

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2007

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: BA 01

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Australia

Topic: Importation of honey-bees

Hansard page: 114 (24/5/07)

Senator Siewert asked:

Senator SIEWERT—Okay. Can we get a copy of the risk assessment as well?

Ms Gordon—That is a matter for Biosecurity Australia.

Senator SIEWERT—Is that possible?

CHAIR—The risk assessment for what—for bees?

Senator SIEWERT—Yes.

CHAIR—But they do not know what the problem is. How could they make an assessment?

Senator SIEWERT—At least we can have a look at it and see what they are doing now.

Dr Martin—Senator, you asked about the import risk assessment. The conditions for queen bees—and that is all we import, so there are very specialised conditions—were developed in 1996. There is a policy document for that and we can certainly provide you with that. The conditions for importing bees from the US were suspended in December 2005 and that was for a different reason. But they are suspended and remain suspended. That was due to a concern about Africanised genetics—those bees are very aggressive—and that is present in the US, so we were concerned about that. That was the basis for the suspension.

Answer:

The quarantine conditions for honey-bees were developed in 1996. Attached are the policy memorandum (1996/42) and the accompanying final quarantine conditions.

BA 01 Attachment A: Animal Quarantine Policy Memorandum 1996/42

BA 01 Attachment B: Conditions for the Importation of Honey-Bees

[BA 01 attachments A and B]

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Budget Estimates May 2007

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: BA 02

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Australia

Topic: Prawns and prawn products import risk analysis

Hansard page: 119 (24/5/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Similarly, a delegation of Thai officials met with the government to discuss the import risk assessment back in March. Who was at those meetings?

Dr Martin—Biosecurity Australia was present and officials from Thailand. We could give you a list of names.

Answer:

A meeting with a Thai delegation was held on 15 February 2007. The Australian delegation was Dr Robyn Martin, Dr Mike Nunn, Dr Ramesh Perera, Dr Geoff Grossel, Mr Dominic Pyne and Mr Mark Kethro. The Thai delegation was Dr Jiraporn Kasornchandra (Director, Coastal Aquatic Animal Health Research Institute, Department of Fisheries), Mrs Sawanit Phongprapai (Minister Counsellor (Agriculture), Thai Embassy, Canberra), Mrs Malinee Witchawut (Senior Fishery Biologist, Thai Department of Fisheries), Mr Chantanon Wannakejohn (Senior Policy and Plan Analyst, Thai Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives), Ms Praiya Savetjinda (Policy and Plan Analyst, Thai Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives), Ms Urailak Naruemonvijit (Assistant to Agriculture Counsellor, Thai Embassy, Canberra) and Professor Timothy Flegel (Mahidol University).

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2007

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: BA 03

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Australia

Topic: Prawns and prawn products import risk analysis, summary of Taura syndrome research

Hansard page: 120 (24/5/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Did Dr Lightner approve the summary prepared by Biosecurity Australia?

Dr Martin—I would have to check that. Certainly we were in communication with Dr Lightner.

Answer:

Yes.

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2007

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question no: BA 04

Division/Agency: Biosecurity Australia

Topic: Imported grains

Hansard page: 121 (24/5/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—When did these import risk assessments begin?

Ms van Meurs—Because of the drought situation, we commenced those in late 2006.

I would have to give you the exact date.

Answer:

The import risk assessments for grains for metropolitan processing commenced in September 2006.