

# PRIMARY INDUSTRIES MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

## Communiqué

**PIMC 14**

**6 NOVEMBER 2008**

Primary Industries Ministers from around Australia met in Adelaide on Thursday 6 November 2008 to consider issues affecting Australia's primary production sectors. This was the fourteenth meeting of the Ministerial Council and preceded the fourteenth meeting of the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council. Specific issues dealt with by Council are detailed below.

### **Senate Enquiry into Meat Marketing**

Council noted the recommendations and views of the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee Inquiry into Meat Marketing interim report and that the sheep meat industry is currently conducting a comprehensive analysis of the issues surrounding lamb descriptions. Council agreed to consider a report from Standing Committee, following consultation with the relevant advisory committee to Food Standards Australia New Zealand, in April 2009 on options to harmonise national standards for all domestic meat slaughtering and processing establishments.

### **Equine Influenza—Future Response and Vaccination Issues**

In response to the national summit held in Sydney on 25 September, Council agreed to establish an expert panel to advise on the costs and benefits of possible strategies for managing the risks associated with a future equine influenza outbreak. The panel will review the work of the Animal Health Committee, consult with stakeholders and report to Standing Committee next year.

### **European House Borer**

Council remains committed to eradicating the European House Borer from metropolitan Perth and recognised the progress made to date to scope and contain the pest. Continued funding of \$9.515 million for the eradication phase of the response plan to 30 June 2011 was agreed subject to budgetary and cost-sharing processes with industry being concluded.

Council resolved to request the National Biosecurity Committee to review the fundamental policy issues requiring resolution associated with the ongoing eradication programs for Red Imported Fire Ant, European House Borer, Branched Broomrape, and Siam Weed for consideration by councils in November 2009.

### **National Fruit Fly Strategy**

Council noted the development of the draft National Fruit Fly Strategy and agreed that it be released for broad community and industry consultation. The draft National Fruit Fly Strategy proposes to establish a viable, cost effective and sustainable nationally coordinated approach to fruit fly management in Australia. An action plan, cost benefit and beneficiary analysis and proposal to fund the implementation of the strategy will be developed by April 2009.

### **Proposal for the Branched Broomrape Eradication Program for 2009-2012**

Council supported the continuation of the program to eradicate branched broomrape for a further three years. Council agreed to funding of \$7.583 million over the next three years, subject to jurisdictions' budgetary processes and a review of the cost-sharing formula and roles and responsibilities to apply from 2010.

### **Development of the Organic Industry**

Recognising increased consumer demand for organic products and interest in organic production systems, Council issued the attached statement of support for the Australian organic industry.

### **Economic Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture Industries and Regions**

Council agreed to extend ABARE research into the vulnerability of agricultural industries and regions to climate change. Future research will focus on the potential for agricultural industries and regions to adapt to climate change. A High Level Officials Group will consider the direction of future research and report to the next meeting of council on possible funding implications.

### **Drought Policy Improvement**

Council noted the progress of the drought policy review. It also noted the recommendations of the Expert Social Panel's final report on the social impacts of drought and the Productivity Commission's draft report on government drought support, released on 23 and 30 October 2008 respectively. Council strongly encouraged individuals and organisations to provide their views to the Productivity Commission during their public consultations on the draft report in November and December 2008.

Ministers will meet again on 12 November 2008 to discuss in detail the recommendations of the Expert Social Panel's final report and Productivity Commission's draft report. These discussions will provide the basis for settling a future approach to drought policy.

### **Agriculture Value Chain Analysis**

As part of a range of work directed toward enhancing agricultural productivity, Council agreed to develop a value chain methodology for analysing agricultural industries based on a pilot lamb industry study.

### **Workforce and Skills in Primary Industries**

Council noted the establishment of an Australian and state government working group to consider key workforce, skills and training issues affecting primary industries and

identify strategies to improve coordination and collaboration across government and industry. Council noted progress on activities by the working group and that the outcomes of their activities and any recommendations will be provided in a final report to Council in April 2009.

### **Review of the National Innovation System and the Rural R&D Council**

Council noted the recommendations in the report on the Review of the National Innovation System and the establishment by the Australian government of a Rural Research and Development Council.

### **National Primary Industries Research, Development and Extension (RD&E) Framework**

Council endorsed the proposed National Primary Industries Research Development and Extension Framework (National RD&E Framework) and acknowledged the significant contribution and progress that has been made by state and territory primary industries agencies, rural RDCs and industry in developing the fourteen sectoral and seven cross sectoral strategies. Council encouraged Standing Committee and other parties to continue the work on this national framework and to work towards finalising the first sectoral and cross sectoral plans by April 2009.

### **Agricultural Trade—Review of Developments**

Council noted recent developments in agricultural trade issues and new initiatives to improve the coordination of market access issues across jurisdictions.

### **Implementation Working Group for the Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals—Pigs**

Council noted progress in implementing the Model Code of Practice for Welfare of Animals—Pigs, including the commencement of legislated standards by 20 April 2009 and in Victoria in December 2009.

### **Food Regulation Issues—Update**

Council noted progress on key food regulatory issues since PIMC 13, including reducing regulatory burden, primary production and processing standards and mandatory fortification.

### **Response to COAG on the Productivity Commission Recommendations Relating to the Regulation of Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals**

Council agreed to develop an implementation plan for the vertical integration of the National Registration Scheme for agricultural and veterinary chemicals, recommended by the Productivity Commission in its Research Report on Chemicals and Plastics Regulation. The implementation plan will examine the scope of integration, mechanisms for providing policy advice by states and territories, arrangements for compliance and enforcement activities and potential transition and implementation arrangements.

## **ANNEX A**

### **Ministerial Statement of Support for the Australian Organic Industry**

Primary Industries Ministers of the Australian Government and State and Territory Governments:

1. Recognise the increasing consumer demand for organic products and increasing consumer interest in organic production systems and the associated environmental benefits.
2. Recognise the subsequent significant and increasing growth of the organic industry and its contribution to the national economy.
3. Support and encourage the commitment of the Organic Federation of Australia and other key industry stakeholders to a more unified approach to industry development.
4. Commit to support the development of the organic industry in Australia by:
  - i. Considering appropriate development strategies on a jurisdiction by jurisdiction basis as relevant to the particular industries and sectors.
  - ii. Consulting with the stakeholders in the organic industry on matters impacting industry development.
  - iii. Working towards a greater exchange of information between organic and mainstream producers so that the supply and quality of organic and mainstream production continues to improve.
  - iv. Acknowledging that Governments have a role in mitigating barriers and maximising opportunities for growth in the organics industry.