

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2011
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 14

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: New export arrangements

Proof Hansard page: 20

Senator BACK asked:

Ms Cale: There are about 14 supply chains across five exporters.

Senator BACK: So there are 14 occasions on which the new arrangements have been activated?

Ms Cale: There are 14 supply chains, but there have been more applications to export. Thirty-two notices of intention to export have been submitted. To date, the department has approved 26 of those.

Senator BACK: Perhaps you could take on notice then to give us the range over those 26 of just what has been the added time and what have been the added costs. Is it possible to do that?

Ms Cale: Certainly.

Answer:

The Live Animal Exports Program operates on a fee for service schedule.

Livestock, including cattle, buffalo, sheep and goats, exported by sea are charged at a per head rate based on a tier system. The tier-based system is linked to the level of complexity of the importing country requirements. Additional services above the agreed per head base rate are charged a time based fee. In relation to Indonesia, the time based fee applied to the Notices of Intention (NOIs) has been dependent upon the complexity of the supply chains and the quality of the documentation provided by exporters.

Of the 26 Notices of Intention (NOI) that have been approved, 23 have had the time based fee applied as of 25 October 2011. The time that Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry officers have spent across the 23 NOIs above the industry/government agreed base rate for feeder cattle exports to Indonesia is 294.75 hours. This translates to \$83 119.50 across all the relevant licensed exporters. Of the 26 NOIs, the additional time based fee has ranged from \$0 to \$8530.50, with the average additional cost across the 26 NOIs being \$3196.90 per NOI.

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Question: 15

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: New export arrangements

Proof Hansard page: 20

Senator BACK asked:

Senator BACK: Thank you. That then leads me to the question: has there been an allocation of more staff time to execute these compliance arrangements within the department?

Ms Cale: There have been staff taken offline to work on the implementation of the new regulatory framework. Those staff are also assessing the notices of intention to export. So there is extra effort.

Senator BACK: Again, could you take on notice to give us an indication of what that extra staff allocation has been.

Ms Cale: Sure.

Answer:

As at 31 October 2011, there are seven full time equivalent staff performing these functions.

At various times, staff and resources from other areas of the department have also worked on the livestock export and regulatory reform issues.

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Question: 23

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Salmonella in sheep

Proof Hansard page: 37

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Senator RHIANNON: Thank you, Minister. Dr O'Connell, I have a question about salmonella and the sheep. Is it the case that otherwise healthy sheep carrying salmonella can be loaded undetected on to a live export vessel? I am also interested in the context, because I understand that there is a vaccine for salmonella registered for cattle that could be used for sheep prior to loading for export. If it was used, that would clearly reduce the suffering of animals with that disease. I am interested in progress in that area.

Dr O'Connell: I will pass that over to Dr Mark Schipp.

Dr Schipp: To answer the first part of your question, yes, it is possible that sheep that are not yet expressing salmonellosis will express it once they are put on board and are under stress. It is also possible for there to be rapid spread of salmonellosis within a stressed group of sheep. Once it starts in a pen, it is ideal to move affected sheep out to prevent spread to other sheep. I am not able to answer your second question on the vaccine. I do not know whether a vaccine registered for cattle is efficacious in sheep. I will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has advised there are no salmonella vaccines registered for use in sheep in Australia and there are no minor use permits for the use of the salmonella vaccine, which is registered for cattle, to be used off-label in sheep. The APVMA has no information on the efficacy of this vaccine against salmonella in sheep.

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Question: 24

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Mortality rates

Proof Hansard page: 38

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Senator RHIANNON: But I thought that was the whole issue with this disease—that at that point the sheep present healthy but can be loaded, and the export process starts, but the disease does not manifest itself until the animals are under the stress conditions.

Ms Cale: In cases in which we do hit the mortality rate, if you like—or exceed the acceptable mortality rate—then extra conditions are often placed on the subsequent consignments. There is also, as you alluded to, vaccines or additional measures that can be taken onboard when there are signs of outbreak. Animals can be fed extra chaff et cetera to try to manage the problem at the time. But subsequent to any mortality event there can be conditions placed on the subsequent NOIs.

Senator RHIANNON: Could you please take on notice and inform us of what those conditions are?

Answer:

Information on the outcome of mortality investigations and conditions applied to a subsequent voyage are available on the department's website at:
www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/live-animals/livestock/aqis-mortality-investigations.

Some examples of conditions imposed on exporters for subsequent voyages as a result of the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) investigation following a reportable mortality incident include:

- livestock loaded with additional space above the specified level required under 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 additional inspections by AQIS of the livestock at the registered premises
- requirement for additional veterinary supplies and chaff to be loaded on the vessel
- restrictions on the classes of livestock to be exported.

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Question: 26

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Food Division

Topic: Animal welfare – stunning

Proof Hansard page: 39

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Senator RHIANNON: Are you suggesting that the processed meat going into Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain is sourced from unstunned animals?

Mr Morris: Unfortunately our data is not clear enough to indicate that for certain. We have looked at this question before. We certainly do export kosher slaughtered meat, which is unstunned meat, into Israel. At the moment, there is quite a bit of trade in unstunned slaughtered sheep, or meat, into that country. For the Middle East, we would have to see if we can double-check on exactly what the nature of the export is there, but it is possible some of it will be unstunned. Some of it may be stunned, but, as I understand it, we would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry does not capture data on exports of meat or meat products on the basis of the method of slaughter.

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Question: 28

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division
Topic: Animal welfare – live animal exports
Proof Hansard page: 40

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Senator RHIANNON: What prosecutions, disciplinary proceedings or action of any substance have been undertaken by the federal department or its delegate, AQIS, in relation to breaches of live-export animal welfare standards prescribed by the department secretary?
Mr Morris: We would have to take that on notice, because it would be quite a list in terms of actions that are taken in the event of problems with compliance for exports of animals. I would note, though, that this is the first time we have had a framework that applies in another country, in terms of the Indonesian framework. The actions to date have been around the existing policy framework, which involves the preparation and export up to the point of arrival in the importing country.
CHAIR: We have run out of time, but I have agreed with Senator Colbeck that there are a couple of questions to be put on notice. Senator Abetz may have some.

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) does not formally report on breaches of live export animal welfare standards prescribed by the departmental secretary. For commercial and privacy reasons, DAFF does not disclose details of breaches by individual exporters.

Compliance with the relevant export legislation and Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) is assessed for each consignment of livestock exported from Australia and action is taken on a case by case basis where required in accordance with the export legislation.

Some examples of action that may be taken against the holder of the export licence in response to potential and actual non-compliance with the ASEL include the following, in no particular order:

- send a notice to the licence holder to show cause
- cancel the licence
- determine that a licence not be renewed
- suspend the licence for a period of time
- reprimand the holder of the licence.

The Australian Quarantine Inspection Service has taken a range of the above actions in the past in regards to a number of exporters. Other actions taken include adding conditions to future exports to improve animal welfare outcomes.

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Question: 30

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Animal welfare

Proof Hansard Page: 44

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

Senator HEFFERNAN: Okay, that's the answer. Have you, on behalf of Australia's taxpayers, the government and Australia's farmers, initiated any inquiry at all into the disgusting proposition that 600 to 800 cattle could starve to death under the supervision of a university? It was a good season and the cattle could have been agisted. It is a criminal offence, but no-one was charged, the RSPCA said, 'Oh, it's outside our jurisdiction, we didn't look at it,' and the government of the Northern Territory said, 'Oh, yeah, we were a bit late in bringing up the thing and the time expired.' Someone let 600 to 800 cattle starve to death and no-one has got into trouble. What sort of bloody disgrace is that?

Dr O'Connell: Shall I take on notice the issues surrounding it?

CHAIR: Whatever you do, can you do it quickly, Dr O'Connell?

Dr O'Connell: I'm happy enough to take the question on notice.

Senator HEFFERNAN: I'm asking whether you're doing anything about it.

CHAIR: With that, to the officers from Live Animal Exports: thank you, very much. We will now go to ABARES.

Answer:

Each state and territory government in Australia is responsible for its own animal welfare laws as well as investigation of potential breaches and associated enforcement activities.

The *Animal Welfare Act* Northern Territory (NT) provides this legal coverage.

The responsible agency for administration of that legislation in the NT is the Animal Welfare and Water Safety Branch of the NT Department of Local Government, Housing, and Sport. The Australian Government has no legislative responsibility for this issue and no power to investigate.

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry understands that the NT Ombudsman was involved in the investigation of this specific matter and a report by the Ombudsman is available at:

www.ombudsman.nt.gov.au/publications-reports/public-reports/

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Question: 35

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Asian honey bee

Proof Hansard page: 69

Senator COLBECK asked:

Senator COLBECK: My recollection is that, post our last discussion about this on this committee, through the inquiry into the science underpinning the inability to eradicate the Asian honey bee, there was a decision by the government to put, I think, \$2 million over three years towards this.

Dr Grant: Two million dollars over two years.

Senator COLBECK: What are we getting for our \$2 million over two years? What are we spending the money on?

Dr Grant: I can go to that if you wish; it will take a bit of time.

Senator COLBECK: Perhaps you could give it to us on notice.

Answer:

The Commonwealth Government is providing \$2 000 000 from July 2011 to June 2013 for a Transition to Management Program for Asian Honey Bee (AHB).

A copy of the final Transition to Management plan for AHB was forwarded to the Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee on 17 November 2011.

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Question: 36

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Strategic Projects Division

Topic: Biosecurity Advisory Council

Proof Hansard page: 76

Senator WATERS asked:

Senator WATERS: I will keep an eye on that one. Moving now to the Biosecurity Advisory Council, I am interested in the expertise of the members of that council. I would be happy to be dissuaded of the notion that there is only one member who has a good, strong ecological background and qualifications.

Ms Mellor: There is a member that has a very strong environmental background, but there are other members from different parts of the community that bring environmental thinking to the table as well. There are agriculturalists and scientists that also bring environmental thinking to the table.

Senator WATERS: What are the various backgrounds and expertise of the members of that council?

Ms Mellor: You will really stretch my thinking now. We have someone with an academic and practical background in veterinary science. I might just pause for a moment. We have recently lost a member of that council, who passed away in the last week—Peter Kenny.

Senator WATERS: My condolences.

Ms Mellor: He was a pastoralist and beef producer.

Senator WATERS: Yes. I know Peter.

Ms Mellor: So he had a very strong background in production and was a very active advocate for biosecurity. We have a former member of the Victorian government who has a very strong background in biosecurity and environment.

CHAIR: What I might do, Ms Mellor, if I could—

Ms Mellor: I can provide it on notice.

Answer:

A summary of Biosecurity Advisory Council members' experience is provided below.

Mr Andrew Inglis AM (Chair) is a South Australian grain and beef farmer, former Deputy Chairman of the Quarantine and Exports Advisory Council and a member of the past two major reviews of Australia's quarantine and biosecurity arrangements—the 1996 Nairn review and the 2008 Beale review. He is the current Chairman of the Future Farm Industries Cooperative Research Centre and is a former Chairman of Plant Health Australia. Mr Inglis was recognised as a member of the Order of Australia in 2000 for service to agriculture.

Dr Lisa Adams is a research and development consultant to the agriculture and public health sectors. She is a member of the Western Australian State Health Research Advisory Council and former Foundation Executive Director and Director of Research Development of the Australian Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre for Emerging Infectious Disease. Dr Adams is a veterinarian with experience working in the agriculture and health sciences and has broad knowledge of biosecurity systems and policy.

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Question: 36 (continued)

Dr Joanne Daly is the strategic advisor in CSIRO Science, Strategy and People in the area of major biological collections and infrastructure and provides the council with skills and experience in environmental and biosecurity sciences. Dr Daly is the former Chief of CSIRO Entomology (2003–07) and Group Executive of Agribusiness in CSIRO (2007–2010). Dr Daly was a member of the Quarantine and Exports Advisory Council.

Professor John Mackenzie AO was a Professor of Tropical Infectious Diseases at Curtin University until his retirement in 2008 and was the inaugural holder of a Premier's Fellowship (WA). He was also Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Perth Node of the Australian Biosecurity Cooperative Research Centre for Emerging Infectious Disease, and Honorary Professor of the University of Queensland. He remains associated with Curtin University as a part-time Professorial Fellow. Professor Mackenzie presented at the Communicable Diseases Control Conference in 2009, represented Australia at the Australia-Indonesia Workshop on Human Health, including infectious diseases in 2008, and presented at the first International One Health Congress in 2011. In 2002, he was appointed as Officer in the Order of Australia for services to public health research and to education.

Dr Elizabeth Mattiske has more than 30 years experience in flora and vegetation surveys in Australia and external territories. She is a former Australian Heritage Commissioner and currently a member of the Australian Heritage Council. She has been involved with both state and federal State of the Environment committees and is a former member and deputy chairman of the Western Australian National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority and the Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority. Dr Mattiske brings to the council a depth of experience on threatening processes and impacts of introduced species on Australian ecosystems.

Ms Claire Penniceard is the owner of an export pig production company and has won three significant national awards for environmental stewardship and innovation. Ms Penniceard has been Director of the Goulburn Murray Water Authority since 2007 and member of the Victorian Government's Ministerial Women in Primary Industries Advisory Panel since 2008. She provides the council with experience in agriculture, primary production, environmental sciences and business management.

Mr Dennis Witt is the former Chief Veterinary Officer of Tasmania. Mr Witt has been a member of a range of advisory and consultative committees and provides the council with valuable state government experience and expertise in the areas of agriculture, fisheries and operational biosecurity.

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Question: 37

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Strategic Projects Division

Topic: Biosecurity Advisory Council

Proof Hansard page: 76

Senator WATERS asked:

Senator WATERS: I was just trying to get at what proportion of the council are actually ecological experts. It seems as if there is one person who is, but perhaps they are not in the majority. But I will await that information. Just one final question: given the recognition that it is so important to involve the community in biosecurity, are there any policies or protocols in relation to engaging with the community and the NGO sector on environmental biosecurity issues generally?

Ms Mellor: We have a number of engagement strategies, depending on the focus area that we are looking at. We basically have a policy of wide engagement, depending on the issue and the focus.

Senator WATERS: Could they be provided on notice?

Ms Mellor: Yes. We will see what we can find.

Senator WATERS: Thanks very much. That is it from me

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has developed Biosecurity Engagement Guidelines that provide direction and practical advice for effective stakeholder engagement. These guidelines can be found on the department's website at www.adl.brs.gov.au/data/warehouse/pe_brs90000004183/BiosecurityEngagementGuideLines2010_ap14.pdf

Additionally the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA) contains provisions for engaging community and non-government organisation (NGO) representatives in the event of an emergency response.

DAFF engages with relevant stakeholders on developments in biosecurity issues through a number of forums, including the Secretary's industry roundtable meetings and the Biosecurity Advisory Council.

DAFF also works with stakeholders through Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS)/industry consultative committees established to ensure efficient and effective service delivery, including:

- AQIS Biologicals Consultative Group
- AQIS Grain Industry Consultative Committee
- AQIS Horticulture Exports Consultative Committee

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- AQIS/Industry Cargo Consultative Committee
- Dairy Export Industry Consultative Committee
- Export Meat Industry Advisory Committee
- Export Meat Industry Advisory Committee Finance Subcommittee
- Horse Industry Consultative Committee
- Imported Food Consultative Committee
- Livestock Export Industry Consultative Committee
- Post Entry Plant Industry Consultative Committee and
- Seafood Export Consultative Committee.

Other consultative arrangements employed by DAFF include:

- public consultation with stakeholders throughout the import risk analysis process
- individual meetings with stakeholders as requested, such as the National Farmers' Federation and the Invasive Species Council
- industry forums to engage stakeholders. For example, DAFF uses meetings of relevant associations such as Ports Australia, Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia and existing consultative groups such as the National Passenger Facilitation Committee and industry consultative committees to consult on biosecurity reforms and other related matters.

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Question: 38

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Food Division

Topic: Australian export meat inspection system charges

Proof Hansard page: 76/77

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

Senator HEFFERNAN: Is the department aware that the Australian Export Meat Inspection System charges are having a detrimental effect on smaller operators?

Ms Mellor: We certainly have new meat inspection charges under consideration in the parliament at the moment. I might ask Dr McDonald if she can specify in more detail.

Senator HEFFERNAN: To make it easier for you, I will give you an example. Are you aware that Broad's Poultry in Maryborough in Victoria, which has AQIS facilities at Maryborough, Geelong and Springvale, will see its AMEIS certification fees rise from \$7,500 before the 40 per cent rebate to approximately \$90,000 per financial year with no rebate?

Ms McDonald: I am not aware of that specific incident, no.

to these people—and you may not be aware of this—it would render their business untenable and lead to the loss of an estimated 50 jobs. To go from \$7,500 to \$90,000 is a considerable increase.

Ms McDonald: I would prefer to take that up directly with the firm involved before we make any comments on that. That seems like a very significant jump.

Senator HEFFERNAN: It does seem so.

Ms McDonald: The other thing that I would really like to point out is that under the new service delivery model that is underpinned by these new fees and charges there are options for companies, individual establishments, to reduce their charges. There are options such as the use of AQIS authorised officers, which may or may not be applicable to this particular establishment—I am not sure. Through demonstrating sustained high level of performance they can decrease their audits, so there are substantial savings to be made in audit costs there.

Senator HEFFERNAN: How about I refer them to you.

Ms McDonald: Yes.

Senator HEFFERNAN: Obviously, we have been at this for many years and obviously there has been cooperation. Obviously the bigger operators are not as worried about it as some of the small guys, some of whom had a free service. Is the department aware of Davisons Casing Pty Ltd in Ararat, who also state that their certification fee charges will potentially render their business, which employs four family members and four additional employees, untenable? I understand, Minister, that the local member, Dan Tehan, wrote to you about this on 21 September 2011. That is another one that I should perhaps refer to you.

Ms McDonald: Yes, I was just going to say that.

Senator Ludwig: We are happy to take those on notice and see what the individual circumstances are.

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Answer:

The department has contacted each of the establishments by telephone and has met with affected export meat businesses to discuss options to minimise cost impacts through alternative service delivery arrangements offered under the Australian Export Meat Inspection System.

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Question: 40

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Food Division

Topic: Imported food inspection scheme

Proof Hansard page: 82

Senator MADIGAN asked:

Senator MADIGAN: Do you charge the same for Australian produce as you do for foreign produce coming into the country?

CHAIR: If you are not sure, just take it on notice.

Ms Mellor: We will take that on notice. The two schemes are quite different. Their costs are quite different.

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry does not charge for the analytic tests carried out on either imported or exported food. These charges are set by the approved laboratories carrying out the tests.

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Question: 41

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Myrtle rust plan

Proof Hansard page: 83

Senator COLBECK asked:

Dr Grant: There is \$1.5 million on the table from the Commonwealth. Through the Cooperative Research Centre for National Plant Biosecurity there is a contribution of \$200,000, which is largely in kind, and through RIRDC, the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, there is \$175,000 on the table—a commissioned piece of work from the forestry industry. So, we have that amount of work on the table. New South Wales is continuing to manage the incursion, where it can, and try to address it. New South Wales is also leading the group that is working to get the approval from APVMA.

Senator COLBECK: That is for the use of particular chemicals that might have been effective on the—

Dr Grant: Yes, and once again the final of the plan was agreed on Friday last week—this plan, as well as the Asian honey bee plan. As soon as we have tidied it up it will be made available. It will be publicly posted on the website but we are also happy to table it.

Answer:

New South Wales has submitted emergency and minor use permits for a range of fungicides and will be conducting research to support their application for registration by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). Experience has shown that fungicides can be effective in reducing disease levels and impacts and can play a part in limiting the impact of the disease on plantations, nurseries and gardens in particular.

The plan is being finalised. It will be posted on the web and provided to the Committee.

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Question: 42

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Myrtle rust

Proof Hansard page: 84

Senator COLBECK asked:

Dr Martin: I would like to add that Queensland is also funding some research and activities for myrtle rust. That is \$850,000. Page 84 Senate

Senator COLBECK: Do we have any sense of the breadth of spread at this stage?

Dr Grant: As far as we know, we think that it has not ranged outside of southern Queensland and up some of the Queensland coast and it is in New South Wales. It is not clear whether it is as far down as Canberra; it is between Wollongong and up towards, I suppose you would say, Rockhampton. It may be a bit further south than that.

Senator COLBECK: Are there particular species it is having a more significant effect on than others?

Dr Grant: Can I take that on notice. Quite a lot of work is being done on this and there are some pretty graphic photographs of various impacts on various species, but I do not have available the details of which ones are more susceptible than others

Answer:

The table below show species that have been observed in the field with moderate or severe damage from Myrtle rust:

Common Names/Cultivar	Species
After Dark', 'Burgundy', 'Nana', 'Westland Burgundy', 'Jeddas Dream'	<i>Agonis flexuosa</i>
Lemon-scented myrtle	<i>Backhousia citriodora</i>
Silky myrtle	<i>Decaspermum humile</i>
Beach cherry	<i>Eugenia reinwardtiana</i>
Sweet myrtle	<i>Gossia fragrantissima</i>
Scaly myrtle	<i>Gossia hillii</i>
Thready barked myrtle, 'Aurora', 'Blushing Beauty'	<i>Gossia inophloia</i> syn. <i>Austromyrtus inophloia</i>
Broad-leaved paperbark	<i>Melaleuca quinquenervia</i>
Tahiti', 'Fiji', includes <i>Metrosideros thomasi</i> 'Spring Fire', 'Fiji Fire'	<i>Metrosideros collina</i>
Common myrtle	<i>Myrtus communis</i>
Plum myrtle	<i>Pilidistigma glabrum</i>
Narrow-leaved malletwood	<i>Rhodamnia angustifolia</i>

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List of Species observed to be moderately or severely affected by Myrtle rust

Common Names/Cultivar	Species
Cape York malletwood	<i>Rhodamnia arenaria</i>
Silver myrtle or malletwood	<i>Rhodamnia argentea</i>
Malletwood	<i>Rhodamnia costata</i>
Rib-fruited malletwood	<i>Rhodamnia dumicola</i>
Smooth malletwood	<i>Rhodamnia glabrescens</i>
Smooth scrub turpentine	<i>Rhodamnia maideniana</i>
Small-leaved malletwood	<i>Rhodamnia pauciovulata</i>
Scrub turpentine	<i>Rhodamnia rubescens</i>
Iron malletwood	<i>Rhodamnia sessiliflora</i>
Northern malletwood	<i>Rhodamnia spongiosa</i> syn. <i>R. glauca</i>
Native guava	<i>Rhodomyrtus psidioides</i>
Turpentine	<i>Syncarpia glomulifera</i>
Aniseed myrtle	<i>Syzygium anisatum</i> syn. <i>Backhousia anisata</i> ; <i>Anetholea anisata</i>
Rose apple	<i>Syzygium jambos</i>
Water gum	<i>Tristania neriifolia</i>
Southern penda	<i>Xanthostemon oppositifolius</i>
Crimson penda	<i>Xanthostemon youngii</i>

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Question: 76

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Animal welfare – live animal exports

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Who was the AQIS-accredited veterinarian on the ‘Al Messilah’ that had to return to Adelaide in August this year?

Answer:

Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS)-accredited veterinarians are employed by the exporter concerned. It is a long standing tradition that for commercial and privacy reasons, the department does not disclose the identity of which AQIS-accredited veterinarians are employed for specific consignments.

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Question: 77

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Animal welfare – live animal exports

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Was an AQIS inspector present at the loading of the 'Al Messilah' in Adelaide in August last year?

Answer:

An Australian Quarantine Inspection Service veterinarian was present.

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Question: 78

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Animal welfare – live animal exports

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Does AQIS attend every loading of live sheep onto ships for export from Australia, and if not, why not?

Answer:

Since 2005, the department's policy requires an Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service veterinary officer to be present and monitor the loading process for each consignment of livestock exported from Australia.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
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Question: 84

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Live animal export – slaughter procedures

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

How can a comprehensive independent assessment of animal handling and slaughter procedures in Indonesia be conducted as a desk top exercise?

Answer:

The question is taken as referring to the assessment of restraint boxes undertaken by the Australian Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) at the request of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator the Hon. Joe Ludwig. The intent of the assessment was to evaluate the ongoing appropriateness of these restraint boxes, and as such, could be accomplished as a desk-top exercise.

To assess the ongoing appropriateness of Mark I and IV restraint boxes the CVO viewed available footage, including of slaughtering operations, and still images of the Mark I and Mark IV restraint boxes used for the slaughter of cattle in Indonesia. Images were sourced from Animals Australia, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the industry body Meat and Livestock Australia. Also considered were photos, design specifications and industry-funded research reports on the use of the Mark I and Mark IV restraint boxes.

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Question: 93

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: New export arrangements

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Is it the case that those most concerned to perpetuate the live export trade are left to police it, in particular, LiveCorp and Meat & Livestock Australia?

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry regulates Australian licensed exporters. LiveCorp and Meat & Livestock Australia are not part of the regulation of exporters under the relevant export legislation.

The new regulatory framework for livestock exports to Indonesia that took effect on 7 July 2011 allows the export of feeder livestock only where a licensed exporter can demonstrate that animals can be managed through supply chains that meet international welfare standards.

The regulatory framework requires exporters to provide the Australian Government with assurances, through independent audit reports, that animal welfare outcomes can be met right through to the point of slaughter.

Detailed information about the regulatory reforms can be found at www.liveexports.gov.au and www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/live-animals/livestock/escas.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 95

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: OIE - guidelines

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

The World Health Organisation for Animal Health (known also as OIE) publishes a *Terrestrial Animal Code* of standards and recommendations for animals for its member nations. Chapter 7.5, '*Slaughter of Animals*', of the Terrestrial Code by Article 7.5.7 deals with stunning methods and is replete with diagrams of methods of stunning. Can it not be inferred from the heavy emphasis upon stunning methods in Article 7.5.7 that the clear preference of the OIE is for pre-stunning and that the reference to methods of slaughter without pre-stunning is no more than an acknowledgement that the OIE's 178 member nations include many 'developing ' or 'third world' countries where pre-stunning is not employed?

Answer:

The majority of the OIE chapter 7.5 on Slaughter of Animals provides guidance on how to appropriately manage animals leading up to and at the time of slaughter regardless of whether stunning is to be applied. Stunning, when applied incorrectly, can cause serious harm to animals during the slaughter process and substantial guidance is included in the chapter to inform correct use. This should not be read as a preference for, but rather recognising the significant risk to animal welfare when stunning is applied incorrectly.

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Question: 96

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Live animal exports – OIE guidelines

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Further, that being so, how can such recommendations by the OIE be talked up into “international welfare standards” with which Australia’s live animal export trade comply, where no-one in government or industry has been heard to say that slaughter without pre-stunning is humane?

Answer:

Slaughter without pre-stunning is accepted as humane in Australia under the Meat Standards Code and is practised in a number of jurisdictions.

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Question: 97

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: New export arrangements

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Why did the department grant an export permit (as distinct from the annual export licence) for the *Hereford Express* to sale from Darwin's Easter Arm Wharf on Wednesday 1 June 2011 for Cilacap in South Western Java and a further export permit for the loading and departure from Broome WA of another full load of live cattle of *Sahiwal Express* on Thursday 2 June 2001, in circumstances where these shipments were undertaken before new orders could be prepared and take effect to suspend the trade in animals to 12 designated Indonesian abattoirs? Why did the federal department not refuse to grant the export permits when such serious concerns about the cattle's welfare were entertained at the time, leading to the suspension of the trade only a few days later? Is it the case that [according to the *The Australian* (2 June 2011, p.4) the federal minister refused to answer questions on whether he had authorised export permits for the two cattle shipments, and if so, why? Is it the case that the shipping agent, Dubai-based Gulf Agency Company, refused to comment on the *Hereford Express* shipment, and that the ship owner, Vroon, said the shipment was commercial-in-confidence?

Answer:

The consignments loaded on the *Hereford Express* and *Sahiwal Express*, which departed on 1 June 2011 and 2 June 2011 respectively, had been prepared in accordance with the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock and met the relevant requirements of the *Export Control Act 1997*. As such, the relevant export documentation was issued at the appropriate times prior to departure. The Orders made under the export legislation that prohibited the export of feeder livestock to 12 listed places in Indonesia came into effect on 3 June 2011.

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Question: 105

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Animal welfare – live animal exports

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Is there a time limit on voyages? For example, voyages to Turkey can take up to 41 days and voyages to and from multiple ports can take up to 35 days.

Answer:

There is no time limit on a voyage, however in granting an export application, the assessing officer must be satisfied that there are sufficient provisions for the proposed journey to ensure acceptable animal welfare standards.

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Question: 106

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Animal welfare – live animal exports

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

The Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock (ASEL) are effectively guidelines only and unenforceable. Has there ever been a circumstance where an exporter has had a statutory fine imposed or a suspension of licence and if so, what were the details?

Answer:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry does not formally report on non-compliance with the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock. For commercial and privacy reasons the department does not disclose details of sanctions imposed on exporters.

Please also refer to the answer to Question 28 from the Supplementary Budget Estimates hearing on 17 October 2011.

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Question: 119

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Food exports

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator WILLIAMS asked:

A series of Export Information Workshops were held in Adelaide, Toowoomba, Melbourne, Perth and Newcastle from the 27th of September to the 20th of October. Was any consideration given to holding a workshop in regional centres such as Narrabri or Tamworth, as most exporters in that area could not afford the time or cost travelling to Newcastle? Will a regional centre be included in the future?

Answer:

- Newcastle is a regional centre.
- Information sessions, outlining the outcomes of the grains export certification reform package, were presented in one location in each of the five grain exporting states of Australia.
- The location of the engagement sessions were determined in consultation with the MTF in order to maximise the involvement of grains exporters. Over 200 people attended.
- All sessions had significant stakeholder participation from a wide range of regional areas throughout Australia. Stakeholders from regional areas such as Narrabri and Parkes attended the Newcastle session.
- The material presented at these sessions is also available on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website at www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/plants-grains-hort/ian/11/2011-49
- No further sessions are planned.

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Question: 174

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Food Division

Topic: AQIS chemical residue testing

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Last comprehensive analysis of imported food inspections was July – December 2008. Why has this analysis ceased?
2. This showed 97.5% compliance of inspected foods, with incorrect labelling being the area of greatest non-compliance, accounting for some 63% of non-compliances. Is the situation similar now?
3. Are chemical residues in excess of MRLs an area of significant non-compliance?
4. What is the significance of testing for Endrin, Chlorfenvinphos and Disulfoton?
5. How often are these three chemicals detected?
6. When determining the risk profile of produce to be tested, what sources of information are used?

Answer:

1. The analyses of imported food results have not ceased and continue to be reported every six months. The most recent analysis was for the period July to December 2010 and all reports can be accessed from the website at www.daff.gov.au/aqis/import/food/inspection-data.
2. In the July to December 2010 report, compliance of inspected foods was 97.4 per cent. Of these, incorrect labelling accounted for most of the non-compliances at 74.1 per cent of the failures.
3. No, the testing against maximum residues limits does not show significant non-compliance. The average compliance rate for pesticide residue testing for the period January 2009 to December 2010 is 99.3 per cent.
4. Chlorfenvinphos and disulfoton are cholinesterase inhibitors and have the potential to cause acute effects if present at high levels. As such they are included in the pesticide screen, as they may still be used in other countries.

Endrin is an organochlorine pesticide that is no longer used internationally. It is included in the general indicator for the class of organochlorine pesticides that includes endosulfan. While some of the chemicals in this class can be acutely toxic if present at high enough levels, this compound is of less concern from a human health perspective than the organophosphate and carbamate pesticides.

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Question: 174 (continued)

5. The three chemicals are rarely detected. Since October 2005 there has only been a single detection- chlorfenvinphos, in sesame seeds from India in 2006. The shipment was destroyed.
6. Risk profiles are the responsibility of Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) which carries out imported food risk assessments. FSANZ advises that residues in fresh produce pose a low risk to human health.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Question: 175

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Quarantine Operations Division

Topic: Risk assessment imported goods

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. What assessment has been undertaken of the potential for declarations regarding the suitability of food products imported to Australia to be false or otherwise misleading?
2. How many forged Certificates of Assurance did AQIS uncover for Chinese products earlier this year?
3. How was this fraud uncovered?
4. What changes to processes or procedure changed as a result of this discovery and of the way in which the fraud was uncovered?

In response to QON 134, May 2011, the department responded 'Fraudulent documentation provided by importers and overseas suppliers may bypass some profiles but may be picked up by other sampling processes'.

5. Do you have any data on how often fraudulent documentation does bypass AQIS systems, for example is reported by people in the community or found by chance?

Answer:

1. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) utilises a number of compliance assessment methods including automated profiles, audits, inspections, random sampling and liaison with overseas regulatory authorities.
2. DAFF has detected approximately 1400 instances of phytosanitary certificates and fumigation certificates fraudulently purported to be issued by the Chinese Government since new Chinese certification was introduced in January 2011.
3. Approximately 132 000 containers arrived in Australia from China between 1 January 2011 and 31 October 2011. During this period over 1400 certificates associated with these imports were rejected by departmental staff due to inconsistencies including the absence of security features which should have been present in the new, official phytosanitary and fumigation certificates. The Chinese Government confirmed that certificates without these features were not authentic.
4. When examples of fraud occur, future consignments associated with the identified supplier and importer are targeted for increased scrutiny of documentation and physical inspection. If the fraud persists, a high level of Biosecurity intervention is maintained and direct approaches are made to the government of the exporting country. A multilateral working group of representatives from 21 International Plant Protection Convention member countries (including Australia) has also been established to explore new electronic certification options and increase confidence in export certification.
5. In addition to those instances identified by DAFF staff, another 49 reports of fraudulent declarations were received during the period 1 January 2011 to 31 October 2011.

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Question: 176

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Myrtle rust

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. The department identified the following areas of research into Myrtle Rust:
 - Identifying the potential species affected through a more detailed survey
 - Identifying the taxonomy of the rust
 - Investigating breeding resistant species
 - Seeking approval for agricultural chemicals for use in emergenciesHow will the latter two strategies assist in protecting native flora, particularly that in national parks or used for commercial logging operations?
2. What assessment has been undertaken into the potential environmental and financial impacts of this disease?
3. Has ABARES now done any work on the impact of this disease on the forestry industry?
4. How many commercial industries have been impacted so far, for example Tea tree?
5. What is the current estimate of the impact of Myrtle rust on Australian flora?
6. What work has been done on the impact of myrtle rust on native fauna?
7. Has there been any resistance from any Myrtaceae species to Myrtle rust?
8. Has any study been done as to the impact on Myrtaceae species, or the impact on our carbon stores for native vegetation due to Myrtle rust?
9. What lessons has the DAFF learnt from the outbreak of Myrtle rust?
10. What is the extent of the Myrtle rust outbreak in hectares and the extent of the spread by location?

Answer

1. Resistant species and effective fungicides are tools that may assist in reducing the impacts of Myrtle rust in conservation and commercial forests. It is clear from observations made so far that there is a wide range of host susceptibility amongst the Myrtaceae to Myrtle rust. Understanding the basis of resistance and the range of susceptibility across plant species will indicate those that are highly susceptible to the disease as well as those that may provide a source of resistance for inclusion in resistance breeding. Highly susceptible species, where they are used in production or are present in vulnerable ecosystems, may need targeted disease management strategies in order to survive or thrive in the presence of the rust.

This is particularly important in relation to revegetation and commercial planting where strategies to transition to less susceptible species may also be needed. Getting approvals for use of effective fungicides will allow for improved management of susceptible species where fungicide applications may be appropriate such as small areas, nurseries and highly valued individual plants in both conservation and commercial forests. Breeding for resistance in commercial Eucalyptus clones has been applied successfully in Brazil to manage similar rust species.

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Question: 176 (continued)

2. The majority of work done on the impacts of Myrtle rust has been extrapolated from known data on the closely related pest guava rust which has a similar biology, ecology and host range. In 2007, the then Bureau of Rural Sciences estimated the potential impact of guava rust on commercial forestry and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Forestry Division was commissioned to consolidate information on potential economic and environmental impacts of guava rust. These analyses proved difficult due to a lack of baseline data and the number of assumptions that needed to be included.
3. No.
4. Commercial industries which have been directly impacted by Myrtle rust have been the nursery and garden industry, native foods, cut flowers and foliage, and essential oils. Although some commercial forest species are susceptible, no commercial plantations have been infected to date.
5. Estimating the impact of Myrtle rust on Australian flora is difficult and investigations have been and are being initiated. There is variable susceptibility to the rust within and between Myrtaceae species, and this combined with other influencing factors including environmental conditions, differences in plant condition and life stage, make estimating true impact difficult. The number of species showing some susceptibility is over 100 and will likely increase as the rust continues to spread.
6. There have been no specific studies done to date on investigating the impact of Myrtle rust on native fauna.
7. In a recent host testing experiment by CSIRO, 13 of 113 myrtaceous species tested showed resistance to Myrtle rust.
8. There have been two host testing projects completed through CSIRO and NSW Department of Primary Industries, as well as various field observations of infected species through public awareness programs and structured surveillance by NSW and QLD government agencies, which have given an indication of potential impacts. These activities over time will help better define the impact of Myrtle rust.

There has been no specific study of the impact of Myrtle rust on the ability of an infected Myrtaceae species to store carbon; however, reduced plant vitality produced by a disease like Myrtle rust in general reduces the level of carbon storage. In the natural environment, this may be compensated for by gradual changes in the plant species within an ecosystem so the net impact on carbon storage may be minimal.

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Question: 176 (continued)

9. Every incursion response is different due to the nature of the pathogen, its hosts and factors around its introduction, spread, detection and preparedness. Each response generates lessons that are considered at incident debrief sessions by response participants. The Myrtle rust debrief was convened by Plant Health Australia (PHA) on 11 and 12 April 2011. Issues arising from the response are being coordinated by PHA for consideration by all parties to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed.

10. Myrtle rust is currently known to be established in coastal areas extending from the Far South Coast in New South Wales to the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. Isolated detections in nurseries have been found in Cairns and Townsville, where action has been taken to destroy infected plants, and in some plants in Toowoomba. The estimate of hectares of infected plants outside of the nursery industry is not known.

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Question: 177

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Asian honey bee

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

- 1 In response to QON 121, May 2011 the department stated a copy of the pilot program for the management of Asian Honeybee will be made publicly available. Is this now available? Where?
- 2 Summarise the data and evidence that supports the view that the AHB cannot be eradicated.
- 3 Has any new data come to hand during the current field season which has bearing on the eradicability of the AHB?
- 4 Where any new techniques introduced during the current field season which improved capacity to detect and destroy nests of AHB? If so, what were they?
- 5 Have pesticide baits been deployed?
- 6 Have any potential attractants been identified and deployed?
- 7 What will be the impact on incidental pollination services by the spread of AHB?
- 8 What will be the impact on paid pollination services by the spread of AHB?
- 9 What honeybee related export services/products such as queen bees and package bees, have been adversely impacted by the declaration that the AHB is endemic?
- 10 What is the value of these export services/products?
- 11 Will there be other flow-on adverse impacts of the declaration on national services, such as diminished capacity to provide queen bees to Australia's beekeeping industry?

Answer:

1. The Asian honey bee (AHB) transition to management plan (the Plan) has been finalised. A copy of the plan was forwarded to the Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee on 17 November 2011.
2. The following data and evidence supports the view that AHB is not eradicable:
 - the tendency for the bees to swarm
 - the bee breeds rapidly and can travel long distances, particularly with assisted movement on vehicles and trains
 - limitations of current surveillance methods which makes it difficult to locate all nests and destroy them.
3. No.
4. No.

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5. No pesticide baits have been deployed to destroy AHB nests.
6. No.
7. The impact that AHB spread may have on incidental pollination services currently is unclear.
8. In the short-term, paid pollination services are likely to benefit from any reduction in pollination arising from the spread of AHB as demand for this service increases. Longer term impacts remain unclear.
9. Currently there are no exports of package bees (Queen bees) from Australia. Reasons include the unknown pathogen status (particularly in relation to viruses) of European honey bees in Australia, the unknown virus status of AHB around Cairns and the presence of AHB.
10. The production value of honey and beeswax products in Australia for 2010-11 was \$92 million.
11. Other impacts on national services resulting from the declaration that AHB cannot be eradicated are unknown and unlikely to be immediate. No Australian jurisdictions have imposed quarantine or movement restrictions to mitigate the risk of spread of AHB from Queensland. The transition to management plan for AHB focuses on management options for the honey industry, including management of hives within areas where AHB is established.

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Question: 178

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Food Division

Topic: AQIS fees and charges

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. What is the status of the review of AQIS fees and charges and negotiations with industry sectors, particularly horticulture?
2. Response to QON 107, May 2011 indicated no additional appropriation required for travel but an inability to separate out travel as a budget item. Why can't the department separate out travel expenses?
3. Was information such as this used when calculating the budget for Export Certification Reform Package?

Answer:

1. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry review of export fees and charges has the following status:
 - The meat sector has a new fee structure that was implemented on 1 October 2011.
 - The grain sector has a new fee structure that is expected to be implemented on 1 December 2011 and a transition package has been negotiated for the grain industry.
 - The dairy industry has agreed not to change the current fees and charges model.
 - The fish Ministerial Task Force has accepted in principle revised fees and charges at its meeting on 2 November 2011.
 - Negotiations on fees and charges in the live animal sector have been postponed pending further considerations of the Farmer Review.
 - Negotiations with all horticultural sectors with regard to fees and charges continue.
2. Please refer to QoN 107 from the Budget Estimates 2011. The Export Certification Reform Package appropriation included travel within the category of supply chain projects. Travel costs, including fares, accommodation and travel allowance for both staff and non-staff (Ministerial Taskforce members) were:
 - \$332 479 for the 2009–10 financial year
 - \$1 620 856 for the 2010–11 financial year.
3. The total budget for the Export Certification Reform Package was \$127.4 million, to cover the period from November 2009 to the end of June 2011. The budget was separated into the following categories:
 - \$85.3 million for fee rebates to provide a 40 per cent offset of the full cost of export certification services on export industries from November 2009 to 30 June 2011

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- \$26 million for meat inspection reform, to introduce flexible inspection in the Meat Program
- \$16.1 million for reform of the regulatory and export supply chain, which includes supply chain mapping, market access initiatives, fees and charges reviews, IT reforms and consultations with industry.

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Question: 179

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Kiwi canker

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Please provide more information regarding why fresh kiwifruit is not considered a pathway for the pathogen when the pathogen is “known to be spread by infected planting material, wind, wind-driven rain and mechanically”.
2. How is the department confident fresh fruit is safe?
3. How can the department be confident that the current quarantine checks taking place on entry to Australia are sufficient, given the often very cursory questioning of incoming passengers who have declared that they have been on a farm or rural area outside Australia in the previous 30 days?

Answer:

- 1-2. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has conducted a review of fresh fruit of kiwifruit from all countries as a potential risk pathway for *Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *actinidiae* (PSA). The review found no evidence to suggest that fresh fruit is a pathway for transmission of PSA. The department continues to monitor this situation.
3. The department implements a range of measures to protect Australia’s unique biosecurity status, including:
 - Prohibiting the importation of high risk goods such as fresh fruit and vegetables unless strict conditions are met
 - Documentary and physical inspections of imported produce. These may be onshore, offshore, targeted sampling based on statistically valid sampling regimes. For example, all containers destined for rural areas are inspected both externally and internally.
 - Legal requirement for passengers to declare any food or plants on arrival
 - Legal requirement for passengers to declare contact with farms in the 30 days preceding travel (this requirement has been in place for over 10 years).
 - In addition to passenger declarations, all passengers are assessed and screened according to the level of risk they pose of carrying undeclared quarantine material.
 - Passenger screening includes searches by quarantine officers, x-ray inspection and detector dog screening

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Question: 180

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Plant biosecurity cooperative research centre funding

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

What is the status of the review of Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) funding for the Plant Biosecurity CRC?

Answer:

Officers representing the CRC National Plant Biosecurity were interviewed by a Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research selection panel on 7 November 2011 as part of the process to determine which CRC bids will receive a new term of funding.

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Question: 181

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Quarantine Operations Division

Topic: Importing food from Korea

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Goods from Korea have been found in Australia without having met AQIS requirements (QON 134 May 2011). Were these meat products?
2. How were they imported into Australia?
3. Was it through the post?
4. 15 investigations were initiated and 14 Quarantine Act search warrants were executed. What is the status of these investigations?
5. Given the number of investigations and the fact sheet focus on the Korean business community, is there any suggestion this may not be have been random acts by the general community?
6. What risk did these importations have with regard to introducing foot and mouth to Australia?

Answer:

1. Some of the products were meat products.
2. The products were shipped to Australia in refrigerated shipping containers.
3. No.
4. Ongoing.
5. The investigations are ongoing.
6. The Republic of Korea is a foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) affected country. FMD can be carried in a range of animal products, in particular unprocessed meats and dairy products from susceptible species. FMD could be transmitted if affected products were consumed by susceptible species. The seizure and subsequent destruction under quarantine supervision of the animal products from Korea reduced the risk of introducing foot-and-mouth disease to Australia from Korea.

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Question: 182

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Environmental biotech

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

AQIS have recently rejected an application for importation of an environmental bioremediation agent due to it containing a dairy based carrier. Given this product has been imported into Australia for about 16 years, how did AQIS just become aware of the presence of the dairy carrier?

What risk did the importation of this product have with regard to introducing foot and mouth to Australia?

Answer:

A bioremediation agent for use in cleaning grease traps has been imported into Australia for a number of years. The most recent permit application for this product from the importer included additional information that indicated the product contained a dairy-based carrier added during the final phases of the manufacturing process.

The information previously provided by the importer suggested the dairy ingredient was added during the processing steps in the manufacture of the final product. Previous import permits have had a requirement for the manufacturer to declare that the final product contained no material of animal origin. The exporter has been making this declaration to the department.

The addition of the dairy ingredient in the final phases of processing means any prior treatment, such as heating, would not be applied to the dairy ingredient, and therefore disease risks associated with this ingredient may not be appropriately managed. Dairy products may carry viruses and bacteria of quarantine concern including foot and mouth disease.

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Question: 183

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Quarantine Operations Division

Topic: Inspecting frozen goods

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

In response to QON 134, May 2011 the department advised that 'AQIS may direct imported frozen cargo of interest to Quarantine Approved Premises'. What are the triggers or criteria for so doing?

Answers:

The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Services (AQIS) utilises a range of tools that may trigger the direction of frozen cargo to a Quarantine Approved Premises (QAP), please refer to answer (11b) to Question 134 from the Budget Estimates hearing on May 2011.

The selection of premises is negotiated between AQIS and the importer. The department considers factors such as the suitability of different QAPs, the premise's capacity to handle the product, its secure storage capacity and the availability of inspection staff for that location.

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Question: 184

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Quarantine Operations Division

Topic: White Spot Syndrome Virus

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

Questions:

1. On 28 September 2010 the Interim Inspector General of Biosecurity commenced a review of what caused a consignment of imported raw peeled prawns that tested positive for prawn disease White Spot Syndrome Virus (WSSV) to be erroneously released into Australia by the BSG, there were seven recommendations. Have these been implemented?
2. Have there been any further breaches?
3. In view of the recent 'near-miss' where raw Saudi prawns were imported into Australia without testing following an assessment by Biosecurity Australia that Saudi prawns were free of white-spot, followed shortly by a devastating outbreak of white-spot virus in Saudi Arabia that resulted in up to 25,000T of lost production in a single season alone, what modifications to the assessment process have been undertaken by Biosecurity Australia to properly protect Australia's aquatic fauna and the livelihoods of prawn fishermen and farmers from imported viruses?
4. With white spot outbreaks occurring on a regular basis worldwide causing huge economic and job losses, what measures is the Australian government taking to ensure that infected stock does not arrive in Australia?
5. Is the government increasing the number of tests on imported cooked and green prawns?
6. Has the government considered an immediate ban on imported green prawns? What were the key factors in the decision making process?

Answer:

1. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has implemented all but one of the recommendations of Dr Dunn's report. The outstanding recommendation (the development of a system interface between the laboratories and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service Import Management System) is being considered in the context of emerging information and communications technology strategies for DAFF.
2. There have been no further breaches.
3. No prawns were imported into Australia from Saudi Arabia. DAFF has not approved Saudi Arabia to export prawns to Australia. The department continuously monitors instances of animal disease in its trading partners.

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4. The measures introduced to reduce white spot syndrome virus risk as part of the department's import risk analysis of prawns and prawn products include: sourcing from a disease free country, zone or compartment; testing all batches of raw prawns on arrival; requiring that product is highly processed; or that the prawns are cooked. These risk management measures are among the strictest in the world and reduce the risks to an acceptable level consistent with Australia's conservative approach to biosecurity.
5. 100 per cent batch testing all ready occurs.
6. The current import controls are based on the recommendations of DAFF's import risk analysis (IRA) of prawns and prawn products is available at www.daff.gov.au/ba/ira/final-animal/prawns.

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Question: 185

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Food Division

Topic: Tasmanian export certifications

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Is it correct that there are plans to have export certificates and other documentation for Tasmanian exporters produced in Victoria?
2. What is the justification for this?
3. How much money will it save AQIS?
4. Will this affect timeliness of Export Certifications being available?
5. Are fees for Certificates as to Condition (EX 188) expected to increase again on top of the \$55 increase in July 2011?

Answer:

1. The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service has made arrangements with Tasmanian clients to provide certification services for non-prescribed goods, animal by-products and fish and fish products from Melbourne.
2. To improve the already reliable and cost efficient service to export food clients across South Eastern Australia.
3. Approximately \$100 000 per year.
4. Yes. It is expected to improve the reliability and timeliness of the certificate service.
5. There is no proposal to increase the charge for an EX188 for non-prescribed goods at this time.

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Question: 186

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Tropical fish

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Where is Biosecurity Australia up to with its intentions to batch test all imports of certain tropical fish?
2. How have the species to be batch tested been selected – particularly given the viruses being tested for (Megalocytiviruses) have not been found on some of the species to be tested?

Answer:

1. The import risk analysis (IRA) commenced in September 2008 as a regulated standard IRA. A draft IRA report was released in March 2009 for public comment. Comments from 18 stakeholders were received. A provisional IRA report—the final step in the regulated IRA process – was issued on 22 July 2010 for a 30-day appeal period. On 7 October 2010, the Import Risk Analysis Appeals Panel advised the Director of Animal and Plant Quarantine (DoQ) and three appellants that it had disallowed six claims and found one claim outside the ground for appeal. The DoQ is assessing this information and has not yet made a policy determination. Once a policy determination is made, it would provide the basis for the introduction of risk management measures, for example batch testing of fish.
2. In assessing risks, a key determinant is the known host range of a pathogen in fish. Megalocytivirus, which is typical of iridoviruses, has been identified in a broad range of fish species, including species within the gourami family of fishes (such as gouramis, paradise fish and Siamese fighting fish), the cichlid family (such as angelfish and oscars) and the poeciliid family (such as guppies and platys). Other viruses such as herpes viruses typically have a much narrower host range. The batch testing requirements, as proposed in the provisional final IRA report, target all the members of these three families because megalocytivirus is known to have a very broad host range and all species within the three families are therefore likely to be able to carry the virus.

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Question: 187

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Food Division

Topic: AQIS export reforms

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

The Motion put forward by the Coalition passed by Parliament on 13 October 2011 asked for the continuation of rebates until reforms have been delivered, and that the Government carry out a legitimate costs of government study what will the department/Minister do to respond to this motion.

1. With regard to a legitimate cost of government study, the Ernst and Young report did not analyse whether there were legitimate costs that government should pay in association with export certification as there was a broader public benefit. When will the Government undertake an independent study that examines whether there are such costs as promised by the former Agricultural Minister Tony Burke?
2. Did the same consultant organisation do the review of all six industries on the AQIS rebate reforms?
3. Were industries given a choice in consultants?

Answer:

1. The independent study agreed by the former Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Tony Burke MP, was a study to assess all of the costs associated with the provision of export services to the red meat industry. This study has been completed and a report is available on the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry website at www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/ecri/meat-mtf/information-package.
2. Ernst & Young reviewed costs in the meat program and the horticultural program.
3. The Meat Ministerial Taskforce and the Horticultural Ministerial Taskforce chose the consultant. Both taskforces include industry representation.

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Question: 188

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Food Division

Topic: Meat industry export reforms

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. AQIS has issued approximately 345 export licenses; about 150 of these licensees are responsible for less than 2% of total production or exports. Were all these small operators consulted regarding the reform process?
2. What was the nature of the consultations?
3. What notice were these small operators given on the changes to the fees and charges structure?
4. What notice were all affected industry players for the meat industry given of the final fee structure?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. Consultation occurred through a number of means, including via the Meat Ministerial Taskforce and industry peak bodies and directly between the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) and industries. Information was provided on the departmental website and through advertisements in the rural press. Officers from AQIS's Central and regional offices offered advice on the implementation of the reforms to individual exporters, when requested. Regional officers visited individual export establishments to give advice on the best ways to take advantage of the reforms.
3. All registered export meat establishments were informed by email on the commencement of the Export Reform Certification Package in November 2009 that fees and charges would return to full cost recovery by 1 July 2011 and that as part of the reforms the fees and charges would be reviewed in compliance with the government's *Guidelines for Cost Recovery*.
4. All registered export meat establishments were informed by email of the final fee structure on 20 October 2011. The department webpage was updated on 30 September 2011 with the final meat fees and charges at www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/meat/elmer-3/fees-charges/fees.

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Question: 204

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Export inspection report

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

1. It is my understanding that prescribed goods includes various grains and plant products and according to certain destination country requirement fumigation is required as part of the import permit according to the country of destination. Why is it that there is different interpretation of the Orders and Act which makes Registered Export establishments UNPACK containers ready for shipping when the goods could be effectively fumigated with a registered fumigate within the container certified by a registered fumigator without being unpacked . Isn't this a prohibitive cost to the registered packing Premises?
2. And why, in some cases in certain regions, are some prescribed goods allowed to be fumigated in containers and other Prescribed goods are not, if it's all covered by the same Orders?
3. Why if the goods are inspected prior to packing into containers and found to be insect free are they not allowed to be packed into containers and fumigated after being packed?
4. The legislation for prescribed goods hasn't changed since 2005 and is still governed by Export Control Act 1982 and the Prescribed Goods General Orders and the Grains Plants and Plant Product Orders 2005. Fumigation as far as the Plant And Plant Protection Orders 2005 is not an area of control that AQIS are meant to determine HOW the fumigation should be conducted. Why then has AQIS imposed regulation on how fumigation should take place on Industry?

Answer:

1. Importing countries may specify fumigation as a mandatory treatment prior to export. The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Services (AQIS) provides two options to exporters to meet this requirement. The first option is that exporters may first present goods for inspection and where goods are found to be free from insects the exporter may fumigate the goods in accordance with the *AQIS Methyl Bromide Fumigation Standard* and export the goods without any further inspection by AQIS. The second option is for exporters to fumigate the goods and then present to AQIS for inspection. The first option does not require the exporter to unpack a container.
2. The new *Export Control (Plants and Plant Products) Order 2011* allows for consistent treatment requirements for all prescribed goods. These orders are outcomes-focused and do not prescribe how the exporter is to treat the prescribed goods.
3. Refer to Question 1.
4. Refer to Question 2.

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Question: 205

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Export inspection report

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

Current Export Documentation in the form of a an EIR (Export Inspection Report) usual initiated by the registered export establishment and finalised by the AQIS Authorised Officer (AQIS Employee or contractor) has nowhere on this document to verify that the AQIS Approved Inspector (Industry Person) has taken the sample as per the Registered establishments approved arrangement . Seeing this is such a critical document in AQIS's documentation and audit process why has this been left off the document?

Answer:

Currently there are no standard approved arrangement inspection forms as each approved establishment generates its own forms. The department has revised all plant export inspection forms as part of the Export Certification Reform Package and national forms will be phased in throughout November 2011.

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Question: 206

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Food Division

Topic: Registered export establishments and insect inspections

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

Why is it some registered Exports establishments can be put on suspension not allowing them to export or conduct export business when it has been found that they have live insects on site (the live insect being ants or large beetles) when other registered export establishments have forged documents and only received warning ? These misinterpretations and inequalities between premises cost Industry dearly!

Answer:

The export control orders covering prescribed commodities include a schedule that relates to structural requirements and operational hygiene that does not permit the presence of live insects. Without more detailed information it is not possible to respond to the specific examples in the question.

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Question: 207

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Prescribed goods order

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

1. Are Mungbeans included in prescribed goods OR are they do they have their own Orders?
2. If mungbeans are under the Prescribed Goods Orders 2005 as it was legislated, why are there still specific instances where mungbean export packing establishments are singled out to have higher degrees of hygiene above other prescribed goods?
3. Why is there segregation of at least 1mtr (a pallet width) required between stored goods in a registered establishment when the goods are both prescribed goods under the same legislation and there is no way of cross contamination when the products are in sealed bags .
4. Employee's communicably disease policy –instituted on Mungbean sheds but is not found anywhere in Plant & Plant Orders 2005 – why?

Answer:

1. The *Export Control Act 1982* defines prescribed goods “as goods included in a class of goods, that are declared by the regulations to be prescribed goods for the purposes of this Act”. Mungbeans were listed as a prescribed good under the Act's previous subordinate legislation, the *Export Control (Plants and Plant Products) Orders 2005*. They are now prescribed under the *Export Control (Plants and Plant Products) Order 2011* which repeals the 2005 Orders.
2. Under the *Export Control (Plants and Plant Products) Order 2011*, mungbean export packing establishments are now subject to the same legislative provisions for registered establishments as other prescribed plants and plant products.
3. The Plant Export Operations Manual provides guidance on how to meet the requirements of the *Export Control (Plants and Plant Products) Order 2011* for product security. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will consider alternative arrangements to meet these requirements and industry is encouraged to present these to the department.
4. Schedule 3A of the *Export Control (Plants and Plant Products) Orders 2005* did provide regulation to prevent a person with a communicable disease entering a registered establishment for the preparation of mungbeans. *The Export Control (Plants and Plant Products) Orders 2005* have been repealed by the *The Export Control (Plants and Plant Products) Orders 2011* which does not regulate the employee's communicable disease policy.

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Question: 208

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Export certification reform

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

Reference: G Mullen – Grains Industry Project Manager for AQIS produced a 58 page document called “EXPORT CERTIFICATION REFORM PACKAGE – GRAIN WORKPLAN SUMMARY.”

1. Within this summary I believe there is consistent referral to Industry Involvement - who is Industry that this document refers too? There are over 600 Registered Grain Packing premises throughout Australia – How many and how often have you consulted with or held meetings with this part of the Industry which is the focal point of all AQIS legislative requirements?
2. These are the Industry people who have to comply, not the exporters or major Industry parties who are the only ones who have had some form of participation? Why? If these are the portion of Industry who is most effected by the changes envisaged?
3. Within AQIS there are field officers who have direct contact with these registered Export establishments how often has the MTF consulted with or meet with these regional officers who are dealing with the legislation on a day by day basis?
4. Within the new introduction and proposed new scheme why is control being taken away from the regional offices where AQIS officers control
 - a) Booking for Inspections
 - b) Documentation
 - c) Potential closure of offices in the bush
 - d) Travel arrangements – Officers now try and do inspections within a travelled route. NOW with control being taken away it means that they will be subject Inspections at one end of the region then the next at a completely remote location, whilst there could be two or three smaller inspections along the same route
5. Fees for Industry have already been increased, yet the new process hasn't started THERE IS NO DEMONSTRATED SAVING TO INDUSTRY. Please explain Department's position/policy.
6. Why has not Industry (being the registered Export Grain premises) been given a draft or blueprint of what the NEW model is?
7. Where will Industry be trained in this new model? Will it be on site or will they have to travel to capitol cities and take time off work to be educated on this new system?
8. What percentage of your own staff (AQIS) have been trained or have been given a copy of the manual that will the operation of the new Model?

Answer:

- 1-2. The industry involvement refers to organisations and individuals involved in any part of the process of exporting plants or plant matter, from grower to shipping to destination country.

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Industry consultation was delivered through regular communiques, fact sheets, ministerial press releases, workshops conducted by consultants, website updates and a series of five regional grain export reform workshops that the department co-hosted with the Grain Ministerial Taskforce (MTF). These were held during September and October and were open to all grain export industry participants. For details of the workshops provided please refer to Question 119 from Supplementary Budget Estimates on 17 October 2011.

3. The MTF had departmental representatives who provided representation for all Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) plant export officers including field officers.
4. The impact of the uptake of the revised service delivery model by industry will be monitored by the department to ensure adequate resources and infrastructure are appropriately placed. The department is exploring the centralisation of some administrative functions (such as certificate authorisation and inspection bookings) to provide inspection staff with more time to conduct inspections and audits.
5. New fees have not yet been introduced. All plant export clients were informed by mail on the commencement of the Export Reform Certification Package in November 2009 that fees and charges would return to full cost recovery by 1 July 2011 and that as part of the reforms, the fees and charges would be reviewed in compliance with the government's Cost Recovery Guidelines. The proposed grains fee model has been agreed with industry.

The proposed fee model sets in place an activity based costing approach which will be used to address the issue of cross-subsidisation and ensure that fees are adjusted according to export volumes. This revised approach will deliver greater visibility of cost drivers, for both industry and government.

The new fees and charges:

1. Ensure the equitable and transparent allocation of costs.
2. Implement a fee structure that will sustain necessary departmental export certification programs into future financial years.
3. Ensure that cost savings resulting from reform initiatives are passed onto industry.

The review of the fees and charges was based on the principle of 'user pays' – those who use the service pay the costs, consistent with the Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines.

6. The revised service delivery model has been communicated via industry communiques which are available on the department's website at www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/ecri/grain-mtf/grain-mtf-progress-reports/communique-4-recommended-options-for-the-new-service-delivery-model

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7. Training to become an AQIS Authorised Officer (AAO) can commence now by submitting an AAO application form. The individual will then be given access to free on-line eLearning that he/she can complete at his/her own pace and location. Training may be undertaken on-site, if required. Upon completion of the training, the individual must complete on-the-job competency assessments prior to receiving authorisation.
8. All departmental staff will complete training by 30 June 2012.

The Plant Exports Operational Manual became operational on 1 July 2011 and is available on the department's website at www.daff.gov.au/aqis/export/plants-grains-hort/plantexportsmanual

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Question: 212

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Food Division

Topic: AEMIS certification fees

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

1. Is the department aware that the AEMIS certification fee changes are having a detrimental impact on operators in the Australian meat export sector?
2. Is it aware for example that Broads Poultry in Maryborough in Victoria, which has AQIS registered facilities in Maryborough, Geelong and Springvale, will see its AEMIS certification fees rise from \$7,500 (before the 40 percent rebate) to approximately \$90,000 per financial year with no rebate?
3. Is the department aware that this could render the business untenable and lead to an estimated 50 jobs lost?
4. Is the Department also aware of Davidson's Casing Pty Ltd in Ararat who also state that the AEMIS certification fee changes will potentially render their business that employs 4 family members and 4 additional employees untenable? (The Member for Wannon, Dan Tehan MP has written to Minister Ludwig on both of these issues – on 21 September 2011 on Davidson's Casing Pty Ltd and on 10 October 2011 on Broad's Poultry - so the Department should be aware of them)
5. Has the Department had representations from other businesses in the meat export sector raising similar issues and if so, can they please detail the names of these companies and the estimated cost impacts on their businesses.
Could the Department please detail what streamlining has occurred within the AQIS meat inspection system to bring costs down?
Could it please provide a detailed list of the areas where this streamlining has occurred and detail the specific cost savings which have been made as a result?

Answer:

1. The department has received both complaints and compliments regarding the new fees and charges.
2. The estimation provided by Broads of the costs of export certification under the Australian Export Meat Inspection System (AEMIS) is inaccurate. The Department is working with individual business to minimise fees in accordance with the new charges.
3. No.

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4. The department has been made aware of Davidson's Casings of Ararat concerns. The department met with the poultry and casings industries on 3 November 2011 to seek to minimise cost impacts through alternative service delivery arrangements offered under AEMIS.
5. Concerns have been raised by the peak industry body representing export registered cold stores, whose members' registration charges may rise from \$2817 per year up to \$10 080 per year depending on the regulatory model they seek to apply. Concerns have also been raised by one small goods manufacturer that registration charges for that sector may increase from \$2817 per year to \$15 000 per year.

Export reforms incorporate a range of regulatory cost reduction initiatives that can be employed by companies depending on their particular commercial circumstances. These initiatives range from using AQIS Authorised Officers, audits based on risk and performance and the utilisation of alternative regulatory arrangements.

Streamlining measures are being progressed. The total forecast reduction in regulatory costs for the export meat program for the 2011–12 financial year, as a result of the reforms, is expected to be in the order of \$27.4 million, resulting in a total meat program cost of around \$56 million.

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Question: 213

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Food Division

Topic: Kangaroo meat

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator Heffernan asked:

Kangaroo shooters from NSW have had significant issues with obtaining information from AQIS requesting information on the safety and viability of kangaroo meat harvested in the bush.

1. I understand that in 2010 a multi-state survey of over 400 kangaroos was undertaken by AQIS to investigate the effect of age on the microbiological load of field harvested kangaroos. Is this correct?
2. Could I have a copy of the results and the report from this survey and any other surveys undertaken in 2010 in relation to kangaroo meat?
3. Have any surveys been undertaken in 2011? If so, can I have copies?
4. Is the information gathered during this survey publicly available? If so where and how is it accessible and if not, why not?
5. A NSW constituent was counselled by the Food Authority in July 2011 that AQIS was unwilling to release the results of this survey. Have other members of the public been declined the information from this survey and other surveys?
6. Under what conditions was this survey undertaken? Provide details.
7. What issues, if any, were reported from this survey and what has AQIS done to ensure that these risks are reduced?

Answer:

1. In 2010 a multi state survey of 463 kangaroo carcasses was conducted jointly by NSW Food Authority, Department of Primary Industries and Resources, Safe Food Production Queensland and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS). The purpose of the study was to verify that 14 days was an acceptable interval between kangaroo harvesting and processing.
2. The results contain information to which markets may be sensitive and which may enable the identification of individual establishments, causing negative economic impacts. Therefore the report cannot be provided.
3. No surveys have been conducted in 2011.
4. AQIS is seeking clearance from the owners of the survey and the kangaroo establishments to write up the results as a technical report and to publish in the scientific literature.

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5. AQIS is not aware of the request made to NSW Health or any other requests from the public for information from this survey.
6. Sampling was undertaken during March 2010 on kangaroos harvested in late February and March. Samples were collected from the abdominal cavities of field-dressed kangaroo carcasses immediately after entry into the processing establishment, prior to removal of the skin and further dressing. The selection of carcasses for sampling occurred after the initial pre-dressing inspection by the on-site AQIS veterinarian to pass the carcasses as fit for processing for human consumption.
7. No issues arose. The study verified the conditions that the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry had put in place for the interval between harvesting and processing (14 days). The rise and fall of bacterial levels in the samples taken from the abdominal cavity confirmed that 14 days was an acceptable storage interval.

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Question: 217

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Pest incursions

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator WATERS asked:

Per Hansard of 17 October 2011 Dr Grant advised the committee that over the last 12 months the Australian Government has responded to 35 detections of new plant pests or diseases, with only two—chestnut blight and coco pod borer—resulting in a cost shared eradication program, 25 animal disease incidents and five marine pest detections.

1. Please explain the discrepancy between these figures and the Department's 2010-11 Annual Report which said that there were more than 50 newly detected plant pests managed under the emergency plant pests response deed alone.
2. Also, please explain the reasoning by which the vast majority of detected incursions was deemed to not be "of economic significance or it has been considered that their eradication is not technically feasible and/or beneficial" (language of the Department's Annual Report). What is the process by which a decision 'not to eradicate' was taken in all but 2 of the 35 (or 50) incursions?
3. In relation to this process, please advise:
 - a) How many incursions of any sort were detected and investigated in 2010-2011? What were the species involved in 2010-11?
 - b) What was the decision made in respect to each of those detected incursions? How was each decision made? Which of those incursions were regarded as a potential threat to industry? Which to human health or amenity?
 - c) Which of the detected incursions were regarded as a potential threat to the environment? What are the criteria by which you determine this?
 - d) What environmental assessments were conducted to assess the likelihood or level of threat? Please provide copies of these. In decision-making about incursions what method do you use to rank environmental, economic and health threats?
 - e) Who provides technical advice on eradicability? What are the criteria applied? Please provide examples of eradicability assessments for incursions in 2010-2011.

Answer:

1. The figures quoted by Dr Grant relate to the number of detections in the twelve months leading up to the October hearings (i.e. September 2010 to September 2011), the figures quoted in the annual report are for July 2010 to June 2011.

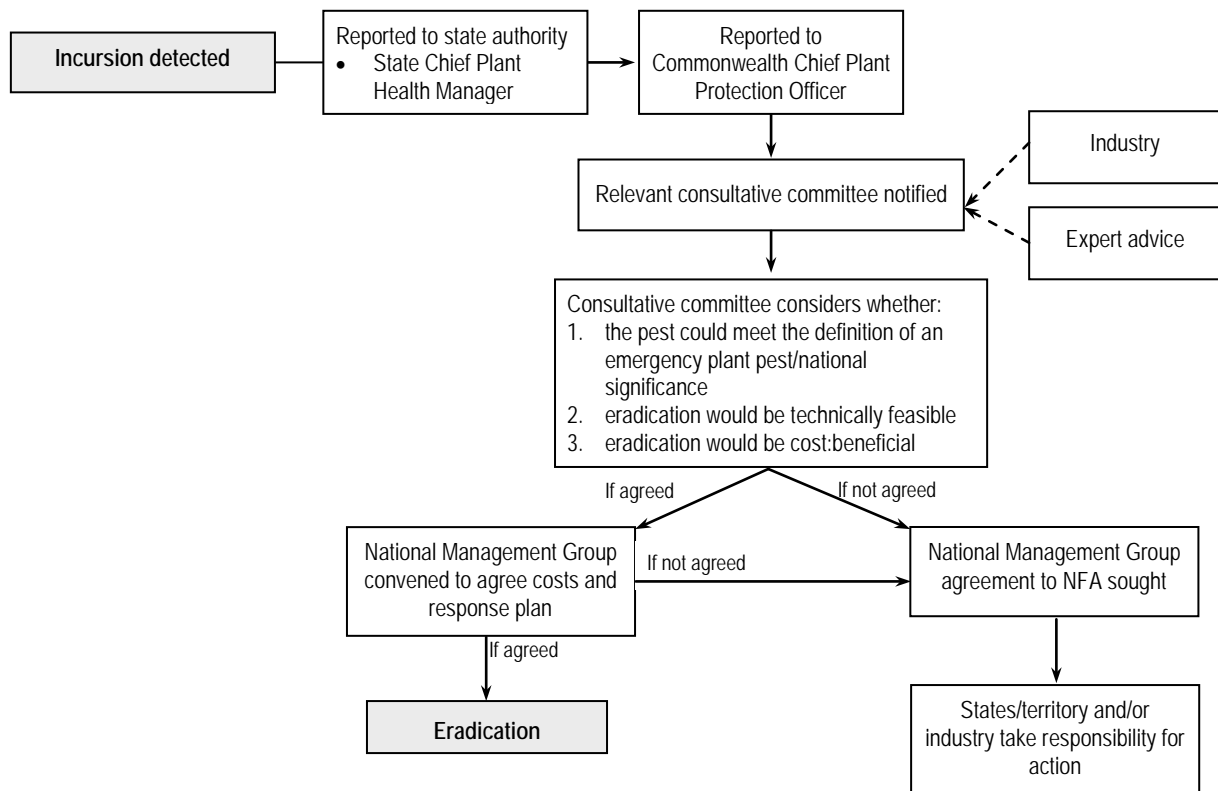
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2. In the majority of cases, the plant pests detected have not been of economic significance or it has been considered that their eradication is not technically feasible and/or beneficial. A number of biological, socio-economic, and ecological factors are considered in making this decision, including, but not limited to:

- positive identification of the pest
- pest taxonomy
- mode and anticipated rate of spread
- survival mechanisms
- reproductive potential/life cycle
- potential hosts and natural enemies
- ease of detection
- length of time pest is likely to have been present in Australia
- likelihood of pest re-introduction
- environmental constraints
- possible eradication/control strategies, including effective available tools
- legislative constraints
- costs and benefits of the response.

An overview of the eradication decision making process is provided below:



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- 3ab. The list of 53 pests for which no further action was deemed necessary by the Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests in 2010–11 and the reasons for these decisions is provided in **Attachment 1**.

The decision making process is outlined above. All pests were considered worthy of being notified but were not considered an emergency plant pest, not deemed technically feasible to eradicate or not deemed cost beneficial to eradicate. The majority of pests were identified because of their potential primary production impact and not their potential threat to human health or amenity.

- 3c. As mentioned above, the majority of pests were identified because of their potential primary production impact. There is no specific stand alone environmental impact assessment and no specific criteria for determining the potential threat of a pest to the environment. Key considerations for considering environmental impacts are noted in the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA) and Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD) but are not prescriptive and include consideration of issues such as the pest host range, impact on biodiversity, potential threatened species, protected areas as well as the impact of control measures and depend on the pest and the incursion situation. The consultative committees predominantly use advice from experts to consider environmental impact on a pest-by-pest basis. The determination of environmental impacts of pests is difficult to describe in Australian's unique environment and is often extrapolated from offshore experience using a range of analytical techniques which can include climate, host and spread modelling.
- 3d. Decisions on proceeding with eradication need to be made in a timely manner and full environmental studies which may be conducted for other purposes—such as land use planning over a longer period of time— are not usually able to be done. However, environmental impacts are integrated into the overall decision process—along with impacts on amenity, health and industry— by the consultative committees responsible for providing technical advice on eradication (including Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests, Consultative Committee on Exotic Plant Incursions, Tramp Ant Consultative Committee). Specific technical advice and consideration by experts sourced from a variety of institutions and agencies both domestically and internationally is sought by consultative committees on a pest-by-pest basis. Where needed, a Scientific Advisory Panel is convened to provide technical advice to the consultative committees.

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Threats are not ranked by environment, economic or health factors in decision making for initiating an incursion response:

- Threats are considered nationally significant under NEBRA if any of a range of impacts can be identified such as loss in biodiversity, threatened species and protected areas.
- Under the EPPRD and its categorisation process, environmental threats are defined as high, medium or low based on expert opinion and taking into account factors previously mentioned that would be taken into account in determining national significance under NEBRA.

- 3e. The relevant consultative committee (including Consultative Committee on Emergency Plant Pests (CCEPP), Consultative Committee on Exotic Plant Incursions, Tramp Ant Consultative Committee) provides advice on the technical feasibility of eradication. Depending on the pest, the committee may seek advice from relevant experts. There is no specific stand alone eradication assessment document, with consultative committees considering the technical feasibility of successful eradication as part of their discussion of the incident. Technical feasibility of eradication is only considered after it has been agreed by the relevant consultative committee that the pest is an emergency plant pest or a nationally significant pest (depending on the situation). The majority of pests reported do not meet this first criterion (refer **Attachment 1**).

Examples of incidents during 2010-11 where the CCEPP deemed the pest to be technically feasible to eradicate include cocoa pod borer in Queensland and chestnut blight in Victoria. In these two cases the limited geographical spread of the pest when initially detected—as demonstrated through surveys conducted both within the affected state and across other states/territories—was one of the key factors in the CCEPP agreeing that successful eradication was technically feasible

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Attachment 1

Pests considered by the Consultative Committee for Emergency Plant Pests between July 2010 and June 2011

No.	Pest	State	Reason for NFA
1.	<i>Aecidium myopori</i> – Emu bush rust	WA	new host for established pest
2.	<i>Albugo candida</i> on commercial cabbage	Vic	new host for established pest
3.	Alfalfa mosaic virus	WA	new host for established pest
4.	<i>Alternaria japonica</i> – Alternaria leaf spot	Vic	new host for established pest
5.	<i>Berlesaspis spinifera</i> (scale)	NT	extension of range of established pest
6.	<i>Botryosphaeria zeae</i> – white grain disorder	Vic	extension of range of established pest
7.	<i>Botryosphaeria zeae</i>	SA	extension of range of established pest
8.	Buprestid beetle (<i>Hylaeogena jureceki</i>)	Qld	not considered an EPP
9.	Cactus X potexvirus	Vic	limited host, transmitted by grafting, likely widespread due to large volume of imports
10.	<i>Cercospora apii</i>	Vic	new host for established pest
11.	<i>Cladosporium variable</i> on spinach	NSW	seed borne disease, high likelihood of reintroduction
12.	<i>Colletotrichum dracaenophilum</i>	Vic, NSW	reported across a number of jurisdictions and likely widespread due to large volume of imports
13.	<i>Commelina mild mosaic virus</i>	NSW	host considered as of little or no economic value, and virus most likely to have a very narrow host range (ie it has evolved with the plant).
14.	<i>Cryptomyzus ballotae</i>	NSW	only one insect detected despite further trapping (Jul 2010 to Feb 2011)
15.	<i>Cytosphaera mangiferae</i>	NT	extension of range of established pest
16.	<i>Diplodia africana</i>	Vic	records show pest is widespread
17.	Downy mildew of sweet corn	Qld	identified as native species
18.	Elm leaf beetle – <i>Xanthogaleruca luteola</i>	SA	extension of range of established pest
19.	<i>Entyloma ageratinae</i> – white smut	Qld	accidental introduction to Qld as a biocontrol agent for mistflower
20.	<i>Eudiagogus maryae</i> – Clown weevil at Port of Brisbane	Qld	no significant economic impact
21.	<i>Euwallacea fornicatus</i> - borer on avocado	Qld	new host for established pest
22.	Flat grain beetle - <i>Cryptolestes species X</i>	Qld, NSW	no significant economic impact
23.	<i>Fusarium oxysporum</i> – Rosewood fusarium wilt	NT	records show pest has been present for some time
24.	<i>Fusicladium convolvularum</i> - Silverbush leaf spot	Vic	no major impact
25.	<i>Fusicladium radiosum</i> var. <i>letiferum</i>	Tas	pest host range confined to <i>Populus</i> spp.

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No.	Pest	State	Reason for NFA
26.	Gray leaf spot – <i>Stemphylium</i> sp.	NT	new host for established pest
27.	Hellebore net necrosis virus (HeNNV)	Vic	established pest, symptomless
28.	<i>Hemileia wrightiae</i> on <i>Wrightia pubescens</i>	NT	established pest—originally misidentified
29.	<i>Hemileia wrightiae</i> on <i>Wrightia saligna</i> , Qld	Qld	extension of range of established pest
30.	Hibiscus chlorotic ringspot carmovirus	NT	new host for established pest
31.	Kiwi fruit canker – <i>Pseudomonas syringae</i> pv. <i>Actinidiae</i>	Vic	diagnostics revealed the mild 'Asian' strain of the pest, records show pest has been present for some time
32.	<i>Macrosposythonia xenoplax</i>	WA	extension of range of established pest
33.	Myrtle Rust – <i>Uredo rangelii</i>	NSW	not technically feasible to eradicate
34.	<i>Nematospora coryli</i> – cotton stigmatomycosis	Qld	new host for established pest
35.	<i>Neofusicoccum macroclavatum</i>	WA	extension of range of established pest
36.	<i>Paraphaeosphaeria</i> spp on <i>Ruscus</i>	WA	extension of range of established pest
37.	Pelargonium zonate spot virus (PZSV)	WA	no major impact as could not infect tomatoes
38.	<i>Phakopsora cingens</i>	NT	new host for established pest
39.	<i>Phenacoccus parvis</i> on lantana and capsicum	NT	records show pest is widespread
40.	<i>Phenacoccus solenopsis</i> on hibiscus	NT	established pest
41.	<i>Phoma herbarum</i>	WA	new host for established pest
42.	<i>Phomopsis mali</i> (WA)	WA	extension of range of established pest
43.	<i>Phyllocoptes bougainvilleae</i> Keifer	Vic	established pest
44.	<i>Phytophthora elongata</i> sp. nov	WA	records show pest has been present for some time
45.	<i>Phytophthora</i> on <i>Bulbine glauca</i>	Vic	established pest
46.	<i>Pinnaspis aspidistrae/strachani</i> complex	NT	extension of range of established pest
47.	<i>Pyricularia angulata</i> – Banana blast disease	Qld	established pest—originally misidentified
48.	<i>Pythium tracheiphilum</i> on rocket	Tas	extension of range of established pest
49.	Tomato big bud phytoplasma (TBB phytoplasma)	Vic	new host for established pest
50.	<i>Uromyces laburni</i> on broom (<i>Genista monspessulana</i>)	Vic	previously detected in Australia, confusion over naming
51.	<i>Valsa malicola</i>	Vic	minor pathogen and generally opportunistic
52.	<i>Volutella colletotrichoides</i>	WA	new host for established pest
53.	<i>Xylaria</i> sp. associated with pear decline	Vic	new host for established pest

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Question: 218

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Strategic Projects Division

Topic: Funding for Biosecurity research

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator WATERS asked:

1. What funding did the Australian Government provide in 2010–2011 and propose for 2011–2012 for each of the categories of biosecurity-related research, contingency planning, and emergency responses through the following entities:
 - a. Primary industries research and development corporations or other industry research bodies – which ones and approximately how much was dedicated to biosecurity-related projects (please specify these projects)
 - b. Plant Health Australia (core funding and special projects to be specified)
 - c. Animal Health Australia (core funding and special projects to be specified)
 - d. Universities, CSIRO and Cooperative Research Centres (projects identified)
 - e. State governments (projects identified)
 - f. Other
 - g. Federal-state emergency incursion responses.
2. Outline the funding arrangements (federal, state and industry contributions) for all current national pest incursion responses. How was the level of funding determined? Please provide a copy of the documents outlining the basis for funding levels.
3. What federal funds have been allocated to emergency pest eradications/control under national arrangements each year for the past 5 years? If available advise what funding / action industry has contributed towards these efforts?
4. How much funding per year for the past 5 years has been allocated for emergency pests with potential environmental impacts? Which species are these?
5. Estimate is the proportion of total federal biosecurity funding for contingency planning and implementation and emergency responses that go to environmental threats?
6. On the DAFF website, it says of foot and mouth disease that ‘Since the UK outbreak, the Australian Government has committed to invest more than half a billion dollars to prepare for and manage the FMD threat.’ What is the annual level of federal government expenditure for FMD preparation and how is it being spent?
7. What is the estimated dollar value of primary production lost to weeds, pests and disease in Australia each year?
8. What is the estimated level of public funding in Australia provided to assist in controlling these threats to primary industries and preventing new threats?

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Answers:

1. Australian Government funding for biosecurity related research, contingency planning and emergency response covers a wide range of activities that are being funded both within and by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), including initiatives for sustainable resource management.

- a. The Australian Government provides approximately half the funding received by six statutory Research and Development Corporations (RDCs) and nine industry-owned RDCs, which enables them to commission biosecurity related research and development activities in accordance with their investment plans.

The RDCs are required to report their research and development expenditure against the government's rural research and development priorities, including that for biosecurity. However, the reporting approach varies between statutory corporations and industry owned bodies.

In 2010–11, the RDCs reported spending a collective total of \$59.26 million on biosecurity related research and development. A breakdown by corporation is provided in **Attachment 1**, Table 1. This information has been obtained from RDC annual reports or if these are not available, the RDC Annual Operating Plans. In cases of the latter, the figures represent projected investment rather than actual expenditure. Details of the projected spend for biosecurity related research for 2011–12 is not yet available.

In general, total funding for each RDC is determined by the amount of industry levy collected each year and the Australian Government matching contribution for eligible expenditure up to certain caps. Some RDCs spend un-matched funds above these caps and RDCs can receive income that is not eligible for matching government contributions.

- b. Plant Health Australia (PHA) is a company responsible for coordinating national plant health matters. It delivers a range of strategies and programs aimed at strengthening partnerships between governments and industry on plant biosecurity matters, improving national surveillance capability, and building capacity for emergency preparedness and response across Australia's biosecurity continuum.

PHA members consist of the national industry bodies for major plant industries, including grains, cotton, horticulture, rice, sugar and wine; the Australian Government; and state and territory governments. PHA's core annual running costs are shared between its members, with the Australian Government paying a third share, state and territory governments paying another third, and industry members paying the remaining share.

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PHA's budget, including its core annual running costs, are subject to agreement by its government and industry members at PHA's Annual General Meeting. PHA spends about 40 per cent of its core funding on biosecurity planning and implementation (PHA 2010–11 Annual Operating Plan).

PHA members also provide special funding to the company to undertake activities outside PHA's core business, including on-farm biosecurity risk management initiatives and contingency development of industry biosecurity plans. Table 2 of **Attachment 1** outlines the core and special funding the Australian Government has provided to PHA for 2010–11 and 2011–12.

- c. Animal Health Australia (AHA) is a company responsible for coordinating national animal health matters. It delivers a range of strategies and programs aimed at strengthening partnerships between governments and industry on animal biosecurity matters, improving national surveillance capability, and building capacity for emergency preparedness and response across Australia's biosecurity continuum.

AHA members consist of the national industry bodies for major animal industries, including cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry; the Australian Government and state and territory governments. As with PHA, AHA's core annual running costs are shared between its members, with the Australian Government paying a third share, state and territory governments paying another third, and industry members paying the remaining share.

AHA members also provide special funding to the company to undertake activities outside its core business. **Attachment 1**, Table 3 outlines the core and special funding the Australian Government has provided to AHA for 2010–11 and 2011–12.

- d. DAFF administers an agreement with the Australian Centre of Excellence for Risk Analysis (ACERA) under a funding agreement with the University of Melbourne. The aim of its establishment is to develop the practice of risk analysis by creating and testing methods, protocols, analytical tools and procedures to benefit both government and the Australian community. Grant funding provided to ACERA for 2010–11 was approximately \$1.689 million and in 2011–12 it will be \$1.719 million (exclusive of GST).

DAFF also provides funding to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) to support the operations of the Australian Animal Health Laboratory (AAHL). AAHL is Australia's national animal health diagnostic services and research provider and helps strengthen Australia's animal pest and disease prevention, preparedness and response capability. Funding for 2010–11 was \$7.25 million and in 2011–12 it is \$7.4 million.

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Attachment 1, Table 4 provides details of Australian Government funding to Universities, CSIRO and CRCs.

- e. Funding arrangements with state governments for 2010–11 are listed in **Attachment 1**, Table 5, together with proposed arrangements for 2011–12.
- f. Funding arrangements with other parties for 2010–11 and 2011–12 are listed in Table 6 of **Attachment 1**.

In 2010–11, the Australian Government provided funds of approximately \$14.2 million towards nationally cost-shared responses for emergency responses to pest and disease incursions. It also provided a further \$3.5 million to support two national pilot programs to transition to the ongoing management of Asian honey bees and myrtle rust, following decisions that these could not be eradicated.

In 2011–12 the Australian Government has committed approximately \$11.2 million for nationally cost-shared eradication responses to incursions. A breakdown of costs by incursion is in **Attachment 1**, Table 7.

- 2. Australia has two national agreements in place that allow for timely response to emergency animal disease or plant pest outbreaks: the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA) and the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed (EPPRD). These agreements set out the roles and responsibilities of governments and industry in an emergency response, including cost-sharing arrangements. The Australian Government, all state and territory governments and a number of industries are signatories, or parties, to the agreements.

Under the agreements, costs for national emergency responses are shared depending on the category of the disease/pest and the public versus private benefits of eradication. For example, Category 1 diseases/pests are considered to have high public benefits and are therefore wholly funded by governments. Category 4 diseases/pests hold mostly if not wholly private benefits and therefore the funding ratio is 20 per cent government / 80 per cent industry. The Australian Government contributes 50 per cent of the total government costs to national emergency responses in all instances.

A third agreement, the draft National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA), is currently being finalised. The draft NEBRA builds on the EADRA and EPPRD and applies to incidents that primarily impact the environment and/or social amenity where a national response is for the public good. For this reason, responses under the NEBRA are proposed to be 100 per cent funded by government.

Copies of the three agreements are provided at **Attachments 2, 3 and 4**.

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The Australian Government may initially meet an industry's cost-sharing obligations, with the amount repaid by the industry within a reasonable time period; generally up to ten years. Industry signatories to the agreements usually establish a statutory levy to meet their financial liabilities for a response. An emergency animal disease (EAD) or emergency plant pest (EPP) response levy is usually set to zero and only activated when an EAD or EPP incident occurs that affects that industry. After the debt has been repaid, the response levy is returned to zero.

Underpinning these agreements are sector specific plans that detail the various strategies to be followed by parties to an emergency response. These include AUSVETPLAN (livestock and poultry), PLANTPLAN (plants and crops), AQUAVETPLAN (aquatic animal diseases) and MARINE PEST PLAN (marine pests).

3. The Australian Government, through DAFF, has contributed approximately \$61.4 million towards emergency pest and disease eradications programs over the last five years. These included programs for Asian honey bees, branched broomrape, chestnut blight, cocoa pod borer, electric ants, European house borer, four tropical weeds, myrtle rust, red imported fire ants and siam weed. The government has also contributed to national programs to transition to ongoing management for Asian honey bees, European house borer and Myrtle rust, following decisions that these pests and disease could not be eradicated. The cost per year/program under national cost shared arrangements is provided in **Attachment 1**, Table 7. This does not include the costs incurred by the jurisdiction where the outbreak occurred under the normal commitments of that state or territory.

With the exception of the Asian honey bee eradication program, where industry provided a minor financial contribution, the costs of the above mentioned eradication programs have been met by governments, with the Australian Government contributing half of all government costs.

The Australian Honey Bee Industry Council (AHBIC) was a member of the National Management Group that made decisions in relation to the Asian honey bee eradication program. The honey bee industry, through AHBIC and the Federal Council of Australian Apiarists Association, has provided further financial and in-kind support for the transition to management program. Volunteer beekeepers are also continuing suppression actions against the bees. Other pollination reliant industries were approached to contribute first to efforts to eradicate the bees and subsequently to actions for ongoing management, as these industries were vocal about the need for funding to be provided to continue working on management of this pest. However, they have declined so far to make their own financial contributions. Some are considering in-kind assistance.

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The Nursery Garden Industry of Australia (NGIA) was a member of the National Management Group for Myrtle rust. It did not contribute financially to the eradication effort as the response was wholly funded by governments due to Myrtle rust being listed as a Category 1 pest under the EPPRD. The NGIA did develop a national management plan for the disease for its members. As part of the transition to ongoing management of Myrtle rust, funding was provided by the Cooperative Research Centre for National Plant Biosecurity (\$200 000) and the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (\$175 000). At this stage, no other affected industry has agreed to provide funding towards the transition program.

Other control/national arrangements over the last five years include the 2007 equine influenza outbreak, where the Australian Government met the costs of the emergency response as the horse industry had not signed up to the EADRA and therefore did not have a statutory levy in place. The response cost for the Australian Government was over \$100 million. A separate industry assistance package added another \$262 million.

The Australian Government has also contributed to a range of long term management or control programs for endemic pests and diseases, including fruit fly, weeds of national significance, vertebrate pest animals (specifically rabbits, pigs, dogs and horses), and for weed management generally. For example, for the Defeating the Weed Menace Program, which terminated in June 2008, the government committed over \$44 million to weeds management and research. The government has also committed around \$4 million a year to the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre to develop improved control techniques for a range of pest animals.

The Australian Government through a Memorandum of Understanding between the member states of New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Queensland also contributes 50 per cent of the Australian Plague Locust Commission's (APLC) annual financial budget. The Australian Government's contribution to the APLC for the monitoring and management of significant populations of locusts within the member states for 2010–11 was \$2.6 million and \$2.5 million for 2011–12.

The APLC spent \$1.4 million on locust control operations in 2010–11. Its total research program cost for 2010–11 was \$465 000 which will be maintained for 2011–12.

In 29 July 2011, the Australian Government announced an additional \$6 million in funding to support Hendra virus research in terms of the virus' impact on human health, animal health and environmental biodiversity.

4. Of the emergency pests for which the government has contributed to national eradication responses over the last five years, all had a potential environmental consequence and seven were managed as if under the NEBRA due to the significant environmental and social amenity impacts of the pest/disease. These include Asian honey bees, branched broomrape, electric ants, European house borer, four tropical weeds, red imported fire ants and siam weed. While managed under the EPPRD, the pathogen, Myrtle rust, poses a potential environmental threat.

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Costs associated with these programs are provided in **Attachment 1**, Table 7.

5. DAFF focuses on contingency planning for agricultural threats identified in industry biosecurity plans. Some of these threats will have a potential environmental impact since pests and diseases can have a wide host range, so there will be collateral benefits. For example Myrtle rust has a wide host range spanning primary production of timber and nursery species as well as species in the natural and built environments.

It is estimated that 10 per cent of federal funding for contingency planning is expended on wildlife disease, for example, Tasmanian devil facial tumours and chytrid fungus.

The amount of funding DAFF provides for emergency responses is listed in **Attachment 1**, Table 7.

6. DAFF does not hold expenditure reports specifically related to the funding of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) preparation. However, it has undertaken a number of initiatives to ensure the department and Australia is prepared and has the capacity to prevent and respond to an FMD outbreak. These initiatives have included improved intervention activities at the border, funding the Australian Government's contribution to the FMD Vaccine Management and Bank (\$2.460 million over the period 2003–11), updating AUSVETPlan in relation to FMD vaccination policy, and an end-to-end assessment of Australia's preparedness to respond to an FMD outbreak across the biosecurity continuum. A review was also conducted of the approved country lists for FMD to improve the predictive nature of assessing the status of trading partners.

The \$0.5 billion mentioned on the DAFF website relates to funds provided by the previous government in 2001–02 to strengthen Australia's defence against the introduction of exotic pests and diseases, including but not limited to foot and mouth. Of the \$0.5 billion, \$288.8 million was appropriated to DAFF. In the 2005–06 Budget, DAFF was appropriated \$266 million under the Quarantine Border Security budget measure which was an extension of the 2001 package. The reference on the website will now be removed.

7. It is difficult to determine the estimated value of primary production lost each year to pests/diseases in Australia, including weeds, due to issues with reporting and quantifying incidents that occur, particularly for pests/diseases that only have a small impact on production. There is also no centralised means of quantifying the costs of pest control in production.
8. DAFF is only able to provide information on the level of funding it is provided with to assist in controlling threats to primary industries and preventing new threats, noting that state/territory governments have prime responsibility for management of outbreaks of pests and diseases that occur within their jurisdiction.

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This equates to the sum of biosecurity measures including contributions to national programs for emergency response and ongoing management of pests (including weeds, invertebrates, pathogens, animal diseases, marine pests and vertebrate pests), and DAFF's expenditure on quarantine border control operations and risk assessment.

These measures are estimated in the 2011–12 Portfolio Budget Statements under one of DAFF's two outcomes—to safeguard Australia's animal and health status to maintain overseas markets and protect the economy and environment from the impact of exotic pests and diseases, through risk assessment, inspection and certification, and the implementation of emergency response arrangements for Australian agricultural, food and fibre industries. Estimated expense for this outcome is approximately \$509 million. Further expenses are listed under Outcome 1 in relation to the Caring for our Country program in support of sustainable management of natural resources, and a national approach to weed and pest animal management and research. These expenses are estimated at \$61.6 million.

Since commencing in 2008–09, Caring for our Country has committed around \$81.6 million in open call weeds and pest animal management projects (listed in **Attachment 5**), \$8.6 million in Community Action Grants (listed in **Attachment 6**), \$92.2 million through regional base level funding, and \$24.6 million through national coordination, and implementation of the Australian Weed and the Australian Pest Animals Strategies.

Funding supplied under Caring for our Country to support nationally significant activities in collaboration with state and territory governments, includes:

- \$6 million over three years (2010–11 to 2012–13) for the Australian Weeds Strategy, including a 50:50 cost share component with state and territory governments to support a national coordinator for the Australian Weeds Strategy and a network of Weeds of National Significance coordinators
- \$430 000 over three years (2010–11 to 2012–13) for the Australian Pest Animal Strategy, including a 50:50 cost share component with state and territory governments to support a national coordinator for the Australian Pest Animals strategy
- \$9 million over the five years to 30 June 2013 for the critical project to help keep Tasmania fox free.
- \$9.2 million for the Macquarie Island Pest Eradication project.

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Question: 219

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Strategic Projects Division

Topic: Biosecurity staffing

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator WATERS asked:

1. How many ecologists are employed by Biosecurity Australia?
2. How many technical committees are convened by the Department? Of those how many deal with the technicalities of primary production pests? How many deal with environmental pests?
3. With how many primary production corporations and industry groups does the Department have regular contact? With how many environment groups does the Department have regular contact?
4. From which primary production corporations and industry groups does the Department seek policy advice? From which environment groups does the Department seek policy advice?
5. Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia are structured to facilitate government and primary industry cost-sharing in the event of emergency pests and disease incursions through their respective deeds. What body is responsible for safeguarding the Australian environment from exotic pests and diseases?
6. What are expected to be the improved outcomes for the Australian environment from the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity and National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement?

Answer:

1. The department employs at least 20 staff with ecological training in the Plant Biosecurity, Animal Biosecurity and Plant Biosecurity – Grains and Forestry Branches (formerly known as Biosecurity Australia).
2. The department convenes five technical committees that relate to biosecurity policy and emergency responses. All of these deal with the technicalities of both primary production and environmental pests.
3. The department regularly engages with primary production corporations, industry and environmental groups via a range of communication channels such as ministerial taskforces, industry consultative committees, biosecurity roundtables hosted by the Secretary, industry groups on legislation and one-on-one consultation.
4. The department regularly engages with primary production corporations, industry and environment groups in relation to biosecurity policy matters. Attachments 1 and 2 in Question 220 provide examples of stakeholders consulted on biosecurity policy.

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5. The Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities are the responsible departments within the Australian Government for safeguarding the Australian environment from exotic pests and diseases. There is no equivalent body to Animal Health Australia and Plant Health Australia for the environment.
6. Implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity is expected to improve outcomes for the Australian environment by:
 - Providing a consistent approach to biosecurity risk prioritisation and investment to address environmental objectives across the biosecurity continuum
 - Providing a collaborative approach to collecting, collating, analysing, storing and sharing biosecurity information
 - Assisting with early detection and diagnosis of pests and diseases of concern
 - Supporting a strategic, consistent, scientific, risk-based approach to managing the impacts of established pests and diseases
 - Improving cooperation to increase stakeholder biosecurity awareness and enhance the effectiveness of biosecurity activities through communication and engagement
 - Enhancing the level of preparedness and consistent response arrangements across jurisdictions
 - Integrating national biosecurity research and development capability and infrastructure.

Implementation of the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement is expected to improve outcomes for the Australian environment by:

- Improving management and reducing the impact of pests and diseases on the environment
- Ensuring more efficient and timely emergency responses to pest and disease outbreaks
- Maintaining Australia's favourable international reputation for being free from many pests and diseases, for biosecure business activity and for diverse ecosystem sustainability
- Complying with Australia's international rights and obligations
- Providing cost-effective, science and risk-based biosecurity management.

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Question: 220

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Strategic Projects Division
Topic: National Environmental Biosecurity Agreement (NEBRA)
Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator WATERS asked:

In response to Senator Waters questions on 17 October (p.75) Ms Mellor appeared to suggest that there had been no engagement with ENGOs in the development of the National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA).

- a. Is this correct?
- b. Why were environment groups not involved? How will environment NGOs be involved in implementation of the NEBRA?
- c. What does DAFF regard as the role and functions of the environmental NGO sector in the various functions of biosecurity? Please provide any Departmental guidance documents setting out how the Department intends to engage with the ENGO sector, particularly in relation to biosecurity.
- d. What consultation did the Department have in 2010–2011 on biosecurity issues with primary industry groups, community groups with a special interest in the environment and other community groups?
- e. What provisions for consultation will be contained within the new biosecurity legislation?
- f. What was the purpose of the Department's 3 year "Engaging in Biosecurity" project? What was the actual cost? What were the outcomes? Which community groups and which environmental NGOs were involved in the project? If the level of involvement of community environment groups was low, was this due to the project's focus on 'on farm' biosecurity?
- g. Is the Department undertaking any work to ensure that the Department's dominant focus on primary production issues doesn't undermine the Department's ability to drive strong environmental outcomes through the biosecurity work of the Department? If so, what work is being undertaken?

Answer:

- a. Yes.
- b. The National Environmental Biosecurity Response Agreement (NEBRA) is the first deliverable of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity (IGAB). As an intergovernmental agreement it was negotiated between the Commonwealth and the state and territory governments and there was no direct consultation with environmental non-governmental organisations in the development of the NEBRA. However, stakeholders were kept informed of the progress in negotiating the NEBRA through a range of mechanisms, including the Secretary's roundtable meetings.

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The NEBRA provides opportunities for community and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) representatives to, observe the consultative committees established to provide technical advice to the National Biosecurity Management Group (NBMG) during an emergency response to a pest or disease under the NEBRA; potentially advise these consultative committees through individual, technical specialists or working groups; or observe the deliberations of the NBMG. The NBMG is the peak decision making body in the event of a national environmental biosecurity response.

- c. DAFF recognises the importance of environmental stakeholders in the delivery of national biosecurity outcomes and is committed to undertaking widespread consultation with stakeholders, including environmental stakeholders. There is no specific document that outlines how the department will engage with environmental stakeholders. This is determined on a case by case basis.
- d. The department engages with a wide range of stakeholders on key biosecurity issues. Due to the extensive nature of consultation that the department undertakes with diverse stakeholders, a comprehensive list is unable to be provided. Examples of the range of stakeholder groups with which the department consults include farming organisations (e.g. the National Farmers' Federation and Agforce Queensland), industry representative organisations (e.g. Ausveg and the Australian Dairy Farmers) and environmental NGOs (e.g. the Australian Wildlife Health Network and the Invasive Species Council).
- e. The biosecurity bill will not specifically contain provisions for consultation. There will be opportunities for NGOs to consider and provide comment on the new biosecurity legislation during consultation on the exposure draft.
- f. The purpose of the Engagement in Biosecurity project (May 2008 – November 2011) is to develop a proposed National Plant Biosecurity Engagement Framework. The project is focussed on the horticultural industry. The total funding for this project is \$1 305 000 (GST exclusive). Key project outcomes include: an elevated profile of community engagement amongst key biosecurity stakeholders; dissemination of guidance for effective community engagement on biosecurity issues; improvement in the capacity of community engagement staff in regional areas; and an increase in research into biosecurity engagement. Community groups and environmental NGOs involved in the project included: Cairns and Far North Environment Centre, Cairns Urban Landcare, conservation volunteers, Invasive Species Council and some regional natural resource management coordinators. Environmental groups were consulted on two occasions, as part of the National Biosecurity Engagement Forum (2008) and in developing a proposed national action plan for community engagement regarding plant biosecurity (2010–2011).

The level of involvement of community environment groups in the project was considered adequate given that the focus of the project was on the horticultural industry.

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- g. The department's strategic objective for biosecurity is to safeguard Australia's animal and plant health status to maintain overseas markets and protect the economy and environment from the impact of exotic pests and diseases, through risk assessment, inspection and certification, and the implementation of emergency response arrangements for Australian agricultural, food and fibre industries.

To achieve environmental outcomes the department liaises closely with the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities on a range of biosecurity issues including emergency responses and through the work of the National Biosecurity Committee. The department also plays a role in the management of marine pests, wildlife health and invasive species.

In addition, through the biosecurity reform process there will be a strengthened contribution to addressing potential biosecurity risks to public and environmental health and recreational amenity.

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Question: 221

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Plant Division

Topic: Biosecurity incursion threats

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator WATERS asked:

1. How many contingency plans are in place for potential biosecurity incursion threats to industry? How many contingency plans are in place for potential incursion threats to the environment? What are they?
2. What work has the Department undertaken to identify the top (for example) 20 incursion threats for the environment? Please advise findings. What is Australia's level of preparedness for these threats? For how many of these are there contingency plans?

Answer:

1. **Attachment 1** lists 77 contingency plans that have been developed for potential biosecurity incursion threats. In addition, some state/territory agencies and industry groups have prepared contingency plans for a range of other exotic pests. There are also diagnostic protocols, pest risk reviews and/or fact sheets for a range of pests that, although they do not outline potential response actions, will support the response to an incursion.
2. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, through the Office of the Chief Plant Protection Officer, worked with the then Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) along with technical experts and representatives from various jurisdictions to develop a list of key environmental threats through a research project commissioned by DEWHA and conducted by the then Bureau of Rural Sciences (BRS) in 2009.

The research identified a preliminary list of 140 nationally significant environmental invasive pathogens and invertebrates—16 of which overlap with the biosecurity incursion threats listed in **Attachment 1**. These 16 are listed in **Attachment 2**. Although these preliminary research findings have not been endorsed, they have provided the basis for discussion of environmental threats at the national level.

Australia is well prepared for biosecurity threat incursions and has a range of generic and sector specific plans, agreements and protocols in place at the national, state and territory levels and within industry. These have been developed as a preparedness activity and will support the management of a biosecurity threat incursion regardless of whether the primary impact is on industry or the environment.

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Question: 221 (continued)

Attachment 1

Contingency plans for potential biosecurity incursion threats to industry

Scientific name	Plant Industry	Common name
		Exotic leafminer species (generic)
<i>Agromyza ambigua</i>	Grain	Cereal leafminer
<i>Agromyza megalopsis</i>	Grain	Barley miner fly
<i>Agrotis segetum</i>		Turnip moth
<i>Alternaria humicola</i>	Grain	Leaf spot
<i>Alternaria triticina</i>	Grain	Leaf blight
<i>Anoplophora chinensis</i>	Nursery & Gardens (N&G)	Citrus longicorn beetle
<i>Atherigona soccata</i>	Grain	Sorghum shoot fly
<i>Barley stripe mosaic virus (Hordevirus)</i>	Grain	Barley stripe mosaic virus
<i>Burkholderia glumae</i>	Rice	Panicle blight
<i>Cephus pygmeus</i>	Grain	European wheat stem sawfly
<i>Cerodontha denticornis</i>	Grain	Wheat sheaf leafminer
<i>Ceutorhynchus assimilis</i>	Grain	Cabbage seedpod weevil
<i>Chilo partellus</i>	Grain	Spotted stalk borer
<i>Chilo</i> spp.	Sugar	Cane borers
<i>Chromatomyia fusicula</i>	Grain	Oat leafminer fly
<i>Chromatomyia horticola</i>	Grain	Leafminer
<i>Chromatomyia nigra</i>	Grain	Wheat leafminer
<i>Colletotrichum truncatum</i> (lentil strain)	Grain	Lentil anthracnose
<i>Dasineura brassicae</i>	Grain	Brassica pod midge
<i>Deanolis sublimbalis</i>	Mango	Red-banded mango caterpillar
<i>Diuraphis noxia</i>	Grain	Russian wheat aphid

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Scientific name	Plant Industry	Common name
<i>Drechslera tetramera</i>	Grain	Leaf spot
<i>Echinothrips americanus</i>	N&G	Poinsettia thrips
<i>Eldana saccharina</i>	Sugar	Cane borer
<i>Erwinia amylovora</i>		Fire blight
<i>Erwinia papayae</i>	Papaya	Bacterial crown rot
<i>Eurogaster integriceps</i>	Grain	Sunn pest
<i>Fusarium cicinatum</i>	Forestry	Pine pitch canker
<i>Fusarium oxysporum</i> f. sp. <i>ciceris</i>	Grain	Fusarium wilt of chickpea
<i>Fusarium oxysporum</i> f. sp. <i>conglutinans</i>	Grain	Fusarium wilt of canola
<i>Fusarium oxysporum</i> f. sp. <i>lentis</i>	Grain	Fusarium wilt of lentil
<i>Fusarium oxysporum</i> f. sp. <i>lupini</i>	Grain	Fusarium wilt of lupin
<i>Gibberella fujikuroi</i>	Rice	Bakanae
<i>Helicoverpa zea</i>	Grain	Corn earworm
<i>Heterodera carotae</i>		Carrot cyst nematode
<i>Homalodisca vitripennis</i>	N&G	Glassy-winged sharpshooter
<i>Liriomyza bryoniae</i>	Grain	Tomato leaf miner
<i>Liriomyza huidobrensis</i>	Grain	Serpentine leafminer
<i>Liriomyza sativae</i>	Grain	American leafminer
<i>Liriomyza trifolii</i>	Grain	American serpentine leafminer
<i>Lissorhoptrus oryzophilus</i>	Rice	Rice water weevil
<i>Lygus lineolaris</i>	N&G	Tarnished plant bug
<i>Lymantria dispar</i>	N&G	Asian gypsy moth
<i>Magnaporthe grisea</i>	Rice	Rice blast

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Attachment 1

Scientific name	Plant Industry	Common name
<i>Maize dwarf mosaic virus</i>	Grain	Maize dwarf mosaic virus
<i>Mayetiola destructor</i>	Grain	Hessian fly
<i>Mayetiola hordei</i>	Grain	Barley stem gall midge
<i>Meromyza saltatrix</i>	Grain	Wheat stem maggot
<i>Nysius huttoni</i>	Grain	Wheat bug
<i>Paracoccus marginatus</i>	Papaya	Papaya mealybug
<i>Peronosclerospora philippinensis</i>	Grain	Philippine downy mildew of maize
<i>Peronosclerospora sorghi</i>	Grain	Sorghum downy mildew
<i>Phyllophaga</i> spp.	Grain	May beetle
<i>Phytophthora infestans</i> A2 mating type		Potato late blight
<i>Phytophthora ramorum</i>	N&G	Sudden oak death
<i>Pomacea canaliculata</i>	Rice	Golden apple snail
<i>Psila rosae</i>		Carrot rust fly
<i>Puccinia graminis</i> f. sp. <i>tritici</i>	Grain	Wheat stem rust
<i>Puccinia psidii</i>	N&G	Guava rust
<i>Puccinia striiformis</i> f. sp. <i>hordei</i>	Grain	Barley stripe rust (exotic strains)
<i>Pyrenophora teres</i> f. sp. <i>teres</i> (resistant strains)	Grain	Net form of net blotch
<i>Red clover vein mosaic virus</i> (<i>Carlavirus</i>)	Grain	Red clover vein mosaic virus
<i>Sitobion avenae</i>	Grain	Wheat aphid
<i>Sitona lineatus</i>	Grain	Pea leaf weevil
<i>Tilletia barclayana</i>	Rice	Kernel smut of rice
<i>Tilletia controversa</i>	Grain	Dwarf bunt of wheat
<i>Tilletia indica</i>	Grain	Karnal bunt

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Attachment 1

Scientific name	Plant Industry	Common name
<i>Trogoderma granarium</i>	Grain	Khapra beetle
<i>Uromyces pisi</i> (field pea strain)	Grain	Field pea rust
<i>Uromyces viciae-fabae</i> (lentil strain)		Lentil rust
<i>Verticillium longisporum</i>	Grain	Verticillium wilt of canola
<i>Xylella fastidiosa</i>	N&G	Pierce's disease
<i>Xanthomonas translucens</i> pv. <i>translucens</i>	Grain	Bacterial leaf streak
<i>Xanthomonas translucens</i> pv. <i>undulosa</i>		
<i>Plum pox virus</i>	N&G	Aphid transmitted viruses
<i>Tobacco etch virus</i>		
<i>Chrysanthemum stem necrosis virus</i>	N&G	Thrips transmitted viruses
<i>Tomato spotted wilt virus</i>		
<i>Impatiens necrotic ringspot tospovirus</i>		
<i>Pelargonium flower break virus</i>		
<i>Tomato yellow leaf curl virus</i>	N&G	Whitefly transmitted viruses
<i>Tomato leaf curl virus</i>		
<i>Lettuce infectious yellows virus</i>		
<i>Diodia vein chlorosis virus</i>		
<i>Bactericera cockerelli</i> (psyllid)	Potato	Zebra chip complex
<i>Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum</i> (pathogen)		

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Question: 221 (continued)

Attachment 2

Industry contingency plans that cover potentially nationally significant environmental threats

Scientific name	Plant Industry	Common name
<i>Agrotis segetum</i>		Turnip moth
<i>Anoplophora chinensis</i>	N&G	Citrus longicorn beetle
<i>Erwinia amylovora</i>		Fire blight
<i>Fusarium cicinatum</i>	Forestry	Pine pitch canker
<i>Homalodisca</i> spp.	N&G	Glassy-winged sharpshooter
<i>Liriomyza huidobrensis</i>	Grain	Serpentine leafminer
<i>Liriomyza sativae</i>	Grain	American leafminer
<i>Lymantria dispar</i>	N&G	Asian gypsy moth
<i>Peronosclerospora philippinensis</i>	Grain	Philippine downy mildew of maize
<i>Peronosclerospora sorghi</i>	Grain	Sorghum downy mildew
<i>Phyllophaga</i> spp.	Grain	May beetle
<i>Phytophthora ramorum</i>	N&G	Sudden oak death
<i>Pomacea canaliculata</i>	Rice	Golden apple snail
<i>Puccinia graminis</i> f. sp. <i>tritici</i>	Grain	Wheat stem rust
<i>Puccinia psidii</i>	N&G	Guava rust
<i>Trogoderma granarium</i>	Grain	Khapra beetle

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Question: 222

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Strategic Projects Division

Topic: New biosecurity legislation

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator WATERS asked:

1. When is the exposure draft of the new biosecurity legislation expected to be released?
2. What new funding will be required to implement the provisions of the new legislation?
3. Which Beale recommendations aimed at improving biosecurity outcomes for the environment will be reflected in the legislation?

Answer:

1. The exposure draft is expected to be released in the first half of 2012.
2. All funding for biosecurity reform projects (including implementation of the new legislation) will be considered as part of the 2012–13 budget process.
3. The object of the new legislation will provide for the management of biosecurity risks (pests and diseases) entering, emerging, establishing or spreading and potentially causing harm to human, animal and plant health, the environment and the economy.

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Question: 223

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Strategic Projects Division
Topic: Animal Health Australia National Biosecurity Forum
Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator WATERS asked:

On October 17 Animal Health Australia (AHA) posted on their website a summary of the recent National Biosecurity Forum held on 11 October in Canberra, and reportedly attended by senior government officials, livestock industry leaders and other stakeholders.

- a. How is the Department involved in this forum?
- b. One of the reported outcomes was an agreement to establish a government-industry working group to consider the development of a national biosecurity framework. Why is a new national biosecurity framework needed so soon after the Beale review?
- c. Why was such an important forum initiated by a corporation dedicated to support of animal industries?
- d. Who represented the needs of the environment in the forum?
- e. What is the nature and extent of the involvement of community groups, especially environmental NGOs, in considering the development of this national biosecurity framework?

Answer:

- a. The department was involved in the forum through:
 - attendance by the Secretary, Dr Conall O'Connell, Deputy Secretary, Ms Rona Mellor and two other staff
 - provision of secretariat services by two additional staff
 - provision of funding at a cost of approximately \$6000 (excluding GST).
- b. A national biosecurity framework will support governments and industry working together to improve post-border biosecurity arrangements and the partnership approach outlined in the Beale review.
- c. Animal Health Australia (AHA) convened the forum to develop a collective approach to a national biosecurity framework, including investment and resources. The forum focussed on the animal sector but AHA recognised that the forum's outcomes could be extrapolated to plant and aquatic industries and the environmental sector.
- d. A list of organisations who attended the forum is at **Attachment 1**.
- e. The terms of reference for the proposed government-industry working group have not been developed and its membership is not yet known.

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Question: 223 (continued)

Attachment 1

Organisations attending the AHA National Biosecurity Forum – 11 October 2011

Animal Health Australia
AQIS Industry Cargo Consultative Committee
Australian Alpaca Association Limited
Australian Biosecurity Intelligence Network
Australian Chicken Meat Federation Inc
Australian Dairy Farmers Limited
Australian Egg Corporation Limited
Australian Farm Institute
Australian Honey Bee Industry Council
Australian Horse Industry Council
Australian Lot Feeders' Association Inc
Australian Meat Industry Council
Australian Meat Processors Corporation
Australian Pork Limited
Australian Veterinary Association
Biosecurity Advisory Council
Cattle Council of Australia Inc
CSIRO Australian Animal Health Laboratory
CSIRO
Dairy Australia
Department of Agriculture and Food (WA)
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Commonwealth)
Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation (Qld)
Department of Industry and Investment, (NSW)
Department of Primary Industries (Vic)
Department of Primary Industries and Resources (SA)
Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (Tas)
Department of Resources (NT)
Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
Equestrian Australia Limited
Goat Industry Council of Australia
Harness Racing Australia
Industry and Investment NSW
National Aquaculture Council Inc
National Farmers Federation
NFF Quarantine and Biosecurity Committee
Plant Health Australia
Red Meat Advisory Council
Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
Safemeat Initiatives Review
Sheepmeat Council of Australia Inc
University of Melbourne
University of Sydney
WoolProducers Australia Limited