

POULTRY INDUSTRY, GENETICALLY MODIFIED SOY

1945. Hon Jim Scott to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

- (1) Is the Minister aware that Australia imports around 300 000 tonnes of genetically modified soy for the poultry industry?
- (2) How much of this 300 000 tonnes of GM soy is used by the Western Australian poultry industry?
- (3) From which country does the GM soy used in the Western Australian poultry industry come from?
- (4) Which poultry producers in WA use imported GM soy?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

- (1) Australia imported 43,818 tonne of soybeans in 2002/03 and 30,308 tonne in the six months to December 2003. None were imported direct to Western Australia. It is understood that these are crushed to produce vegetable oils.

Australia imported 366,874 tonne of soybean meal in 2002/03 and 166,367 tonne in the six months to December 2003. Direct imports to Western Australia were 12,368 tonne in 2002/03 and 6,436 tonne to December 2003.

Imported soybean meal may also find its way to Western Australia via the other States, and some feed products incorporating soybean meal may also be imported from the other States. However, statistics are not available on interstate trade.

The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) issued a licence for the import of GM soybeans from the USA in January 2003. The licence conditions stipulate that the grain is securely transported to processing plants and processed so that it is no longer viable. Imported soybean meal is not regulated by the OGTR, because the meal is not considered to be live, viable organisms. However, imported meals are subject to quarantine inspection on arrival to ensure that they have been devitalised and contain no whole grains.

- (2) On a national basis, soybean meal (either imported or the by-product of crushing domestic and imported soybeans) makes up about 40 per cent of the protein meal used in stockfeeds, and the chicken meat and layer industries consume around a quarter of the total output of the stockfeed industry.

I understand that the majority of the soybean meal imported by Western Australia (12,368 tonne in 2002/03 and 6,436 tonne to December 2003) is used in producing chicken meat rations, with a smaller amount used in layer rations.

- (3) Over 99 per cent of imported soybeans and soybean meal has been from the USA in 2002/03 and 2003/04.
- (4) The Hon Member would be aware of reports in the media in April 2004 in relation to the import and use of soybean meal by Inghams. I do not think it is appropriate for me to comment further on companies that may use GM soybean meal in poultry rations.