



Review of AVA's Food Safety & Biosecurity Programmes – 6th International Advisory Committee of Experts (IACE) Review

Issued on 7 August 2014

1 The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority's (AVA's) International Advisory Committee of Experts (IACE) has concluded its sixth review of AVA's food safety and biosecurity programmes. The review took place from 4 to 7 August 2014 and considered a range of issues including strengthening AVA's food safety and biosecurity programmes.

2 The IACE commended AVA's initiative in establishing the One Health platform with the medical and public health agencies (MOH and NEA) to promote cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaborations and communications. AVA's progress in refining its contingency planning for disease incursions, such as rabies, and using social media platforms (e.g. Facebook) to engage the public on a variety of food safety and animal health and welfare issues was complimented by the IACE. The committee also congratulated AVA in acquiring the status of an OIE Collaborating Centre for Food Safety.

3 Drawing on their experience, the IACE provided valuable insights and suggestions on areas including rabies contingency plan and food recall protocols. The committee also recommended that as an OIE Collaborating Centre for Food Safety, AVA can leverage on its comparative advantage and assist other countries in advancing food safety capabilities.

4 Dr Gardner Murray, Chairman of the IACE, said "The IACE noted significant progress had been made on the various recommendations of its review in 2011. In the opinion of the IACE, the AVA remains a trusted and well-respected organization

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both in Singapore and internationally with food safety and biosecurity standards at a world class standard. The IACE recognizes that there are major international challenges which pose risks to food safety, and human and animal health. These risks, including the risks of food fraud, are increasing and the AVA will have to accommodate to these new challenges. Based on past experiences, it is more than capable of doing so.”

5 Acknowledging the recommendations of the IACE, Ms Tan Poh Hong, Chief Executive Officer of AVA, said, “The IACE review is an opportunity not only to assess the robustness of our systems, but also to give us fresh insights and perspectives as we continue to pursue smarter systems and more effective programmes. The IACE is a valued advisory partner and we are glad to receive their positive report. We thank the IACE for their advice and recommendations, which will help us to continue to build stronger networks, tailor our plans and resources to be scalable and sustainable for the long term, and keep AVA at the forefront, both locally and internationally. ”

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ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

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 Sweden.

2. The IACE's terms of reference include:
 - i. Review and advise on AVA's programmes and approaches in:
 - a. Ensuring a safe food supply for Singapore
 - b. Safeguarding animal and plant health in Singapore
 - ii. Advise on emerging issues as well as latest international and scientific developments on food safety and biosecurity
 - iii. Advise on issues pertaining to the veterinary profession in Singapore
3. Since 2002, five 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

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e) 2011: Strengthening AVA's food safety programmes, facilitating AVA's food sourcing and diversification efforts and AVA's approaches in dealing with emerging issues

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

5. The five-member team of experts who undertook the sixth review are:

Chairman:

i. Dr Gardner Murray

Director, Gardner Murray Pty Ltd

Members:

ii. Prof Dirk Pfeiffer

Professor of Veterinary Epidemiology, Veterinary Epidemiology, Economics & Public Health Group, Royal Veterinary College, University of London

iii. Prof Alan Reilly

Chief Executive, Food Safety Authority of Ireland and Adjunct Professor at UCD Institute of Food and Health

iv. Prof John Edwards

Team Leader, FAO Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) China Office

v. Dr Stuart Slorach

Chair, OIE Working Group on Animal Production Food Safety

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Pictures



The IACE, chaired by Dr Gardner Murray, reviewed AVA's food safety and biosecurity programmes over 4 days.



AVA's senior management team with the members of the IACE.

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