



The Hon Gayle Tierney MP

Minister for Training and Skills
Minister for Higher Education
Minister for Agriculture

2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne
Victoria 3002
Telephone: +61 3 9637 3196

DX 210074

Ref: BMIN-2-22-23789

Ms Alison Stone
Chair
PrimeSafe
PO Box 2057
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205

Email: alisonstone7@gmail.com

Dear Ms Stone

STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS FOR PRIMESAFE

I am pleased to provide you with my expectations for PrimeSafe to guide the regulator's business planning processes.

As Minister for Agriculture, I am responsible for administering the *Meat Industry Act 1993* and the *Seafood Safety Act 2003*. This guidance should be read in the context of the objectives, obligations and functions outlined in these Acts, as amended. This guidance should also be read in the context of any other legislative and non-legislative obligations and in the context of, but in addition to, your core business activities.

To begin, I would like to acknowledge the essential role that PrimeSafe plays in Victoria's strong and productive agriculture system. PrimeSafe continues to meet its core objectives, including upholding food safety standards to protect public health, maintaining consumer confidence and safeguarding Victoria's strong reputation in export markets.

The expectations I have outlined below focus on building on PrimeSafe's strengths to better deliver on government priorities, address emerging risks and capture new opportunities for the meat and seafood sectors.

To achieve this, my expectations are that PrimeSafe deliver on the following three priority areas:

1. Risk based regulation and food safety culture
2. Regulatory responsiveness
3. Supporting system wide improvement

The initiatives and actions outlined below describe how I expect PrimeSafe to address these priorities.

1. Risk based regulation and food safety culture:

I expect PrimeSafe to continue to develop a regulatory system that acknowledges food safety cultural maturity as key to achieving food safety outcomes. Specifically, I expect PrimeSafe to:

- Develop and implement additional incentive-based approaches to risk and compliance. For example, rewarding a track record of compliance with a less frequent, and in turn less burdensome, audit inspection cycle or rewarding investment in risk-mitigating processes.
- Conducting ongoing review of existing approaches to guidance and the application of food safety standards to confirm that these settings remain appropriate.
- Provide me with a report on efforts to reduce the regulatory burden for business, including the impact of risk-based measures across the meat and seafood sectors, by the end of 2023.
- Drive innovative business improvement, such as through active participation in the RegTech program, collaborating with other regulators and Agriculture Victoria.
- Provide me with a report on your plans for the RegTech model in the meat and seafood industries within six months of completing the pilot.
 - The report should reflect on the potential culture changes for both stakeholders and the authority, and detail lessons learned, barriers to adoption and opportunities for the sector.

2. Responsive regulation:

To ensure efficient delivery of regulatory functions I expect PrimeSafe to:

- Demonstrate proportionate and situation appropriate use of food safety regulatory tools, including the effective use of education and extension services and enforcement where necessary.
- Engage in genuine, regular consultation with stakeholders to solve problems, understand and address potential harms, and support effective decision-making.
 - This includes, where appropriate, expanding existing stakeholder forums in terms of the numbers and diversity of businesses represented across the sectors.
- Engage in open and regular discussion with the Department and other food safety regulators on emerging issues, priorities and approaches to regulation.
- Identify opportunities and collaboratively support the Department to manage the risk of emergency and other animal diseases.
- Support small businesses to understand and meet regulatory requirements.
 - Identify the different cohorts of small business licensees.
 - Annually report on the regulatory burden of general, direct and indirect costs these businesses experience, and their satisfaction rating of PrimeSafe.

- Provide me an update on your efforts to improve working relationships with small business and small-scale producers by the end of 2023. My department will also be engaging with industry during this time to better understand their experiences.

3. Supporting system wide improvement

I expect PrimeSafe to work with the Department to help ensure Victoria's food safety system is able to manage risk and respond to new challenges, as well as support the agriculture sector to seize on emerging opportunities. Specifically, I expect PrimeSafe to:

- Continue to engage openly and constructively with opportunities to improve both PrimeSafe and the broader Victorian food regulatory system.
- Work with other agencies and represent Victoria through the binational food regulatory system in a constructive, transparent manner to foster accountability, national consistency and increased collaboration on best practice regulation for meat and seafood.
- Provide leadership alongside the Department to deliver a whole of government approach to food safety and regulatory practice.
- Identify and support opportunities for regulatory improvement across Victoria's agriculture sector.
- Support Victorian Government initiatives on animal welfare and in preparedness and response to exotic animal diseases.

I understand that you are embarking on a significant effort to review PrimeSafe's strategic direction and underpinning policies. I support and encourage you in this effort.

I request that PrimeSafe incorporates the three priorities identified in this Statement into the current work program and in corporate planning. Please identify milestones and appropriate review points for this work and advise me when the Statement needs to be updated or reviewed.

Yours sincerely



The Hon. Gayle Tierney MP

Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Training and Skills
Minister for Higher Education

Date: 12 October 2022