

## DPI Additional Qs – May 2022

### Inquiry into food production and supply in NSW - Additional questions for witnesses - NSW Government (submission 17)

Question	Answer
1. Could you provide an update on NSW Government research projects targeted at improving food production and productive fertilisers, as outlined on pp 7-8 of your submission?	<p>NSW DPI has a range of projects and significant investment in targeting improved food production (eg yield), product quality and improved shelf life. This work covers areas such as grains (wheat, barley, oats, chickpeas, lupins, faba beans etc), horticultural crops, oils and honey, meats, eggs, dairy and viticulture as well as evaluating new and emerging products such as quinoa and colored rice for production in NSW. Similar work is undertaken in the seafood sector. There is also work on productive fertilizers. This includes through projects looking at improving natural nitrogen fixation from pulses crops and pasture legumes in both the grain and grazing sectors. Additional projects looking to improve the efficiency/productivity of nutrient inputs as well as reducing the outputs. Finally, we undertake projects that look at the safety and effectiveness of new or novel soil amendments.</p> <p>All these projects are undertaken in partnership with industry and other stakeholders. Most of these projects are 3 years investments that are undertaken in collaboration with other research institutions and industry bodies.</p>
2. Has the NSW Government invested in research and development on cellular agriculture? Are international developments in the growth of cellular agriculture being monitored?	DPI has not invested in research and development on cellular agriculture. NSW DPI does monitor the development of innovative technologies and approaches to food production.
3. You note that the NSW Food Authority undertakes training programs like the Food Safety Supervisor training to 40,000 retail food service businesses (p20). Are there any barriers that prevent this	Food Safety Supervisor (FSS) training for NSW food businesses is delivered on a fee for service basis by Registered Training Organisations approved by the Food Authority to deliver this training. There is no barrier to participation and

<p>service being delivered to voluntary food services?</p>	<p>FSS training is open to anyone whether or not they work for a food business. The Food Authority also collaborates with Councils as needed to deliver food safety training to the charitable food sector.</p>
<p>4. What is the role of the NSW Food Authority, and how much funding does the Authority receive?</p>	<p>The <i>Food Act 2003</i> (the Act) (S.3) includes the following objects:  (a) to ensure food for sale is both safe and suitable for human consumption,  (b) to prevent misleading conduct in connection with the sale of food,  (c) to provide for the application in this State of the Food Standards Code.  The Food Authority is constituted by S.107 of the Act with such functions (S.108) as are conferred or imposed on it by or under the Act or any other Act and in particular:  (a) to keep under review the construction, hygiene and operating procedures of premises, vehicles and equipment used for the handling or sale of food,  (b) to provide advice or recommendations to the Minister on the establishment, development or alteration of food safety schemes,  (c) to regulate the handling and sale of food the subject of food safety schemes to ensure that it is safe and suitable for human consumption,  (d) to encourage businesses engaged in the handling or sale of food to minimise food safety risks,  (e) to undertake or facilitate the education and training of persons to enable them to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Code and food safety schemes,  (f) to provide advice, information, community education and assistance in relation to matters connected with food safety or other interests of consumers in food,  (g) to make recommendations as to the maximum fees to be charged by local councils in relation to inspections carried out under section 37 by authorised officers of enforcement agencies (other than inspections in connection with premises the subject of a license under a food safety scheme or the granting of a license under a food safety scheme),  (h) to carry out such research as is necessary in order to perform its other functions.</p>

	<p>Funding - Budget Paper 4: Agency Financial Statements for FY2021-22 shows a total budgeted expenditure of \$20.2M for the Food Authority</p>
<p>5. The City of Sydney (submission 24, pp16-17) noted that some mobile voluntary food services haven't met food safety standards, and users from vulnerable populations have contracted foodborne illnesses. Additionally, these services are not covered by the Food Act, and there is limited oversight from the NSW Food Authority. How can this issue be addressed?</p>	<p>Information from the NSW Food Authority and the two NSW Health Public Health Units that cover the City of Sydney local government area show no evidence that the food charities referred to have been associated with foodborne illness outbreaks or other food safety risks to this community.</p> <p>These charities are well supported to ensure that they can safely store, process and handle food. The NSW Food Authority recently collaborated with the City of Sydney Council to deliver food safety training to voluntary food services operating in the that local government area, and further training sessions are planned. An approach that provides education, training and capacity building for volunteers involved in charitable food distribution is more commensurate with risk and is supported by the NSW Food Authority, in collaboration with its local government and non-government partners. The exemptions for charitable organisations exist to recognise the valuable service these organisations and their volunteers provide for their communities. The exemptions also cover community events such as school/church fetes and sports day barbecues. Removing the exemptions would impose significant additional burdens across the whole charitable sector, from these types of community events to low budget not-for-profit operations that are typically staffed by volunteers to serve the needy in our community.</p> <p>Food Authority staff also met with CoS staff on 17 February this year and explained these issues.</p>