Australian Government
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority

Ref: G6076

8 June 2010

Ms Naomi Bleeser
Committee Secretary
Australian Senate
Community Affairs Legislation Committee
PO Box 6100
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Bleeser

FOOD STANDARDS AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND AMENDMENT BILL 2010

Thank you for your letter of 4 June 2010 in which you sought responses to 4 questions on notice. The APVMA's responses together with the questions are set out below.

Question 1: Please provide an overview of the role APVMA currently undertakes in setting Maximum Residue Limits (MRL) for agricultural chemicals and how this relates to the activities of FSANZ and the operation of the food code.

Answer 1: The APVMA currently determines maximum residue limits for chemical products that are used on food producing crops or food producing animals. This occurs when a person makes an application to the APVMA to register a new chemical product, to extend the use of an existing chemical product to a food-producing situation or to seek a permit to authorise use of a product in a food-producing situation. The APVMA assessment includes a residues component, which includes the dietary risk assessment. The dietary exposure assessment is conducted jointly by APVMA and FSANZ in accordance with a FSANZ/APVMA agreed protocol under a Memorandum of Understanding between the two agencies. APVMA enters the MRL into the APVMA MRL Standard, which triggers the entry of the corresponding MRL into the Food Standards Code. FSANZ then conducts a consultation process including WTO notification prior to variation of the Food Standards Code.

Question 2: What will APVMA's role be if the proposed legislation is passed?

Answer 2: If the proposed legislation is passed the APVMA will have the legislated ability to vary the Food Standards Code for domestically grown produce.

Question 3: What is the average amount of time that elapses between APVMA applying to FSANZ to have an MRL included in the food code and its promulgation in the food code?

Answer 3: Currently the average time period is approximately twelve months but has varied between six and eighteen months. The APVMA estimates the proposed legislative changes will reduce that timeframe to around four months.

Question 4: Are there any new or increased risks, particularly in regard to human health, that may result from the passage of the proposed legislation?

Answer 4: No. All current dietary exposure measures will remain the same and the dietary risk assessment will be undertaken by APVMA and checked by FSANZ as is currently the case. FSANZ may undertake its own dietary risk assessment on a case-by-case basis as needed.

Yours sincerely

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