Animal Welfare Codes of Practice & Standards

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Scoping Process

1. Ms South said that the Animal Welfare Committee has engaged with a limited number of stakeholders to start to form a view around what the scope of this exercise might look like.
 - a. What stakeholders have been included in what Ms South says is a limited number?
 - b. Can you explain the process you used to determine which stakeholders you would include?
 - c. Can you explain why Range Farmers Association was not included in this?
 - d. Can I ask specifically:
 - i. Why, given consumer demand for free-range poultry meat & eggs and given free-range eggs is the most rapidly growing section of the egg market, the Range Farmers Association has not been included in the process?
 - ii. Why consumer expectations haven't been taken into account and why free-range producers aren't an equal part of the process as other industry representatives groups?

Ducks

2. Are the very separate biological (*access to clean pooled water*) and health needs of ducks and other water fowl going to be addressed by the review of the Poultry Code of Practice?
 - a. If not, why not? Where and when will these very different welfare needs be addressed?
3. The very painful and debilitating debilling of ducks is not widely practiced but is still legal in Australia, will issues like this be open for discussion and change within the drafting stage of the standards and guidelines? How?

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4. An animal welfare group has recently published a report on the welfare concerns in duck farming- is this report being used as part of the consideration? Is there anyone in particular that I may forward this report to for the scoping process?
5. Which individuals or groups will be involved in the writing and reference groups specifically for ducks?

Process

6. Has the writing group for the Poultry Code been established yet?
 - a. When will it be established?
 - b. **If not**, given 'appropriate industry representation' is to makeup the writing group, will the industry producers representing true free-range producers be invited as members
 - c. **If not**, will animal welfare organisations be invited? Which ones? What is process for being considered as a member of the Writing Group?
 - d. **If yes**, who are the members of the group? Who was invited ?
 - e. **If yes**, where is the first draft and technical issues paper up to?
7. Mr Chapman outlined that the Animal welfare committee agreed to a review of the poultry code as a priority. On 10 December the members of the AWC agreed in principle the scope of that review.
 - a. Is there an action plan for this poultry code review?
 - b. May I have specific dates for each step of the review process as per the Animal Welfare Standards & Guidelines Development Business Plan
 - c. If you do not yet have a plan, when will you have one?
 - d. Will you make public the plan and when?
8. The Writing Group is supposed to refer to scientific literature and community expectations to "support an evidence-based approach" in preparation of its first draft.
 - a. Are there any animal welfare group representatives on the Writing Group?
 - b. If not, why not? How can it be put on the agenda for consideration? Who determines the makeup of the Writing Group?

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- c. What sort of guarantee that the current science on animal welfare issues and needs will be referred to?
 - d. Please detail how community expectations for true free-range and cruelty-free will be incorporated?
9. What is the process to ensure animal welfare organisations and experts in this area have the opportunity to be included in the Reference Group, which addresses the issues presented by the Writing Group and endorses the first draft?
- a. Please detail how public input in the public consultation stage informs the final Standards and Guidelines?

Answer:

1.
 - a. Preliminary views have been sought from Egg Farmers of Australia and the Australian Chicken Meat Federation Inc.
 - b. The Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) determined that initial consultation on the scope of the poultry code review should be carried out with the major national representative organisations for the egg and chicken meat industries.
 - c. Major national representative bodies were included in the initial discussions. The Free Range Farmers Association is not a national representative body
 - d.
 - i. The poultry code review is only in its preliminary stage. The AWC has not yet carried out extensive stakeholder consultation activities however, this will be undertaken before the scope of the review is finalised.
 - ii. The poultry code review is only in its preliminary stage. The AWC will consider consumer expectations and will consult with a wide range of stakeholders before the scope of the review is finalised.
2. Yes. Ducks and other species including turkeys, geese, guinea fowl, pigeons, partridge and quail will be included in the review. The development of the standards and guidelines will address the health needs of each specific species.
 - a. Not applicable, refer to answer 2.
3. Yes. All husbandry practices will be discussed throughout the development of standards and guidelines for ducks and other species.
4. Yes. A literature review of material related to poultry welfare will be conducted as part of the poultry code review. The report can be forwarded to the AWC Secretariat, whose contact details are:

Secretariat - Animal Welfare Committee
Department of Environment and Primary Industries
Level 23, 1 Spring Street, Melbourne, Victoria 3000
E: awc.secretariat@depi.vic.gov.au

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5. Membership of the writing and reference groups is yet to be determined.
6. No
 - a. A date has not been set.
 - b. In response to the recommendations from the PricewaterhouseCoopers *Review of the Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines Development Process (July 2013)*, the AWC is considering the structure and membership of this group.
 - c. Refer to answer 6.b
 - d. Refer to answer 5.
 - e. Refer to answer 5.
7. a. No
 - b. The poultry code review project plan has not been developed yet.
 - c. Following the appointment of a project manager, by the AWC, a detailed project plan will be developed.
 - d. Yes. It is expected that the project plan will be made publically available once developed.
8. a. Refer to answer 5.
 - b. Refer to answer 6.b
 - c. In response to the recommendations from the PricewaterhouseCoopers *Review of the Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines Development Process (July 2013)*, the AWC has agreed to consult regularly with stakeholders to identify priorities for targeted research, surveys and/or consultation throughout the development process.
 - d. All production systems will be included in the review.
9. Refer to answer 6.b
 - a. Writing and reference groups consider feedback received during public consultation and as a result may recommend:
 - 1 amendments to the draft standards and guidelines; and
 - 2 new standards or guidelines.

The draft standards and guidelines (including any amendments or additions), and a summary of the feedback received during public consultation, will be considered by state and territory governments before final endorsement.

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Question: 69

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Crustaceans and animal welfare standards

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

1. Do crustaceans have any protection under any industry Codes or Practice?
2. Will crustaceans be considered within the ongoing development of the new Standards and Guidelines?
 - a. Is this already taking place?
 - b. What process is available to ensure crustaceans are considered in the development of the new Standards and Guidelines?

Answer:

1. We are not aware of any specific industry codes of practice for crustaceans. Crustaceans are included under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, or animal welfare Acts, in some jurisdictions.
2. There are currently no plans for the development of standards and guidelines for crustaceans.
 - a. No.
 - b. Refer to answer 2.