

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2013

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 61

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Animal Welfare Groups

Proof Hansard page: 60

Senator RHIANNON asked:

Senator Rhiannon: I am hoping you can answer this considering cattle and sheep are nearly finished. What efforts are made to ensure that members of the review panel reflect and represent the entire industry including those who may be looking at addressing animal welfare issues to be consistent with good practice in farming these animals?

Mr Smalley: The process that has been undertaken has given invitation to all of the stakeholder groups that were of interest, particularly in relation to your citing sheep and cattle. In some instances, animal welfare groups decided not to be members of the writing groups. They have participated to date in the reference groups, which are also a part of sheep and cattle. In addition to what has happened in the past, the animal welfare committee has also decided that it ought to review the way that these codes of practice are converted to national standards and guidelines. That review process is hopefully going to start up during the course of the next few months. So that will look at how the process is done, over what time frame and who is involved so that we can aim to do things more expeditiously.

Senator Rhiannon: Can you take on notice, when will that review be done?

Answer:

The review is expected to be completed in mid 2013, with advice then provided to senior officials and Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers for their consideration.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 62

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Trade and Market Access

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator WILLIAMS asked:

Which markets are the priority markets and why (DAFF should be working off the priorities determined by the Protocol Committee of the industry which DAFF is a participant).

Answer:

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) negotiates with trading partners to maintain, gain or improve access to export markets for live animals and their genetic material.

To assist in considering priorities for market access for livestock exports, DAFF participates in meetings of the Australian Livestock Exporters Council's Protocol Committee. The Committee helps set priorities that reflect industry needs in the development of livestock export protocols and associated market access issues. It also acts as a forum for resolving ongoing animal health protocol issues associated with import conditions that are negotiated with importing countries. Priorities are established at regular committee meetings but these may be modified on an as-needs basis to resolve specific issues and/or take advantage of market opportunities that arise from time to time.

The most recent meeting of the Protocol Committee was held in Fremantle on 14 November 2012. The following top priorities were established.

PRIORITY 1

Cambodia – Cattle: Breeder & Feeder

China (Peoples Republic) – Cattle: Breeder

Customs Union (Russia/Kazakhstan/Belarus): Breeder cattle

Indonesia – Cattle: breeder

Iran – Cattle and sheep

Japan – Cattle: Breeder & Feeder

PRIORITY 2

Iraq – Cattle: breeder, feeder and slaughter

Turkey – Cattle: feeder, slaughter, breeder and bulls

Customs Union - Sheep and Goats: breeder

Mauritius – cattle

Vietnam - cattle

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Question: 62 (continued)

PRIORITY 1 or 2 (Pending further advice from industry sources)

China (PR) – Sheep and Goats: Breeder

Malaysia – Buffalo

Thailand – Feeder Cattle

Kuwait – Cattle

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Question: 63

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Information from USA regarding BSE

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator NASH asked:

1. Has the department received any information from the United States regarding BSE affected meat?
2. Has the department been in communication with USA in obtaining that information?
3. Is there a time period in which that the USA has to provide that information to Australia?
4. How long does Australia have to wait for the USA government to provide Australia with information on cattle health and certification systems?

Answer:

The questions appear to confuse a food safety assessment on beef from the United States being conducted by Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) with a biosecurity Import Risk Analysis being conducted by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

Further information about a DAFF Import Risk Assessment on beef from the United States and other jurisdictions, including 'stop the clock' arrangements is at http://daff.gov.au/ba/ira/current-animal/beef_and_beef_products_for_human_consumption.

Further information about FSANZ food safety assessment of beef from a range of jurisdictions is at <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumerinformation/bovinespongiformencephalopathybse/statusofcountrybsefo5388.cfm>. Questions on this process are better directed to FSANZ.

The United States has provided a BSE submission to Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), which has been shared with the department.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 64

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Animal Division

Topic: Greyhounds

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator RHIANNON asked:

1. In a letter to Humane Society International regarding export of greyhounds to Macau, the Minister stated that the Australian Government will continue to request updates on Macau's progress to introduce animal welfare legislation.
 - a. When did the Australian Government last request an update, and what are the details of that update?
 - b. What is Australia doing to encourage the Macau Government to enact such legislation?
 - c. How is the banning of greyhound to Macau different to the banning or suspension of livestock exports as has been done by various Australian Governments?
2. The Minister stated that Greyhounds Australasia is working towards ensuring the welfare of greyhounds exported from Australia.
 - a. What are the details of Greyhounds Australasia's programme in this regard, and where is it up to?
3. What are the Government's requirements for the welfare of exported Australian greyhounds, and how does it differ from requirements for exported Australian livestock?

Answer:

1.
 - a) The Australian Government met with Macau authorities in May 2012 to discuss greyhound welfare. At this meeting Macau authorities provided an update on the development of animal welfare legislation and associated programs, including re-homing strategies.
 - b) As noted above, we have held discussions with the Macau authorities, including about the development of animal welfare legislation.
 - c) The temporary suspension of the export of feeder and slaughter livestock to Indonesia was implemented by making orders under the *Australian Meat and Live-stock Act (AMLI) 1997* and the *Export Control (Orders) Regulations 1982*. These orders temporarily suspended the export of feeder and slaughter livestock to Indonesia.

The export of domestic animals is regulated under the Export Control Act 1982.

Under World Trade Organization rules, it would not be possible to ban exports of greyhounds to one country without banning them to all countries. A ban on exports to all countries would have broad implications, including preventing greyhound owners from taking their pets abroad.

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Question: 64 (continued)

2.

a) Greyhounds Australasia is conducting a review that will identify welfare gaps in export markets. The review has not yet been completed.

3. All dogs exported from Australia are required under the *Export Control Act 1982* to be inspected by a veterinarian. Each dog must be found to be in good health and fit for travel by the veterinarian before the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry will issue an export permit and health certificate.

The exporters of livestock are licensed under the *Australian Meat and Live-stock Act (AMLI) 1997* and the *Export Control Act 1982*. Under these laws livestock exports are required to be consistent with the Australian Standards for the Export of Livestock and have an approved Exporter Supply Chain Assurance System in place. Under these laws the definition of livestock does not apply to domestic animals.