



Reference: 05857/10

Hon Tim Mulherin MP

Member for Mackay

15 JUL 2010



**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Primary Industries,
Fisheries and Rural and Regional
Queensland**

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
Corner Alice and George Streets
Brisbane Qld 4000

Neil
Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 9 June 2010 concerning Parliament of Queensland E-Petition 1380-10 regarding poultry welfare.

The following wording is provided as the ministerial response for tabling, responding to the principal petitioner and publishing on Parliament's website.

"I acknowledge the concerns of the petitioners regarding poultry welfare issues, including reviewing codes of practice, introducing new legislation and mandatory reporting.

Codes are developed nationally in extensive consultation with a wide range of groups such as animal industries, animal welfare organisations, governments, universities and specialist organisations such as the Australian Veterinary Association. Revision of the codes is undertaken via a national review process that involves representatives of all these stakeholders.

As part of a national approach, codes are currently being converted into Standards and Guidelines (Standards) and will bring about improved animal welfare outcomes when they come into effect. Currently codes provide guidelines only, which are voluntary. With the adoption of the new Standards into legislation, it will be compulsory for all livestock to be treated according to the Standards.

The Australian Model Code of Practice for the Welfare of Animals – Poultry (poultry code) was developed in 2001 to define welfare standards that meet community expectations for the keeping of poultry. The poultry code applies to meat chickens and caged, barn and free-range egg production systems.

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Under the *Animal Care and Protection Regulation 2002* (the Regulation), key elements of the poultry code have been made compulsory in Queensland. As of 1 January 2008, the Regulation increased the minimum height of the cage, the height and width of the cage door, and the floor area per bird. Biosecurity Queensland, a service of the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI), has developed a program to monitor compliance with the poultry standards in the Regulation. In addition, Land Transport of Livestock Standards and Guidelines will bring about improved animal welfare outcomes for livestock when they come into effect next year.

The Australian Code of Practice for Welfare of Animals – Livestock at Slaughtering Establishments, will be reviewed in the future.

The priority for reviewing model codes of practice for the welfare of animals and conversion to Standards is determined through the Ministerial Council process. Animal Health Australia (AHA) facilitates the review and conversion process in accordance with these priorities.

At the time of endorsement of the Poultry Code by the Ministerial Council in 2002, it was considered that 2010 was appropriate for its review. This time frame was determined in the understanding that the Poultry Code would be implemented in all jurisdictions within twelve months of endorsement, and be in force for some years before the review.

While implementation did occur in Queensland in 2003, unfortunately, some other jurisdictions experienced significant delays in implementing the Poultry Code and it has only recently been implemented. This means the Poultry Code has not been in effect nationally long enough for a 2010 review.

A realistic time frame to consider a review of the Poultry Code would be about five years from implementation in all jurisdictions. Although this means a review well after the previously agreed 2010, it ensures the Poultry Code is in place for a reasonable period of time to develop a good understanding of its effectiveness.

Issues such as those raised in the petition relating to a mandatory reporting system and legislative restrictions on genetic strain selection will be considered as the relevant codes come up for review. I would encourage petitioners to make a submission during the public consultation process."

If you require any further information regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Laurie Dowling of DEEDI on telephone 07 3224 8778 or email laurie.dowling@deedi.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



TIM MULHERIN, MP
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