



PIRSA Food Safety NEWS

Issue 3- May 2002

Hot on the heels of Victoria's mass food poisoning outbreak is an outbreak in South Australia. Sixty seven people have reported acute gastroenteritis after eating at a restaurant in metropolitan Adelaide. DHS investigators have identified Caesar salad dressing as the most likely source. The bug has been identified as *Salmonella* Typhimurium phage type 8 which grew after poor temperature control. The number of cases is expected to increase.

Even closer to home is the food poisoning suffered by the spouse of a high level PIRSA employee. Food containing *Campylobacter* resulted in two days in hospital on a saline drip after severe symptoms including bloody diarrhoea. Here's hoping for a speedy recovery.

So far this newsletter is reading like a horror story! The good news is that without everybody's diligence the situation could be much worse. Have a good month!

Barrie Paynter
PIRSA Food Safety Communication Officer

Latest News

Proposed Stakeholder Consultation Process

Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) have released a discussion paper titled, '**Proposed approach to stakeholder consultation on food policy guidelines and issues relevant to the Australia New Zealand food regulation ministerial council**'.

The purpose of the discussion paper is to establish consultative mechanisms that ensure the perspective of non-government stakeholders are taken into account in government food regulation and food policy making processes. The paper is available at www.foodsecretariat.health.gov.au/ under the section headed *Items for Consultation*. There is a response sheet that may be used to register comments. Comments may be register via email or post until 5 July 2002.

More info or a hard copy of the paper contact Barrie Paynter on 8226 0392 or email at: paynter.barrie2@saugov.sa.gov.au

PIRSA/DHS Memorandum of Understanding Endorsed

The Chief Executives of PIRSA and DHS recently signed off on the MoU . The MoU formally establishes a cooperative relationship between the agencies, under agreed principals, to facilitate effective implementation of the new regulatory framework and an improved food safety surveillance and incident response framework for the primary industry sector.

More info: Chris Etherton, Manager Food Safety Policy, PIRSA, on 8226 0531 or email: etherton.chris@saugov.sa.gov.au

SA Update

Dairy Industry update



The Dairy Authority of SA (DASA) currently licenses 33 **dairy processors**. All SA dairy processors have a HACCP based food safety program approved, or for new premises, are in the process of approval. DASA audits HACCP programs for domestic factories and jointly with AQIS for export factories.

In SA 420 **dairy farms**, of the 548 that supply to commercial processors, have an audited quality program that complies with the minimum HACCP guidelines set by the Aust dairy industry. A further 100 are actively pursuing accreditation including 14 independent farms. DASA is carrying out the audits or authorising the audit process.

More info: Steve Rice, CEO Dairy Authority of SA on 8223 2277 or email stever@chariot.net.au

SARDI Prawn Project



The SARDI Food Safety Research Program is currently undertaking a survey of the microbiological food safety status of prawns caught by the Spencer Gulf and West Coast Prawn Fishermen's Association (SGWCPFA). This survey was initiated following an approach from the SGWCPFA in light of the Food Act 2001, where the on-board processing of the prawns may be deemed 'substantial transformation'. The boats would then be considered 'food businesses'.

The fleet consists of 42 vessels that trawl Spencer Gulf and areas of the West Coast. SGWCPFA intend to confirm their status as producers of safe high quality seafood.

The enthusiastic nature in which the industry has approached this issue and cooperated with SARDI shows a great willingness on their part to protect both the consumer and

their reputation and thus ensure the survival of this valuable income earner for the state.

More info: Geoff Holds, SARDI Food Safety Research Program on 8207 7936 or e-mail: Holds.Geoffrey@saugov.sa.gov.au

Campylobacter infection remains the most common potentially foodborne disease in SA. There were 2618 and 1882 reported cases in 2001 and 2000 respectively. In comparison 613 and 452 cases of salmonella infection were reported during 2001 and 2000. So far during 2002, 783 campylobacter and 215 salmonella infections have been recorded. Source: DHS web site at <http://www.dhs.sa.gov.au/pehs/disease-control-stats.htm>

Seafood Industry update



The first of a series of SAFIC FarmBis HACCP food safety workshops was conducted at Kingscote during April. The workshops aim to provide participants with an understanding of the concepts of food safety and demonstrate how they can be implemented. Workshops are planned for Yorketown and another for Kingscote in the coming weeks.

Rudderfish continues to be a problem with over 100 health complaints being reported to DHS in SA. The national Technical Advisory Group working party are focusing on improving communication and information. Two information papers have been drafted. The first is targeting consumers at point of sale and the second targeting fisherman, processors and retailers.

More info on the above seafood issues contact Paul Dowsett, PIRSA Food Safety Program on 8207 7934.

Food Safety Implementation Working Group (FSIWG)

The first meeting of FSWIG was held on 16 April. The Food Safety Reform Business Plan was presented by Viv Greaves and accepted by the group. Viv reported

progress with the four strategies that make up the business plan. Next meeting is scheduled for 14 May.

More info: [Barrie Paynter on 82260392](mailto:Barrie.Paynter@saugov.sa.gov.au)

Blueberries linked to Hepatitis A.

New Zealand health authorities issued a recall of blueberries purchased in Dec 01 and Jan 02 after 17 cases of hepatitis A were linked to the fruit. It is now known that a person with the highly contagious virus was at a farm during part of the harvesting period. NZ Authorities are working with the blueberry industry to provide more specific information on what products might be affected, how they could be identified and where they were sold. Source: Search for 'blueberries' at www.nzherald.co.nz/

National Update

ANZ Food Regulation Ministerial Council (ANZFRMC)

The next meeting will be in Sydney on 24 May. Relevant agenda items were listed in the April edition of PSF NEWS.

More Info:

www.foodsecretariat.health.gov.au/

ANZFA (soon to be FSANZ)

ANZFA has released 3 new documents during April;

- Publications -Temperature control of potentially hazardous foods,
- Fact Sheet - Limiting chemical residues in food -the role of Maximum Residue Limits,
- Fact Sheet - the change to FSANZ: what will happen to existing applications?

All are available in What's New at www.anzfa.gov.au/

New Zealand

The stated intention of the NZ Govt is to establish the NZ Food Safety Authority in

July 2002. Legislation is still to be passed but planning for the amalgamation of key areas in the Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry and the Ministry of Health is well advanced.

More info at:

<http://www.maf.govt.nz/food/issues/food-agency/>

NSW - SafeFood and Health

Full implementation of the Seafood Safety Scheme is underway requiring the registration and licensing of seafood businesses. More info at:

www.safefood.nsw.gov.au/pages/3.6.update.htm

ACT - Health

The ACT Food Act 2001 replaced the previous act during March 2002. The commencement of the new act means that the ACT moves from a food business licensing system to a dual registration/notification system.

Food Safety Victoria

A working party including industry bodies has been established to develop a model for food safety regulation of the seafood industry.

The Victorian DHS has let contracts for 3 projects aimed at establishing benchmarks for measurement of community perception of food safety, skills and knowledge in business and food safety practices in food businesses. Good news! -Doggy bags are still legal in Victoria.

For more info on these issues see the April 2002 Food Safety Victoria Bulletin at www.foodsafety.vic.gov.au/issues.htm

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:

- Barrie Paynter Ph. 8226 0392
paynter.barrie2@saugov.sa.gov.au

- Chris Etherton Ph. 8226 0531
etherton.chris@saugov.sa.gov.au

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