

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014 - 2015, 22 October 2014

Ref No: SQ14-001305

OUTCOME: 1 – Population Health

Topic: FSANZ Nanotechnology Standards

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Siewert, Rachel

Question:

In Estimates questions taken on notice, FSANZ gave details of a survey it had conducted of food packaging companies. In that survey, businesses noted that FSANZ regulations were ‘minimalistic at best’ and that compliance with EU and US standards meant that compliance with Australian requirements was assumed.

In light of a similar hands off approach to regulating nanomaterials in food, would you agree that FSANZ standards relating to nanomaterials in food are also minimalistic at best and essentially irrelevant as well?

Answer:

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) does not consider that standards regulating nanoscale materials in foods are minimalistic. In December 2008, FSANZ amended its Application Handbook to require applicants to provide appropriate information for FSANZ to conduct a robust risk assessment on food substances that may be manufactured using novel nanotechnologies. Any new or novel food substance manufactured using nanotechnologies that may present safety concerns will need to undergo a pre-market assessment before it can legally be supplied in or as food in Australia.

FSANZ continues to monitor the regulatory environment to ensure foods and any ingredients do not present risks to public health and safety.