

HORSE MEAT INDUSTRY — SLAUGHTER PRACTICES

3688. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Agriculture and Food

This question is in relation to the Minister granting a license for the sale of fresh horse meat in Western Australia. Whilst I acknowledge the attachment of strict conditions including the presence of a Western Australian Meat Industry Authority inspector during processing, I ask:

- (a) can the Minister advise what screening processes are involved in the slaughter of horses;
- (b) are blood tests done prior to the slaughter of the animal; and
  - (i) if not, why not; and
  - (ii) if so:
    - (A) do the blood tests rule out the presence of all equine diseases;
    - (B) do the blood tests identify all drugs or medication the animal has ingested; and
    - (C) can the blood test confirm whether the animal is fit for human consumption;
- (c) how is medication ingested by the horse prior to slaughter tracked;
- (d) what technique is used to slaughter the animal;
- (e) what evidence can the Minister provide to demonstrate that the method of slaughter is proven to be humane;
- (f) do abattoir workers perform their duties any differently when slaughtering horses than they would when slaughtering cows, sheep and goats; and
  - (i) if so, have any occupational safety and health measures been implemented to reflect the different work method used to ensure the safety of the abattoir worker from disease?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

Department of Agriculture and Food

- (a) A declaration is required to identify the treatments the horse had been exposed to prior to consignment. Further, an agistment period of 4 weeks is required on an approved Authority facility prior to slaughter.
- (b) No.
  - (i) This is not standard practice in Australia in the case where horses are slaughtered for human consumption.
  - (ii) Not applicable.
- (c) Refer to (a).
- (d) Invasive stun (by high powered captive bolt designed specifically for horses) followed immediately by cutting/severing the jugular vein to desanguinate (bleed-out) the animal.
- (e) This is the standard practice used by all abattoirs in Australia slaughtering horses for human consumption.
- (f) No
  - (i) Not applicable