



PIRSA Food Safety NEWS

Issue 8 - November 2002

Irradiated food – coming soon? The recent outbreaks of E-coli and Listeria in the US, coupled with huge recalls, have prompted many US retailers to begin trials of irradiated meat products to test consumer sentiment. Irradiation is a relatively new process that kills potentially harmful organisms by exposing foods to very high-energy electrons. There is overwhelming scientific evidence demonstrating that irradiation does not harm the nutritional value of food and has no harmful side effects. But will consumers accept the method and the higher costs? Only time will tell.

Read on for the latest news. Have a good month.

Barrie Paynter
PIRSA Food Safety Communication Officer

Latest News

Discussion Paper Generates Plenty of Discussion

The discussion paper titled, ***Legislation for implementing food safety systems in the primary industry sector to support trade, industry development and public health outcomes*** was released for public consultation during October 2002 and has prompted wide spread industry discussion.

The PIRSA Food Safety Policy team (Chris and Barrie) have met with interested parties from a variety of industries including apiary, dried tree fruits, dairy and wine, as well as meetings with

- SA Farmers Federation,
- SA Fishing Industry Council,
- Meat Hygiene Advisory Council, and
- Primary Industry Food Safety Steering Committee.

The PIRSA Food Policy staff are available to discuss the paper and are available to present to any stakeholder group by appointment.

Copies of the discussion paper can be obtained by contacting Barrie Paynter on 08 8226 0392 or email paynter.barrie2@saugov.sa.gov.au.

The document is also available online at www.foodsafetysa.com.au

Government is very keen to hear your views and encourages you to write with your comments so that effective legislation for South Australia can be developed.

Written responses until 6 December 2002 to:

Mr Chris Etherton
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or etherton.chris@saugov.sa.gov.au

SA Update



Dairy Update

SA Dairy Authority seeks comment on Victorian Code of Practice

The SA Dairy Authority is considering replacing existing standards with the *Victorian Code of Practice for Dairy Food Safety (Aug 2002)*. The current SA dairy industry standards require updating to better align with the national Food Safety Standards. The national standards will be implemented when the new SA Food Act becomes operational in December 2002.

The *Victorian Code of Practice for Dairy Food Safety* was developed using a risk based approach and with consideration of the Food Safety Standards. It sets the minimum mandatory standards for the production, manufacture, storage and transport of milk and dairy foods.

Steve Rice, CEO, SA Dairy Authority emphasizes, "this is for preliminary consideration only. A change from the current SA dairy industry standards, operational under the Dairy Industry Act, to the Victorian Code would need to be fully investigated and require thorough consultation with the SA Dairy industry. It is likely to be some way into the future."

The Dairy Authority is seeking comment from industry on this preliminary concept.

For more information contact Steve Rice, SA Dairy Authority on (08) 8223 2277.



nvttech.com

Meat Industry Update

The Meat Hygiene Unit has released a brochure outlining the results of the independent review conducted to assess and validate the outcomes and effectiveness of SA Meat Hygiene Program. The results show significant improvements in the hygienic status of SA meat and favourable comparison with national and international standards.

The brochure is available from Bob Thomas on (08) 8207 7964 or at www.foodsafetysa.com.au

DHS Update

The DHS road show is in full swing, with the Food Safety Reform Section visiting regional areas during the next 4 weeks. The team will be travelling to the

- West Coast (11-13 Nov),
- South East (18-20 Nov),
- Riverland & Barossa (25-27 Nov)
- Kangaroo Island (28 Nov)
- Mid North & Yorke Peninsular (2-4 Dec)

For session details or to obtain an information kit contact your local council or call Mandy MacGillivray on 08 8226 7133 or email amanda.macgillivray@dhs.gov.au

Food Regulations 2002

The Food Regulations are progressing through the lines of authority. The changes to the sale of unpasteurised cow's milk drew significant public comment. At this stage the Regulations are on track for introduction during December 2002.

Info is also available on the DHS - Food Section website at www.dhs.sa.gov.au/pehs

When 4 minus 1 = Salmonella free

Maths is not the strongest point of the FDA inspector who visited a restaurant in Salt Lake City, Utah, recently.

According to this story, the menu at the restaurant includes a "scrumptious" selection of quiches, prepared with a recipe that calls for 4 fresh eggs for each quiche. The inspector told the owners that FDA research indicates that 1 in 4 eggs carries the salmonella bacterium - so restaurants should never use more than 3 eggs when preparing quiche. The manager asked if simply throwing out 1 in 4 eggs from each packet purchased and using the remainder in 4-egg quiches would serve the same purpose.

Apparently, the inspector wasn't sure but would try and find out.

Source: New Scientist vol 176 no 2367



SASQAP – SA Shellfish Quality Assurance Program

SASQAP was established as a joint initiative between the shellfish industry in SA and PIRSA in 1994. Its aim is to provide public health protection for consumers of SA shellfish and thereby support development of a sustainable shellfish industry in SA. The shellfish industry in SA continues to grow at a rate exceeding 15% per year.

SASQAP classifies all shellfish harvesting areas in SA by surveying for pollution sources as well as performing ongoing monitoring for microbiological pathogens and toxic phytoplankton. Shellfish can only be sold for human consumption from these classified growing areas.

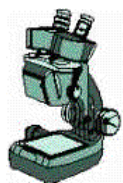
Coorong Shellfish Growing Areas

Coorong areas have been extensively tested and monitored during the last year. This has now resulted in the Coorong Shellfish Growing Area being classified as an 'approved shellfish harvesting area' under the guidelines of the Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program.

AQIS has successfully audited the SASQAP report on the Coorong and now pipis (cockles) originating from the Coorong may be sold anywhere in the world that Australia has seafood export arrangements.

For more info contact Ken Lee, Project Manager, SASQAP on (08) 8683 2533 or email lee.ken@saugov.sa.gov.au

SARDI Update



SARDI Presents to Safe Food QLD

In an effort to better understand the application of risk assessment to food safety, Safe Food Qld invited Andrew Pointon and David Hamilton from SARDI to an industry regulator forum in Brisbane.

The presentations focussed on how risk assessment can be used to map pathways of contamination by food borne hazards from farm/boat to consumption. This approach

provides information that is critical for the development, and later, the validation of food safety quality systems. A range of current studies conducted by the SA group on eggs (*Salmonella*), prawns (microbial and chemical) pork (*Salmonella*) and grains (microbial) were used to demonstrate the risk assessment approach. An overview of a risk profile project on beef, sheep and goats for the MLA was provided as an example of how risk managers may prioritise food safety issues.

The September workshop was attended by Primary Industry representatives from most commodity areas, staff of Safe Food Qld and the Qld Health Dept.

For more info contact David on 8207 7939 or email padula.david@saugov.sa.gov.au.

Detecting E-coli on fruit and produce.

The chance of faecal bacteria contaminating fresh produce or juice could become nil if produce packing plants install an automated food safety inspection system. Yud-Ren Chen, an agricultural engineer with the USDA is developing "machine-vision" systems to detect E-coli contamination the human eye can't see. Chen started with chickens and is trialling apples, but he expects the system to work with all produce. His system would direct a camera to take 3 spectral images of each apple through different colour filters. A computer would then analyse the spectral images to detect the signs of faecal contamination or fly specks, as well as of fungi, rot or other diseases. More info: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/aug02/food0802.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:

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