

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2007

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: ID 01

Division/Agency: International Division

Topic: Live export agreement with Egypt

Hansard page: 57 (14/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'Brien—I am just wondering, given that that is common in a whole range of Middle Eastern markets, why that phenomenon was not contemplated in the agreement reached—or maybe it was and the Egyptians would not come to any agreement; I do not know. Which is the case? Did we make any claims or proposals in relation to protocol applying to private purchase, or did they resist those?

Mr Burns—I will have to check. I was not directly involved in that.

Senator O'Brien—Who did that, then? Was it this department?

Mr Burns—It was this department but—

Senator O'Brien—Another officer.

Mr Burns—Yes.

Senator O'Brien—Can you contact that officer and find out what went on, or have they gone?

Mr Burns—No, I can contact them. I know that they are not here this week. So we might have to take it on notice and get back to you

Answer:

The *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Handling and Slaughter of Australian Live Animals* requires measures to be applied to the handling, transport and slaughter of all live animals, whether in the private or government systems, in a manner consistent with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) guidelines on animal welfare. There are additional specific provisions which apply to cattle. It was recognised that it would not be possible to apply such additional conditions to sheep at this stage due to the trade into the private system.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2007

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: ID 02

Division/Agency: International Division

Topic: Live trade with Middle East

Hansard page: 58 (14/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'Brien—So with those countries which we do not have agreements with, or are not making progress, what sort of trade have we got—live trade, that is.

Ms Gordon-Smith—With live trade we are constrained. We are required to have an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with countries with which there has been no trade since 2002. So before we can commence trade we need to have an MOU in place and we would be actively, as I have described to you in the previous list, pursuing those. I might need to take that question on notice and provide you with a comprehensive list.

Answer:

The countries in the Middle East with which we currently trade in live animals where MOU negotiations have not been concluded are Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and Israel. MOU negotiations are underway with Qatar and Oman. In 2005-06, these countries accounted for 27% of live sheep exports to the Middle East (27% of total live sheep to the world) and 50% of live cattle exports to the region (8% of total live cattle exports to the world).

Australia has commenced MOU negotiations with Libya, Syria and Lebanon.

Australia has had no trade in live animals with these countries since 1 January 2002.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: ID 03

Division/Agency: International Division

Topic: Regulation for feedlots

Hansard page: 59 (14/02/07)

Senator Heffernan asked:

Chair—In relation to the beef cattle that go to Indonesia to Australian owned feedlots, are there any different regulations for Australian owned feedlots as opposed to the foreign owned feedlots?

Mr Burns—Not that I am aware of. We would have to check on that.

Answer:

No. The Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) health certificate conditions for the export of beef feeder cattle from Australia to Indonesia are the same, regardless of whether the destination feedlot is owned by Australian or foreign interests.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: ID 04

Division/Agency: International Division

Topic: Official Development Assistance expenditure and activities

Hansard page: 96 (14/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

I expect you will take this on notice: I want full details of the Official Development Assistance eligible expenditure and activities undertaken by the department since the 2000-01 financial year to date.

Answer:

Table A, **attached**, outlines all Official Development Assistance (ODA) eligible expenditure and activities undertaken by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the Department) for the 2000-01 to 2005-06 financial years as reported to AusAID bi-annually. The Department has provided preliminary information to AusAID for July to December 2006, however final ODA figures are not available from AusAID for this period.

[ID 04 attachment]

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: ID 05

Division/Agency: International Division

Topic: Increase in UN Food and Agriculture Organisation Contributions

Hansard page: 96 (14/02/2007)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Which exchange rate have you underestimated, the US Dollar or the Euro, or do you get a choice?

Answer:

Accounts for annual member nation contributions to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) are written with a portion in US Dollars and a portion in Euro. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the Department) doesn't have a choice in which currency payments are transacted.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2007

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: ID 06

Division/Agency: International Division

Topic: Live trade agreement with Egypt –treatment of animals

Hansard page: 60 (14/05/06)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'Brien—What is their position about the domestic activities, if I can put it that way, with people taking the animals home, apparently trussing them with wire in some circumstances and putting them in boots of cars, with high temperatures, or tying them to the roofs of cars?

Mr Yuile—I am not aware of any Egyptian government statements along those lines, or part of negotiations, but perhaps we can take that on notice if there is anything that we do have—unless others at the table—

Answer:

On 1 March 2007, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. Peter McGauran MP, wrote to his Egyptian counterpart, Minister Abaza, seeking advice on how the Egyptian Government intended to ensure that the undertakings agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) would be implemented to avoid such practices occurring in the future.

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry officials met Minister Abaza on 13 March 2007 and raised the issue. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry understands that Minister Abaza is considering his response to Minister McGauran's letter.