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KANGAROO ACTION PLAN TO BEAT RUSSIAN MEAT BAN

The NSW Government is supporting the development and implementation of a national kangaroo industry marketing plan to help counter the significant impact of a Russian ban on kangaroo meat imports, Minister for Primary Industries and State Development Ian Macdonald said today.

Mr Macdonald said the Kangaroo Industry Association of Australia reports that up to 2,400 jobs have been lost because of the Russian ban which has also forced the closure of a string of regional kangaroo processing operations.

In July 2009, Russia banned the import of all meat products from 30 different countries.

Before the ban the value of Australian kangaroo meat exports to Russia was estimated to be worth \$70 million a year.

“Russia was the world’s major importer of kangaroo meat and a critical source for the sale of lesser grade kangaroo ‘trim’ meat for smallgoods manufacturing,” Minister Macdonald said.

“The Russian ban on meat imports has had a drastic impact on the industry,” Mr Macdonald said.

“The NSW Government hosted a recent roundtable bringing together representatives of the Queensland government, kangaroo industry, meat and food suppliers, research groups to kick-start efforts towards a national marketing action plan to revive the industry.

“The roundtable was used to identify potential new markets for kangaroo meat including strategies to grow domestic as well as alternative export sales.

“Regaining access to the Russian market will remain a priority but the industry has identified the need to diversify into new export markets, including target markets such as China, South and Central America, Eastern Europe, Japan and North America.

“In the domestic market, more efforts will be needed to promote the health and environmental benefits of kangaroo meat as a low fat and high protein food source that has limited impacts on the environment”.

Mr Macdonald said sales of kangaroo meat in Australia remain low so efforts to build greater awareness and acceptance among domestic consumers could make a major difference to the success of the industry.

“To make kangaroo meat a regular part of the Australian diet we will need to improve consumer perceptions of the product, including its cleanliness, taste appeal and health and environmental benefits,” Mr Macdonald said.

“We will also need to promote the greater availability of kangaroo meat through retail and wholesale outlets, to help bring the product from the paddock to the plate.

“An important area for action will be developing the support of the food trade – including chefs, restaurants, delicatessens, butchers and take-away food outlets – in selling, using and promoting kangaroo meat.

“This will include the development of alternative kangaroo meat product lines to complement the current use of fillets, such as kangaroo mince, kebabs and pizzas as well as smallgoods-style deli meats like sausages, prosciutto, jerky and salami.”

Mr Macdonald said the NSW Government will help promote kangaroo meat through major food industry events, both in Australia and overseas.
