

FOODWISE

NSW Food Authority – partnering with the NSW food industry to ensure food is safe in NSW – from paddock to plate



Foodwise going digital

We are committed to providing our food industry partners with timely, relevant updates. We are also keen to find cost effective solutions that allow for better engagement.

That's why we are moving to a digital version of Foodwise in November. Content will remain the same, but we will be able to incorporate videos, surveys, online feedback mechanisms and that's just for starters. The Food Authority will be able to see what's popular and what doesn't interest readers so much - helping us shape future editions.

Don't worry, you'll still be able to print articles of interest to you!

Enjoy this edition of Foodwise and keep an eye out for the new and improved digital version at the end of November.

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Food
Authority



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Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Programs Biennial Science Conference

18

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee

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2018 Taste of Excellence Awards Night (Sydney Royal Fine Food Show)

OCTOBER 2018

16

NSW Seafood Industry Forum

NOVEMBER 2018

8

FRP Retail & Food Service Information Session, Camden

11-13

Australian Veterinary Antimicrobial Stewardship Conference 2018, QLD

28

RTO Forum, Sydney

Ballina serves up food safety tips



Ballina Shire Council recently hosted a Retail and Food Service Information Session where local food business operators took the opportunity to learn about food safety regulations, ask questions and discuss food safety matters.

NSW Food Authority CEO Dr Lisa Szabo said the session was one of a series of regular consultation events delivered by the Food Authority across the state, in partnership with local councils.

“Food safety is the top priority of the NSW Food Authority and having direct contact like this is an effective way of providing information, education and dialogue between retail food businesses, council Environmental Health Officers, who are responsible for the inspections of food retail premises, and the Food Authority,” Dr Szabo said.

Presentations on subjects relevant to the local area were given and included common food safety issues in a retail food service setting, and how to reduce the risk of foodborne illness in their business. Attendees then participated in an open discussion which included the Scores on Doors food hygiene rating program as well as allergen management, and were also invited to ask questions about specific food safety issues relevant to them.

“Improving food safety standards, reducing foodborne illness and driving consumer confidence in the sector is a two-way street” Dr Szabo said.

The next Retail and Food Service Information Session will take place on 8 November in Camden. Further details will be provided closer to this date.

Name and Shame turns 10

The NSW Food Authority's Name and Shame register, a register which names businesses that fail to meet food safety standards, reached a milestone of 10 years of operation last month with more than 14 million hits on the site since it launched on the Food Authority website in July 2008.

With the vast majority of food businesses in NSW doing the right thing, the Name and Shame register has proven to be an effective compliance tool, with very few repeat offenders appearing on the list. It has the added benefit of providing consumers and customers with transparent information to make choices about the retail food outlets they purchase from.

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Scores on Doors celebrating 8 years

While they may share a birthday month, Scores on Doors has a very different tale to tell than the Name and Shame register.



The higher the rating means repeat business and more customers through the door.

Just as the Name and Shame register gives consumers knowledge about those doing the wrong thing, Scores on Doors celebrates those businesses doing the right thing.

Scores on Doors was first piloted with councils in July 2010 and continues to provide transparency around council inspections, and enables consumers to make informed choices about where to eat or shop for food.

Scores on Doors celebrates businesses doing the right thing.

The food hygiene and safety program encourages businesses to display their food safety rating prominently in their premises, so they can promote their compliance to consumers.

Australia's Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy is launched

In April 2017, the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation (the Ministerial Forum) identified three priority areas for 2018 to 2021 and beyond to further strengthen the Food Regulation System.



Ministers requested the development of an Australian strategy to reduce foodborne illness, noting New Zealand has an existing strategy, and recognised success requires concerted national effort, collaboration and partnerships across the food supply chain.

Following an extensive consultation process, the **Australian Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021+** (the Strategy) was endorsed by Forum Ministers on 29 June 2018.

The aim of the Strategy is to reduce the number of food-related human cases of campylobacteriosis and salmonellosis in Australia by 2021.

In 2010, Australia experienced:

- 234,000 cases of campylobacteriosis, with 3,200 hospitalisations and 3 deaths
- 56,200 cases of salmonellosis, with 2,100 hospitalisations and 15 deaths.

To successfully reduce these numbers, we will:

- take action at all points along the food supply chain from the farm to the consumer
- work closely with industry to develop interventions and drive reform
- use research and evidence to drive innovation
- build a regulatory system that focuses effort on critical outcomes and food safety culture.

The Strategy focuses on food safety culture, sector based initiatives (horticulture, poultry, eggs and food service), consumer and industry information, research, monitoring and surveillance, and national engagement.

One of the goals stated in the *NSW Food Safety Strategy 2015–2021* was to ensure that 'food-safe businesses contribute to NSW's economic growth

and prosperity by reducing the incidence of foodborne illnesses', a commitment which would be delivered by 'reducing food poisoning incidents in NSW by 30 per cent by 2021'.

The *Australian Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021+* aligns with the *NSW Food Safety Strategy 2015–2021* and the work we undertake at the Food Authority.

You can access the *Australian Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021+* on the Food Regulation website at foodregulation.gov.au/internet/fr/publishing.nsf/Content/Home and the *NSW Food Safety Strategy 2015-2021* can be found on the Food Authority website at foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/corporate/Food_Safety_Strategy.pdf

Following an extensive consultation process, the **Australian Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021+** (the Strategy) was endorsed by Forum Ministers on 29 June 2018.

Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation

The Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation, chaired by the Australian Government Minister for Rural Health, Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie, met on 29 June 2018.

The Forum comprises all Australian and New Zealand Ministers responsible for food regulation, and the Australian Local Government Associations.

During the meeting, progress was made on a number of activities that shape the implementation of the three Food Regulation System priorities for 2017-2021 which are:

Priority 1 - reduce foodborne illness, particularly related to *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*

A key activity to support Priority 1 was endorsed at the meeting and Forum Ministers were pleased to launch the *Australian Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021+*. See page 4 for more information about this Strategy.

Priority 2 - support the public health objectives to reduce chronic disease related to overweight and obesity

Priority 3 - maintain a strong, robust and agile food regulation system.

Other items discussed which contribute to activities to support Priority 1 included:

- Food Safety Management for General Food Service and Closely Related Retail Sectors (Policy Guideline), and
- Food Safety risk associated with high risk horticulture products in Australia.

Items discussed that will contribute to the delivery of Priority 2 included:

- Sugar labelling
- Fats and oils labelling

To support Priority 3, Forum Ministers agreed that the central focus of work will be to 'apply best practice regulatory approaches' to ensure the Food Regulation System is agile, responsible and robust.

Further and more detailed information from the Forum can be found in the Communique on the Food Regulation website at foodregulation.gov.au/internet/fr/publishing.nsf/Content/forum-communique-2018-June

During the meeting, progress was made on a number of activities that shape the implementation of the three Food Regulation System priorities for 2017-2021 which are:

Priority 1 - reduce foodborne illness, particularly related to *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*

Priority 2 - support the public health objectives to reduce chronic disease related to overweight and obesity

Priority 3 - maintain a strong, robust and agile food regulation system.

NSW Food Authority Priorities for 2018-19

The NSW Food Authority is a statutory authority within the Department of Industry. It contributes to the department's strategic goal of *Risks managed for natural resources, farming and food* by regulating and monitoring food safety across the entire food industry supply chain in NSW - from paddock to plate.

The Food Authority reviews its priorities annually to ensure it adopts an evidence and risk-based approach to its critical core functions, as well as focusing on new and emerging threats and risks. Priorities are determined in consultation with key government, industry and community stakeholders.

Priorities identified for the Food Authority for 2018-19 include:

Reducing foodborne illness:

- Partner with local government
 - » roll out a targeted *Campylobacter* reduction program and maintain our *Salmonella* reduction program in food service
- Grow the evidence base
 - » develop evidence informing decisions about risk management of horticulture products
- Engage with educators
 - » develop food safety education resources and provide training for teachers who will deliver the food technology school curriculum to be introduced in 2019 for year 8 and 9 NSW students
 - » focus audits of registered training organisations on allergen training materials
- Enhance incident response capability

- » review current food incident response protocols to ensure ongoing effectiveness, including building staff capacity and capability

Enhance technology systems:

- Improve the use of digital technology
 - » develop a business case for real-time monitoring and surveillance in food service
 - » collaborate with the Food Agility CRC on real-time monitoring of environmental conditions in shellfish harvest areas
 - » new digital forms developed for engaging with stakeholders
- Towards one health:
 - » work nationally to integrate data collected on humans, food and animals relating to the causes of foodborne illness
- Develop online training tools
 - » rollout online food safety training modules for authorised officers

Maintain an agile food regulatory system

- Assist industries:
 - » guidelines for small businesses to better understand their food safety obligation
 - » assess compliance with the new hemp food standard and raw milk regulation
 - » enhance the food labelling portal to assist with correct labelling
 - » develop and implement key food safety indicators for improved food safety management systems in the egg industry

- Food Fraud: Intelligence profile and targeted monitoring:
 - » investigate, understand and verify food composition and food safety practices in targeted industry sectors to detect and deter economically motivated adulteration.

Reduce chronic diet related health issues

- Review the Health Star Rating System
 - » through representation on the national Health Star Rating Advisory Committee, oversee the five-year review of the system so Ministers can make informed decisions about its future
- Evolve kJ menu labelling
 - » Co-lead national consultation on enhancing and harmonising kJ menu labelling across jurisdictions

To view the full document containing the core priorities of the Food Authority as well as the targets we aim to meet, go to foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/corporate/food_authority_priorities_2018_19.pdf

For a complete list of all priority projects that the Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance team, in conjunction with regulatory partners and industry will conduct over the next financial year, download the Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance Regulatory Priorities 2018 - 2019 document at: dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/801050/BFS_RPstatement_2018-19_v1B-FINAL.pdf

Feedback Assist - Improving Government Services

Feedback Assist is a new tool on all NSW Government websites which provides customers with another way to provide feedback about how government provides its services.

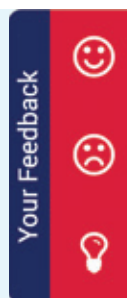
Feedback Assist makes it quick and easy for customers to provide compliments, complaints or make suggestions about how we provide our service.

Simply click on the tool and a short online form will pop up for you to complete.

If you have a complaint or question related to food safety, such as a food business, service or product that we regulate, please continue to use the online [general enquiry](#) and [complaint forms](#) on our website. Or call the Food Authority Helpline on 1300 522 406.

We welcome your feedback!

The Feedback Assist tool sits on the right hand side of the NSW Food Authority website and looks like this:



Update to Food Safety Schemes Manual

The NSW Food Authority's *NSW Food Safety Schemes Manual* (Manual) specifies certain requirements for the following Food Safety Schemes (Schemes) under the Food Regulation 2015.

- Dairy food safety scheme
- Meat food safety scheme
- Plant products food safety scheme
- Seafood food safety scheme
- Vulnerable Persons food safety scheme, and
- Egg food safety scheme

The Manual applies to all food businesses licensed under these Schemes. The requirements referred to in the Food Regulation 2015 and which are detailed within the Manual, must be complied with.

The current Manual, which has been in use since 2016, was recently updated and modernised to make it easier to read.

As a result of the review, some amendments will apply for a small number of licensees within the Dairy and Vulnerable Persons food safety schemes, and non-treated non-reticulated water will no longer be permitted to process food products. The Food Authority is currently consulting with each of these licensed businesses on an individual basis.

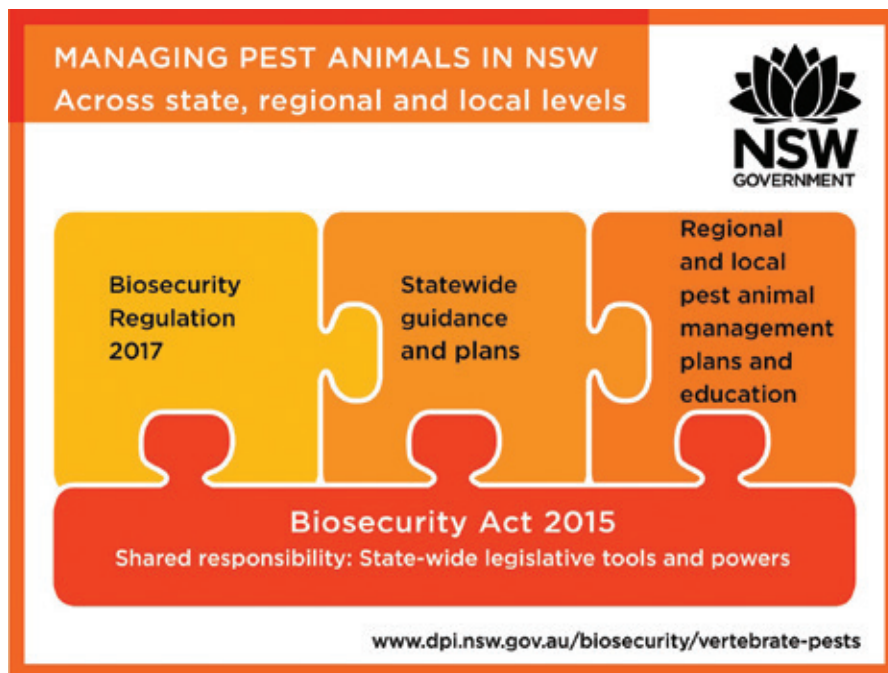
More detailed information on the proposed amendments can be found in each relevant section (page 14 for Dairy and 17 for Vulnerable Persons).

The updated Food Safety Schemes Manual is expected to be published in October 2018.

The current manual was recently updated and modernised to make it easier to read.

A collaborative approach to pest animal management in NSW

The impact of pest animals on primary production, communities and our natural environment can be devastating, particularly when compounded by seasonal conditions such as the current drought.



From 1 July 2018, the management of pest animals will be regulated under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) and a range of new, flexible regulatory tools have come into effect; replacing the more rigid, state-wide, prescriptive Pest Control Orders. Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plans developed for the 11 Local Land Services regions across NSW identify the priority pests and regionally problematic areas as well as outlining the delivery of effective pest management outcomes based on local priorities.

Developed by regional committees in consultation with local stakeholders, these plans identify key threats to agricultural production and the environment in each region, and the best strategic control plans to get on top of these problem species. Land managers are supported in managing these priority pest animals by NSW Department of Primary Industries, Local Land Services, and other public and private land managers, community members and peak industry bodies; an approach based on the principle that biosecurity is a shared responsibility between government, industries and individuals.

Key elements of the old Pest Control Orders are captured in the Biosecurity Regulation and provide a range of tools and powers that may be implemented in the process of managing pest animals.

The dry conditions currently being experienced across NSW have resulted in increased reports of pest animals such as wild dogs, as they move across the landscape in search of food and water.

In addition to the economic impacts of pest animals competing for food and water and as well as predation on livestock, pest animals create biosecurity risks by spreading weeds and disease, damaging crops and food production systems and contributing to land erosion and waterway degradation. Wild rabbits, wild dogs, foxes, feral pigs and other vertebrate

pests cost the Australian agricultural industry about \$800 million per year and this is climbing.

The Natural Resource Commission's (NRC) review of pest management in NSW identified the need for a more coordinated approach to pest animal management across the State to deliver lasting environmental, economic and social outcomes. The NSW biosecurity reforms reflect the NSW Government's commitment to pest animal management by addressing the range of stakeholder and community concerns that were identified following the review.

The NSW Government is working to educate public and private land managers about their obligations and best practice pest animal management. But a strong regulatory system is still in place, ensuring that people and organisations that do not manage pests properly, or who breach pest management regulations, may face

compliance and enforcement action if necessary.

The NSW Government will work in partnership with land managers to safeguard our primary industries and protect the environment, economy and community from the risks posed by pest animals.

The NSW Government is working to educate public and private land managers about their obligations and best practice pest animal management.

New Biosecurity Helpline now live

NSW Department of Primary Industries has launched a new helpline designed to make it easier for anyone seeking information about a biosecurity matter in NSW or wanting to report a biosecurity risk.



**NSW DPI
Biosecurity
Helpline
1800 680 244**

Operating between 9am and 5pm on NSW business days, the helpline offers five options for important information and support on:

1. Licence, permit, registration or accreditation
2. Bees, bee hives or bee products
3. Farm chemicals
4. Animals, fish and shellfish
5. Plants, weeds and fruit and vegetables

Based on the successful Food Authority helpline model, the Biosecurity helpline aims to make it easier and faster for customers to enquire about biosecurity matters and report risks.

The NSW DPI Biosecurity Helpline aims to make it easier and faster for customers to enquire about biosecurity matters and report risks.

MEAT

Increasing engagement to decrease risk

Every day thousands of animals pass through our abattoirs and knackeries. This means these facilities are vital to ensuring food safety and may be amongst the first to detect an outbreak of emergency animal disease.

That's why the NSW Department of Primary Industries joined forces with the federal government's Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, the NSW Food Authority, Local Land Services and the National Meat Industry Training Advisory Council to build the early identification and reporting capacity of abattoirs and knackeries.

The program, funded by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, has a focus on small abattoirs and knackeries, which are more likely to have contact with livestock produced by small landholders.

The program encourages abattoir and knackery workers to increase engagement with producers and provide feedback around the signs of disease, livestock health and the effects this may have on food safety.

The 2001 UK Foot and Mouth outbreak was first detected in an Essex abattoir. Abattoir and knackery workers are on the frontline of efforts to protect our livestock industry from the threat of emergency animal disease and ensure food safety.

Inspections and audits

From April 2018 to June 2018, the Food Authority conducted 223 inspections and 453 audits of licensed meat businesses. This industry sector has recorded a compliance rate of 96%.

The improvement in the compliance rate was a result of the introduction of the Audit Notification letter which was implemented in October 2017. Licensees are now being provided with audit notification letters advising that their audit has been scheduled. This is having an impact on the compliance level as licensees are reviewing their documents and ensuring they are audit ready. The improved compliance rate is also attributed to the successful implementation of the updated Retail Meat Food Safety Program & Retail Diary.

The below table shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the meat sector between reporting years 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Reporting period	2016-17	2017-18
Total audits	2,645	1,986
Total inspections	2,189	1,824
Acceptable audit rate	96%	96%

By increasing awareness and making training more accessible we're hoping that abattoir and knackery workers recognise the signs of emergency animal disease and are more likely to make a report when suspicious symptoms are detected.

NSW Department of Primary Industries is hosting a webpage with a variety of training resources developed by government and industry organisations

including NSW Department of Primary Industries, Animal Health Australia, Australian Meat Processor Corporation, Biosecurity Queensland and Meat and Livestock Australia.

To access the training resources available for abattoir and knackery workers visit: dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/training-for-abattoir-and-knackery-workers

SEAFOOD

Inspections and audits

From April 2018 to June 2018, the Food Authority conducted 145 inspections and 88 audits of licensed seafood businesses. This industry sector has recorded an improvement compliance rate of 96% over the previous financial year 2016/17.

The main areas where critical defects have been raised at audit relate to process control, analytical testing, and food safety program monitoring. There have been no consecutive audit failures and the clear majority of defects raised have been rectified immediately, demonstrating that effective corrective actions are being implemented by businesses.

The table below shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the seafood sector between reporting years 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Reporting period	2016-17	2017-18
Total audits	407	340
Total inspections	1,175	968
Acceptable audit rate	93%	96%



This industry sector has recorded an improvement compliance rate of

96%

over the previous financial year 2016/17.

Shellfish Biennial Conference

NSW DPI is joining forces with University of Technology Sydney to deliver the Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program Biennial Science Conference in September.

This free event is Australia's premier industry conference on research in seafood safety and attendees will hear from experts in microbial, viral, algal and biotoxin fields.

The Conference will take place on Tuesday 11 September and will be held at University of Technology Sydney in Ultimo.

You can register your attendance at asqap2018.com/



NSW Shellfish Committee, May 2018



Topics discussed at the latest NSW Shellfish Committee meeting - held in Sydney on 9 May - included:

Pilot - environmental sensor network

The Food Agility Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) environmental sensor network is undertaking a pilot in selected estuaries to test the efficacy of sensors in predicting oyster mortality events, condition and growth and harvest area management.

Final sensors are now in place and are now recording data. Estuaries were chosen for this pilot study

based on productivity, disease management and potential for management plan change.

To ensure local programs receive the most out of the pilot study, local program members attended a series of workshops to gain a better understanding of how the sensors can assist to solve industry problems.

New Committee member

Associate Professor Shauna Murray has been appointed to fill the position of the independent technical expert for the Committee, to assist in high level technical guidance relating to shellfish biology and shellfish production.

Shauna has an in-depth knowledge of phytoplankton and associated biotoxins as well as expert knowledge in laboratory and testing processes and is also leading the Food Agility CRC project.

Oyster stock from Tasmania

NSW Department of Primary Industries has approved an application to import 100% triploid Pacific Oysters from a Tasmanian hatchery to the Clyde and Shoalhaven/Crookhaven Rivers.

The NSW Chief Veterinary Officer approved an importation protocol with strict hatchery management and testing requirements prior to importation of stock to NSW. In addition, a Biosecurity Control Order will prevent the movement of any oysters from these estuaries for three years other than to the "like risk" estuaries of Georges River, Hawkesbury River and Brisbane Water.

During the three year period DPI will undertake disease surveillance with producers.

View the full summary of meeting outcomes at: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/industry/NSWSC_summary_meeting_outcomes_May_2018.pdf

DAIRY



Proposed amendments to the Food Safety Schemes Manual



Infant Formula Manufacturers

The NSW Food Authority recently reviewed the *NSW Food Safety Schemes Manual* (Manual) to incorporate all mandatory testing requirements for businesses included in the food safety schemes under the Food Regulation 2015.

As a result of the review, it is proposed that manufacturers of infant formula be required to test for *Cronobacter* spp and *Salmonella* in powdered infant formula other than powdered follow-on formula.

Cronobacter spp (formerly *E. sakazakii*) and *Salmonella* have been identified as microorganisms that can cause illness if consumed in powdered infant formula. In the current Manual, there is only a

Inspections and audits

From April 2018 to June 2018, the Food Authority conducted 26 inspections and 110 audits of licensed dairy businesses. This industry sector has maintained a high compliance rate, with 97% of businesses recording an acceptable audit result. There were no serious enforcement actions taken against licensed dairy business during this period.

The below table shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the dairy sector between reporting years 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Reporting period	2016-17	2017-18
Total audits	778	605
Total inspections	176	108
Acceptable audit rate	97%	97%

mandatory testing for *Salmonella* in milk powder (including infant formula).

A requirement for *Cronobacter* testing for infant formula products already exists in the Food Standards Code (the Code), so the change will bring the Manual in-line with the Code.

All licensed businesses that will be affected by this proposed change have been consulted individually. The proposed implementation date of the new testing requirement is October this year.

The updated Food Safety Schemes Manual is expected to be published in October 2018.

As a result of the recent review of the *NSW Food Safety Schemes Manual* to incorporate all mandatory testing requirements for businesses included under the Food Regulation 2015, it is proposed that manufacturers of infant formula be required to test for *Cronobacter* spp and *Salmonella* in powdered infant formula other than powdered follow-on formula.



NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee, May 2018

Topics discussed at the latest NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee - held in Sydney on 22 May - included:

NSW Dairy Food Safety Scheme evaluation summary report

A presentation was given to members following the evaluation conducted of the NSW Dairy Food Safety Scheme.

The analysis of data focused on a five-year period from July 2011 to June 2016.

The evaluation found that the Scheme had met its primary objectives, which is to ensure that NSW dairy food sold for human consumption is safe to eat, and it also highlighted some areas for improvement.

Food Amendment (Raw Milk Products) Regulation 2018

Further information on this regulatory change is provided in the article below.

For a full summary of meeting outcomes visit: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/industry/NSW_DCM_22_may_2018.pdf

Food Amendment (Raw Milk Products) Regulation 2018

On 20 July, a new regulation was introduced requiring all raw milk activities to be licensed with the NSW Food Authority and creating an offence to supply raw milk products without one. Previously, only milk producers who supplied milk for human consumption were required to be licensed.

The change also creates an offence for any person to sell or supply raw milk products unless it has been treated, packaged, labelled and presented in a manner that deters human consumption and could not be reasonably mistaken for food. This offence can be applied to retailers.

A 2009 Food Standards Australia and New Zealand review of the risks associated with raw cow's milk as food concluded that it presented an unacceptable public health and safety risk. Raw milk provides an ideal environment for a range of pathogenic organisms and people who consume

it are at an increased risk of infection - capable of causing severe illness and potentially death.

In November 2015, the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation noted that Australian jurisdictions had agreed to prevent the supply of raw cow's milk for human consumption through the supply chain.

While all jurisdictions currently prohibit the sale of raw milk as food, raw milk and raw milk products have been found to be sold under the guise of 'bath milk' or 'bath wash' and are packaged and labelled in-line with milk which is lawfully sold for human consumption and displayed in refrigerators alongside pasteurised products. This can lead to consumer confusion and purchase of the product believing that it is a food that can be safely consumed.

The regulatory amendments allow officers to take preventative action on the sale and supply of raw milk as a food.

While the amendment will not inhibit the supply of legitimate raw milk products, licence conditions will be used to prevent inappropriate labelling, packaging and display of raw milk which may lead consumers to believe it is a food and will also impose requirements to render the product unpalatable.

A three-month implementation period to allow for broader industry communication of the new licensing requirements is in place.

From 20 October 2018, all persons involved in the production, manufacture and transport of raw milk products must hold a Food Authority licence.

A new regulation was introduced in July, requiring all raw milk activities to be licensed with the NSW Food Authority.

EGGS

Inspections and audits

From April 2018 to June 2018, the Food Authority conducted 30 inspections and 33 audits of licensed egg businesses.

The below table shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the egg sector between reporting years 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Reporting period	2016-17	2017-18
Total audits	207	187
Total inspections	55	88
Acceptable audit rate	98%	94%



From April 2018 to June 2018, the Food Authority conducted

30

inspections and

33

audits of licensed egg businesses.



PLANTS

Listeria outbreak investigation

Following a recent national listeriosis outbreak linked to rockmelons which affected 22 people (six from NSW), the NSW Government carried out environmental and epidemiological investigations.

NSW DPI conducted the environmental investigation into the outbreak while NSW Health undertook the epidemiological investigation.

A summary report outlining the findings and making recommendations will soon be made available.

As a result of the outbreak, NSW DPI will provide training for all rockmelon growers in NSW. This will include face-to-face workshops and the provision of individual on-site food safety advice.

Following a recent national listeriosis outbreak linked to rockmelons which affected 22 people (six from NSW), the NSW Government carried out environmental and epidemiological investigations.

Inspections and audits

From April 2018 to June 2018, the Food Authority conducted 18 inspections and 36 audits of licensed plant product businesses. This industry sector has recorded a compliance rate of 87%.

The main audit items attracting Corrective Action Requests (CAR's) during the period were for hygiene and sanitation, construction and maintenance, and prerequisite programs. The Food Authority will be targeting its future oversight and implementing targeted strategies to address these critical and high-risk issues and poor performers. This will include guidance material and factsheets on the Food Authority's website to assist businesses to comply with food safety requirements.

The below table shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the plant sector between reporting years 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Reporting period	2016-17	2017-18
Total audits	125	127
Total inspections	54	54
Acceptable audit rate	91%	87%

A best practice food safety guide will also be developed for growers covering all aspects of farm management and washing and packing of melons.

Training workshops for NSW growers will commence in October, with on-site inspections to commence in November prior to harvest in December-January.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand has also been asked to review potential regulatory and non-regulatory measures to improve rockmelon food safety. The training and education initiatives being delivered by NSW DPI will ensure that NSW growers are well placed to adapt to any new regulations in the future.

VULNERABLE PERSONS



Proposed amendments to the Food Safety Schemes Manual



Central Processing Units

The NSW Food Authority recently reviewed the *NSW Food Safety Schemes Manual* (Manual) to incorporate all mandatory testing requirements for businesses included in the food safety schemes under the Food Regulation 2015.

In 2016, the Food Authority conducted a Central Processing Unit (CPU) inspection program which identified areas for improvement in regard to facilities that produced vacuum packaged ready-to-eat (RTE) meats for distribution to various hospital and aged care facilities across NSW.

Inspections and audits

From April 2018 to June 2018, the Food Authority conducted 71 inspections and 346 audits of licensed hospitals and aged care businesses. This industry sector has maintained a high compliance rate with 98% of businesses recording an acceptable audit result. This industry sector has maintained a high compliance rate for an extended period, reflecting the correct implementation of food safety controls and appropriate levels of staff skills and knowledge.

The below table shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the vulnerable persons sector between reporting years 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Reporting period	2016-17	2017-18
Total audits	1,926	1,349
Total inspections	293	201
Acceptable audit rate	98%	98%

The Food Authority has since assessed the risk associated with preparation of food for vulnerable persons at an off-site facility and proposes to introduce the following mandatory testing requirements for related CPU's into the Vulnerable Persons Scheme:

- Packaged sliced or whole packaged RTE meat products for consumption without further heat treatment - to be tested for *E. coli*, *L. monocytogenes* and *Salmonella* every 20 batches,

- Texture modified foods - to be tested for *E. coli*, *L. monocytogenes* and *Salmonella* every 20 batches, and
- Cooked extended shelf life products - to be tested for standard plate count every 20 batches.

The Food Authority has consulted all licensed businesses that will be affected by this proposed change.

The updated Food Safety Schemes Manual is expected to be published in October 2018.

MANUFACTURING

Five year review of the Health Star Rating system

The Health Star Rating (HSR) system provides consumers with a quick, easy, standard way to compare the health credentials of similar packaged foods.



The system started in June 2014 on a voluntary basis and allows food manufacturers to label their products with a star rating.

In 2016 the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation agreed to review the system after five years of implementation.

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Earlier this year, nine public forums were held across Australia and New Zealand to hear from stakeholders on a range of issues significant to the five year review of the HSR system, including opportunities to enhance the system.

A second round of forums will be held in November.

To guide engagement, the HSR Advisory Committee plans to release a consultation paper in mid-October. The consultation paper will outline options for whole of system enhancements, and canvasses technical advice regarding the impact of potential changes to the HSR system calculator and the scope of the HSR system. Stakeholders will be invited to make written submissions over a six-week consultation period.

A second round of forums will be held in November.

One of the forums is scheduled to take place in Sydney:

Date and time: Wednesday
14 November, 1:00pm - 4:00pm

Location: Karstens Sydney, 111
Harrington St, The Rocks

RSVP: By 7 November to:
frontofpack@health.gov.au, indicating that you wish to attend the Sydney forum.

For details of Forums held in other jurisdictions, visit healthstarrating.gov.au/internet/healthstarrating/publishing.nsf/Content/stakeholder-engagement

For more detailed information on the five year review of the HSR visit healthstarrating.gov.au/internet/healthstarrating/publishing.nsf/Content/formal-review-of-the-system-after-five-years



Manufacturer and Wholesaler Food Inspection Program information pack

Businesses that manufacture or wholesale food in NSW fall under the NSW Food Authority's Manufacturer and Wholesaler Food Inspection Program (MWIP) and are required to have inspections. At a very small scale home-based businesses may be included.



MWIP was initiated to ensure that food businesses not covered by licensing or local government inspections meet their legal responsibility to keep food safe for consumers.

The MWIP information pack has recently been updated and details important food safety obligations for food businesses under this program including:

- Manufacturer / wholesaler food inspection program
- Cleaning and sanitising in food businesses
- Declaring allergens
- Food recalls and withdrawals
- Health and hygiene requirements of food handlers
- Pest control in food businesses
- Safe preparation of raw egg products.

You can download the MWIP information pack at foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/manufacturers-and-wholesalers

For more about home based businesses visit foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/retail/home-based-mixed-businesses

100 training sessions and counting...

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) came into effect on 1 July 2017.

To ensure the successful implementation of this new and unique piece of legislation, NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) has been delivering a specialised training program to Authorised Officers (Officers) within NSW DPI, Local Land Services, and local councils.

This multi-phase training program introduces the definitions, scope, and specific management tools that enable Officers to make decisions based on biosecurity risk and impact, and also use the legislation to advise stakeholders of their responsibilities under the Act.

- The **Introductory stage** is being rolled out via a dedicated online module delivery platform housed on the EMTrain.dpi.nsw.gov.au webpage. It is available to any person and to date, has been completed by over 1,300 people from multiple organisations both private and public, right across the country.

- **Phase 1** is delivered as a face to face training session following the successful completion of the online training program. Phase 1 practically demonstrates the concepts, themes, management tools, and definitions introduced through the online training modules. Phase 1 was delivered to more than 1,100 Officers authorised under the Act via 70 sessions across NSW.

- **Phase 2** also targets Officers that require specific skills and knowledge in using specific management tools available under the Act, including Biosecurity Undertakings, Individual Biosecurity Directions, and Biosecurity Permits. **On 23 August, NSW DPI delivered the 100th Biosecurity Act Training session.**

The skills, knowledge, and experience gained by trainees has helped spread the message of voluntary compliance, enabled officers to not only undertake and fulfil activities in both advisory and regulatory capacities, but most importantly enable every stakeholder in NSW better understand their shared responsibilities under the Act.

To ensure the successful implementation of this new and unique piece of legislation, NSW Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI) has been delivering a specialised training program to Authorised Officers (Officers) within NSW DPI, Local Land Services, and local councils.

NSW DPI would like to thank every contributor to the design, development, and implementation of this training program, and every person that attended these training programs over the last 18 months.

More information on the Biosecurity legislation can be found at dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/biosecurity-legislation