

## E. COLI STUDY TOUR

Date: 20 February 2013

### Project Description

Recently the USA established new rules relating to certain Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STECs) which require the application of HACCP to manage the risks associated with these STECs. Processors in the USA are applying a range of different interventions to manage these risks as well as a range of testing and other quality assurance functions to respond to these new requirements. While Australian processors have been fully engaged in the changing environment it was identified there was a need to provide processors with advice on options available to respond to the new requirements and positive test results for STECs that have begun to be identified within the US market. Additionally more information was needed to examine the new alternatives being applied in the US and to integrate this information into the current AMPC and MLA advice on intervention management for the benefit of Australian exporters.

To this end 8 industry representatives took part in the tour from February 6 to 20th 2013 which included attending the North American Meat Association conference and expo. Participants on the study tour were current USA listed beef exporters who co-invested with AMPC and MLA under the syndicated PIP arrangements.

Companies undertaking the syndicated PIP to participate on the study tour were all required to nominate a focus on a key intervention, HACCP review requirement or issue relating to STEC that they sought to examine as part of the study program. Examples provided included and were not limited to hot/cold/hot wash heads, viscera, steam sterilisation, application of lactic acid and to investigate the US approach to the issue as part of the study and report on the findings, and identify how this might apply in Australia and what the related considerations are (e.g. costs, practicality, operational or other considerations) This requirement ensured participants were working toward the objects of the tour:

- // To update processor companies seeking to define their approaches to STEC;
- // To update on process control activities – which will inform Australian processing companies and in addition, the process control projects underway to assist industry;

- // To expose processors to practical, on site review of quality assurance and intervention approaches in the US;
- // To enable processors to investigate a specific issue/area they seek to address;
- // To update current information and provide a program approach and extension outputs on the latest practical applications, HACCP activities and interventions;
- // To inform the direction MLA, AMPC and AMIC activities in research, extension and engagement and policy approaches.

#### **Benefit for Industry**

The study tour used the following key questions as part of the study program:

- // What do the US processors/customers do towards meeting the requirements of the new regulations?
- // What interventions and HACCP review activities are applied prior to and following STEC being detected in product?
- // What learnings can be gained from comparing these approaches to the approaches in Australia, what are the gaps and what information do we need to upgrade the current information on these activities for processors in Australia?

As a result of undertaking the study tour, industry will be provided with:

- // A consolidated report on all learnings to be disseminated to industry and that will inform current/future research projects and activities in industry
- // Technical factsheets on HACCP review activities based on US examples in practice;
- // MLA material to be updated with advice from processors in the US;
- // A sequence of workshops on HACCP review and approaches to managing adulterants (underway with MLA).

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