

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON GM FOOD LABELLING

377. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the minister representing the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I refer to the interdepartmental committee on GM food labelling.

- (1) Who are the members of the committee and what agencies are they from?
- (2) Who was responsible for choosing the committee members?
- (3) What is the core function of the committee?
- (4) Given the time frame and the urgency of this matter, why has the committee held only three meetings since 2009?

Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The chair is Peter Watt, Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia; Jim Dodds, Department of Health Western Australia; Claire Nutter, Department of Commerce Western Australia; and Frank Hough—that is a name from the past—representing the Western Australian Local Government Association.
- (2) The committee members were chosen by directors of their respective organisations.
- (3) The core function is to prepare a report as follows: the investigation of strengthening labelling laws to identify GM and non-GM food products and improve compliance to assist consumer choice through the relevant local, state and federal agencies.
- (4) Background work on this study has been in progress in addition to the three meetings, the last of which was on 25 February 2010. This work has included correspondence with key state and national food industry stakeholders, canvassing stakeholder viewpoints on GM food labelling issues, and a telephone survey of consumers. An interim report on the progress of the committee is currently being prepared and will be delivered to the Minister for Agriculture and Food by 30 June 2010. The study will be delivered to the Minister for Agriculture and Food by 29 October 2010.