Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 197
Division/Agency: BSG – SP - Biosecurity Services Group - Strategic Projects
Topic: Beale Review
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. When will the government release a comprehensive response on the Beale Review which was commissioned by the Labor Government?

2. Can you give an indication of the progress of the reforms in each industry and whether they will be completed by the time the subsidy is removed. The industries are
    - Horticulture
    - Meat – Industry based certified inspectors
    - Dairy
    - Grains
    - Fish
    - Organics

3. Live animals certification is currently paper based and industry requested an online IT system with automatic approval of Export Plans so industry can put the required protocols in place and get on with their business. Why has the government only adopted the recommendation for cutting funding when the review found that our border defences are significantly under-resourced, putting Australia's economy, people, and environment at significant risk?

Answer:

1. The government provided a response to the Beale Review in December 2008 and has made a number of announcements since then on progress with the reforms. The reforms to the biosecurity system will occur incrementally over a number of years as they are comprehensive and require careful implementation.

2. Industry and the department are working together to ensure the implementation of the Export Certification Reform Package is progressing on schedule and within budget. Joint Industry–Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) Ministerial Taskforces have established detailed work plans to implement reform for each industry sector. The six ministerial taskforces are making good progress against agreed timelines as shown below.

    - Horticulture: A new service delivery model and fees and charges structure underpinned by an independent financial evaluation by Ernst and Young has been presented to industry for discussion and agreement. See: www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/export_certification_reform_package/horticulture-mtf

Question: 197 (continued)

- Meat: Phase 1 reforms (competent company personnel taking on some export tasks under AQIS control) have been implemented in 20 establishments. Phase 2 (company employed AQIS approved officers carrying out meat inspection activities under the control of the AQIS on-plant veterinary officer) is on track for completion. Major trading partners have been informed of the changes and have raised no barriers to the reforms being implemented. See: http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/export_certification_reform_package/meat-mtf.

  The department, through the MTF, has requested advice from AMIC on a fee structure underpinning the proposed Australian Export Meat Inspection System (AEMIS). As of 4 April 2011, that advice hadn't been provided to the department.

- Dairy: A reformed certification system is being finalised. A 3-5 year strategic plan for the industry and market access is being developed. See: http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/export_certification_reform_package/dairy-mtf

- Grains: A comprehensive review of the legislation is on track. Service delivery models have been endorsed and new fees and charges developed. Strategic plans for market access and for handling pest, disease and weed status are progressing well. See: http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/export_certification_reform_package/grain-mtf

- Fish: The business process and supply chain mapping reports have been finalised. The taskforce has agreed on a future certification service delivery model. See: http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/export_certification_reform_package/fish-mtf

- Live animal exports: The automation of the live animals export documentation process is on track and is the major reform focus of this industry. See: http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/export_certification_reform_package/live-animal-mtf

- There is no organics Ministerial Taskforce.

3. As per the answer to question 1.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates February 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 198

Division/Agency: BSG – QO – Biosecurity Services Group - Quarantine Operations Division
Topic: Imported Prawns
Proof Hansard Page: 28 (21/02/2011)

Senator Heffernan asked:

Senator HEFFERNAN—Yes, I understand that. The imported prawns that got out—no-one got their head cut off. I suppose he had a glass of wine and said, 'Oh, gee, that was a mistake.'—went to the various outlets, could have been Coles and Woolies. We do not know whether they were used as fish bait, we do not know whether they were in Coles when they got washed to sea in Brisbane. There is a risk, is there not, that those prawns would get into the system?
Mr Chapman—The risk was assessed as being extremely low.
Senator HEFFERNAN—Based on what?
Mr Chapman—Based on the assessment of who the prawns were sold to and based on the fact that they were generally prawn cutlets, that they were high-end, quite expensive prawns. They were actually sold to restaurants and to the catering industry so the assessment was that it was extremely unlikely, extremely low risk, that they would be—
Senator HEFFERNAN—Did you say they were prawn cutlets? They were not raw, green, peeled prawns?
Mr Chapman—There were a range of products but they were, as I said a high—
Senator HEFFERNAN—Could you give us the details of the range of products?
Mr Chapman—Yes, we can provide that.
Senator HEFFERNAN—Thank you. Could you also give us the outlets that they were sold to? Because, if you do not know, you have not done your job, and we want to know because we are going to do our job.

Answer:

The products were:

- farmed prawns that were peeled, de-veined with the tail on
- farmed prawns that were peeled and deveined with tail off
- wild caught prawns that were prawn cutlets (peeled, de-veined with tail on)
- wild caught that were prawn meat (peeled, deveined with tail off).

The prawns were 'high-end' product for the catering and restaurant industry with each package required to be marked "For human consumption only – not to be used as bait or feed for aquatic animals".

Information in relation to which business purchased theses prawns is commercial-in-confidence.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates February 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 199

Division/Agency: BSG – QO – Biosecurity Services Group / Quarantine Operations Division
Topic: Protocols for Cruise Ships
Proof Hansard Page: 49-50 (21/02/2011)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—Is there anywhere that we could access on the department's website what those protocols might be for dealing with those materials off a cruise ship?
Ms Mellor—The waste management?
Senator COLBECK—Yes.
Mr Chapman—We can provide information on the waste management protocols. I don't believe we have got them on the website but we have a range of compliance agreements and stipulated protocols.
Senator COLBECK—So are they negotiated individually with the shipping companies or are they something that we have got in the bottom drawer? What is the process for updating those for emerging issues?
Mr Chapman—No, they are not negotiated individually. We have protocols which apply to airlines, to arriving international vessels. We are currently in the process of updating waste management protocols and
they are quite broad in their application—so not designed to look at particular vectors or particular diseases but to manage the spectrum of risks which might occur because of the waste of various materials onboard vessels or onboard aircraft.

Answer:

The relevant protocols for quarantine waste management associated with cruise vessel waste are **attached**.

1. Business Policy – Quarantine Waste Management (this document is also available on the department's website : www.daff.gov.au/qwmbp
2. Collection of Quarantine Waste
3. Transportation of Quarantine Waste
4. Storage of Quarantine Waste

The specific process management systems for the collection, storage and transportation of quarantine waste on cruise ships are highlighted in attachments 2-4.

[4 Attachments]

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 200

Division/Agency: BSG – P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: Asian Honey Bees
Proof Hansard Page: 31-32 (21/02/2011)

Senator Heffernan asked:

Senator HEFFERNAN—How many traps did you put out?
Ms Ransom—Initially there were very few traps. Trapping technology has improved through the program.
Senator HEFFERNAN—How many is a few? Two?
Ms Ransom—I would have to ask Queensland for the exact numbers over the period of time. These bees are not strongly attracted to traps and so they are very difficult to pick up.

Answer:

Biosecurity Queensland was the responsible state agency and managed the logistics and daily implementation of the program. Biosecurity Queensland advises that throughout the course of the program the number of traps used varied as surveillance efficacy and trapping techniques improved. The maximum number of traps laid was around 350 in the Cairns area, these included land swarm traps, tableland traps and boat run traps.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 201

Division/Agency: BSG – P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: Asian Honey Bees
Proof Hansard Page: 33 (21/02/2011)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—Will you table or make available to the committee the technical report from those who say it is not eradicable as well as the technical report or evidence given by the entomologists who say that it is too early to say whether it is eradicable or not? History will show what the cost of this decision will be.
Ms Hinder—There is a report from the consultative committee on emergency plant pests. We will take that question on notice, but I imagine there would be no difficulties in providing that to the committee.

Answer:

The Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests' review of the Asian honey bee eradication program for the National Management Group is **attached**.

Also **attached** are:

- Queensland Government's report on 'Proposed Activities for *Apis cerana* in North Queensland – January 2011 and beyond'
- AusVet Animal Health Services Stage 2 Report 'Review of likely eradicability of Asian honeybees (*Apis cerana)* in Queensland'
- AusVet Animal Health Services Stage 2 Report: Appendix 1 – Distribution of AHB detections
- AusVet Animal Health Services Stage 2 Report: Appendix 2 – AHB detections and surveillance

[5 Attachments]

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 202

Division/Agency: BSG – P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: ***Jatropha curcas***
Proof Hansard Page: 44 (21/02/2011)

Senator Milne asked:

Senator MILNE—I do not know if there is any imported; I am assuming there is not. I am assuming it is just interstate, but I will check on that with the various states. The second thing is: I understand that a number of airlines have been talking up the possibility of growing—and I will spell it—it is j-a-t-r-o-p-h-a c-u-r-c-a-s, which has been identified as a weed in the Australian context. There is a lot of pressure on to reverse the ban on this weed coming into Australia in order to grow it as a biofuel. I understand it is banned in Western Australia and the Northern Territory currently and I just want to get a reassurance from you that the ban will continue and it will remain illegal to import this particular plant, especially since Air New Zealand's CEO was estimating that, if 300,000 square kilometres of northern Australia were planted out with this, it would make a big difference. Indeed, it would make a big difference to the biodiversity; as to what happened in biofuels, I do not know. Can you give me an answer on whether there has been an application to overturn the ban? If so,what action have you taken?
Mr Magee—Thanks, Senator Milne. As we have indicated, we will probably get you a full answer on that on notice, but this issue has been around for some time.
Senator COLBECK—Sorry, what is it called?
Mr Magee—Jatropha. I think a lot of it is centred around whether the jurisdictions where it is present have taken any steps on official control. So, unless there was a clear position that it was under some sort of active control, the ban would remain in place, but we will get you a full answer on that.

Answer:

Jatropha curcas is prohibited from importation into Australia unless an import permit is granted.

Jatropha curcas has been declared a noxious weed in the Northern Territory and Western Australia and is under official eradication and control measures in these jurisdictions. *Jatropha curcas* cannot be moved into or within the Northern Territory or Western Australia.

The Biosecurity Services Group (BSG) has received three applications to import *Jatropha curcas* seed for growth and processing into biofuel. These import applications have not been approved due to the quarantine pest status of *Jatropha curcas*. BSG has granted one permit for the import of *Jatropha curcas* seeds and plants for contained research in a quarantine approved laboratory.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 203

Division/Agency: BSG – P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: Apples from China
Proof Hansard Page: 46 (21/02/2011)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—About 24 containers of apples have come?
Ms van Meurs—That is correct.
Senator COLBECK—There must be a purchaser for these things for them to come in, I would have thought. So do we know who the consignees are?
Ms van Meurs—At the moment we have issued 16 import permits, for various importers.
Senator COLBECK—Are the names of the importers public?
Ms van Meurs—It is commercial-in-confidence information.
Senator COLBECK—Why is it commercial in confidence?
Ms van Meurs—When we issue an import permit, it is confidential information between the importer and AQIS. We could consider issuing the information, but—
Dr Grant—This is about competitiveness. Who is buying what is something that is about market share and market competition, so I do not think it is our business to provide information about that.
Senator COLBECK—We are not asking you to say how much they are paying for it or anything like that;we just want to know who is bringing stuff in.
Dr Grant—I will take it on notice but, as we have said, there are 16 permits that have been issued.

Answer:

The department has granted 16 import permits to allow the importation of fresh apples from China. Information on the company who have applied for import permits are commercial-in-confidence.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 204

Division/Agency: BSG – P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: Import of Potatoes into New Zealand
Proof Hansard Page: 48 (21/02/2011)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—Which countries does New Zealand accept potatoes from?
Dr Findlay—I will have to take that on notice. I do not know what New Zealand's import conditions are and which countries they import from.

Answer:

The Biosecurity Services Group does not retain information on which countries New Zealand imports potatoes from. However, New Zealand's import conditions are publicly available on the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Biosecurity New Zealand website, at www.biosecurity.govt.nz/

All import requirements for all countries to New Zealand are listed in the following documents on the above website:

- *MAF Biosecurity New Zealand Standard 152.02 – Importation and Clearance of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables into New Zealand.*
- *MAF Biosecurity New Zealand Standard 155.02.06 – Importation of Nursery Stock*

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 205

Division/Agency: BSG- P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: Kiwifruit and Bacterial Canker
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. Can you update us on the breakout out of Bacterial canker in New Zealand?
2. Have we suspended or reviewed quarantine arrangements from infected countries?
3. Do we have a national response plan for an outbreak?

Answer:

1. Biosecurity New Zealand advises the department that the response to the bacterial canker of kiwifruit in New Zealand is ongoing. An independent authority has been set up to manage the response with the disease now widespread across both the north and south islands of New Zealand. As of 7 February 2011, 130 orchards had been confirmed as having the bacterial canker present.

2. Until a review of existing import conditions is finalised, the department's Biosecurity Services Group has suspended imports of nursery stock and pollen of kiwifruit (*Actinidia* spp.) from all countries where bacterial canker is present.

3. A national response to a new plant pest would be conducted under the auspices of the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed. To initiate the deed process, there needs to be at least one affected industry member. In this instance, it is the Nursery and Garden Industry Association, noting that the kiwifruit industry is neither a member of Plant Health Australia, nor a signatory to the deed. Within this framework there are a number of contingency plans for bacterial diseases in cropping systems based on the life cycles of the pathogens and their capacity to spread.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 206

Division/Agency: BSG- P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: Asian Honey Bee
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

Bees – Asian honeybee

1. Can you explain the committee system process for overseeing the management of this eradication program?
2. Does a bureaucratic committee system provide the best mechanism for the management of pests such as the honeybee when there is a definite public good for eradicating such pests?
3. We are hearing rumours that the eradication program was hindered by the need to extract money from stakeholders.
   It is a fairly loaded question of do you want us to eradicate this pest if so show us the money.
   There are lots of industries that would benefit from the eradication they may not immediately see the benefits.

   So shouldn't the government take a more of role in funding this as it will for example impact on native bee populations and the pollination of crops and native vegetation?

Answer:

1. The management structure for Asian honeybees follows the requirements of the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed – a legally binding agreement between the Australian Government, state and territory governments and plant based industries that are signatories to the deed. Decisions under the deed are made by a National Management Group (NMG), comprised of the chief executive officers of the national and all state/territory departments of agriculture and primary industries, representatives of affected peak industry bodies, Plant Health Australia and a representative of the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

   The NMG takes into account technical advice from the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP). The CCEPP for Asian honeybees was comprised of Chief Plant Health Managers from each state and territory, the Chief Plant Protection Officer of the department, a representative of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council, a representative of the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities and Plant Health Australia. Members of the CCEPP have lengthy experience in assessing and eradicating emergency plant pests and diseases.

   This is the same committee system as for the Myrtle rust response.

Question: 206 (continued)

2. The committee system provides the broadest consideration of public, industry and environmental benefits.

3. Under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) all parties commit to a shared financial responsibility. In accordance with the requirements of the EPPRD, it was agreed by all parties to the response that Asian Honey Bees it would be treated as a 'Category 2' plant pest.

   The categorisation of Asian Honeybees as a Category 2 plant pest resulted in a cost apportionment of 80 per cent for governments and 20 per cent for industry. The Australian and state and territory governments have met their funding obligations to contribute to the eradication response. The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council on behalf of their members was the sole industry contributor to the eradication program. The Council has failed to make its contribution under the deed. Other industries reliant on pollination services were approached at peak industry level to contribute, but declined.

   The decision to cease eradication activities under the deed was made on the basis that it is not technically feasible to eradicate the Asian honeybee. While the decision means the eradication program will end on 31 March 2011, it does not mean that all activities against the bee will cease.

   At its meeting of 31 January 2001, the Asian Honeybee National Management Group agreed to the establishment of a group to consider what future actions, if any, could be undertaken at a national, state or industry specific level to mitigate the impact of the bees. The Asian Honeybee Coordination Group met for the first time on 15 March 2011 and will next meet on 29 March.

   The Coordination Group comprises senior federal and state/territory government officers, representatives of the Australian Honey Bee Industry Council, representatives of some pollination reliant industries and Plant Health Australia. A number of pollination reliant industries were approach to join the Asian Honeybee Coordination Group, with some accepting, and others declining to be involved.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 207

Division/Agency: BSG – P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: Bees – Varroa Mite
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

Industry tell us that with varroa mite resistant strains in the population it will take about two years to recover which will have a dramatic impact on the pollination of vegetation and crops (in the order of billions of dollars).
Does the department have a view on how to be ready for such an outbreak? Please provide a detailed answer.

Answer:

The department, assisted by an expert steering group, is developing a honey bee industry and pollination continuity strategy to prepare industry and governments in the event that Varroa mite becomes established in Australia. The steering group includes members from the CSIRO, Plant Health Australia, Horticulture Australia Limited, Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation and Pollination Australia. The strategy is being finalised following two rounds of public consultation.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 208

Division/Agency: BSG – P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: Myrtle Rust
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. Explain the spread of the disease and explain how this would have been handled differently if it was handled as if it was Guava Rust.
2. Is it true that while you were trying to eradicate the disease you allowed bees to be moved from NSW to Queensland and that the disease has now spread to that state?
3. Does the department think it would have been eradicated if the National response plan was implemented as though it was Guava Rust?
4. Is the committee system process for overseeing the management of this eradication program the same as the Asian Honeybee?
5. Does a bureaucratic committee system provide the best mechanism for the management of pests such as the honeybee when there is a definite public good for eradicating such pests?
6. We are hearing rumours that the eradication program was hindered by the need to extract money from stakeholders. It is a fairly loaded question of do you want us to eradicate this pest if so show us the money.
   There are lots of industries that would benefit from the eradication they may not immediately see the benefits.
   So shouldn't the government take more of role in funding this as it will for example impact on native forests?
7. Given the spectacular failure of the eradication program for myrtle rust and the Asian Honeybee is the department going to review its strategy?
8. Have they found myrtle rust on Eucalypts yet and what level of checking has been done to check?

Answer:

4. Spores of Myrtle rust (like most rust fungi) are spread by wind and can travel long distances. Spores can also be spread as surface contaminants on a wide range of material and surfaces including clothing, packaging, vehicles and equipment.
   The response to all incursions is set out in the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed and for Myrtle rust has been the same as if it were any other fungi, including those in the Guava rust complex.

5. The detection of Myrtle rust in Queensland in December 2010 was in a commercial plant nursery, well removed from the location of the bee hives. The beehives moved from New South Wales to Queensland in the initial stages of the Myrtle rust incursion were traced and the hives investigated for the presence of Myrtle rust spores. There was no evidence of Myrtle rust in the hives or the surrounding environment.

Question: 208 (continued)

6. See answer to question 1.

7. As outlined in question 1, the management structure for Myrtle rust follows the requirements of the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed – a legally binding agreement between the Australian Government, state and territory governments and plant based industries that are signatories to the deed.

   The Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed provides the same committee system as for the Asian honeybee response.

8. The Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed provides for the consideration of public, industry and environment benefits and has served the community well since 2005.

9. Under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed all signatory parties commit to a shared financial responsibility. Cost-apportionment for Myrtle rust was agreed between government and industry parties on the basis of the pest being a 'Category 1' plant pest reflecting public benefit. A Category 1 plant pest is cost-apportioned as one hundred per cent government funded. The Commonwealth Government provided fifty per cent of total government costs. The remaining fifty per cent was apportioned between the state and territory governments. No industry contributions were required in the attempted eradication.

10. The attempted eradication programs for Myrtle rust and Asian honey bee were managed under the provisions of the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed. It has been agreed through this consultation process that Myrtle rust is not technically feasibility to eradicate. The deed is limited to only recognising the benefits of eradicating emergency plant pests and does not apply to long term management of pests. The Australian Government will consider the future capacity of the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed in consultation with other signatories. The Review of Australian Quarantine and Biosecurity (Beale review) covers the issue of the biosecurity continuum; and Intergovernmental Agreements on Biosecurity.

11. To date (31 March 2011), Myrtle rust has been found on four eucalyptus species.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 209

Division/Agency: BSG – P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: New Zealand Potatoes
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. Are New Zealand potatoes to be imported into Australia for processing?
2. What processes need to be undertaken from a bio-security point of view before this can happen?
3. What safeguards are there?
4. What guarantees do we have if this was to go ahead that the disease Zebra Chip could not get out of the processing plant by for example one employee taking home a potato and planting it in the back garden or waste from the processing being dumped in the open air?

Answer:

1. Australia does not import potatoes from New Zealand for processing.

2. In 2006 Australia received a market access request for potatoes from New Zealand for processing. In 2010, work commenced on this assessment. The assessment and the associated import conditions are yet to be finalised. Quarantine procedures would need to be developed before New Zealand potatoes for processing were approved for import. Any quarantine procedures would be made available for public comment prior to being finalised. The department's Biosecurity Services Group has assessed potato production practices in New Zealand and potato processing facilities in Australia as an early step in this process.

3 & 4.

In 2009 a specific pest risk analysis focussing on *Candidatus* Liberibacter psyllaurous (Zebra Chip) found that processing potatoes in quarantine approved premises is an appropriate control measure for this pest. This process included formal and informal engagement with the vegetable industry stakeholders. Stakeholders consulted during the process supported the final PRA and the proposed measures.

While the market access request for the import of New Zealand potatoes continues, no potatoes will be imported until the assessment is finalised and appropriate import conditions are established.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 210

Division/Agency: BSG – P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: New Zealand Apples
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. Do you have scientists skilled in fireblight advising on the Import risk analysis?
2. Are there to be inspectors on the ground in New Zealand to check that apples are not coming from fire blight infected trees? (there is concern that there will not be enough on ground inspections by our AQIS staff under new protocols)
3. Is there a national response plan to deal with the outbreak of fireblight?
4. Who provides funding for any required eradication program?
5. Is there a public good in eradicating diseases like fireblight and therefore a need to publicly fund it?
6. We have been told that with the Asian honeybee and Myrtle rust that the need to get industries to provide funding has played a significant role in the failure of the eradication programs so do we need to re-look at our strategies?
7. Is it true that New Zealand can import produce that has been sourced from other countries without the same rigour in its testing procedure? (ie New Zealand imports do not test for all the chemical that we do on imports)

Answer:

1. Yes.

2. The details of the revised import risk analysis and subsequent review of import conditions are not yet finalised, for New Zealand apples.

3. A pest specific national contingency plan for responding to fire blight in the event an outbreak occurs has been prepared entitled "Revised Contingency Plan for Fire Blight" and was published by Horticulture Australia Ltd. Representatives from both Commonwealth and State agencies were involved in the development of the plan.

4 & 5. When the National Management Group approves a response plan to eradicate an emergency plant pest it will agree on funding under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD). The deed is a legally binding agreement between the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, and industries, that sets out the costs and benefits of eradicating emergency plant pests. Eradication funding is based on a "beneficiary pays" categorisation ratio that allocates government costs as Category 1 (100 per cent government), Category 2 (80 per cent government), Category 3 (50 per cent government), Category 4 (20 per cent government).

6. The department notes the Beale Review supported the notion of beneficiary pays. Any reconsideration of the EPPRD would require the full cooperation of all signatories to the agreement.

Question: 210 (continued)

7. The department does not hold information about trading partners' import procedures. The New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) regulates food imported into New Zealand under the *New Zealand Food Act 1981*. Information on NZFSA management of imported food is available at: www.foodsafety.govt.nz/industry/importing.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 211

Division/Agency: BSG – P **–** Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: Chinese apples
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. Industry were not so concerned with the import of Chinese apples as they thought that they could not compete cost wise however the increase in the value of the dollar and the reduction in the availability of domestic apples has seen the dynamic change with Chinese apples now competitive. How many tonnes of Chinese apples have been imported?
2. How many more tonnes of apple imports have been approved?
3. What are the Quarantine arrangements surrounding the import of these apples?

Answer:

1. As at 9 March 2011 619.07 tonnes of apples have been imported from China.

2. Biosecurity Services Group officers have inspected 1580 tonnes of fresh Chinese apples for export to Australia. A further 960.93 tonnes remain available for shipment to Australia.

3. The quarantine arrangements governing the import of fresh Chinese apples into Australia are listed in the *Final import risk analysis report for fresh apple fruit from the People's Republic of China* (www.daff.gov.au/ba/ira/final-plant/apples_china) and in the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service Import Conditions Database (www.aqis.gov.au/icon32/asp/ex_querycontent.asp).

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 212

Division/Agency: BSG – P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: Dimethoate and Fenthion
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. Will these changes result in higher levels of use of these chemicals during the current season?
2. Will this higher use lead to the same residual problems leading for the chemicals to be banned altogether?
3. Will this higher use lead to impact on the natural and introduced predators of the fruit fly which growers were using, through a more natural holistic approach to minimise chemical use and lead to even greater chemical use?
4. The current system for control of fruit fly prescribes the use of these chemicals in Regulation.
   How do we propose to manage this?
5. The only alternative, irradiation is around 10 times the cost and doesn't kill fruit fly it only sterilises them. Will this option be acceptable to industry and destination countries?
6. Why hasn't the government foreseen these changes and implemented and funded a national response much earlier?

Answer:

1. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has not completed its safety assessments on dimethoate and fenthion. There have been no changes to the availability or registered uses of these chemicals.

2. There has been no change to current uses.

3. There has been no change to current uses.

4. A national response plan has been developed to assist with the identification and adoption of alternative treatments, should changes to the current uses of the two insecticides occur as a result of the reviews. A consultation committee, comprising government, industry and research representatives is implementing the response plan.

5. Irradiation is accepted as a phytosanitary treatment within Australia and by importing countries. There is an international standard that covers radiation use in trade. The standard, *Guidelines for the use of irradiation as a phytosanitary measure ISPM No 18*, has been adopted under the International Plant Protection Convention, to which Australia is a signatory. These standards are recognised by the World Trade Organization. The international standard and national policy for interstate trade endorse

Question: 212 (continued)

the use of irradiation for sterility rather than mortality. While irradiation is a useful alternative to these chemicals it is only available for use on fruit and vegetables where this has been approved by Food Standards Australia New Zealand. These include breadfruit, carambola, custard apple, litchi, longan, mango, mangosteen, papaya and rambutan. Submissions for other commodities are under consideration.

6. In 2007 the Australian Government provided funding to raise awareness of the issue with industry and governments, the need for alternatives and to source any relevant information. An outcome from this work is the Horticulture Australia Limited (HAL) funded data package to support current uses that was submitted to the APVMA in October 2010.

   The Australian Government is providing funding through HAL to support research into issues impacting industry such as alternatives to the current uses of dimethoate and fenthion.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 213

Division/Agency: BSG – P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: Plague Locusts
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. Has there been a review on the commission performance and specifically has there been a review of the plague in Northern Victoria?
2. What work is being carried out to manage the latest hatchings?
3. Where are these hatchings?
4. How is the budget going?
5. Do you have enough funds to continue locust management after a costly year?

Answer:

1. A number of reviews have been conducted on previous major locust outbreaks, notably by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES, formerly ABARE) on the major 2004–05 outbreak. The findings are publicly available at: www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/locusts/publications/abare-study05.

   A similar exercise has recently been undertaken by ABARES for the spring 2010 event which covers all affected jurisdictions, including Northern Victoria. The report is being finalised and is expected to be publically available in April 2011.

2. There are no infestations that satisfy Australian Plague Locust Commission (APLC) criteria for control intervention. APLC continues to monitor and evaluate the locust situation in its area of operation and will take action should circumstances require it.

   State agencies have been encouraging landholder control of residual and lesser second generation infestations.

3. Hatchings in early 2011 occurred in areas between Bendigo and Horsham, Victoria, in the south east Riverina region, New South Wales and the Barossa Valley in South Australia. These are being controlled by affected landholders with support from the respective state agency and local authority.

4. The APLC budget has accommodated expenditure ($1.4million) for control operations in spring 2010. APLC has capacity to undertake additional locust control measures this financial year if necessary.

5. Yes.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 214

Division/Agency: BSG – P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: Locust Plague
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Nash asked:

1 What is the current condition of the locust plague in Australia and what impact have recent rains had on the breading activity of locusts?
2. Have the current locust management strategies been effective?
3. Has the group identified any problems in delivering locust plague support and advice to farmers?
4. Has the group encountered any difficulty in sourcing adequate supplies of pesticide?

Answer:

1 The spring 2010 outbreak of Australian plague locust has subsided across previously infested areas. Some higher levels of residual infestation still persist in Victoria and parts of South Australia. Current infestations do not warrant intervention in Australian Plague Locust Commission (APLC) operational areas but some response may be required by state agencies and landholders.

Most background populations have reverted to non-gregarious behaviour and isolated breeding. Recent rains are unlikely to increase locust numbers to the scale experienced in spring 2010.

2. Yes, APLC operations have been effective in preventing significant losses to agriculture.

3. The APLC has had a positive reception to information it has provided about the locust plague. The APLC does not, however, have a direct extension role with farmers. State agencies and local authorities play this role.

4. The APLC holds locust control chemicals in store to help guard against supply deficiencies. In the spring 2010 outbreak, there were some supply constraints for the biological insecticide ‘Green Guard’, however the outcome of APLC control measures was not materially affected.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates February 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 215

Division/Agency: BSG – P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: Chinese apples
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Nash asked:

Given that China's quarantine agency audits and registers apple packing houses and orchards in preparation for export; what specific criteria and auditing systems are used in these audits?

Answer:

The quarantine arrangements governing the import of fresh Chinese apples into Australia are listed in the *Final import risk analysis report for fresh apple fruit from the People's Republic of China* (www.daff.gov.au/ba/ira/final-plant/apples_china) and in the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service Import Conditions Database (www.aqis.gov.au/icon32/asp/ex_querycontent.asp).

The report recommends that China implement operational systems to manage specific pest risk concerns in addition to its existing commercial production practices.

China's pest risk management system is documented in a work plan which details the Chinese industry and government responsibilities, training requirements, timing and process for monitoring and surveillance activities, documentation requirements, auditing and reporting elements.

The department's Biosecurity Services Group conducted audits in China in October 2010 (and on several previous visits to China) that examined all the activities described in China's work plan. The audits confirmed that the activities had been undertaken and that Australia's requirements had been met.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates February 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 216

Division/Agency: BSG – P – Biosecurity Services Group – Plant Division
Topic: Imported Chinese Nursery Stock
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Nash asked:

Is there any Australian oversight of the inspection and monitoring of Chinese imported nursery stock? If so, what measures are in place? If not, why not?

Answer:

The risks associated with nursery stock imports from all countries, including China, are managed on arrival in Australia by 100 per cent inspection for pests and diseases and fumigation for insects. Material is required to undergo a period of propagation in post entry quarantine facilities, which includes monitoring, surveillance and diagnostic testing for any diseases. The time plants spend in post entry quarantine depends on the species and related disease risk. All post entry propagation is conducted in closed quarantine premises, including either government facilities for high risk material, or private approved facilities for low to medium risk material.

Tissue cultures are inspected at the border, with low and medium risk cultures that are free of obvious pests and diseases being released. All high risk tissue cultures are required to undergo a period of propagation and observation in government post entry quarantine facilities.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates February 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 217

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: White Spot in Prawns
Proof Hansard Page: 37

Senator Boswell asked:

Senator BOSWELL—How long can white spot remain active in prawns? What is the time limit there?
Ms Mellor—We do not have an answer to that here.
Senator BOSWELL—You do not have an answer?
Ms Mellor—No.
Senator HEFFERNAN—But can you provide an answer?
Ms Mellor—Yes, we will try—

Answer:

The viability of white spot syndrome virus is affected by temperature.

Most viruses are stable at freezing temperatures. Several experimental studies have demonstrated that white spot syndrome virus remains infectious following freezing for prolonged periods (Wang et al. 1997, Nunan et al. 1998, Wang et al. 1999).

Trials of white spot syndrome virus infectivity have revealed that the virus obtained from prawn carcases can retain infectivity at ambient temperatures for several days (Wang et al. 2002). A separate trial looking at infected prawn heads and tails found that infectivity can be maintained for 14-28 days (Prior and Browdy 2002).

Various heat treatments have been shown to inactivate white spot syndrome virus (Chang et al. 1998 and Balasubramanian et al. 2006). Cooking followed by a quick freezing process also destroys the white spot syndrome virus (Devivaraprasad Reddy et al. 2011).

These factors were taken into consideration in developing measures to address the risk of white spot syndrome virus in the import risk analysis of prawns and prawn products (http://www.daff.gov.au/ba/ira/final-animal/prawns).

References:

Balasubramanian G, Sudhakaran R, Musthaq SS, Sarathi M and Hameed ASS (2006) Journal of Fish Diseases 29: 569-572.

Chang PS, Chen LJ and Wang YC (1998) 166(1-2): 1-17.

Devivaraprasad Reddy G, Jeyasekaran G and Jeya Shakila R (2011) Letters in applied microbiology.

Question: 217 (continued)

Nunan LM, Poulos BT and Lightner DV (1998) Aquaculture 160(1-2): 19-30.

Prior S and Browdy CL (2002) World Aquaculture 2002: book of abstracts: 397.

Wang CS, Tang KFJ, Kou GH and Chen SN (1997) Journal of Fish Diseases 20(5): 323-331.

Wang Q, White BL, Redman RM and Lightner DV (1999) Aquaculture 170(3-4): 179-194.

Wang YG, Hassan MD, Shariff M and Zamri M (2002) World Aquaculture 2002: book of abstracts: 802.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 218

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Complaints from AQIS Accredited Vets
Proof Hansard Page: 50

Senator Xenophon asked:

Senator XENOPHON—...The question is: how many AQIS-accredited veterinarians have complained to AQIS, including AQIS Compliance WA, about being pressured by exporters to revise live export mortalities downwards?
Ms Schneider—We would have to take that on notice, I think.

Answer:

The department is aware of one complaint that was directed to the department's Biosecurity Services Group Business Integrity Branch for formal investigation. The investigation determined that there was insufficient evidence for the matter to be prosecuted.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 219

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Cattle Exported to Egypt
Proof Hansard Page: 50

Senator Xenophon asked:

Senator XENOPHON—Okay. Let's move on. Is AQIS in possession of information that a shipment of Australian cattle were exported into Egypt during the period that the federal government suspension of the live
trade with Egypt was in place or since then in contravention of the subsequent Australian meat and livestock industry export of livestock to Egypt order of 2008?
Ms Schneider—We would have to take that on notice too.

Answer:

No, the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service does not possess such information.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 220

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Pet food imported and domestic
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

PIMC – Working Group on safety of imported and domestically produced pet food:

1. What is the total of expenses incurred by the working group since its inception in May 2009?
2. What is the breakdown of these costs? (travel, accommodation, remuneration for participating members etc.)
3. When will the working party's discussion paper be finalised?
4. Will there be an opportunity for the general public, including pet owners, to review and make submissions on the discussion paper?
5. Why has it taken 21 months for the working party's discussion paper to be drawn up?
6. What work and actions were conducted between the working group's meeting on September 11, 2009, and the next meeting on June 22, 2010?
7. Why did the working party not meet during this nine month period?
8. Why has the PIMC not considered this matter in-session since May 2009?

Answer:

1. The working group has not incurred any specific expenditure. All meetings have been convened via teleconference and members have met their own costs.
2. See answer to question 1.
3. The department expects that the working group's discussion paper on options for managing the safety of imported and domestically produced pet food will be finalised in late 2011.
4. The working group under its terms of reference is not required to seek public comment. Material supplied by interested members of the public has been directed to the attention of the working group.
5. The discussion paper has taken longer than originally expected due to the decision by the Pet Food Industry Association of Australia to upgrade its *Code of Practice for the Manufacturing and Marketing of Pet Food* into an Australian Standard after the working group was convened. The working group recognised that the pet food safety elements of the proposed Australian Standard should be considered in the discussion paper. The new pet food Australian Standard is due to be finalised by the end of March 2011. On this basis, the working group anticipates it will be in a position to report back to the Primary Industries Ministerial Council (PIMC) in late 2011.
6. The working group focussed its efforts on researching and drafting the discussion paper. Most members were also involved in the development of proposed Australian Standard.
7. The working group decided to meet once the discussion paper and standard were sufficiently progressed to review.

Question: 220 (continued)

8. PIMC revised the reporting timeline for the working group in light of the development of the pet food Australian Standard. It is expected that PIMC will consider, in-session, a report from the working group in late 2011.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 221

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Export Documentations for Exported Animals
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

1. How does AQIS check that the claimed number of animals for which there is export documentation is the actual number of animals loaded?
2. Is this independently verified, or does AQIS rely entirely on the declarations by the exporter?

Answer:

The exporter advises the department's Biosecurity Services Group of the number of animals loaded on the vessel. This is checked against the numbers specified on the load plan and the importing country's import permit (where required) prior to the issuance of export certification.

At the voyage's end, the number of animals loaded is correlated with the end of voyage report submitted by the accredited veterinarian or stockman, which must include the number of livestock loaded, number of mortalities and the number discharged.

The Biosecurity Services Group also receives a report from the master of the vessel that includes the number of livestock loaded and the number discharged.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 222

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Breaches of ASEL
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

How many exporters have had statutory penalties applied for breach of ASEL (and details)?

Answer:

The department's Biosecurity Services Group does not compile statistics of instances of non-compliance with the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock.

Compliance with the standards is assessed for each consignment of livestock exported from Australia and action is taken where required in accordance with the export legislation. Penalties for non-compliance might include conditions imposed on the export license or on subsequent export consignments.

During 2010, there were four reportable mortality incidents and all four incidents were investigated by AQIS. Some examples of conditions imposed on exporters for subsequent voyages as a result of the AQIS investigations following a reportable mortality incident include:

- Livestock loaded with defined extra space above the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock.
- Requirement for the exporter to provide AQIS with additional declarations regarding the sourcing and preparation of livestock.
- Requirement for specified additional veterinary supplies to be loaded on the vessel.
- Restrictions on the classes of livestock to be exported.

A summary of each of the investigation reports and the actions taken by AQIS are available on the department's website at the following location:
http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/live-animals/livestock/aqis-mortality-investigations.

Full copies of each of the investigation reports are also available from this webpage.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 223

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Live Animal Exports
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

What evidence does AQIS have of loading of animals on live export vessels beyond the number of animals authorised to be loaded?

Answer:

The department is not aware of any evidence of animals being loaded on live export vessels beyond the authorised number. In addition see answer to 221 (BSG - A) from the Additional Estimates February 2011.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 224

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Breaches of ASEL
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

1. How many AQIS mortality investigation reports have identified possible breaches of ASEL?
2. What were those possible breaches?
3. What actions have been taken against the exporters responsible for those breaches?

Answer:

A mortality investigation is conducted to investigate the cause of a reportable mortality and to look at strategies to minimise the possibility of a re-occurrence. Compliance with the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) is confirmed prior to export as outlined below but is not specifically assessed as part of the mortality investigation.

Livestock exporters are required to comply with the ASEL as part of their export license under the *Australian Meat and Livestock Industry Act 1997*. The department's Biosecurity Services Group requires a declaration (supported by documentation) from the licensed exporter that the animals have been prepared for export in accordance with the ASEL. These checks occur at multiple stages during the export process.

The department verifies this system by auditing an annual sample of the licensed exporter's consignment documentation for compliance with the ASEL. Prior to export all livestock consignments are assessed by Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) accredited veterinarians and AQIS veterinarians to determine whether the animals are fit to travel.

The mortality investigation report, conclusions about the cause of mortality, and subsequent action taken in response to the mortality event are published on the department's website. This information can be found at: www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/live-animals/livestock/aqis-mortality-investigations.

Please also refer response 222 (BSG - A) from the Additional Estimates February 2011.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 225

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Deaths on Sea Voyages
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

For 'high mortality incidents' what is the proportion of deaths which occur during the sea phase of the voyage and what is the proportion of deaths which occur while discharging or immediately afterwards?

Answer:

The mortality investigation report for reportable mortalities provides details of daily mortalities that occur onboard the vessel and mortalities that occur during discharge. The mortality investigation report is available on the department's website: http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/live-animals/livestock/aqis-mortality-investigations.

Mortalities that occur after the livestock have been discharged in the destination country are not reported to Australia.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 226

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Sea Voyages for Live Animal Exports
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

1. How long does a 'voyage' last under ASEL?
2. Does it include the time spent discharging animals at intermediate ports and at the final port of destination?
3. Is there a requirement for reporting on every day of a 'voyage', including the days spent discharging animals from the ship?

Answer:

1. and 2. Under the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock, a voyage commences on the first day at sea after leaving the port of loading and concludes when all animals have been discharged at the final arrival port.

3. Daily reports and an end of voyage report are required for voyages greater or equal to ten days. For those voyages of less than ten days an end of voyage report from the master and the stockman is required.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates February 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 227

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Sea Voyages for Live Animal Exports
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

As the load of animals can exceed 100,000 (eg sheep on some voyages) on a live export voyage, how can the fitness of these animals for export be assessed?

Answer:

The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) accredited veterinarian and the AQIS veterinarian inspect all livestock consignments to be exported by sea prior to export, regardless of the size of the consignment. The animals are also inspected at the point of loading to ensure their fitness to travel.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates February 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 228

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Sea Voyages for Live Animal Exports
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

In those circumstances, how can there be compliance with ASEL, which requires the health and welfare of those animals be monitored daily on board a live export vessel?

Answer:

Each live animal export voyage by sea must be accompanied by a stockperson accredited by LiveCorp, the industry-owned body supporting the livestock export industry. In addition, higher risk voyages are accompanied by an Australian Quarantine Inspection Service accredited veterinarian. The department receives reports from the onboard stockperson or veterinarian as prescribed by the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 229

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Sea Voyages for Live Animal Exports
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

There is a requirement under s57AA of the *Australian Meat and Live-stock Act 1997* that the names of exporters be reported to parliament for each live export voyage and that actions taken by DAFF be reported.

Have these requirements been complied with, in particular, where there is more than one consignment (ie more than one exporter) per voyage, have all exporters been named in the report to parliament?

Answer:

As required by s57AA of the *Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997*, the department prepares a report every six months for the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, to be tabled in both houses of Parliament. The report is based on a copy of the Masters' Reports on the Carriage of Livestock, which are provided to the department by the master of each ship under the Australian Maritime Safety Authority Marine Orders Provision 19, Part 43.

Where a voyage carries consignments for more than one exporter, only one exporter may be listed on the voyage report selected by the ship's Master. This complies with the *Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997*.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates February 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 230

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Sea Voyages for Live Animal Exports
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

On how many occasions has heat stress been identified as the cause of a 'high mortality incident'?

Answer:

The reportable mortality level for sheep in the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock is 2 per cent. In 2010 there were four consignments of sheep exported to the Middle East (on three voyages) in which mortality exceeded the reportable level. In each of the consignments heat stress was a contributing cause of mortality.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates February 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 231

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Sea Voyages for Live Animal Exports
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

What evidence is there that the heat stress model allows high mortality incidents caused by heat stress to be avoided?

Answer:

A heat stress risk assessment is required for all consignments of livestock exported to or through the Middle East and North Africa. The heat risk assessment is generated by a computer model that was developed by specialist engineers with ventilation and heat exchange expertise engaged by the live export industry. The live animal export industry reviews the model periodically.

The exporter provides the heat risk assessment to the department's Biosecurity Services Group as part of the export application. The assessment must indicate that the risk of heat stress is manageable before a consignment will be approved for export. The aim of the heat risk assessment is to prevent consignments being exported if there is an identifiable unmanageable risk of heat stress. Application of the heat risk assessment does not negate the risk of heat stress that might arise during the voyage due to unpredictable micro-climatic events.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates February 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 232

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Sea Voyages for Live Animal Exports
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

You indicated that for 100 per cent of livestock consignments, AQIS veterinarians assess whether the animals are fit enough to travel prior to export. Animal welfare groups, Stop Live Exports and Animals Angels, have both regularly observed that at the Fremantle Port in Western Australia the AQIS veterinarian, or AQIS accredited veterinarian assesses the animals' fitness to travel by watching the animals run up the loading ramp onto the ship. There is a concern that this practice does not sufficiently assess the animals - especially as the veterinarian can only see one side of the animal. In addition Stop Live Exports and Animals Angels, have both regularly observed that the AQIS veterinarian or AQIS accredited veterinarian is not always present.

For animals loaded at Fremantle Port, does the AQIS veterinarian or AQIS accredited veterinarian assess the animals in an additional way besides simply watching the animals go up the loading ramp onto the ship?

Answer:

For sheep exported from Fremantle, an Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) accredited veterinarian and an AQIS veterinarian conduct a flock inspection at the registered premises prior to sheep being loaded for transport to the port. An individual animal inspection is also conducted under the supervision of an AQIS accredited veterinarian at the port prior to the animals being loaded onto the vessel.

For other livestock species, the individual animal inspection occurs at the registered premises prior to being loaded for transport to the port. In addition, a welfare inspection is conducted by the exporter’s representative at the port to remove any animals unfit for travel.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 233

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Sea Voyages for Live Animal Exports
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

Was an AQIS veterinarian, or AQIS accredited veterinarian, present for the full duration of the loading at Fremantle Port on 23 December 2010?

Answer:

An Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) veterinarian was present at Fremantle Port wharf for approximately two hours during the loading of the livestock on 23 December 2010. An AQIS accredited veterinarian was present for the full duration of the loading process on 23 December 2010.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 234

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Sea Voyages for Live Animal Exports
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

Since the introduction of the ASEL, how many shipments have been penalised for not meeting the standards?

Answer:

The department's Biosecurity Services Group does not compile statistics of instances of non-compliance with the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock.

Compliance with the standards is assessed for each consignment of livestock exported from Australia and action is taken where required in accordance with the export legislation. Penalties for non-compliance might include conditions imposed on the export license or on subsequent export consignments.

Please also refer response 222 (BSG - A) from the Additional Estimates February 2011.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates February 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 235

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Sea Voyages for Live Animal Exports
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

You indicated that an AQIS accredited stockman must accompany each voyage and an AQIS accredited veterinarian must accompany each voyage to the Middle East.

Who pays the wages of the AQIS accredited veterinarian or AQIS accredited stockman?

Answer:

The exporter or the vessel operator pays the wages of the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) accredited veterinarian or AQIS accredited stockman on each live animal export voyage to the Middle East.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates February 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 236

Division/Agency: BSG – A – Biosecurity Services Group – Animal Division
Topic: Sea Voyages for Live Animal Exports
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

Are the reports received by AQIS from the onboard stockperson or veterinarian as prescribed by the ASEL available to the public?

Answer:

No, the reports from the onboard stockman or veterinarian are not made public. However, if a reportable mortality event occurs, the department's Biosecurity Services Group incorporates relevant information from the reports into the investigation report that is published on the department's website. These reports can be found at: http://www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/live-animals/livestock/aqis-mortality-investigations.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 237

Division/Agency: BSG – F – Biosecurity Services Group – Food Division
Topic: Pesticide Testing of Imported Plant Products
Proof Hansard Page: 35

Senator Xenophon asked:

Senator XENOPHON—Can you advise, on notice, how many consignments in 2010 were tested and, of those, how many failed?

Dr Clegg—Sure. Yes, we can do that.

Answer:

In 2010, the pesticide screen was applied to 4331 products contained in 3475 consignments. Of these products 29 products or 0.67 per cent failed.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates February 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 238

Division/Agency: BSG – F – Biosecurity Services Group – Food Division
Topic: Pesticide Testing of Imported Plant Products
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

After AQIS conducts testing of import consignments, what analysis does Biosecurity Australia carry out in response to these tests? For example, if a trend emerges of a certain chemical being increasingly present above the maximum level, does Biosecurity Australia review its policy on this chemical?

Answer:

The department's Biosecurity Services Group provides information on imported foods which fail tests for agricultural and veterinary chemicals to state and territory food authorities for their consideration and action if warranted. The results are also provided to Food Standards Australia New Zealand.

When a food is detected with residues above Australia's maximum residue limits (MRLs), any food held by the importer must be re-exported or destroyed. A holding order is created so that 100 per cent of future consignments of that product are referred to the Biosecurity Services Group for testing. Under a holding order, the importer is unable to release the food until the test results are known. The holding order is lifted when five consecutive consignments pass testing.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 239

Division/Agency: BSG – F – Biosecurity Services Group – Food Division
Topic: Pesticide Testing of Imported Plant Products
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

1. Of the failed consignments in 2010, can you advise why they failed?
2. Did they show traces of banned chemicals?
3. Were the traces above the maximum allowable level?
4. Please provide a breakdown by numbers.

Answer:

1 and 4. The following table lists the 29 failed consignments from 2010 by product type and pesticide detected. The information is taken from the failing food data on the department's website www.daff.gov.au/aqis/import/food/inspection-data/failing-food-reports.

Pesticide Fails in 2010

Products that Failed	Above MRL for chemical	Number of Test Failures
Peppercorn, Lemon Oil, Seasoning Mix, Olive Oil, Mangosteen, Vine Leaves, Curry Paste, Roasted Peanut Kernel, Red Chilli	Chlorpyrifos	10
Passion fruit Juice, Passionfruit Pulp	Captan	5
Raspberry Puree, Pepper Leaves	Procymidone	2
Pepper Leaves	Deltamethrin	1
Pepper Leaves, Sugar Snap Peas	Difenoconazol	2
Pepper Leaves, Soya Bean Oil, Vegetable Oil	Endosulfan	3
Peach Chutney	Fenoxycarb	1
Bhindi	Acephate	1
Olive Oil	Oxyfluorfen	3
Jujube	Methidathion	1

2. No, all pesticides detected in the failed consignments are permitted to be used on crops in Australia.

3. Yes, the traces of residues detected were above the maximum allowable limit.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates February 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 240

Division/Agency: BSG – F – Biosecurity Services Group – Food Division
Topic: Pesticide Testing of Imported Plant Products
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

What testing for chemicals is done on frozen fruit and vegetable products?

Answer:

Imported frozen fruits and vegetables are screened for the 49 pesticide residues listed below. This list is available on page 30 of the document Imported Food Notice 03-10: www.daff.gov.au/aqis/import/food/notices/2009/2010/ifn-03-10.

Agricultural chemical	**Agricultural chemical**
Acephate	Fenoxycarb
Aldrin	Fenthion
Azinphos-methyl	Fipronil
Benalaxyl	Heptachlor epoxide
Captan	Imazalil
Carbaryl	Malathion
Chlorfenvinphos (cis & trans)	Metalaxyl
Chlorpyrifos	Methidathion
DDD (2,4- and 4,4-)	Mevinphos
DDE (2,4-and 4,4-)	Monocrotophos
DDT (2,4- and 4,4-)	Omethoate
Deltamethrin (cis, trans)	Oxyfluorfen
Diazinon	Parathion-ethyl
Dichlorvos	Parathion-methyl
Dicofol	Permethrin (cis, trans)
Dieldrin	Phorate
Difenoconazole	Phosmet
Dimethoate	Piperonyl butoxide
Disulfoton	Pirimicarb
Endosulfan (α, β □& sulfate)	Pirimiphos-methyl
Endrin	Procymidone
Ethoprofos	Prothiophos
Fenamiphos	Terbufenpyrad
Fenarimol	Triadimefon
Fenitrothion	

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 241

Division/Agency: BSG – F – Biosecurity Services Group – Food Division
Topic: Kangaroo Exports
Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

Questions following up to Answers to Questions on Notice BSG 19, Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2010.

Funding

1. Answer 3 (A3) stated that an additional $400,000 was allocated to the kangaroo harvester training programs by the Hon Tony Burke MP. How much of these funds have been spent on these training programs to date? Please list the programmes and recipients.
2. What future funding plans are in place for these programs if regulatory changes and retraining fail to ensure the Russian export market for kangaroo products is regained?

Hygiene Standards

3. Answer 6 states that the new processing requirements (as per AQIS Meat Notice 2009/18) apply to export-registered game processing establishments only. Given the hygiene concerns that prompted Russia's banning of Australian kangaroo imports, why are non-export-registered establishments exempt from the new processing requirements, regardless of the intended market for the processed meat? i.e. why do the new requirements not apply at all game meat processing establishments?
4. As stated in Answer 7, all wild game harvesters must comply with the Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production of Wild Game Meat for Human Consumption (AS 4464:2007). This standard, concerning the slaughter, harvesting, dressing, chilling and storing, differs significantly from the Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production and Transportation of Meat and Meat Products for Human Consumption (AS 4696:2007) (but not significantly from the Standard for the Hygienic Production of Pet Meat [PISC Technical Report 88 – Amended 2009] as it pertains to wild game harvesting). Given the loss of the Russian export market due to meat contamination, are these standards for wild game still considered appropriate for the year-round processing of wild game carcases for human consumption? [*Differences in the Australian Standards are outlined below]*

   Current Australian Standards:

   - *For the processing of meat and meat products (not including game or wild game) such as cattle, sheep etc. intended for human consumption require carcases whole or in part to be placed under refrigeration within 2 hours of stunning, and deep muscle temperature to be no greater than 7ºC within 24 hours of* ***stunning****.*
   - *For wild game, including kangaroos, carcases whole or in part are to be placed under refrigeration within 2 hours of* ***harvesting*** *if harvested during daylight, or*

   - ***within 2 hours of daylight if harvested at night****, and deep muscle temperature must be no greater than 7ºC within 24 hours of* ***being refrigerated****.*

Question: 241 (continued)

5. How often are inspections performed on harvesters and processors for compliance to reporting requirements, and compliance to hygiene standards?
6. As per Answer 8 and A9, exactly what safeguards are in place to ensure the data gathered by harvesters and processors are accurate and have not been tampered with?
7. Are all kangaroo carcases microbiologically tested and temperature-monitored to ensure compliance with the time-temperature and hygienic parameters? If not, why not, and what are the benchmark sampling ratios for harvesters and processors?
8. Why are there no additional measures in place for summertime harvesting, in which environmental conditions may result in the carcase not being effectively chilled within the required time-temperature parameters?
9. A10 states that all animal carcases intended for human consumption must be effectively chilled to no greater than 7ºC "within 24 hours". According to the respective Australian Standards, this means within 24 hours of slaughter for non-game meat; for game and wild game meat, this means within 24 hours of refrigeration, which may legally be up to 12 hours after slaughter. These standards do not take into account Australian environmental conditions, in which carcases may remain unrefrigerated overnight in high summer temperatures. Given the loss of the Russian market due to contaminated meat and the legitimate associated concerns regarding hygienic production of kangaroo meat, why do these discrepancies exist between the hygienic production of game meat and non-game meat for human production?
10. For optimum hygiene and to limit microbial growth in a nominally warm and humid environment, non-game meat is skinned, dressed and placed under refrigeration within 2 hours of slaughter. As stated above, this is not the case with game meat. Carcases can legally remain field-dressed for a significant period of time between slaughter and processing, in comparison to non-game carcases. Why are hygienic regulations less stringent for game meat in comparison to game meat intended for human consumption?
11. Given the above discrepancies, is the Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production of Wild Game Meat for Human Consumption, in regards to slaughter/harvesting, transport, and hygienic processing of kangaroo carcases, appropriate for meat intended for human consumption, and does it comply (as per A10) with international hygienic standards for meat intended for human consumption?
12. Answer 13 states that the requirements for game and non-game meat for human consumption are equivalent, with regards to hygienic harvesting and processing. The loss of the Russian export market due to contaminated meat, and the discrepancies stated above, would suggest that this is not the case. These discrepancies also suggest that harvesting and processing standards for game meat, not the reporting thereof, may be inappropriate for meat intended for human consumption. If the new reporting regulations (as required by AQIS Meat Notice 2009/18) and Federally-funded retraining fail to regain the Russian market, does AQIS intend to change the game meat harvesting and processing standards to comply with the non-game meat standards with a view to regain the Russian market and to ensure optimum hygiene and production safe for human consumption? If not, why not?

Question: 241 (continued)

Answer:

1. Safe Food Production Queensland is delivering the kangaroo harvester training program on behalf of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation. As at 9 March 2011, $385 000 has been spent of the $400 000 allocated to the program. The balance of $15 000 is due to be spent on training courses that will be conducted in March 2011 in New South Wales.

Details of Kangaroo harvester training courses and recipients

Training location	Number of courses run	Number of recipients
Queensland		
Toowoomba/Ipswich	5	266
Brisbane	2	36
Rockhampton/Emerald/Clermont/Longreach/Biloela	16	544
St George	3	121
Cunnamulla/Charleville	6	143
Quilpie/Roma	4	176
Condamine/Goondiwindi	5	171
Townsville/Charters Towers/Cloncurry/Mt Isa	11	242
New South Wales		
Moree/Walgett	5	265
New South Wales other	17	608
South Australia		
Adelaide	1	16
Port Augusta	2	45
Total	**77**	**2633**

Question: 241 (continued)

2. There are no future funding plans for kangaroo harvester training beyond 30 June 2011.

3. Any export registered establishment seeking to export kangaroo meat for human consumption must meet the requirements of the Commonwealth Government and the importing country. Standards and requirements domestic processing establishments are determined by state or territory governments. State regulatory authorities monitor compliance at domestic processing establishments with their relevant legislation.

4. The Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production of Wild Game Meat for Human Consumption (AS 4464:2007) is consistent with international standards published by Codex Alimentarius. The outcome of this standard is also consistent with the Australian Standard for meat. The outcome of both standards is the production of safe meat for human consumption. In addition, AQIS Meat Notice 2009/18 requires wild game carcases to have the deep muscle reduced to 7 ºC within 24 hours of being placed in refrigeration; for non-game meat, the carcases must be reduced to a surface temperature of 7 ºC within 24 hours of stunning. This requirement applies 'for year round processing'.

5. State regulatory authorities monitor harvesters for compliance with hygiene standards and reporting requirements. The department's Biosecurity Services Group conducts annual verification audits of the authorities. AQIS veterinary officers undertake daily monitoring and verification activities at export registered processing establishments.

6. Data records are monitored as part of the activities described in the response to question 5.

7. Representative samples of kangaroo carcases are microbiologically tested and temperature monitored. This is the same methodology applied to non-game meat.

8. Carcases must be compliant with temperature requirements in order to be processed at export registered establishments.

9. The outcomes of the Australian Standard for game and the Australian Standard for meat are consistent – producing safe meat for human consumption.

10. The Australian Standard for game meat has been developed to ensure game meat is produced to the same standard as non-game meat, that is, meat that is safe for human consumption.

11. Yes. The Australian Standard for the Hygienic Production of Wild Game Meat for Human Consumption is consistent with international standards published by Codex Alimentarius.

12. In the Australian food regulatory system, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has responsibility for reviewing and developing food standards, with input from government, industry, scientific experts and consumers. The department is aware that FSANZ are undertaking work on primary production and processing standards for meat.