

# Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

**Committee inquiry:** Senate Select Committee on Australia's Food Processing Sector  
**Date Held:** 11 May 2012

## Question Taken on Notice

Senator Colbeck asked officers appearing as witnesses at the Senate Select Committee on Australia's Food Processing Sector hearing held on 11 May 2012 the following question which was taken on notice:

1. **CHAIR:** I was going to ask you what the key themes [of the National Food Plan] are.

### **Answer:**

The aim of the national food plan is to foster a sustainable, globally competitive, resilient food supply that supports access to nutritious and affordable food. On 27 October 2011 Minister Ludwig announced that the objectives of the National Food Plan include:

- Identifying and mitigating potential risks to Australia's food security
- Contributing to global food security
- Reducing barriers to a safe and nutritious food supply that responds to the evolving preferences and needs of all Australians and supports population health
- Supporting the long-term economic, environmental and social sustainability of Australia's food supply chain
- Supporting the global competitiveness and productivity growth of the food supply chain, including through research, science and innovation
- Reducing barriers faced by food businesses to access international and domestic markets
- Contributing to economic prosperity, employment and community wellbeing in regional Australia.

<http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/food/national-food-plan/about-the-nfp>

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Senator Edwards asked officers appearing as witnesses at the Senate Select Committee on Australia's Food Processing Sector hearing held on 11 May 2012 the following question which was taken on notice:

- 2. Senator EDWARDS:** I think this question is probably for you Dr Penm—hopefully. In Adelaide, we heard from a duck breeder, who has been trying to get market access into New Zealand for five years, but cannot due to what they describe as—

**CHAIR:** Could be Mr Grant or Mr Read.

**Senator EDWARDS:** It could well be, I am not sure. He described it as an artificial trade barrier that has been caused between AQIS and its New Zealand equivalent. It has cost his company tens of thousands, and they still cannot export to New Zealand. When I heard that I thought, 'Well, I will ask that when we are with you guys'. Have we got a tit-for-tat something going on—I do not want to create an international incident here this morning—but is there an issue why we cannot get duck meat to New Zealand?

### Answer:

New Zealand suspended imports of poultry in 2001 from a broad range of countries, including Australia, due to concerns about the introduction of Infectious Bursal Disease (IBD). While Australia does not have the very-virulent form of IBD, some low pathogenic strains do exist and therefore New Zealand does not recognise Australia as free from IBD virus. Exports of cooked duck meat from Australia to New Zealand are now possible under requirements specified in New Zealand's Import Health Standard for *Specified Cooked Poultry Meat Products for Human Consumption from Australia*, which was subsequently issued in 2009. Under these requirements the poultry products must be sourced from, and processed in, a compartment (such as a farm or property) which is considered free from IBD virus by New Zealand authorities. In order for a compartment to be recognised as free from IBD virus the exporting company must prepare and submit supporting documentation, in accordance with the Import Health Standard, to New Zealand authorities through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

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3. **CHAIR:** Can I just add on the back of that? I am interested in that. I have had conversations with a processor of army rations. With our current contract for army rations everything in the packs is consolidated in New Zealand. It is a similar thing with poultry. They have developed a freeze-dried poultry product here at Scottsdale, at the DSTO plant down there, but they cannot send it to New Zealand to go into our army pack products because of this issue of poultry—and I presume it is chicken as well as duck, or something similar. So that excludes our food processor from providing a processed product into a consolidation business which then comes back to feed our military. I found that a little bit—

**Senator EDWARDS:** Disconcerting?

**CHAIR:** Yes, disconcerting is a good word, because it is effectively contained and I am interested to know the broader reasons behind that. I am happy for you to take it on notice because it is probably more complex than something that is just—

### Answer:

New Zealand suspended imports of poultry in 2001 from a broad range of countries, including Australia, due to concerns about the introduction of Infectious Bursal Disease (IBD). While Australia does not have the very-virulent form of IBD, some low pathogenic strains do exist and therefore New Zealand does not recognise Australia as free from IBD virus. Exports of cooked poultry meat from Australia to New Zealand are now possible under requirements specified in New Zealand's Import Health Standard for the import of cooked poultry products from Australia, which was subsequently issued in 2009. Under these requirements, the poultry products must have undergone a specified cooking process as an additional measure to address the risk of IBD. Freeze drying is currently not an accepted process under the Import Health Standard.

Under New Zealand's requirements, the poultry products must also be sourced from, and processed in, a compartment (such as a farm or property) which is considered free from IBD virus by New Zealand authorities. In order for a compartment to be recognised as free from IBD virus the exporting company must prepare and submit supporting documentation, in accordance with the Import Health Standard, to New Zealand authorities through the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

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- 4. CHAIR:** In 2010 you went through a food chain resilience study, and one of the recommendations that came out of that was that you look at some further issues, including around the food service sector, in relation to supply chains and the interactions between the supply chains and those that are used by different groups—say, Defence, AusAID and the retail supply chain. You also were looking at a case study on the impact of the floods. Where are you at with all that, in the context of where that fits into what we are looking at in relation to the food-processing sector and how it fits in that supply chain?

### **Answer:**

The *Resilience in the Australian Food Chain* report can be accessed on the Department's website at: [http://www.daff.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/1915290/resilience-food-supply.pdf](http://www.daff.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/1915290/resilience-food-supply.pdf).

A copy is attached for the Committee.

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Senator Madigan asked officers appearing as witnesses at the Senate Select Committee on Australia's Food Processing Sector hearing held on 11 May 2012 the following question which was taken on notice:

5. **Senator MADIGAN:** Could you explain to me what you believe are DAFF's key goals and what DAFF considers to be a successful outcome for your goals. I want to get back to basics.

**Mr Grant:** It is about trying to ensure the productivity of our rural and regional producers, our agricultural producers. It is about trying to ensure that we manage our natural resources in the best way we can to ensure that that production and productivity are enhanced. Also, it is about protecting our producers from potentially disastrous pests and diseases that might be coming from overseas.

**Dr Grant:** I add that all this was produced and contained recently in a strategic statement by the first assistant secretary of the plant division. The strategic statement for the department, which was released about November last year, is a pretty succinct document—it is one page—and, as Mr Grant says, it has those three basic elements in it. We can certainly supply that to you.

### Answer:

The Department's one page strategic statement is attached for the Committee.

The following information can be accessed on the Department's website at <http://www.daff.gov.au/about/what-we-do>:

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) aims to enhance the sustainability, profitability and competitiveness of Australia's agriculture, food, fisheries and forestry industries.

### Planned outcomes

The Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has two planned outcomes for 2010-11:

- **Outcome 1**  
More sustainable, productive, internationally competitive and profitable Australian agricultural, food and fibre industries through policies and initiatives that promote better resource management practices, innovation, self-reliance and improved access to international markets.

- **Outcome 2**

Safeguard Australia's animal and plant health status to maintain overseas markets and protect the economy and environment from the impact of exotic pests and diseases, through risk assessment, inspection and certification, and the implementation of emergency response arrangements for Australian agricultural, food and fibre industries.

## **Role and functions**

To achieve our planned outcomes, the department is active throughout the entire supply chain, from producer to consumer. We:

- work with the Australian Government to develop and deliver policies and programs that help our agriculture, food, fisheries and forestry industries
- protect Australia's agriculture, food, fisheries and forestry industries by providing quarantine and inspection services and export certification that maintains our favourable pest and disease status
- protect and develop the natural resource base that portfolio industries rely on
- negotiate access to international markets for our animals, plants and associated products
- provide independent research, policy analysis, forecasts and advice on economic issues affecting our agriculture, food, fisheries and forestry industries
- provide independent scientific advice, social analysis and science-based quarantine and policy advice
- represent the Australian Government at international meetings relating to agriculture, food, fisheries and forestry.

The department is one of several bodies in the [agriculture, fisheries and forestry portfolio](#).

## **Administrative Arrangements Order**

The Administrative Arrangements Order made by the Governor-General specifies the functions of Departments of State. The Administrative Arrangements Order describes the matters DAFF deals with and lists the [legislation](#) administered by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Access the [Administrative Arrangements Order](#), which is available from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet website.



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry**

## Strategic Statement

### Our Mission

We work to sustain the way of life and prosperity of all Australians.

We advise the government and our stakeholders how to improve the productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of our portfolio industries.

We help people and goods move in and out of Australia while managing the risks to the environment and animal, plant and human health.



### Our Vision

**For the Australian people**  
Safe and secure food choices

**For our portfolio industries**  
Globally competitive and sustainable industries

**For our department**  
A smart place, with smart people

### Our Goals

**Resources**  
Ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources

**Productivity**  
Improving the competitiveness of portfolio industries

**Markets**  
Enabling trade in goods

### Our Culture

We, individually and as a department, promote and uphold the APS Values and Code of Conduct. To achieve our goals, we aspire to be:

**Leaders**  
We willingly tackle important issues

**Creative**  
We are open to doing things differently to achieve success

**Future thinkers**  
We anticipate and adapt to new situations

**Compassionate**  
We are mindful of the impact we have on others

**Responsive**  
We make things happen

**Collaborative**  
We build on our partnerships to succeed