

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 50

Division/Agency: Biosecurity - Food Division

Topic: Events following a letter from Minister Ludwig to horticulture industry

Proof Hansard page: 85 (21/05/2012)

Senator COLBECK asked:

Senator COLBECK: Subsequent to the minister's letter of 9 March and the minister's response back, what occurred post that letter from Minister Ludwig to the industry on the 20th?

Mr Read: Certainly, between the February meeting and the acceptance by industry of the offer that was put forward by the minister, there was a range of interactions and discussions between industry, the department and the office around their particular circumstances—the need for transition support and the sort of initiatives that needed to be developed. I do not have a list of every contact point but I can take that on notice for you.

Answer:

Please refer to the answer to question 201 Biosecurity - Plant Division from the Budget Estimates hearing in May 2012.

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Question: 184

Division/Agency: Biosecurity - Food Division
Topic: Reform of Australia's biosecurity system
Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

Does the recognition of importers' food safety management systems through compliance agreements extend to recognition of commercial food safety audits?

Answer:

No.

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Question: 185

Division/Agency: Biosecurity - Food Division

Topic: Reform of Australia's Biosecurity system

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. What cost savings flow back to importers as a consequence of the recognition of their food safety systems?
2. What cost savings could flow back to importers as a consequence of recognising the outcome of commercial food safety audits?

Answer:

1. If the question refers to Food Import Compliance Agreements the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry does not have data about cost savings.
2. No evaluation of cost savings has been done to extending Food Import Compliance Agreement arrangements to auditing arrangements.

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Question: 198

Division/Agency: Biosecurity - Food Division

Topic: Chinese food imports risk profiling

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Is the level of inspection and testing of food imports risk based?
2. How is the risk determined?
3. What is the current risk profile of food products from China?
4. How does the level of critical failures in inspections of Chinese food reported in the media recently (Food Australia May/June) impact on Australia's risk profile for food products from China?
5. Is there a process for considering international data or trends in determining the risk profile for goods entering Australia?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), within the Department of Health and Ageing portfolio, provides advice to the department on the foods that contain food safety hazards which pose a medium to high risk to public health and on the most appropriate tests for the identified hazards.
3. Country of origin of foods is generally not considered in FSANZ risk assessment, although there are instances where the country of origin is relevant. For example, the department received advice from FSANZ about food safety risks associated with radionucleotide contamination of food from Japan in 2011.
4. As the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry does not undertake food safety risk assessments of imported food, this question should be referred to FSANZ.
5. Yes, FSANZ considers both domestic and international (where available) surveillance data, the prevalence of a hazard in a particular food and human exposure in the development of risk assessment advice.

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Question: 204

Division/Agency: Biosecurity - Food Division
Topic: Reform to Australia's export certification services
Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Have reports similar to the Ernst and Young report on the Cost Recovery in the Meat Program been completed for other sectors, such as horticulture?
2. If not, why not?
3. With regard to the export competitiveness of Australian businesses, are AQIS fees competitive with those charges internationally?
4. What fee structure do New Zealand apple growers and exporters face?
5. What costs are borne by the New Zealand government?

Answer:

- 1 and 2. Yes. Reviews of similar nature were undertaken at the request of the Seafood, Grain and Horticulture Ministerial Taskforces established under the export certification reform package.
3. Fees and charges must comply with the Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines. The fees and charges set by the department are designed to recover the total costs of services provided. The department's cost recovery is in compliance with the Australian Cost Recovery Guidelines which are available at www.finance.gov.au/publications/finance-circulars/2005/09.html#FMG_4
- 4 and 5. This question is best put to the Government of New Zealand.

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Question: 206

Division/Agency: Biosecurity - Food Division

Topic: Revenue and expenses

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

Provide a breakdown of revenue sources and expenses for the National Residue Survey.

Answer:

The table below provides a breakdown of revenue received and expenses incurred by the National Residue Survey (NRS) for 2010–11

Revenue Type	Amount \$'000
• Levy receipts	9411
• Sale of Goods and Services	141
• Interest from investments	1110
• Revenues from Government	559
• Other Gains	637
Total revenue	11 858

Program expense	Amount \$'000
Animal products random residue monitoring and targeted testing	9023
Plant products random residue monitoring	2051
Residue chemistry and laboratory performance evaluation	75
Appropriation funds	559
Resources received free of charge	633
Total expenditure	12 341

At 30 June 2011, the NRS Special Account held \$19.13 million. These industry reserves are utilised when expenses exceed revenue in a particular year.

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Question: 207

Division/Agency: Biosecurity - Food Division

Topic: Revised export screening

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

The 2010-11 National Residue Survey Annual Report states:

“Within the onion program, samples are collected from packing sheds and markets by third party samplers. An export screen is also being developed to allow onion producers and growers to gain GlobalGap accreditation for export consignments.”

How is the development of an export screen progressing?

What consideration has been given to the requirements of other food safety and quality assurance standards, such as Freshcare and WQA?

Answer:

The export onion screen was developed in consultation with Onions Australia in 2010 and one of the main Tasmanian onion exporters. Due to the extensive GlobalGap requirements and associated costs of analysis (approximately \$1600 per sample), the onion industry determined that there were insufficient National Residue Survey (NRS) levy funds available to conduct this screen while continuing to conduct a domestic screen (approximately \$300 per sample). As a result, the NRS onion export screen has not been implemented. Should an onion exporter wish to utilise the screen, the analytical capability remains available.

NRS liaises closely with Onions Australia, Apple and Pear Australia Limited and other participating peak bodies to ensure that NRS sampling programs do not overlap Freshcare and WQA programs. To minimise duplication of effort, NRS also works closely with FreshTest management which is responsible for a fruit and vegetable market residue monitoring program covering all capital cities.

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Question: 208

Division/Agency: Biosecurity - Food Division

Topic: Industry sector contributions

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

Provide detail of the financial contribution of each industry sector contributing to the NRS.

Answer:

Industry sector financial contribution to National Residue Survey in 2010–11 through statutory producer levies.

Industry	Amount \$'000
Beef	4203
Sheep	2041
Pork	805
Chicken	117
Horse	35
Deer	12
Goats	136
Ostrich	2
Kangaroo	26
Wild Boar	28
Buffalo	1
Emu	5
Laying Chicken	58
Honey	19
Grains	1563
Apples and Pears	203
Onions	89
Macadamias	69
Total Industry Revenue	9411

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Question: 209

Division/Agency: Biosecurity - Food Division

Topic: Government contribution

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

Provide detail of the total budget of the NRS and the government contribution to this program.

Answer:

The total budget of the National Residue Survey (NRS) and the government contributions to this program from 2010 to 2013 is provided in the following table

	Budget 2012-13 \$'000
Revenue	
Statutory Levies and contributions	10 667
Government appropriation	189
Total revenue	10 856
Total expenses	13 816
Surplus / (Deficit)	(2 960)

Operating losses are drawn from the NRS special account.

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Question: 210

Division/Agency: Biosecurity - Food Division
Topic: Number of samples analysed for National Residues Survey
Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

Provide detail of the number of samples analysed for each industry sector contributing to the NRS.

Answer:

During 2010–11, the following number of samples for each industry sector were collected and analysed for a range of pesticides, veterinary medicines and environmental contaminants.

Industry sector	Samples	Industry sector	Samples
Camel	15	Cereal grains	4652
Cattle	5731	Pulses	266
Deer	23	Oilseeds	312
Goat	255	Almond	34
Horse	142	Apple	420
Kangaroo	49	Pear	150
Pig	2739	Onion	108
Poultry	332	Macadamia	160
Ratite (emu)	9	Citrus	152
Ratite (ostrich)	3	Aquaculture	35
Sheep	5458	Wild caught seafood	220
Wild boar	49		
Eggs	204		
Honey	167		