



PIRSA Food Safety NEWS

Issue 2- April 2002

It's already a month since the first edition of PIRSA Food Safety NEWS. I trust everyone had a good Easter break (doesn't that seem like a long time ago!) and hope you are all feeling recharged.

A lot can happen in a month, SA finally has a new government and Victoria experienced the worst mass food poisoning outbreak in that state in 5 years. Contaminated rice is believed to be responsible for the 256 people falling ill. Not a pleasant way to celebrate the Islamic New Year.

Have a good month and stay away from contaminated rice!

Barrie Paynter
PIRSA Food Safety Communication Officer

Latest News

New PIRSA CEO Appointed

Jim Hallion has been appointed to the Chief Executive position in PIRSA. Jim held the position of Chief Executive in the SA Department of Industry and Trade from 1994 to 2002 and has qualifications in engineering and finance.

SA Seafood Industry Emergency Response Workshop

A workshop was conducted at the SAFIC Head Office on 4 April with the aim of developing a SA seafood industry plan for responding to and recovering from a seafood industry food safety emergency. A national plan has been developed by Seafood Services Australia for a food safety emergency. The day focussed on assessing the viability of applying a tailored version of the national plan to

SA. For more details contact Barrie Paynter on 82260392.

Primary Industries Food Safety Steering Committee (PIFSSC)

Next meeting scheduled for 12 April 2002 from 10am –3pm in the Asia Australia Water Conference Centre, level 4, 77 Grenfell St.

Key agenda items:

- Dr John Sumner will present an interim report on the Food Safety Risk Profile for the Primary Industries Sector,
- Michele Flint, DoHA and Luba Tomaska, ANZFA will talk about national direction in food safety and their agency roles,
- Committee discussion on the draft discussion paper for a primary industry food safety act.

SA Update

SARDI Food Safety Risk Assessment Program

The program provides specialist risk assessment research capability to all commodity/industry sectors and is managed by Andy Pointon, the former Chief Scientist of SARDI's Livestock Systems. Andy has assembled a specialist team consisting of:

Ben Daughtry - Senior Research Scientist - Risk Modelling.

David Padula - Principal Research Scientist - Epidemiologist/Sampling.

Geoff Holds - Technical Officer - Food Borne Hazards.

David Hamilton - Principal Research Veterinarian – Pork Safety.

Jo Slade - Program Support.

The team will be individually profiled in future issues.

For more information contact Andy Pointon on 8207 7838 or Jo Slade on 8207 7886.

Seafood Industry update

Cooked Prawns – a project managed by SafeFood NSW and funded by DoHA has been established to assist boat operators who cook prawns onboard to implement food safety programs. A generic food safety program will be field tested in SA, NSW and QLD.

Version 5 of a Seafood Food Safety Standard will be discussed at the Seafood Services Aust Network meeting in Canberra on 15 & 16 April.

FarmBis has provided funding to SAFIC to conduct a series of food safety training workshops. The workshops aim to provide participants with an understanding of the concepts of food safety and demonstrate how they can be implemented. Participants will gain a TAFE qualification in food handling and a HACCP plan for their business.

Rudderfish – some consumers have complained to various state health

departments about diarrhoea after consuming Rudderfish. Paul Dowsett is representing PIRSA on a technical advisory group working party established to investigate this issue.

Post Harvest Food Safety Project – initiated by PIRSA to assist businesses in the post harvest sector to plan, develop and implement food safety programs.

For more information on the above seafood issues contact Paul Dowsett, PIRSA Food Safety Program on 8207 7934.

Port Pirie Grain Quality

Following the lowering of international and domestic maximum limits for lead in cereals, a joint industry and government working party has taken a pro-active approach to ensure heavy metal standards for cereals continue to be met in higher risk areas.

A survey of cereals around Port Pirie has been conducted with results presented to producers, the grains industry, government and Pasma. Individual survey results found some higher levels of lead in barley and cadmium in wheat however industry remains confident that ongoing monitoring and stack management practices for bulked grain will ensure trade and domestic standards continue to be met. Further research on lead uptake paths will be conducted.

For further information contact Michael McManus, PIRSA Rural Chemicals on (08) 8226 0421.

LONDON- The Sunday Times newspaper was cited as reporting that some restaurants in Britain are forcing customers who like their hamburgers, sausages or minced beef rare to sign a disclaimer form before eating due to fears of litigation should the consumer become ill from E-coli and salmonella poisoning. Source www.food-safety-news.com/april-2002-newsletter/odyframe.htm

Food Safety Implementation Working Group (FSIWG)

This is a recently established group, lead by DHS, whose primary focus is:

- the co-ordination of state and local govt agencies, businesses and other stakeholders in the implementation and ongoing operation of the Food Act 2001,
- development of an implementation plan for the reform of the food safety system in SA.

Chris Etherton and Geoff Raven have been invited to represent PIRSA. Next meeting is scheduled for 16 April 2002.

Independent scientists who advise the Food Standards Agency UK have concluded that washing fruit and vegetables is not required as a protection against pesticide residues. But the Agency is stressing that washing them is still a sensible food hygiene measure. Source: Food Standards UK @ www.foodstandards.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/55018

National Update

ANZ Food Regulation Ministerial Council (ANZFRMC)

The next meeting will be in Sydney on 24 May and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries is scheduled to attend. Current agenda items for Ministers include:

- Nominations for the new FSANZ Board,
- Country of origin labelling,
- Approval of process for primary production standards,
- Health and nutrient claims policy,
- ANZFA Standards for:
 - Hemp as a novel food,
 - Pasteurisation of orange juice,
 - Use of antibiotic resistance marker genes,
 - MRLS for cephalosporins,
 - Glyphosphate tolerant corn.

ANZ Food Regulation Standing Committee (ANZFRSC)

Key items of interest resulting from the meeting on 19 March are that industry and other stakeholders will be consulted soon on:

- a national health and nutrient claims policy,
- the results of consultancy reports;
 - *Food Safety Management Systems, Costs, Benefits and Alternatives,*
 - *National Food Safety Risk Validation Study,* and,
- possible consultative mechanisms for industry and others with the new national system.

Next meeting 28 August 2002 in Brisbane.

ANZFA (soon to be FSANZ)

Current documents for public comment include Processing Requirements for Uncooked Comminuted Fermented Meat Products by 24/4/02.

Documents for public comment are found at www.anzfa.gov.au/foodstandards/recentstandardsdevelopment/index.cmf

The Mar/April 2002 Food Standards News Number 35 is available.

Go to:

www.anzfa.gov.au/mediareleasespublications/

Contact us if you would like more information on an article, have feedback or a suggestion, or would like to submit a report/information for a future issue. Please call or e-mail:

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