

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: APD 01

Division/Agency: Agricultural Productivity Division

Topic: Importation to Australia of New Zealand agricultural products

Proof Hansard Page: 110 (24/10/2010)

Senator COLBECK asked:

I will open up another can of worms. The issue is the importation of agricultural products into New Zealand for processing in New Zealand and then sending to Australia labelled as 'made in New Zealand'. I should say it comes from third-party nations, it is imported into New Zealand and then it comes here as New Zealand product. Do we have any way of measuring that, or how we can potentially manage that? I know that it is a function of the bilateral arrangement that we have with New Zealand—I understand that—but we are seeing a number of our food processors move into New Zealand. McCains made a decision in April to move all their vegetable processing to New Zealand, so effectively McCains do not grow a pea in Australia—or will not after this season. Potentially, the peas could come from anywhere and be labelled as coming from New Zealand.

Answer:

The department does not measure the quantity of agricultural products imported into Australia from New Zealand that is labelled as 'Made in New Zealand' and comes from third party nations.

Under the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement, goods that may be legally sold in Australia may be legally sold in New Zealand and vice versa, regardless of differences in standards and other sales related regulatory requirements.

Standard 1.2.11 - Country of Origin Requirements in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code mandates country of origin labelling for all packaged foods and unpackaged fresh or processed fruit, vegetables, seafood and pork offered for sale. As New Zealand opted-out of this standard, it applies only in Australia.

In addition, Standard 1.2.2 – Food Identification Requirements in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code requires the name and address of the supplier of the food to be provided on the label. It is possible to contact food companies directly to seek additional information regarding the origin of the food.

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Question: APD 01 (continued)

Country of origin statements on food products imported into Australia, including from New Zealand, is managed under the *Commerce (Trade Descriptions) Act 1905* and the subordinate *Commerce (Imports) Regulations 1940* which require certain goods, including food, imported into Australia to be labelled with a trade description that states the country in which the goods were made or produced. The *Commerce (Trade Descriptions) Act 1905* is exempt from the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement by virtue of Section 44 of the *Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997*.

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Question: APD 02

Division/Agency: Agricultural Productivity Division

Topic: Genetic Modification

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

1. What was the Commonwealth budget for research and development into Genetically Manipulated (GM) crops, plants and micro-organisms in each of the past 20 years?
2. What is the value of commercial benefits from this publicly-funded GM research over the past 20 years?
3. What share of these commercial benefits accrued to:
 - a. the government;
 - b. farmers; and
 - c. other commercial entities?
4. What was the Commonwealth research and development budget for organic and sustainable farming systems in each of the past 20 years?

Answer:

1. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry only has information related to activities undertaken in the portfolio. The department has not funded any direct research and development projects into genetic modification (GM), however there has been funding by some of the research and development corporations (RDCs).

RDC expenditure on GM research and development comes from both industry levies and matching government funds and therefore the specific amount of Commonwealth expenditure on each project cannot be identified.

It should also be noted that RDCs do not have a budget for research and development projects into GM crops, plants and micro-organisms per se. The RDCs refine their investment portfolios each year to reflect changes in the business environment and to address the priorities of their stakeholders.

2. It is not possible for the department to quantify the commercial benefits from publicly funded GM research conducted in the portfolio. However, the Council of Rural Research and Development Corporations reported in January 2010 the 'Impact of Investment on Research and Development by the Rural Research and Development Corporations'. The report highlights a return on investment in the order of \$10.51 for every \$1.00 invested after 25 years. Results are not available for individual projects or for the subset of those directed at GM.

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Question: APD 02 (continued)

3.

As noted in the response to Question 2, it is not possible to quantify the commercial benefits of publicly funded research. However this research has benefited a range of stakeholder interests including industry and the environment.

The Cotton Research and Development Corporation has advised the department that the adoption of Bt cotton has seen the quantities of insecticide applied reduce by over 80 per cent since the mid to late 1990s. The Bt gene (isolated and transferred from the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis*) gives an in-built tolerance to the *Heliothis* caterpillar, cotton's main pest.

Adoption of Roundup Ready herbicide tolerant cotton has seen an increased adoption of reduced and minimum tillage practices – which is associated with a reduction in fuel use and associated greenhouse emissions. The adoption of GM cotton has been a major contributor to workplace health and safety on cotton farms over the last 30 years through: reduced exposure to chemicals, reduced accidents on farm due to reduced traffic and field operations, reduced anxiety, and improved lifestyle of managers and workers.

The Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) has advised the department that its GM research and development expenditure has provided improved research knowledge regarding the function of genes involved in plant processes of import to the grains industry such as responses to drought, salinity and temperature stress and genes involved in plant pathogen defence responses. Approximately 90 per cent of GRDC's investment in genetic modification in the past 5 years has been in partnership with public research organisations including universities, CSIRO and state departments of agriculture.

4. There is no formal Commonwealth research and development budget for sustainable farming systems. However, as part of the Caring for our Country Initiative the government is assisting farmers to adopt improved management practices that will lead to more sustainable farming systems and protect and improve soil, water quality and biodiversity outcomes. Sustainable farm practices is one of six priority areas for the Caring for our Country initiative.

Caring for our Country is not a research initiative and does not fund projects that are predominantly research focussed, with the exception of Reef Rescue water quality research and development projects. Under Caring for our Country four projects have been funded to date, with all funding provided in 2008-09:

- Establishing best practice nutrient recommendations for nitrogen and phosphorus use on papaws in the wet tropics (\$92 000).
- Field evaluation of nitrogen fixation by sugar cane (\$108 350).
- Accelerating adoption of the nitrogen replacement system to reduce nitrogen loads from sugarcane to the Great Barrier Reef (\$102 300).
- Land management practices in the Great Barrier Reef Catchment (\$600 000).

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Question: APD 02 (continued)

While there is no specific budget for sustainable farming systems, many of the RDC's workplans have a focus on improving the long run sustainability of farming practices.

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) has invested in organic research and development through its Organic Systems Program. RIRDC does not have a record of budget figures for the program however it has provided actual expenditure figures for the period 1997-98 to 2009-10.

Table: RIRDC Organics Expenditure 1997-98 – 2009-10

Financial Year	Total Expenditure
1997-1998	\$ 223,567.00
1998-1999	\$ 238,326.00
1999-2000	\$ 287,028.00
2000-2001	\$ 226,166.00
2001-2002	\$ 265,634.00
2002-2003	\$ 261,577.00
2003-2004	\$ 229,223.00
2004-2005	\$ 184,986.00
2005-2006	\$ 262,047.00
2006-2007	\$ 245,285.00
2007-2008	\$ 369,061.00
2008-2009	\$ 253,347.00
2009-2010	\$ 128,480.00
	\$ 3,174,727.00

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Question: APD 03

Division/Agency: Agricultural Productivity Division

Topic: Regional Food Producers Innovation and Productivity Program

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. Can DAFF advise on what are now the remaining funds over this and the next financial years for the program?
2. When will the next round of funding be announced? What will be the level of funds available for this round?
3. How much of this will be for seafood (Labor promised \$10 million over 5 years for seafood specifically)?
4. Can you please advise on any reductions to this fund since the original \$35 million commitment? What was the level of each reduction and to which program was it diverted?
5. What promotion of the program has DAFF undertaken with respect to the seafood industry? What organisation or businesses have been corresponded with relating to the possibility of applying for the program?

Answer:

1. The program has \$1.2 million uncommitted in 2010-2011 and \$4.7 million in 2011-2012.
2. No further funding rounds have been planned. The program has \$5.9 million uncommitted funds.
3. No decision has been taken on further funding rounds.

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Question: APD 03 (continued)

4. See table below

\$million	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	Total
Original budget	6.000	8.200	8.000	12.800	35.000
Amendments	(3.000) Reallocated to Promoting Australian Produce (Major Events) program	(1.300) Reallocated to Promoting Australian Produce (Major Events) program 2009-10	(1.000) Reallocated to Promoting Australian Produce (Major Events) program 2010-11	(4.000) Reallocated to Horticultural Code of Conduct and Pacific Leaders Forum (See 2010-11 PBS)	
	(3.000) Returned to government	(0.831) Reallocated to Climate Change Adjustment Program	(1.500) Reallocated to Horticultural Code of Conduct and Pacific Leaders Forum (See 2010-11 PBS)	(1.000) Reallocated to National Food Plan	
		(2.000) Moved to 2010-11	2.000 Moved from 2009-10		
			(0.500) Reallocated to National Food Plan		
			(0.500) Reallocated to Northern Australia Sustainable Futures program		
Final budget	0.000	4.069	6.500	7.800	18.369

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Question: APD 03 (continued)

5. The communications strategy for the Regional Food Producers Innovation and Productivity Program included:
- direct emails to over 2000 interested stakeholders, including industry bodies, businesses (including seafood businesses), state and territory government officials, other Commonwealth government departments, consultancy firms and individuals;
 - presentations to industry groups;
 - direct discussions with relevant industry organisations, including Seafood Experience Australia and Seafood Services Australia;
 - placement of advertisements in *The Australian* newspaper (20 December 2008 and 17 January 2009) and on *FOODweek online* from 6 April – 6 May 2009;
 - distribution of the *Innovation Grants for the Seafood Industry* brochure in the March/April 2009 edition of *Fish*, the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation's quarterly publication.

The promotions undertaken resulted in 105 of 323 expressions of interest received across the two funding rounds from the seafood industry.

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Question: APD 04

Division/Agency: Agricultural Productivity Division

Topic: The Department's involvement in the Review of Food Labelling Law and Policy (Blewett Review) and enforcement of Country of Origin Labelling

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Can you provide a rundown of DAFF's involvement since Budget Estimates in the inter-governmental labelling law and policy review chaired by Neal Blewett?
2. Has the review panel drafted its report and recommendations? Has DAFF been privy to this draft?
3. According to the review's website, the final report of the Review Committee will be provided to the Government through the Australia and New Zealand Food Regulation Ministerial Council in December 2010 and to COAG in early 2011. Will this still occur?
4. At Budget Estimates, Mr Souness said DAFF is working with the States through a subcommittee of the Food Regulation Standing Committee to encourage greater enforcement of country of origin labelling. Can you please advise on the status of this work?

Answer:

1. Since Budget Estimates the department paid \$250 000; half the Australian Government's contribution to the cost of the review. The department made a submission to the review on 22 July 2010 and departmental officers attended the public forums in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne. The department has been keeping a watching brief on the review process through the labelling review website www.foodlabellingreview.gov.au and a verbal update provided by the review panel to the Food Regulation Standing Committee at its meeting on 1 October 2010.
2. The first part of this question was answered during Supplementary Budget Estimates (Proof Committee Hansard Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee Supplementary Budget Estimates Wednesday 20 October 2010, pages 131 and 132). The department has not been privy to any drafts of the review report or recommendations.
3. This question was answered during Supplementary Budget Estimates (Proof Committee Hansard Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee Supplementary Budget Estimates Wednesday 20 October 2010, pages 131 and 132).
4. At Budget Estimates on Tuesday 25 May 2010 Mr Souness, General Manager, Food Branch, said DAFF works 'with a subcommittee of the Food Regulation

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Question: APD 04 (continued)

Standing Committee to encourage states and territories to more consistently enforce the current existing food standards including country of origin labelling' and that 'there has been a body of work done on not just focusing on country of origin labelling but all enforcement work' (Official Committee Hansard Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee Budget Estimates Tuesday 25 May 2010, pages 130 and 131).

The department participates as part of the Australian Government delegation on the Food Regulation Standing Committee and its Implementation Sub-Committee (ISC) which represents all jurisdictions. ISC has developed a strategy for consistent implementation and enforcement of the food standards code, including country of origin labelling in Australia. Implementing this strategy is a core component of ISC's ongoing work. The states and territories are responsible for enforcement of the code. Through its role in ISC the Australian Government encourages consistent implementation and enforcement of food standards, including country of origin labelling.

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Question: APD 05

Division/Agency: Agricultural Productivity Division

Topic: Murray-Darling Basin Plan

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. Does the Agricultural Productivity section (Division) contain a taskforce, unit or group of employees who are working specifically on the Murray Darling Basin issue?
2. How many personnel does this unit contain? When was it formed? When will it disband?
3. Are personnel attending the MDBA consultation meetings? What other activities are they undertaking?
4. What type of advice are they providing to DAFF, the Minister, the MDBA or other agencies?

Answer:

1. No. There is a section in the Agricultural Productivity Division which deals with rural infrastructure and water. One of the issues addressed by that section is the proposed Murray Darling Basin Plan.
2. See response to question 1.
3. Yes. Departmental staff attend most meetings to observe the discussions and to answer portfolio-related questions at the conclusion of formal proceedings.
4. Departmental staff attending the community consultations share feedback from the meetings with relevant areas of the portfolio and provide advice to the minister as requested.

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Question: APD 06

Division/Agency: Agricultural Productivity Division

Topic: Country of origin labelling and products imported from New Zealand

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Can the Department provide advice on the requirements of products from NZ to have country of origin labelling, particularly horticulture products?
2. Is the Department aware of NZ food manufacturers, including vegetable manufacturers, importing product from China (or other 3rd party nations) and then packaging it up as 'Made in NZ' or similar?
3. What level of bulk wine is exported into Australia from NZ?

Answer:

1. Standard 1.2.11 - Country of Origin Requirements in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code mandates country of origin labelling for all packaged foods and unpackaged fresh or processed fruit, vegetables, seafood and pork offered for sale. New Zealand opted-out of Standard 1.2.11 so it applies only in Australia.

Under the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement, goods that may be legally sold in Australia may be legally sold in New Zealand and vice versa regardless of differences in standards and other sales related regulatory requirements.

In addition, the *Commerce (Trade Descriptions) Act 1905* (CTD Act) and the subordinate *Commerce (Imports) Regulations 1940* require certain goods, including food, imported into Australia to be labelled with a trade description regardless of whether or not they are imported in packages in which they are customarily exposed or offered for sale. The CTD Act is exempt from the Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement by virtue of Section 44 of the *Trans Tasman Mutual Recognition Act 1997*.

2. The department is not aware of New Zealand food manufacturers packaging food, including vegetables imported from third party nations, and labelling them 'Made in New Zealand'.
3. In the year to September 2010, the level of bulk wine (ie- not bottled) imported from New Zealand was:
 - by volume, 11,798,890 litres; and
 - by value, AUD \$30,792,024.

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Question: APD 07

Division/Agency: Agricultural Productivity Division

Topic: Murray-Darling Basin Plan

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. What resources has DAFF assigned to the MDB Plan (& consultations) in 2009-10 and in 2010-11?
2. What is the total cost of DAFF's contribution to the Plan (& consultations) in 2009-10 and in 2010-11?
3. How many staff are assigned to the current round of meetings (or attended any of the meetings)? What are their positions?
4. What is the budget for their travel and accommodation for these meetings? What is the budget for other hospitality expenses incurred?
5. Does the Minister and/or his staff intend on attending any of the meetings? If so, when? If not, why not?

Answer:

1. Within Agricultural Productivity Division there is a section that deals with rural infrastructure and water issues related to agriculture. These issues include matters relating to the Murray Darling Basin (MDB) Plan. There is a section in ABARE-BRS that looks at issues related to the MDB Plan. Two staff from ABARE-BRS have been seconded to the Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA). The MDBA is funding these positions.

The department has not been involved in the planning or organisation of community consultation meetings.

ABARE-BRS undertook work for the MDBA on a fee-for-service basis that is a matter of public record.

2. The department has made no budgetary contributions to the development of the plan or the organisation of consultation meetings in 2009-10 or 2010-11 to 5 November 2010. However, the department meets regularly with agencies that have an interest in the MDB Plan, including the MDBA, and canvasses aspects of the plan in meetings with portfolio stakeholders as part of its normal business.

The cost of the ABARE-BRS body of work undertaken for the MDBA and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities on a fee for service basis was \$986,822.

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Question: APD 07 (continued)

3. A total of nine officers have attended the community consultations to 5 November 2010. Officers at the general manager, manager or assistant manager levels have represented the department.
4. The department does not have a budget for travel, accommodation or hospitality expenses associated with the consultations. Expenses for departmental staff attending community consultations are being paid from base departmental funding.
5. Neither the Minister nor his staff have attended the MDBA's community information sessions. Departmental officers have attended the majority of community information sessions and have provided regular updates to the Minister's office about the outcomes of these sessions. The Government is not conducting consultations on the draft guide to the draft plan they are being conducted by the MDBA.

The Government has established a Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into the impact of the Murray Darling Basin Plan, which was announced by the Minister, together with the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Simon Crean MP, and the Minister for Sustainable Population, Communities, Environment and Water, the Hon Tony Burke MP. This Committee, together with an inquiry initiated by the Senate, will provide further opportunities for people who are potentially affected by the plan to express their concerns.

The Minister has met with stakeholders in areas potentially affected by the Plan, including Shepparton, Albury-Wodonga and Adelaide, and has met with other stakeholders in Canberra, including irrigators and other agricultural producers. Ministers Burke and Crean have undertaken similar consultations with industry and community stakeholders during visits to the MDB region and in meetings in Canberra.

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Question: APD 08

Division/Agency: Agricultural Productivity Division

Topic: Murray-Darling Basin Plan

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

Farmers have had to really drive hard agricultural productivity during the drought to stay afloat.

1. Has there been any research on the increase in debt levels on farms during the drought to maximise productivity?
2. Has there been any research on the impacts of further cuts to production under a basin plan and whether farmers can financially withstand another financial hit?
3. Has the Department geared up its productivity area to meet the new challenges imposed under cuts in irrigation due to the Basin Plan?
4. Does your Agricultural productivity area have a strategy to deal with the water cuts under the Basin Plan?
5. Has the department and specifically the productivity area met with the MDBA, or the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities or the Department responsible for of regional Australia under Minister Crean to discuss the impacts of water cuts on agricultural production?
6. Are you aware of any cross port folio committee charged with overseeing the impacts on water cuts on regional Australia?
7. Have they done any modelling on the impact of fresh fruit and vegetables prices due to the cuts in water in the MDB?

Answer:

1. ABARE-BRS collects data on farm debt levels as part of its farm surveys program. Annual surveys of Australian broadacre farms and dairy farms have been conducted since 1978. Surveys of irrigated horticulture, dairy and broadacre farms within the Murray-Darling Basin have also been conducted since 2006.

Over the 30 years to 2001-02, total farm debt for broadacre farms generally rose in line with the increase in the total value of agricultural production. However, in the period since 2001-02, aggregate farm debt has increased faster than the gross value of agricultural production. Survey data indicates that the majority of the increase in aggregate farm debt since 2001-02 has been to finance land purchase and fund investment in plant, machinery, vehicle and farm improvements. However, part of the increase has also been to finance the working capital requirements of farms, including shortfalls in farm receipts relative to farm costs, particularly in low income years as many farms have had very low farm incomes as a consequence of prolonged drought.

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Question: APD 08 (continued)

With record low farm cash income in 2006-07, as a consequence of severe widespread drought affecting all states, the proportion of farm cash income needed to cover interest payments (debt servicing ratio) reached an historical high of 45 per cent. Improved seasonal conditions in 2007-08 resulted in some improvement in the capacity of farms to service debt. In 2008-09, further improvement in farm cash incomes combined with low interest rates led to the debt servicing ratio falling to average 29 per cent – still relatively high in historical terms.

2. ABARE-BRS analysis of the effects of the Murray Darling Basin Plan is presented in the report *Environmentally sustainable diversion limits in the Murray-Darling Basin: Socioeconomic analysis*.
3. The department remains focussed on improving the productivity growth of Australian agriculture and seeks to monitor, understand and manage the large number of challenges to productivity growth, including long run changes to climate.
4. No formal strategy has been developed. . The only information that has been released is a guide to a draft plan.
5. Yes.
6. Yes.
7. See answer to Question 2.

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Question: APD 09

Division/Agency: Agricultural Productivity Division

Topic: Funding and priority areas for research and development (R&D)

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

1. Has the department conducted any work on the return on Investment on the funding for R&D?
 - a. If yes, has the work shown that funding provides a good return on investment and that increases in funding be beneficial?
 - b. What feedback has the department had from the sector in relation to future R&D requirements?
2. What are the priority areas for R&D in the short term/medium term? (eg. next 12 months/24 months)

Answer:

1. ABARE-BRS is finalising research that investigates the internal rate of return of investment in R&D to Australia's broadacre agricultural sector.
 - a. Preliminary estimates suggest that the internal rate of return of government expenditure on agricultural R&D to broadacre farmers has been significant over the period 1953 to 2007.
 - b. Within the portfolio, the RDCs manage the majority of R&D undertaken. As part of their strategic investment planning processes the RDCs undertake extensive consultation to determine the priority areas for R&D in the short, medium and long term, taking into account the national R&D priorities (see below).
2. The national rural R&D priorities are:
 - improve the productivity and profitability of existing industries and support the development of viable new industries
 - better understand and respond to domestic and international market and consumer requirements and improve the flow of such information through the whole supply chain, including to consumers
 - support effective management of Australia's natural resources to ensure primary industries are both economically and environmentally sustainable.

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Question: APD 09 (continued)

- build resilience to climate variability and adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change
- protect Australia's community, primary industries and environment from biosecurity threats
- improve the skills to undertake research and apply its findings.

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Question: APD 10

Division/Agency: Agricultural Productivity Division

Topic: Australian Government response to the Senate Select Committee report
on Food Production in Australia

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Xenophon asked:

When will the Government respond to recommendations made by the Senate Select Committee on Agriculture in its report on Food production in Australia (tabled on 23 August 2010), especially the response to Recommendation 1 regarding foreign investment in agricultural land and water?

Answer:

The department is coordinating the draft government response to the Senate Select Committee report on Food Production in Australia. The department is working to ensure a timely response to the report.

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Question: APD 11

Division/Agency: Agricultural Productivity Division

Topic: Live Export Industry

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

The live export industry is worth \$996m in livestock sales and almost \$1 billion in wages pa, employs more than 13,000 Australians.

1. What is the current position and policy by the Department in relation to live exports?
2. Is the current policy undergoing any changes?

Answer:

1. The Australian Government supports a vibrant and growing livestock industry, and an important part of it is the export sector. Its earnings reached a total of \$996.5 million in 2009, underpinning employment of around 10 000 people in rural and regional Australia.

The government recognises that the sector faces challenges and responsibilities different from those in some other export industries. Being part of the international live export trade means Australia can help improve the way it operates—benefiting not just our animals but those from other countries as well. The government and those involved in the live export trade are continuing to work on improvements throughout the supply chain.

The Live Animal Trade Program was established to further improve animal welfare in importing countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Asia. For example, the program has supported upgrades in livestock facilities in the Middle East and Asia so that they meet international animal welfare guidelines. The Hon. Tony Burke MP, former Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, approved projects worth more than \$2.4 million under the program.

The Government announced the three-year \$3.2 million Live Trade Animal Welfare Partnership in 2009. Projects under this program are to be funded in equal parts by the government and Australia's livestock export industry. This is an unprecedented example of government and industry working together to support Australian agriculture and trade. On 10 March 2010 the Government announced funding for three projects worth around \$1 million in total under the program. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig announced funding for four projects worth around \$1.1 million in total under the program on 15 October 2010.

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Question: APD 11 (continued)

The government has consulted scientists and animal welfare organisations like the RSPCA in developing the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL). They are regularly updated and are available at www.daff.gov.au/livestockexportstandards.

Several measures are in place to ensure transparency in Australia's live export trade. All livestock exporters must hold a livestock export licence issued under the *Australian Meat and Live-stock Industry Act 1997*. Under the ASEL all vessels carrying livestock must be accompanied by an accredited Australian stockperson and for all voyages to or through the Middle East a government accredited veterinarian must also be on-board. For all voyages the on-board stockperson or veterinarian must provide a comprehensive end of voyage report on livestock health and welfare during the journey. For voyages of 10 days or longer they must also provide daily reports.

In addition the master of the vessel is required to submit a report on the outcome of the voyage to Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and the Biosecurity Services Group (BSG). AMSA and BSG investigate all consignments which record mortalities above a certain threshold, and a report on voyage outcomes is tabled in each House of Parliament every six months.

The Government acknowledges that some people would prefer Australia to export meat rather than live animals. However, a 2008 report from the then Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics concluded that restrictions on the export of live animals would not increase sales of chilled beef, veal or sheep meat. Instead, the countries involved would likely source live animals from elsewhere, including from countries that may not apply the same standards of animal welfare as Australia. The report is at www.abare.gov.au/publications_html/livestock/livestock_08/LiveExports.pdf.

2. No