



REVIEW OF AVA'S FOOD SAFETY & BIOSECURITY PROGRAMMES – 5th INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS (IACE) REVIEW

1 The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority's (AVA's) International Advisory Committee of Experts (IACE) has concluded its fifth review of AVA's food safety and biosecurity programmes. The review took place from 22 to 25 August 2011 and considered a range of issues including strengthening AVA's food safety programmes, facilitating AVA's food sourcing and diversification efforts and AVA's approaches in dealing with emerging issues.

Findings and recommendations of the IACE

2 The IACE concluded that AVA's food safety and biosecurity systems continue to be of world class standard. The IACE commended AVA on the developments and progress in its programmes since the last review in 2008 and endorsed AVA's efforts in the following:

- i. The new *Guidelines on Good Warehousing Practices* to enhance its food safety measures
- ii. The new *Guidelines for the Declaration of Foods and Ingredients Known to Cause Hypersensitivity* in conjunction with the legislative amendment to require the mandatory declaration of certain food and ingredients known to cause hypersensitivity, on the labels of prepacked food products.

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- iii. AVA's strategy of following international guidelines and implementing monitoring and testing programmes for food contact materials in dealing with the complexity and challenges posed by the migration of harmful chemicals into food and subsequent consumer health risks,
- iv. AVA's approach of comprehensively reviewing its food safety surveillance programmes continuously, to make better use of resources without compromising consumer health and to ensure relevance and alignment with international best practices.

3 "Without a doubt, the AVA is a world class food safety and biosecurity organisation. The key question is how AVA will maintain this status and meet expanding demands and public expectations. We live in a rapidly changing world and must adapt to changing needs and emerging issues. The AVA is well positioned to do this by refining its inspection systems and priorities, including networking with other agencies and industries. The AVA staff development and training initiative should ensure skills remain at a very high level." Dr Gardner Murray, Chairman of the IACE, said.

4 The IACE recommends that AVA works more closely with the industry and helps companies assume greater ownership for quality assurance systems and support for standards.

5 Believing that AVA is on the right track to maintain its position as an internationally-recognised regulatory authority, the IACE also encourages AVA to leverage on its expertise to train others and to develop itself as a centre of excellence.

6 The IACE also provided valuable feedback and advice on strengthening AVA's approaches in a range of programmes such as food sourcing and diversification, horizon scanning and early alert, and professional development.

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7 Acknowledging the recommendations of the IACE, Ms Tan Poh Hong, Chief Executive Officer of AVA, said, “We are grateful for the IACE’s advice and insight as it will help us stay ahead of the curve in the face of rapid changes. We are encouraged by the IACE’s commendations and endorsements, and are heartened to know that our programmes are of world class standards. We will continue to work with our partners to review our programmes and standards; and maintain AVA’s reputation so as to achieve AVA’s vision of being trusted and respected globally.”

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26 August 2011

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ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

1 AVA's International Advisory Committee of Experts (IACE) comprises experts in the fields of veterinary epidemiology, food safety and hygiene, biosecurity, phytosanitary and plant pathology, from Australia, the United Kingdom, Ireland and the United States.

2 Since 2002, four IACE reviews had been conducted. The areas of emphasis for each review are shown below:

- a) 2002: AVA's integrated approach to food safety
- b) 2003: AVA's biosecurity programmes on food safety as well as animal and plant health
- c) 2005: AVA's risk management approaches towards Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE or mad cow disease), Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI or bird flu), Nipah virus and Salmonella Enteritidis
- d) 2008: AVA's risk management approach to the control of HPAI (or bird flu), rabies and plant pests and diseases, in addition to AVA's policies and plans in ensuring food safety for processed food

3 The IACE was impressed with AVA's systems and approaches during the first four reviews and the current review builds on the knowledge gained during the previous meetings.

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4 The five-member team of experts who undertook the fifth review are:

Chairman:

i. Dr Gardner Murray
Director, Gardner Murray Pty Ltd
PO Box 4215, Weston Creek
Canberra, Australia

Members:

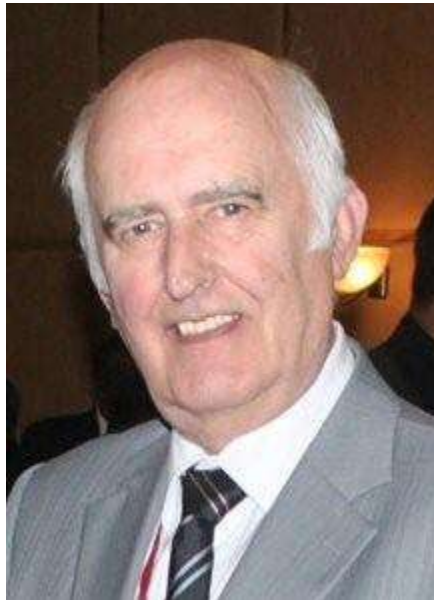
ii. Dr Thomas Ksiazek
Institute for Human Infections and Immunity, Galveston National Laboratory
University of Texas Medical Branch

iii. Professor Dirk Pfeiffer
Head, Veterinary Epidemiology & Public Health Group
Royal Veterinary College, University of London

iv. Professor Alan Reilly
Chief Executive, Food Safety Authority of Ireland and Adjunct Professor at the
Institute of Food and Health, University College Dublin, Ireland

v. Professor John Edwards
Emeritus Professor, Murdoch University, Australia, and Executive Director, One
Health Solutions

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Dr Gardner Murray, Chairman of the International Advisory Committee of Experts (IACE)



Ms Tan Poh Hong, Chief Executive Officer of the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) of Singapore

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