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BRIEFING: JOINT PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE'S MEETING

Progress Report on the Strengthening of Food Control Services and Labelling in South Africa

19 FEBRUARY 2014



agriculture,
forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



the dti

Department:
Trade and Industry
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Outline

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Recap on the previously proposed interventions and report on actual actions taken to address challenges identified in food control systems
- ❖ Update on the “brine injection” in chicken meat
- ❖ Update on other progress made on Meat Labelling: The Department of Trade and Industry and the National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS)
- ❖ Update on investigation by National Consumer Commission (NCC)
- ❖ Update on progress made by the Department of Health
- ❖ Conclusion

Introduction

- ❖ The three Departments (Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Health; Trade & Industry) have been in interaction since March 2013 ;
- ❖ These Departments presented comprehensive Action Plans to the Joint Portfolio Committee in June 2013 and reported on progress to the Joint Portfolio Committee in September 2013;
- ❖ The aim of the current presentation is to:
 - Provide the Joint Portfolio Committee with a report on some of the actions taken since the last update; and
 - Highlight complementary work done by various institutions.

Recap on the previously proposed interventions in Action Plan

CHALLENGE	INTERVENTIONS	STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS
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High level decision to ensure the strengthening of Food Safety Controls

Cabinet level approval to strengthen Food safety controls oversight in South Africa through reconfiguration of a Ministerial Cluster

Foster an integrated approach to governance that is aimed at improving government planning, decision making and service delivery in food safety matters at national, provincial and local levels.

Fragmentation of food control authorities
Establishment of Inter-Departmental Food Safety Coordinating Committee (IDFSCC)

-Systematic review of regulatory frameworks for food safety and food control;
 -Draft the National Food Safety and Food Control Policy document and a Road Map of Food safety and Food Control in South Africa;
 -Carry out a feasibility evaluation of an integrated model of governance for food safety and food control
 -Oversee development of norms and standards for Food Safety and Food Control.

Progress report on the actual actions taken

- ❖ A meeting of Ministers was convened in August 2013; Ministers gave an in principle approval of the proposed Action Plan;
- ❖ A Cabinet Memo was prepared for presentation by the Ministers to Cabinet; The Memo sought to request approval for the creation of (1) a Ministerial Cluster on Food Security and Food Safety; and, (2) the Inter-Departmental Food Safety Coordinating Committee as precursors to the establishment of a Food Safety Agency;
- ❖ The Directors-General (DGs) from the three (3) departments had a meeting on the 10th February 2014; the DGs recommended that processes related with Cabinet shall be halted to allow this matter to be considered by the new Cabinet; and
- ❖ The DG's ordered that the Technical Working Group of the Inter-departmental Food Safety Coordinating Committee (IDFSCC) should be established and continue with the work of the proposed action plan towards the models for the creation of Food a Safety Agency.

Progress report on the actual actions taken

Establishment of Inter-Departmental Food Safety Coordinating Committee (IDFSCC)

- ❖ The Terms of Reference have already been drafted by the three Departmental technical teams;
- ❖ The IDFSCC to be the interim coordinating mechanism (Structure) – departments will second or appoint senior officials to the IDFSCC Technical Working Group;
- ❖ IDFSCC will drive the full review of existing legislation and policy interventions;
- ❖ IDFSCC will investigate and recommend on the harmonisation of inspections, including Provincial and Municipal levels; and
- ❖ IDFSCC to link with Consumer Goods Association of South Africa to drive private sector compliance initiatives.

Recap on the previously proposed interventions in Action Plan

CHALLENGE	INTERVENTIONS	STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS
Lack of capacity to conduct animal species quantitative analysis	<i>Identify laboratories and institution responsible for leading on quantification of species DNA traces</i>	Design and carry out studies on the levels of species contamination that is achievable, detectable, and acceptable in RSA through partnerships with research institutions.

Progress report on the actual actions taken

- ❖ The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has identified laboratories under Agricultural Research Council (ARC) Biotechnology Platform;

- ❖ Two research projects have been conceptualised:

- Profiling food-borne risks in local and imported meat, and
- DNA characterisation and species identification in order to provide for the acceptable levels of cross-contamination in normal production process, and to distinguish intentional food fraud, species substitution, and adulteration.

- ❖ MOU's and SLAs with the ARC have been finalised at the technical level and it is expected that the research will commence on 01 May 2014, the projects will be conducted over a period of 12 month.

Recap on the previously proposed interventions in Action Plan

CHALLENGE	INTERVENTIONS	STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS
Fragmented Inspections compromising enforcement and compliance	Food <i>Review food inspection system within DAFF, the dti and DoH</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conduct audits of existing inspection services -Address capacity issues and identified gaps identified from audits; -Create linked databases for inspectors and registered food facilities; -Create data base for reporting of third party verification audits; -Explore the use of a Memorandum of Understanding between Departments; and -Finalise independent meat inspection proposal.

Progress report on the actual actions taken

Finalisation of independent meat inspection proposal at abattoirs

- ❖ The final proposal was tabled to MINTECH of the HODs of Provincial Departments of Agriculture and the DG DAFF for a decision and the proposal was endorsed;
- ❖ The proposal was then sent to each MEC of the Provincial Departments of Agriculture for consideration in October 2013 and the MEC's are currently conducting internal consultations with their respective stakeholders and legal advisors;
- ❖ In parallel, the Terms of Reference for assignees have been drafted in close cooperation with industry role players – the 1st phase of consultations was concluded in November 2013; and
- ❖ Although DAFF and the Industry agree on the majority of matters, there are few areas of divergence which the MINTECH Veterinary Group is expected to address.

Progress report on the actual actions taken

Control over the sale of Poultry Meat to address brine treatment (injection)

- ❖ Draft Amendment to the Regulations has been compiled and submitted to WTO (TBT Agreement) for comments from international trading partners;
- ❖ The highlights of the revised of treatment levels are as follows:
 - The brine based treatment (injection) for full carcasses be not more than 10%.
 - The brine based treatment (injection) for portions be not more than 15%.
 - The water uptake in the chiller be not more than 7%, and this % is part of the above limits.

Progress report on the actual actions taken

Control over the sale of Poultry Meat to address brine treatment

(injection)....

- ❖ The producers must regularly perform tests to ensure compliance with these limits, and keep records thereof; and
- ❖ The water uptake test methods were changed to reflect the results on a QUID basis, and a new method was introduced to test the moisture content of breasts, thighs and drumsticks using the water-protein ratio (at 15% moisture).

Progress report on the actual actions taken

Meat Labelling

Department of Trade and Industry

- ❖ Trade and Industry Minister Dr Rob Davies, (MP), issued a final notice on categories of goods that are required to have trade description applied to them in terms of the Consumer Protection Act 68 of 2008. This was published in the Government Gazette No. 36968 on 25 October 2013.
- ❖ On 22 March 2013, the Minister published a notice in terms of the Act for members of the public and other stakeholders to submit comments to the proposed regulation on the labelling of meat products. This was prompted by media reports in February 2013 that various meat products seem to indicate the presence of donkey, water buffalo, goat and other undisclosed meat products in certain processed foods which are available to consumers at retail stores in South Africa.
- ❖ This notice will only come into effect after six months in order to comply with the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.

Progress report on the actual actions taken

Meat Labelling

National Consumer Council Investigation

- ❖ The National Consumer Commission has completed its investigations relating to the 'Horse meat labelling and the related matters'; and
- ❖ A report has been submitted for approval to Minister, comments are underway and the publication of the report will happen after the Minister has made his comments.

Progress report on the actual actions taken

Meat Labelling

National Regulator For Compulsory Specifications

- ❖ The National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications (NRCS) is working on a proposed new Compulsory Specification for Processed Meat Products;
- ❖ The impact assessment was conducted during the second full stakeholder meeting in November 2013;
- ❖ The first draft of the Compulsory Specification was circulated and comments were incorporated; and
- ❖ The impact report and the second draft compulsory specification will be presented at the final full stakeholders' meeting on the 7th of March 2014.

Progress report on the actual actions taken Regulatory Interventions Department of Health

- ❖ The Department of Health (DoH) has finalized the Draft Regulations relating to the Labelling and Advertising of Foodstuffs, to realign with regulatory requirement by the NRCS, relating to the proposed new Compulsory Specification for Processed Meat Products, as well as the Regulations regarding control over the sale of Poultry Meat by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; and

- ❖ The DoH has finalised the incorporation of Port Health Services into the National Department from the Provincial departments with effect from 1 April 2014. This will ensure easier monitoring and enforcement of imported products, including foodstuffs.

Conclusion

- ❖ The Inter-Departmental Food Safety Coordinating Committee (IDFSCC) Technical Working Group is expected to present periodical progress reports to the Accounting Officers of the three Departments; and
- ❖ The Accounting Officers will submit Cabinet Memorandum on the proposed measures to strengthen Food Control in South Africa to Cabinet during the third quarter of the 2014/2015 financial year.

