



PIRSA Food Safety NEWS

Issue 5- July 2002

I'm still in shock after studies revealed that my staple diet of hot chips has not only been making me fatter (I knew that!) but may also cause cancer. Hopefully all those fresh fruits and veges I eat will counter the potential effects of the high levels of acrylamide.

Read on for the latest news and keep up those balanced diets. Have a good month.

Barrie Paynter
PIRSA Food Safety Communication Officer

Latest News

ANZFA Changes to FSANZ

ANZFA has officially changed to Food Standards Australia and New Zealand from 1 July 2002.

The Hon. Trish Worth MP said, 'A new feature of the system is that FSANZ will also develop standards relating to primary production and processing under its normal standards setting process (for Australia only). This means that for the first time we have an organisation setting standards for the whole food chain. Therefore the FSANZ Board includes members with expertise in agriculture and primary food production.' The new board was announced on 20 June 2002.

More info: www.foodstandards.gov.au

Primary Product Standards

Further to the agreement on the model detailing the system and the protocol outlining the process, Ministers recently agreed to an overarching policy guideline on primary production and processing standards. It prescribes that the new

standards maintain Australia's safe food supply through a consistent approach across the entire food chain without being trade restrictive or by placing an excessive regulatory burden on industry. This ensures that for the first time a single national framework exists for the development of all domestic food standards covering the entire food supply chain.

More info: www.foodstandards.gov.au

New Zealand Establishes Food Safety Authority

The New Zealand Food Safety Authority has been set up to :

- Protect and promote public health and safety
- Facilitate access to markets for New Zealand food and food related products

NZFSA brings together the food related functions from both the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of Health into a single integrated agency.

More Info: www.nzfsa.govt.nz/

SA Update

Seafood Industry update



Oyster Industry - the government supported, voluntary, 3rd party audited food safety certification system has progressed with a tender specification and draft contract being finalised by Crown Law. A tender process will be used to select a contractor to perform the auditing of food safety programs.



The Post Harvest Food Safety initiative is focusing on specialist seafood retailers and domestic processors has continued to gather momentum.

Identification and classification of the businesses continues and a draft plan for communication with these sectors developed.

A Seafood Industry Reference Group meeting was held on 9/07/02. The members agreed to participate in a workshop that will:

- explain the current food safety regulatory environment relative to the seafood industry,
- explain proposed regulations and identify gaps from an industry perspective, and,
- determine the way forward for SIRG

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



Horticulture Industry Update

A Horticulture Australia funded project has produced guidelines for the safe food handling of vegetables and is available free to SA vegetable growers by contacting Craig Fuetrill on 08 8568 1824.

The next Horticulture Industry Reference Group meeting is scheduled for Thursday 19 July 2002.

For more info contact Barrie Paynter, PIRSA Food Safety Program on 8226 0392.



Meat Industry Update

PIRSA and DHS have recently verified with over 20 businesses that their process to manufacture fermented meat products complies with the specific requirements of the Food Standards Code.

For more info contact Geoff Raven, PIRSA Food Safety Program on 8207 7871

Fruit and vegetables could be stored in freezers for up to a year before appearing fresh on supermarket shelves. A new process called Tendafrost, takes vegetables hours after harvesting and simply washes them, freezes them and stores them for up to 12 months. When they are needed they are slowly thawed in containers, that are flushed with nitrogen to remove oxygen and delay decay. The food is then delivered unfrozen to the supermarket. Source: New Scientist #2347 15/6/02

DHS Update

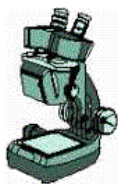
DHS have release a Food Safety Bulletin that provides an update on the food safety reform program for SA food businesses. The bulletin answers common questions and provides details of upcoming action that will assist food businesses to understand and implement the new Food Act and food safety standards successfully. The bulletin will be distributed through councils and industry associations.

Mandy MacGillivray has recently joined DHS in the role of Communication Officer. Mandy has an extensive communication background having worked for Dept of Premier and Cabinet, State Opera Co and Santos. Mandy can be contacted on 8226 7133.

The draft Food Regulations 2002 under the Food Act are still out for public consultation until 31st July, 2002. To arrange for a consultation pack phone (08) 8226 7100 or go to (www.dhs.sa.gov.au/pehs) and click on "Food & Nutrition".

More DHS info phone 8226 7100.

SA Update (cont)



SARDI Update

The SARDI Food Safety Program recently won a RIRDC grant to develop a quantitative microbiological risk assessment for *Salmonella* in the Australian

Egg Industry.

The model will cover the egg production process from the point of lay, through transportation, processing and packaging and finally to consumption. It is anticipated that the model will assist the industry in defining R & D priorities, devising alternative control measures, evaluating alternative production and processing systems and relating public health outbreaks to industry performance and practices. The project will be completed in July 2003 and will be facilitated by Ben Daughtry.

Ben Daughtry is the Senior Research Scientist Risk Modelling. His primary role is the development of through-chain risk assessment models of food processing operations, from primary production through to the consumer, to estimate the importance of hazards to consumers and identify optimal points for control.

For more information contact Ben on 8207 7938 or email:
daughtry.ben@saugov.sa.gov.au

Japan - Tracking systems try to tackle food safety

In an experimental system available in selected supermarkets Japanese consumers can punch in a 10-digit identification number on the price tags of domestic beef, and a computer screen will show a scanned copy of a certificate showing the animal's breeding history and that the cow from which the beef came is free of BSE. Yet, those involved in creating the traceability system question its feasibility, citing hefty costs and the difficulty of providing strict and thorough records.

Source: The Japan Times 1/5/02

National Update

FSANZ

FSANZ has initiated a project aimed at the development of a Risk Assessment and Risk Management Strategy for *Listeria monocytogenes* in the food supply. This project (Proposal P239) is being undertaken collaboratively with the New Zealand Ministry of Health, Food Science Australia, and the New Zealand Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR).

The first component of the strategy is focussing on seafood, and in particular, cooked crustacea and cold-smoked salmon. The overall aim is to provide regulators, industry and consumers with a consistent evidence and risk-based approach to managing *L.monocytogenes* in foods.

The paper can be found in What's New / Documents for Public comment at
www.foodstandards.gov.au

FoodSafe NSW

Have recently released an issues paper inviting comment on the future of food safety regulation in NSW. The Issues Paper has been prepared as part of a review of the State's primary industry food safety authority, SafeFood Production NSW and will consider whether State Government food safety operations in NSW - from production to retail - should be integrated into one single agency. More Info:

<http://www.safefood.nsw.gov.au/pages/0.6.w hats-new.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

Next issue 14 August 2002.

London - Mercury

Pregnant women, women who intend to become pregnant, infants and children under 16 years of age should avoid eating shark, swordfish and marlin.

The Food Standards Agency issued this precautionary advice after carrying out a survey that found relatively high levels of mercury in these fish. Mercury, found in fish in the form of methylmercury, can harm the nervous system of an unborn child. Infants and children may also be at greater risk of mercury poisoning.

However, Occasionally eating shark, swordfish and marlin as part of a balanced diet is unlikely to cause harm to other adults. However, as a precaution, the Agency is advising that people don't eat more than one portion of these fish a week.

Source: Food Standards UK

www.foodstandards.gov.uk