

RETAIL MEAT FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM & RETAIL DAIRY INSPECTION PROJECT

The issue

Ongoing trend analysis of audit and compliance data across all sectors highlights a varying degree of awareness and understanding of regulatory requirements.

For over 10 years, generic Food Safety Programs and Retail Diaries to record daily monitoring information have been made available to over 1700 licensed butcher shops in NSW. These documents are available to licensees enabling them to record the processes they use to produce safe food for consumers and monitor the food safety controls they use on a daily basis.

What we did

In early 2016, the meat industry was advised that an audit improvement training and education program focussing on the retail meat sector was being conducted. The program included a number of on-site sessions at retail meat premises to guide businesses through the food safety and regulatory requirements specific to their operations. In addition to this, a comprehensive review of the existing Retail Meat Food Safety Program and the Retail Diary was also undertaken to determine where improvements

could be made. The review included interviews with licensees who had found the old systems difficult to understand, and also included consultation with meat sector representatives on the Meat Industry Consultative Committee. In addition, Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance Officers provided information of issues that were regularly being identified at audits.

What we found

The project findings clearly identified the following improvements needed to be made:

- Remove complex hazard analysis information and focus on 'outcomes based' compliance
- Provide clear examples on how to achieve the required outcomes so licensees could take ownership of their food safety systems
- Provide technical information, explanation and guidance on how to implement food safety controls within their business to ensure they can demonstrate understanding of their requirements
- Combine the Retail Dairy with the Food Safety Program so

licensees have all of their required documents in the one, easy to audit package

- Highlight the important food safety monitoring records by using a colour coding system

Licensees requested an easy to use system that could provide them with all of the information they needed while also providing them with the opportunity to demonstrate that they are willing to do everything needed to produce safe food for their customers.



The outcome

Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance Officers conducted free implementation sessions with dozens of licensees to determine if the updated document was easy to use, fit for purpose and improved compliance outcomes.



The final combined document was well received by licensees and industry stakeholders. It provides retail meat operators with one easy to use document that contains all of the information they need and also provides them with the required information if they are considering expanding the range of products they produce, such as commencing the sale of ready-to-eat meat products.

Licensees were confident that they can improve their compliance during audits as this document clearly explains the expectations of the Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance Officers that will audit their business.

The Retail Meat Food Safety Program and Retail Diary is available for download free on the website, but licensees commented that they would likely purchase the new document, as they previously did with the existing documents.

The reduced cost of the Retail Meat Food Safety Program and Retail Diary was also welcomed as any reduction in compliance costs is a positive improvement in the

relationship between the regulator and licensees and contributes to the red tape reduction goal as outlined in the NSW Government Food Safety Strategy.

Next steps

The Retail Meat Food Safety Program and Retail Diary is being translated into six additional languages which will be available, at no cost from the website.



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