



PIRSA Food Safety NEWS

Issue 17 – October 2003

Bottled natural mineral water and salad vegetables have been highlighted as emerging risk factors in a recent UK study on Campylobacter infection. The study, conducted by the Uni of Wales and partners, confirms that eating chicken still plays an important role in the cause of campylobacter infection. But it also identifies these two potentially important new risk factors that merit further investigation. Details of the study can be found at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol9no10/02-0823.htm
Read on for the latest news.

Barrie Paynter
PIRSA Food Safety Communication Officer

Latest News

Consultative Draft Bill

The draft *Primary Produce (Food Safety Schemes) Bill 2003* is currently before Cabinet for their approval to be released for stakeholder comment.

The draft Bill creates a legislative framework for the application of Food Safety Schemes to specific primary production and processing sectors with significant food safety risks. Each Scheme will specify the food safety standard(s) to be applied to the businesses under the Scheme.

The draft Bill will not apply requirements to businesses or sectors unless a Scheme is created by regulation. Under the proposed Bill businesses not covered by a Scheme do not require accreditation and are not required to meet a Standard, even if they are within the scope of the legislation.

The Food Safety Policy team will be available to discuss the draft Bill and can present to stakeholders by appointment.

For more info contact Chris Etherton (08) 8226 0531 or Barrie Paynter (08) 8226 0392.

Poultry Meat Standard

The FSANZ Board has formally decided that the second Primary Production and Processing Standard to be developed will be for the poultry meat industry.

Initially, FSANZ intended to produce a chicken meat standard but, on the advice of the Meat Standards Committee (MSC), the scope of the proposed standard was expanded to include other poultry.

The poultry industry in Australia is large, producing some 670,000 tonnes of chicken meat a year, with a retail turnover of \$2.7 billion. Australians consume, on average, 31 kilograms of chicken meat a year.

At present, food safety in the poultry industry is regulated by a standard developed by the MSC and issued by Standards Australia. It is not mandatory for jurisdictions to adopt this standard, however, most jurisdictions have. The Primary Production and Processing Standard for poultry will replace this standard with a mandatory, nationally consistent standard that will be enforceable across Australia.

The FSANZ Board will consider the appointment of a Poultry SDC at its

December 2003 meeting. An Issues Paper will be circulated for public comment in January/February 2004.

Individuals or organisations with an interest in the development of the poultry meat standard can register their interest with Ms Amanda Hill (02 6271 2632) or Dr Hong Jin (02 6271 2612).

Progress with the standard will be posted on the FSANZ website at www.foodstandards.gov.au, follow the Primary Production prompt.



Seafood Standard Update

At the September meeting of the Seafood Standard Development Committee (SSDC), members agreed to commence a national consultation program with the seafood industry. This process will precede a call for public comment on the Draft Assessment Report now likely in April 2004.

The Draft Assessment Report (DAR) consists of a seafood risk assessment, risk management options and the draft seafood standard.

The FSANZ Board has deferred consideration of the DAR to its March 2004 meeting (previously scheduled for the December meeting).

FSANZ and State and Territory regulators plan to host meetings with representatives of all sectors of the seafood industry to provide an update on the progress of the standard and discuss the standard in terms of the impact on their businesses.

Deon Mahoney from FSANZ is scheduled to meet with the Seafood Industry Reference Group (SIRG) on 18 Nov 2003 to discuss the development of the National Seafood Standard.

Consideration of appropriate times and venues for the above-mentioned public meetings with the wider SA seafood industry is on the SIRG agenda.

For more information contact Paul Dowsett 8207 7934.

SA Update

DHS/PIRSA Food Safety Incident Response Agreement

During October DHS and PIRSA Chief Executives endorsed the DHS/PIRSA Food Safety Incident Response Agreement.

The Agreement supports the Memorandum of Understanding between the agencies. It formally outlines the responsibility of each agency in a food safety incident or potential incident involving the primary industry sector.

The agreement will be supported by operational procedures in each agency.

For more info Barrie Paynter 8226 0392

DHS Update

Food Business Inspections - During 2002/03 there were 12,279 inspections carried out by Councils at 8,664 different food businesses (3,615 of the inspections were repeats). Councils estimated they had 11,464 food businesses listed meaning that 75.6% of known businesses were inspected at least once during 2002/03.

MOU between DHS, PIRSA and LGA - The MOU for regulatory management of food safety in the meat industry is progressing. The Crown Solicitor has provided an opinion regarding the liability situation for local government. In effect their opinion confirms that PIRSA will be the responsible party for food safety in retail premises that process meat once the Meat Hygiene legislation has been amended.

For more info contact Mandy MacGillivray on 8226 7133 or visit the DHS food safety web site at <http://www.dhs.sa.gov.au/pehs/food-index.htm>.

National Update

SafeFood NSW

Plant Products – SafeFood NSW is encouraging members of the plant products industry to join a new group advising on the food safety of plant products. The new group will provide advice on how industry operates and how a plant products food safety scheme will operate.

Goat milk producers – SafeFood NSW has certified one goat milk producer under the voluntary food safety certification. SafeFood NSW is conducting a baseline study to identify and understand the food safety issues in the goat dairy industry. Micro testing of goat milk will be conducted over 2 years to obtain a scientific profile of the product. (In SA all goats milk producers are licensed by the Dairy Authority and have audited HACCP based food safety programs.)

Development and Review of Codes of Practice (COP) – SafeFood NSW is at various stages with the development and review of a number of codes of practice for the following areas

- food transport vehicles,
- seafood handling premises,
- seafood vessels,
- depuration,
- bottling unpasteurised goat's milk.

They are also providing input into food safety aspects of an industry COP on abalone diving.

The NSW Food Bill passed the Legislative Council on 3 September and received assent on 8 September.

The formal establishment of the **new NSW food agency** may be delayed until March 2004. It appears unlikely that legislation to establish the new agency will pass through the NSW Parliament before the end of the spring session.

SafeFood NSW and NSW Health Food Branch have relocated to their new purpose built offices. They can now be found at:

3/13 Avenue of Americas
Newington
or
PO Box 6685
Silverwater NSW 2128

The new phone no is 08 9741 4777

More info Joanne Keune at above number

National Food Safety Week

The theme for this year's Food Safety Week, to be held from 10 – 16 November 2003, will be 'Cooking for Family and Friends'. It aims to highlight the additional food safety risks when catering at home for a larger number of people than usual.

Research following food safety week last year identified a lack of knowledge in this area.

The Food Safety Information Council (FSIC) will use a video news release for TV and pre-packaged radio segments and Community Service announcements to broadcast their message.

The Food Safety Information Council is a group of organisations with a mission to stop Australians getting sick from food poisoning. Its members include representatives of government, the food industry and professional associations.

Further research will be conducted before and after the campaign to assess its effectiveness. For more info go to www.foodsafety.asn.au

SafeFood QLD

Approved Auditing Initiative - Safe Food Queensland recently launched its approved auditing initiative. Approved auditing is where holders of accreditation can engage food safety auditors approved by SafeFood Qld to audit their food safety programs. The scheme will be rolled out to businesses involved in low risk activities first. Once the system is working effectively other business may be included. More in www.safefood.qld.gov.au

Food Safety Legislation around the nation

The table below is a summary of the current position in relation to each State and Territory's implementation of the Food Bill, the Food Safety Standards and primary industry food safety legislation (at 28/8/03 with some updates).

Jurisdiction	Model Food Bill*	Standards 3.2.2 & 3.2.3	Core Primary Industry Food Safety Legislation **
SA	New Food Act 2001 commenced on 1/12/02	Commenced 1/12/02. Notification 1/09/03 Skills and Knowledge 1/12/03.	Meat Hygiene Act 1994 Dairy Industry Act 1992 Consultation Draft Bill, to enable the implementation of food safety systems and standards in primary industries, due for release Nov 2003.
Vic	An amended Food Act took effect on 2/1/02	Commenced 2/01/02.	Meat Industry Act 1993 Dairy Act 2000
NSW	The NSW Food Bill 2003 is currently in Parliament	Commenced on 16/05/01	Food Production (Safety) Act 1998 (includes seafood)
Qld	Annex 1 amendments to the Qld Food Act took effect on 1/1/02. Annex 2 being drafted.	Commenced 1/07/01 Skills and knowledge 01/07/02 Notification dependant on review	Food Production (Safety) Act 2000 (includes seafood)
WA	The new Bill to be considered by Parliament possibly late 2003.	Enforceable following the passing of the new Public Health (Food and Related Matters) Act.	Overarching powers for food safety risks in the meat and dairy industries are regulated under Health legislation.
NT	Food Bill being drafted for submission to Parliament late 2003 or early 2004.	Not enforceable until passing of new Food Act.	Meat Industry Act 1996
Tas	The Food Act 2003 effective 15/10/03	Commenced 24/09/01	Meat Hygiene Act 1985 Dairy Industry Act 1994 Egg Production Act proposed
ACT	The new Food Act took effect on 11/03/02	Commenced 11/03/02	n/a

* Note: jurisdictions may have minor variations to Model Food Bill

** Note: the Food Act, to varying degrees, in respective jurisdictions has overarching powers

** Note: Fisheries Acts or similar in respective jurisdictions may contain food safety powers including shellfish controls

Note: Australian Govt legislation also applies (AQIS)

Source: Food Bill and Standards from FSANZ (and updated)

Contact us for more information

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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