



Annual Report 2010 - 2011



# Message from the Chairman

## Dear Stakeholder

SAFEMEAT continues to promote best practice management systems and implement strategies for the safe and hygienic production of red meat in Australia.

This annual report summarises critical policy issues and work programs oversighted by SAFEMEAT during 2010-11. A number of residue issues were managed during the year including those associated with feed contamination and cattle rejected from export which had been treated with a tickicide. Work commenced on the Business Rules for NLIS (Pork). The NLIS (Pork) Advisory Committee was established.

Further input into the draft Primary Production and Processing Standard for meat was provided. Work continued on pathogens. Significant progress was made on the SAFEMEAT Strategic Initiatives Review and the administration review was finalised. Work continued on improving NLIS.

Residues in bobby calves remain of concern, although I acknowledge the work done to improve this situation by the bobby calf task force.

A major event this year was the disruption to the live cattle trade to Indonesia with many SAFEMEAT members involved in this matter.

Australian Pork Limited became full partners and their membership is welcome.

The Goat Industry Council of Australia also became formal partners which is also welcome. The Australian Livestock Markets Association (ALMA) became observers as the representative body for the saleyard sector replacing the Livestock Saleyards Association of Australia (LSAA). I would like to thank LSAA for their contribution to SAFEMEAT.

The contribution of the many committees and working groups, with SAFEMEAT involvement and support, continues to provide valuable information for industry in maintaining a high level of food safety and market access for its products. This work has enabled targeted approaches to improving industry quality assurance programs through education and fostering a partnership approach with industry. Examples of this can be found in the monitoring of residues in livestock and the improving levels of compliance with NLIS requirements throughout the livestock supply chain.

It has been stated in previous annual reports, and I consider it worth repeating, that SAFEMEAT continues to be the most important vehicle for managing food safety issues across the whole red meat and livestock industry in Australia. The success of SAFEMEAT is due to the commitment and co-operation of the partners that make up SAFEMEAT.

I would like to thank the SAFEMEAT Executive, the SAFEMEAT Partnership and their respective organisations for their continued commitment and contributions in 2010-11. I would also like to acknowledge Meat and Livestock Australia Ltd (MLA), Animal Health Australia, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, State and Territory jurisdictions, the various industry peak bodies and the Secretariat for their considerable efforts made during the year.



I would also like to thank Jack Ware, Chair of SAFEMEAT who stood down this year after having been involved with SAFEMEAT since its inception. Jack's contribution to SAFEMEAT's success has been outstanding.

Yours sincerely

Ross Keane  
Chairman  
November 2011

## Role of SAFEMEAT

The primary role of SAFEMEAT, as specified in the Meat Industry Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), is to oversight and promote sound management systems to deliver safe and hygienic product to the market place. SAFEMEAT promotes rationalisation of regulation and standards within the industry, drives the implementation of strategies to ensure meat safety and hygiene and monitors industry performance in respect of these.

### SAFEMEAT Terms of Reference

- To work with the objective of establishing world best practice in ensuring the safety of red meat products.
- To ensure each red meat industry sector implements sound management systems to ensure safe and hygienic product is delivered to the market place.
- To ensure adequate and nationally consistent government standards and regulations relating to meat safety and hygiene.
- To ensure that effective crisis management strategies are put in place by the appropriate red meat industry sectors and to this end, ensure that there is a fully integrated and effective communications network.

### SAFEMEAT Structure

The SAFEMEAT Partnership met face-to-face on the following dates during 2010-11:

- 10 November 2010
- 5 July 2011

### The SAFEMEAT Partnership members for 2010-11 were:

- Mr Jack Ware and Mr Ross Keane (part of year) – Chair
- Mr Wesley Judd – Australian Dairy Farmers Ltd
- Mr Conall O’Connell – Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Dr Andy Carroll – Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Mr Peter Kane – Australian Livestock Exporters’ Council Ltd
- Mr Jim Cudmore – Australian Lot Feeders’ Association
- Mr Terry Nolan and Mr Gary Burrigge – Australian Meat Industry Council
- Mr Bob Barwell – Cattle Council of Australia
- Mr Richard Bolt – Victorian Department of Primary Industries (representing State/Territory Agriculture Departments)
- Dr Barbara Wilson – Safe Food Queensland (representing State/Territory Meat Industry Authorities)
- Ms Kate Joseph – Sheepmeat Council of Australia
- Ms Kathleen Plowman – Australian Pork Limited
- Mr Patrick Hutchinson- Goat Industry Council of Australia

### Observers:

- Dr Mike Bond and Mr Duncan Rowland – Animal Health Australia
- Mr Gary Tapscott – Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association
- Mr Justin Toohey – Red Meat Advisory Council
- Mr David Palmer – Meat and Livestock Australia Ltd
- Mr Don Hamblin – Wool Producers Australia



### The SAFEMEAT Partnership is supported by the Executive Group.

The Executive Group meets regularly to drive the Business Plan work program. Teleconferences or special meetings to address particular issues were also held during the year and involved industry, government experts and the Executive Group. In 2010-11 the Executive group comprised the following members:

- Mr Stephen Bailey – Chair
- Mr Wesley Judd and Mr David Basham – Australian Dairy Farmers Ltd
- Mr Bob Biddle – Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Mr Lachlan Mackinnon – Australian Livestock Exporters Council
- Mr Dougal Gordon – Australian Lot Feeders' Association
- Mr John Dorian, replaced by Mr John Langbridge – Australian Meat Industry Council
- Mr David Inall – Cattle Council of Australia
- Mr Brian Casey – PrimeSafe Victoria (representing State/Territory Meat Industry Authorities)
- Dr Sandra Baxendell – Biosecurity, part of Department of Employment QLD, Economic Development and Innovation – and Mr Tony Britt – Victorian Department of Primary Industries (representing State/Territory Agriculture Departments)
- Mr Ron Cullen – Sheepmeat Council of Australia
- Ms Kathleen Plowman – Australian Pork Limited
- Mr Patrick Hutchinson – Goat Industry Council of Australia

### Observers:

- Mr Duncan Rowland – Animal Health Australia
- Ms Michelle Gorman – Meat and Livestock Australia Ltd
- Mr Andy Madigan – Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association
- Mr Robin Condron – Dairy Australia
- Mr David Pollock – Livestock Saleyards Association of Australia
- Mr Craig Palmer – Australian Renderers Association
- Mr Bob Munro – Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority
- Ms Jo Hall – Wool Producers Australia
- Mr Angus Hobson – Red Meat Advisory Council
- Mr Tony White – Australian Livestock Markets Association

The SAFEMEAT Executive also used sub-committees to progress specific SAFEMEAT activities. In 2010-11 the sub-committees were:

- Device-Based Status Working Group – Chair: Mr Ed Klim (Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry)
- Endosulfan Technical Working Group – Chair: National Residue Survey
- National Vendor Declaration (NVD) Working Group – Chair: Mr Stephen Bailey (SAFEMEAT)

- NLIS (Cattle) Advisory Committee – Chair: Mr Peter Milne (SAFEMEAT)
- NLIS Monitoring Committee – Chair: Mr Stephen Bailey (SAFEMEAT)
- NLIS (Sheep and Goats) Advisory Committee – Chair: Mr Ian Feldtmann (Sheepmeat Council of Australia)
- NLIS Standards Committee – Chair: Mr Keith Adams (SAFEMEAT)
- SAFEMEAT Bobby Calves Residue Solutions Taskforce – Chair: Mr Bob Barwell (Cattle Council of Australia)
- Stockfeed Working Group – Chair: Mr Ed Klim (Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry)
- Targeted Testing Working Group – Chair: Mr Bob Barwell (Cattle Council of Australia)

### SAFEMEAT Secretariat

The SAFEMEAT Secretariat is located within the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 18 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra. Mr Ed Klim managed the SAFEMEAT Secretariat during 2010-11.

### Funding

Funding to attend meetings and undertake projects is provided by the individual SAFEMEAT members.

Funding for the SAFEMEAT Secretariat is provided through Meat and Livestock Australia Ltd and the Australian Meat Industry Council. The cost of running the Secretariat was \$200,000 for the 2010-11 financial year.

## Significant events in 2010-11

The finalisation of the administrative review was a major milestone. The process has resulted in a streamlined and simplified annual business plan instead of a 3-year plan. As a result the terms of reference for SAFEMEAT will be reviewed as will the committees and working groups on a regular basis.

Progress was also made with the instigation of the Strategic Initiatives Review with a consultant being appointed to assist the working group.

A number of residue issues, and metal shot in beef occurred. These were managed with minimal disruption to trade.

Antibacterial residues in bobby calves have been a concern for a number of years and continue to be detected. The new property identification code (PIC) status for screening test positives was implemented.

SAFEMEAT was continually updated on the progress of the following residue monitoring activities:

- National Organochlorine Residue Management Program (NORM);
- National Antimicrobial Residue Minimisation (NARM);
- Targeted Antimicrobial Residue Testing (TART); and
- Sheep Targeted Antimicrobial Residue Testing Program (START)
- Endosulfan Monitoring program
- Device-Based Status Working Group.

NLIS involved a lot of work for members this year. Primary Industries Ministerial Council appointed a working group to look at the feasibility of electronic identification for sheep and goats. The disruption of the live cattle trade to Indonesia resulted in the feasibility of using the NLIS database for closed supply chains being examined. The issue of national consistency in NLIS rules was once again raised.

A meeting of the Chairs of the SAFEMEAT committees was held to discuss key issues, communication between the committees and other matters. The meeting was very successful and is intended to be an annual event.



# Safemeat Business Plan

The strategic directions of SAFEMEAT are set out in the Three-Year (2008-2011) Business Plan. The Business Plan outlines the strategic approach to managing red meat safety and hygiene within Australia and seeks to achieve this through a number of targeted projects under the following eight key programs of industry priority:

- 
1. Standards and Regulations
  2. Emergency Management
  3. Animal Diseases
  4. Residues
  5. Pathogens
  6. Systems Development and Management
  7. Communications and Education
  8. Emerging Issues
- 

Under each key program there are defined projects, with milestones, funding arrangements and responsibilities:

## 1. Standards and Regulations

The purpose of this program is to contribute to the implementation of nationally consistent standards and regulations relating to meat safety and hygiene.

In doing this SAFEMEAT will support the development of harmonised and scientifically based national and international standards and promote minimisation of regulation to that necessary to produce safe food, ensure consumer protection, and prevent market disruption.

## 2. Emergency Management

The purpose of this program is to ensure that effective emergency management strategies are in place and activated at appropriate times to minimise market disruption.

## 3. Animal Diseases (as they relate to food safety)

This program is designed to ensure the red meat sector deals effectively with food safety issues arising from disease outbreaks in cattle, sheep and goats.

The objectives are to minimise market disruption arising from the public health aspects of animal disease outbreaks and to contribute, where appropriate, to the development and implementation of national policies and programs designed to protect Australia from exotic animal diseases.

## 4. Residues

This program aims to develop and implement sound management systems to deliver safe and hygienic food with adequate and nationally consistent government standards and regulations relating to residues.

SAFEMEAT will actively promote the observance of withholding periods and export slaughter intervals in order to prevent residues being present above the corresponding maximum residue limit for all markets. It is the objective of this program that any potential residue problem will be identified and appropriate management strategies will be developed and implemented, taking into consideration cost-efficient and equitable funding implications. This will minimise market disruption arising from residue violations.

## 5. Pathogens

The purpose of this program is to implement sound management systems to deliver safe and hygienic food that meets consumer and regulatory requirements. This involves the development of pathogen management programs with an emphasis on risk management as appropriate.

## 6. Systems Development and Management

This program enables SAFEMEAT to facilitate the development and establishment of key management systems to underpin red meat safety and hygiene programs in order to provide a through-chain, 'world best practice' approach for managing food safety risks in the red meat industry.

## 7. Communication and Education

This program's purpose is to facilitate communication, education and awareness of meat safety and hygiene issues by all stakeholders. Specifically, to establish a fully integrated and effective communication network within and outside SAFEMEAT, to encourage the ongoing development of expertise on meat safety and hygiene within the industry, government and academia and to raise the level of awareness of food safety and hygiene within the broader community.

## 8. Emerging Issues

This program is designed to ensure that the industry is positioned to meet changing market and consumer demands as they arise. Issues such as advancements in biotechnology policy are closely monitored both domestically and internationally to ensure a well-informed industry.



# Progress Against the Business Plan

The progress SAFEMEAT made against the eight key programs outlined in the Business Plan is detailed below.

## 1. Standards and Regulations

During 2010-11, SAFEMEAT continued to provide input into the Primary Production and Processing Standard for Meat and Meat Products being developed by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). SAFEMEAT is represented on FSANZ's Standards Development Committee by the SAFEMEAT Secretariat. Individual SAFEMEAT members are also involved as representatives of their respective industry.

The Regulatory Analysis Working Group looked at current costs producers incur in complying with the requirements of industry programs and the extent of compliance with these programs.

SAFEMEAT received updates on the progress of the National Standard for Animal Feed.

## 2. Emergency Management

The SAFEMEAT Emergency Response Manual was reviewed to ensure that the manual remains current and relevant. While there were a number of residue incidents, SAFEMEAT did not go into full emergency operation.

Working Groups were set up to deal with the market access impacts of a number of residue incidents.

## 3. Animal Diseases (as they relate to food safety)

SAFEMEAT, through its representative bodies and various BSE-related committees, continued to actively promote Australia's food safety measures in order to maintain market confidence in the safety of Australian livestock products. Many members of SAFEMEAT gave evidence to the Senate inquiry into the Government's decision to relax import restriction on beef.

SAFEMEAT was consulted and provided comments on a food safety contingency plan for a BSE case in Australian cattle.

Work also continued on utilising NLIS to rationalise *Cysticercus bovis* (beef measles) inspection. This work was being undertaken by Australian Quarantine and Inspection Services (AQIS), jurisdictions and the Australian Meat Industry Council. The initial work was to identify and risk assess sewage treatment plants allocating the status CB to PICs or animals linked to risk land, laboratory testing to confirm or exclude *C. bovis* in suspect lesions and, where confirmed, identification of the source.

SAFEMEAT took an active interest in a Japanese health ministry decision that products from animals infected or suspected to be infected with Johne's disease should not enter the human food chain.



## 4. Residues

A survey was undertaken by the National Residue Survey (NRS) for SAFEMEAT to ensure no residues were entering the food chain from plague locust spraying.

The NARM Program continued during 2010-11. Export NARM sampling for 2010-11 consisted of a total of 21,214 samples, of which 29 contained residues, 18 were violative residues.

Domestic NARM sampling for the spring and autumn period found 0.35% of calves with violative residues during spring and 0.35% of calves with violative residues during autumn.

During 2010-11, the NRS reported that 973 cattle had been tested under their random sampling program for antibacterials, including 216 bobby calves. One violative residue has been detected in the samples from bobby calves.

The Bobby Calf Residues Solution Taskforce kept working on a range of options to help minimise the number of residue violations in bobby calves.

The TART for cattle and the sheep equivalent START continued to operate in 2010-11. There were no residues detected in the one sheep sample. However, from the 20 cattle samples, 3 residues were detected with one violative residue. The carcass was condemned at slaughter.

SAFEMEAT continued its endosulfan monitoring program over the 2010-11 summer season. SAFEMEAT endorsed the summer testing program consisting of:

- testing for endosulfan on the basis of particular responses to relevant National Vendor Declaration (NVD) questions; and
- reconvening the Endosulfan Technical Working Group in October 2010 to maintain a watching brief on endosulfan use and residue risk over the 2010-11 cotton and major Queensland horticulture growing seasons.

Working groups were established to manage residue issues with residues in live cattle rejected from export, feed contamination and metal shot. For the feed contamination incident a survey was conducted of single line feed mills, while for metal shot an NLIS status was established. In the case of the live cattle issue SAFEMEAT was working with the states and the manufacturer to manage this potential problem.

A survey was undertaken of chemicals used to control plague locusts with very good results. Some 50,000 information brochures were printed on plague locust control.

SAFEMEAT kept a close watching brief on the agricultural and veterinary chemical review and on the submissions to the *Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement* for a new nationally harmonised agvet chemical regulatory system. SAFEMEAT submitted comments to the review.

## 5. Pathogens

The work under this key program continues to be supported by MLA's research and development (R&D) program. R&D projects were conducted by MLA in the areas of chemical usage, microbiological food safety and biotechnology.

One of the key components of this program is related to microbiological food safety and examines the use of scientific approaches to understanding food-safety risks and develops systems and new technologies to manage identified risks.

In 2010-11 food safety research and development again focused on the ongoing concerns regarding *E. coli* 0157:H7 and other pathogenic *E. coli* strains. During the year the USA listed another six strains of *E. coli* as adulterants. This work is of extremely high importance for the ongoing market access to the United States. A paper was published that demonstrates the low prevalence of these strains in Australian cattle.

SAFEMEAT agreed to investigate the possibility of doing another antimicrobial resistance survey as it is some years since the last survey.

The 2010-11 activities in MLA's food safety research and development program continue to be reported against specific projects, budget allocations and timelines and are linked, where appropriate, to the SAFEMEAT Business Plan.

## 6. Systems Development and Management

NLIS had several significant developments during 2010-11. The restructured NLIS Standards Committee recommended the accreditation of 10 cattle tags and 13 sheep tags. They had de-accredited 1 cattle tag as well as several sheep tags.

SAFEMEAT again looked at national consistency of NLIS rules and for cattle recommended the phasing out of exemptions for cattle consigned direct from property of birth to slaughter or live export. SAFEMEAT also requested mandatory national PIC requirements for properties carrying livestock. These changes were agreed by jurisdictions during the year.

As at June 2011, the NLIS database contained:

- 216,033 PICs with NLIS devices transferred or issued to them;
- 50,107 active database accounts; and
- 102.3 m devices on the database (48.3 of which were deceased)

SAFEMEAT endorsed changes to the NLIS database Terms of Use as recommended by the NLIS (Cattle) Advisory Committee. These changes were to allow data within the database to be used by various stakeholder groups to assist with managing livestock issues for both industry and government.

Consideration was given to utilising the NLIS database to facilitate the 'closed' supply chain for live cattle exports. This was agreed and a secondary database was established for live exports.

The NLIS Monitoring Committee continued to have concerns with non-compliance with the mob-based system and agreed to work with Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) on auditing property to property movements for sheep and goats and performing saleyard audits to check tagging compliance and movement document.

SAFEMEAT also wrote to all jurisdictions seeking assistance in reminding meat processors of their obligations to comply with various NLIS rules. SAFEMEAT then worked with MINTRAC/AMIC to develop necessary support material.

The NLIS (Sheep and Goats) Advisory Committee continued work on maintaining the current NLIS (Sheep and Goats) system pending any decision by the Primary Industries Standing Committee on electronic identification.

The NLIS Monitoring Committee continues to work on verification.

SAFEMEAT was provided with reports of NLIS monitoring activity conducted by state and territory jurisdictions during 2010-11. Developments of business rules for NLIS (Pork) continued.



A review was conducted of the LPA program with the following strategies agreed to improve the system: the development of an electronic online system that facilitates the integration of livestock movements with food safety and other declarations, implementation of periodic commitment declaration to strengthen the application process for gaining full accreditation within the LPA program, a communication program focusing on 'why' the program exists and 'what' it means to be part of it.

A major review of NVDs is underway focused on phasing out old declarations, completely redesigning the form and moving progressively to an electronic declaration system.

The SAFEMEAT Initiatives Review is now well underway with a report expected to SAFEMEAT in 2011-12.

## 7. Communication and Education

SAFEMEAT continues to:

- hold teleconferences (as required) on international issues relating to food safety;
- produce educational material as needed;
- maintain linkages to other committees by providing them with updates on the progress of the work outlined in the Business Plan; and
- post up-to-date material on current issues on the SAFEMEAT website.

## 8. Emerging Issues

SAFEMEAT was briefed on emerging market access issues for Australian exports by AQIS during 2010-11. Such briefings have assisted in communicating issues specific to certain markets to the relevant stakeholders.

A watching brief was maintained on the food chain security and critical infrastructure protection issues.

SAFEMEAT maintained a watching brief on possible residues from coal seam gas.

Antibacterial resistance has re-emerged as an issue again and SAFEMEAT is considering whether to conduct a survey in meat.

© SAFEMEAT 2013

This publication is published by Meat & Livestock Australia Ltd ABN 39 081 678 364 (MLA).

Where possible, care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of information contained in this report, but MLA cannot accept responsibility for errors in the accuracy or completeness of the information.

Reproduction of this material is permitted with due acknowledgement of SAFEMEAT. Published February 2013