



Australian Government

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Ms Jeanette Radcliffe
Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Radcliffe

In the course of reviewing the record of responses by officers of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the department) and portfolio agencies during the Supplementary Budget Estimates hearings conducted by the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee (the committee) on 20 October 2008, it has been determined that several of the answers provided were incomplete or inaccurate.

The errors occurred through officers of the department and portfolio agencies attempting to answer the committee's questions, in good faith and from memory, without the specific details at hand for reference. We have since had the opportunity to review the answers provided at the hearings and the following pages provide our corrections and in some cases further information for the consideration of the committee.

I apologise for incorrect or incomplete information supplied at the hearings and for any misunderstanding that may have arisen. It would be appreciated if these corrections could be brought to the attention of the members of the Committee.

If you have any queries on this matter, please contact me on 6272 3035.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Elizabeth Bie'.

Ms Elizabeth Bie
General Manager
Ministerial and Parliamentary

9 December 2008

RURAL AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Senate Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 20 October 2008

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

Factual Corrections

In answering Senator COLBECK's question (Hansard page 66; 20 October 2008):

Senator COLBECK—Do we accept that IHNV is now endemic to Australia? Is that what we are saying?

Dr Carroll—Yes, we are. The strains of the virus that are similar or almost identical to the strains that occur in the East Asian region are now considered endemic to Australia.

Senator COLBECK— How does that impact on our export industry?

Dr Carroll— Overseas it is a very widespread virus, but I am not aware of it impacting on exports. Also, it is no threat to human health.

Senator COLBECK—Are there any countries that do not have it that now would not take our fish?

Dr Carroll—Not that I am aware of.

Senator COLBECK—Can you please take it on notice to check that for me?

Answer provided on Hansard page 75; 20 October 2008

Dr Carroll— Yes. We have checked up and can say that the IHNV declaration has not affected our export certification.

Dr Carroll wishes to advise the committee that live and raw Australian prawn products will not be allowed to enter New Caledonia because of Australia's changed IHNV status.

In answering Senator HEFFERNAN's question (Hansard page 72; 20 October 2008):

Senator HEFFERNAN— Did you pay him to do that?

Ms Ransom— No, not that I am aware of. In fact, he is extremely committed to biosecurity. We had about 100 participants—state government, the horticulture industry, other industries, Animal Health Australia, Plant Health Australia and a number of community biosecurity groups. The meeting was held in conjunction with a pre-evening meeting that looked at the concept of community detectives. So a number of community groups, particularly Weed Spotter Network groups, were represented at the biosecurity forum.

Ms Ransom wishes to advise the committee that Mr Dingo's agency, Cameron's Management Pty Ltd was paid \$1701.92. The breakdown consisted of \$500 as presenter's fee, \$1,047.20 reimbursement for mileage and \$154.72 GST.

In answering Senator MILNE's question (Hansard page Page 101; 20 October 2008):

Senator MILNE – I wanted to ask some questions in relation to the general climate change programs that are up and running. My first question is in relation to the Climate Change Adjustment Program, where there is meant to be training and so on. How many people have accessed the training program that was outlined for the Climate Change Adjustment Program and can you give me any further information on it?

Ms Cupit wishes to advise the committee her response “The Climate Change Adjustment Program commenced on 1 July 2008. The year-to-date figures to 30 September are that 264 applications have been received for the advice from training grants, 95 have been granted, with 27 of those vouchers having been redeemed at Centrelink to the cost of \$30,000. At this stage no re-establishment grants have been provided under the Climate Change Adjustment Program.”

Should have been;

“The Climate Change Adjustment Program commenced on 1 July 2008. The year-to-date figures to 31 September are that 264 applications have been received for the advice from training grants, 95 have been granted, with 27 of those vouchers having been redeemed at Centrelink to the cost of \$30,000. At this stage no re-establishment grants have been provided under the Climate Change Adjustment Program.”

In answering Senator MACDONALD's question (Hansard page 114; 20 October 2008):

Senator MACDONALD –The important question Senator Boswell is asking, which I think you have answered, is that you have done work on this and you are going to get it for us in five to 10 minutes, or if you cannot do it in five to 10 minutes you will make it available to the committee?

Mr Glyde –....Those officers are expert modellers and they work for the Department of the Treasury in the design of the parameters and the work that was done.....

Mr Glyde wishes to advise the committee that the officers work for the Department of the Treasury in the design of the model parameters. This correction is so there is no confusion about ABARE's role.

Mr Glyde apologises if this has in any way been misleading to the committee as this was not his intention.

In answering Senator COLBECK's question (Hansard page Page 116; 20 October 2008):

Senator COLBECK – What is your budget for the grants that are being handed out, the \$1,500 grants? You said that there have been 264 applications, 95 granted and 20 redeemed. What is your budget for the year for those?

Ms Cupit wishes to advise the committee her response “The budget for 2008-09 is \$15 million in total. That is the total for the Climate Change Adjustment Program” should be “The budget for 2008-09 was \$15 million in total. That was the total for the Climate Change Adjustment Program as the original election commitment of the incoming government.”

Within the Climate Change Adjustment Program, the current allocation for professional advice and adjustment training is \$32.2 million and the re-establishment assistance is \$12.5 million over 4 years.

In answering Senator SIEWERT's question (Hansard page 137-138 20 October 2008):

Senator SIEWERT—Oh, good. I understand BRS has done some modelling on the impacts of the carbon price on various industries: is that correct?

Ms Schneider—No, we have not done any modelling on impacts of prices.

...

Senator SIEWERT—Okay. Have you done any modelling at all on the carbon price as it relates to trees and plantations?

Ms Schneider—I would have to ask Dr Ritman.

Dr Ritman—No, I am not aware of any modelling.

...

Senator SIEWERT—Can I go back to the tree planting. I am not talking about reports that have been released. You have not done any work at all, released or not released?

Dr Ritman—We do not do modelling on price; that is an economic question that ABARE does.

The BRS confirms that it has not done any modelling related to the impacts of the carbon price on various industries or on the price of carbon as it relates to trees and plantations. A simple internal spreadsheet can calculate (under a large set of simplifying assumptions) the agricultural output that could be lost if farmers switched land from food production to, for example, production of crops for biofuels or production of trees for carbon sequestration. However this is based on questions in a recent BRS survey of farmers regarding their interest in undertaking various carbon emission mitigation strategies on farm. It cannot be used to assess the impact of a carbon price on agricultural industries.

In answering Senator Colbeck's question (Hansard page 140; 20 October 2008):

Senator Colbeck: We were told earlier that there is \$1.9 million this year allocated for fisheries research program, of which \$1.1 has gone to BRS. Can I assume that the rest has come to ABARE, and what will you be doing with it?

Mr Glyde responded: I think Peter would know the answer or we may have to take it on notice.

Mr Gooday – Yes, the answer is the money has not come to ABARE.

Mr Gooday wishes to advise the committee that the fisheries research program has allocated \$99 342 to ABARE in 2008-09 to develop improved economic performance measures, initially in the Northern Prawn Fishery, and to examine the relationship between productivity and profits and the major drivers for changes in these over time.

Mr Gooday apologises if this has in any way been misleading to the committee as this was not his intention.
