

FOODWISE

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



Food Authority works to improve safety across the melon industry

The recent listeriosis outbreak linked to rockmelons has highlighted the need for greater awareness of food safety across the melon industry.

Twenty two people were impacted during the outbreak, which occurred between January and March this year. Of those, seven people died and there was one miscarriage.

An investigation into the outbreak commenced in early February after initial listeriosis cases across three states were linked through DNA identification methods.

The outbreak was sourced to a farm in the Riverina region of NSW. It voluntarily ceased production on 23 February when alerted to a potential issue. A trade recall was initiated on 28 February and consumers were advised to discard any rockmelons they may have purchased.

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The investigation found that the contamination was likely to have occurred due to a localised storm over the farm and subsequent dust storms during the season, increasing the levels of *Listeria* on the fruit prior to harvest. While the farm had procedures and systems consistent with best practice across the industry, a sanitising wash used at the time was not sufficient to reduce the overall prevalence of *Listeria monocytogenes* on the fruit.

While the actual levels on melons were likely to be very low, and unlikely to affect generally healthy people, the traces were enough to affect people with a compromised immune system, severely impacting their health.

Since the outbreak, the Food Authority and other agencies have been working closely with the melon industry to prevent any further cases and protect consumers. A national food safety regulator working group has been formed to develop consistent best practice across all growers through a *Listeria* management strategy.

These efforts will be complemented by an Australian Melon Association (AMA) project and an industry-developed accreditation scheme. The AMA project will run for 12 months and deliver one-on-one training to all melon growers in Australia. During this time, their food safety systems and procedures will be reviewed to ensure that only best practice is being applied.

The Food Authority and other regulators will work collaboratively with the AMA and growers prior to the next harvest season to ensure that their operations are up to scratch.

“These measures will help to reduce the risk of further illness and restore confidence with consumers and trading partners,” said NSW Food Authority CEO, Dr Lisa Szabo.

“The Food Authority also has in place detailed food safety information for consumers and food businesses on our website.”

Rockmelons have been linked to *Salmonella* and *Listeria* poisonings in the past – notably *Salmonella* outbreaks in the United States during the 1950s, 1960s and in 2002. More recently there has been *Salmonella* linked to rockmelons in Australia in 2016 and to *Listeria* in 2018.

More information

Rockmelon Listeriosis Investigation Summary: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/foodsafetyandyou/rockmelon_listeriosis_investigation_summary.pdf

Managing foodborne illness: health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/Pages/Foodborne-outbreaks.aspx

Council to regulate home-based food businesses from July

Domestic kitchens used to prepare food sold directly to consumers will be regulated by local councils from 1 July this year.



- Handling food hygienically
- Storing food safely
- Labelling items correctly
- Keeping accurate records
- Being prepared for an inspection.

Download a fact sheet detailing these requirements at: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/retailfactsheets/home_based_food_businesses.pdf

For further information about the changes visit: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au

These kitchens are deemed 'home-based food businesses' under the *Food Act 2003* and are required to follow the same food legislative requirements as traditional food retailers.

All food businesses must comply with the Food Standards Code – in particular the food safety practices (Standard 3.2.2), food premises and equipment requirements (Standard 3.2.3), as well as all labelling requirements.

From 1 July, it will be the responsibility of individual businesses to notify the local council of their operations.

If a home-based business only sells to other businesses (e.g. cafes, restaurants and supermarkets) – and not the consumer – it will remain regulated by the NSW Food Authority.

Anyone in charge of a food business needs to identify food safety issues, and implement measures to control risks. These include:

- Designing and constructing the premises correctly
- Keeping cold foods properly refrigerated
- Cooking food thoroughly

A food business is any food preparation, food storage or food distribution activity which handles food for sale, including not-for-profit organisations offering in-kind rewards. If the handling of food for sale occurs at an address which is also a domestic premises, there are special food safety issues to consider.

Biosecurity Warrior

Defending against weeds, bugs and bacterial thugs!

The Sydney Royal Easter Show, held at the Sydney Showground in March and early April, once again provided an extraordinary opportunity to engage directly with visitors and promote the message that biosecurity and food safety starts at home.



The DPI stand used Biosecurity & Food Safety as a theme for the second year running.

It was built to resemble a kitchen leading into a suburban backyard and was located in the Woolworths Food Farm - the Show's educational hub, offering parents and children a range of interactive 'paddock to plate' activities.

The aim of the stand was to demonstrate what biosecurity is, as well as the risks that urban and peri backyards pose as hot spots for the potential introduction of plant and animal pests and diseases, which may threaten human health, food security and industry access to global markets. Food safety messages were once again demonstrated in the kitchen, through a range of everyday risks and habits that occur in the home.

In the backyard, visitors worked with DPI staff to become 'Biosecurity Warriors' by discovering where the biosecurity 'baddies' were lurking, and to identify the 'goodies' that will help save their backyard. They also learnt how to report any biosecurity bug 'baddies', why it's important to get rid of weeds in the backyard and why you should keep your cat indoors at night.

The kitchen helped to promote the '4 Golden Rules of Food Safety' – keep it cold, keep it clean, keep it hot, and check the label. Visitors were shown simple ways to keep food safe at home, and avoid sickness, such as how to wash hands properly, keeping your kitchen clean, ensuring fridge and freezer doors are kept shut so food is kept cold, using different cutting boards for different foods, and storing and labelling foods properly.

Also featured this year were two animations – 'Danger Zone' (relating to the food safety 'keep it cold' message) and 'Backyard Blitz' (relating to the biosecurity 'keep your lawns and garden tidy' message). These were played continuously on screens during the show, entrancing the many kids who watched them.



Held from 23 March to 3 April, the Royal Easter Show was attended by more than 780,000 people (including 30,000 international tourists).

The stand certainly generated a lot of interest, with scores of requests received from schools and consumers for Biosecurity Warrior resources and links to animations.

NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Niall Blair and DPI Director General Scott Hansen visited the stand to share biosecurity and food safety messages. As previously inducted Biosecurity Warriors, they were also well placed to help new visiting families be inducted into the Biosecurity Warrior Hall of Fame.

View the Biosecurity Warrior 'Danger Zone' animation at: [youtube.com/watch?v=y-XdLIHA-Yc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-XdLIHA-Yc)

View the Biosecurity Warrior 'Backyard Blitz' animation at: [youtube.com/watch?v=R_6ASTqKbDw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_6ASTqKbDw)

The Biosecurity Warrior comes to life!

Our popular Biosecurity Warrior debuted as a character mascot at this year's show and was a massive hit with kids. The mascot handed out thousands of Biosecurity Warrior Training Manuals, bandanas, Golden Everlasting paper daisy seed packets (to attract native bees to the garden) and fridge thermometers – while wandering the Food Farm to meet families and have photos taken with them.



DPI stand wins Bronze

The hard working team behind the DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety stand at this year's Sydney Royal Easter Show were rewarded for their efforts by winning bronze in the Commercial Exhibitors Award – Agriculture Pavilion category. The category was judged based on stand design, theme, staff attitude and knowledge, appeal, interactivity and innovation.

Lupin allergen labelling now mandatory

Mandatory allergen labelling requirements for lupin commenced on 26 May 2018. From this date, all products, including existing ones out on shelves, need to comply.



The new requirement was announced by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) in May last year. They gave food businesses 12 months to comply.

Australia has one of the highest food allergy rates in the world. More than half a million people have a diagnosed food allergy and one in 10 babies born in Australia today will develop a food allergy. Correct allergen labelling can mean the difference between life and death for people with food allergies.

Standard 1.2.3 (Information requirements – warning statements, advisory statements and declarations) now requires lupin to be declared where it is present as an “ingredient,

compound ingredient, additive or processing aid”. If the food is not packaged or not required to have a label, the law states that allergen information is either displayed in connection with the food or provided to the purchaser on request.

The 10 allergens that must be declared on food product labels when present in the food are: peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, sesame seeds, fish, shellfish, soybeans, cereals (containing gluten and their products – i.e. wheat, rye, barley, oats and spelt) and now lupin.

Sulphites in concentrations of 10mg/kg or more must also be declared on food labels of packaged foods.

The new requirement affects different stakeholders in different ways.

Manufacturers and industry should ensure that they:

- implement an effective allergen management plan,
- train staff in food allergen risks, management and communication,
- provide clear and accurate information on the allergen status of a product, and
- are aware of their responsibility to manage the unintentional presence of food allergens.

Importers should ensure that they:

- provide clear and accurate information on the allergen status of the imported product,
- are aware that they have a responsibility to ensure their imports are properly labelled, and
- advise overseas suppliers about labelling requirements in the Code.

Councils should ensure that:

- retail food service businesses in their local area are aware of the new requirement (while it is the customer’s responsibility to advise food service staff they have an allergy, the law requires businesses to provide accurate information about allergens in foods that are being served if asked).

Retail food service businesses should ensure that:

- an effective allergen management program is implemented, and
- staff are trained in food allergen risks, management and communication.

The NSW Food Authority has communicated these changes to retail food businesses, training organisations and consumers that may be affected.

In conjunction with Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia, the Food Authority has updated existing allergen resources. Developed specifically for the retail food service sector, they can be downloaded from our website via the following links:

- Be Prepared. Be Allergy Aware (brochure): foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/retail/be_prepared_be_allergy_aware.pdf
- Allergy Aware Checklist! (A3 poster): foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/retail/allergy_aware_checklist.pdf
- The Usual Suspects (A2 poster): foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/retail/the_usual_suspects_poster.pdf

Further information

If you have any questions about these resources, or if you are interested in ordering some printed copies (free of charge) for distribution to food

businesses in your area, contact the NSW Food Authority on 1300 552 406 or at food.contact@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Lupin are a legume similar to chickpeas and lentils and can be found in a wide range of food products. Lupin has the potential to trigger an allergic reaction in a small number of people. Due to its high protein and fibre content, it is increasingly being used in food, including but not limited to, bread, bakery and pasta products, sauces, beverages and meat based products.

Exercise Border Bridge: largest biosecurity simulation in Australia in 10 years

The Exercise Border Bridge simulation – conducted from 5 to 9 March – was the largest simulated biosecurity response exercise in Australia in the past 10 years.



With over 260 participants (including representatives from government and industry), the scenario-based exercise assessed the ability of New South Wales and Queensland to respond to a biosecurity incident affecting both states.

Exercise Border Bridge focussed on two scenarios:

1. An emergency response to the detection of Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) – an infectious disease of cattle and buffalo on Queensland and New South Wales properties.
2. A pest scenario involving a Giant African Snail (GAS). This commenced midway through the exercise to further challenge participants.

At regular intervals, new challenges and tasks were presented to participants, reflecting the way a real-life emergency situation would evolve.

The exercise is currently being evaluated, with early findings reinforcing the strong sense of collaboration and teamwork across government and industry in New South Wales and Queensland.

The final Evaluation Report is expected mid 2018.

Allergen management key topic at Kiama Retail & Food Service information session

The importance of allergen management was a key discussion point at the most recent Retail and Food Service Information Session, held in Kiama on 5 April 2018.



CEO of Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia, Maria Said, explained why allergen awareness and management is so important to food businesses in helping the allergic consumer maintain their health.

The meeting heard from the CEO of Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia, Maria Said, who explained why allergen awareness and management is so important to food businesses in helping the allergic consumer maintain their health.

Maria Said provided a highly engaging demonstration on how to administer an adrenaline autoinjector in an emergency situation using an expired EpiPen and an empty water bottle.

The session provided the perfect opportunity to launch the recently revised *Be Prepared, Be Allergy Aware* brochure which introduces lupin to *The Usual Suspects* (poster). Labelling regulations will incorporate

lupin as a food for mandatory declaration from 26 May 2018.

Co-hosted by Kiama Municipal Council and Wollongong City Council (as part of the Food Regulation Partnership), it was the first time two councils have hosted a Retail and Food Information Session together. This provided a fantastic opportunity for attendees to see a joint commitment to food safety within the Illawarra region.

These free, trice yearly sessions bring together local food businesses, council Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) and representatives from the Food Authority to learn how to create and maintain a culture of food safety within the retail food sector.

Other topics presented at the Kiama session included:

- An overview of the Food Regulation Partnership
- Foodborne illness information and update
- Service NSW's Easy To Do Business program – showcasing an array of business support services to help navigate regulatory requirements
- 10 compliance issues that Council EHOs really want food businesses to know about.



Tathra Oysters scoop the pool at awards

Returning to the winners circle and proving they still know how to rock a Sydney rock oyster, Tathra Oysters were named winners of the NSW Food Authority *Champion Sydney Rock Oyster* award at the Sydney Royal Fine Food Competition lunch in March.



Tathra Oysters received the Food Authority's perpetual trophy for their *Nelson Lake - Premium Grade* Exhibit as part of the Sydney Royal Aquaculture Competition.

Tathra Oysters also starred in the Oysters section of the Sydney Royal Fine Food Competition – claiming four of the seven gold medals awarded in the Sydney Rock Oysters - Unopened class.

NSW Food Authority CEO, Dr Lisa Szabo (pictured above centre), had the honour of presenting the Champion trophy to Tathra Oysters' Gary and Jo Rodely at the lunch, which was hosted by the Royal Agricultural Society.

The Food Authority is a proud sponsor of the event which recognises and celebrates excellence and innovation in the fine food industry.

New resources



Reports:

- Rockmelon Listeriosis Investigation Summary
- *Campylobacter* in meat and offal
- *Campylobacter* in plant products

4 hour/2 hour rule factsheet now available in eight languages

The 4 hour/2 hour rule factsheet is now available on the Food Authority's website in Arabic, Chinese Simplified, Chinese Traditional, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, Japanese and Khmer.



The 4 hour/2 hour rule is an alternative method for temperature control that allows food to be safely held in the temperature danger zone, but only for short and measured periods of time.

Temperature control is very important to prevent bacteria from growing in food. Food businesses need to minimise the time that food spends in the temperature danger zone (between 5°C and 60°C) to keep food safe.

The new translations will help food handlers from non-English speaking backgrounds understand food that has been in the temperature danger zone for less than two hours (e.g. preparation, storage and display) can be returned to the refrigerator to below 5°C, or heated to above 60°C, and brought out again at a later time. However, the total time in the temperature danger zone must not be longer than four hours.

The translated factsheet will also help businesses complete daily monitoring

records, which are reviewed by authorised officers at inspections. Businesses are required to demonstrate they are following the time temperature requirements.

Communicating food safety messages to culturally and linguistically diverse communities is a high priority for the Food Authority. It ensures that critical information such as understanding the different methods of temperature control (outlined in the Food Standards Code) are accessible on the Food Authority website as a downloadable resource.

The translated fact sheets can be downloaded from the Food Authority's website: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/translations

FSANZ Call for submissions

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has recently released a call for submissions on the following:

P1048 – Code revision 2018

To make minor amendments including the correction of typographical errors, inconsistencies and formatting issues and updating of references. Written submissions are due by **6pm (Canberra time) 12 June 2018**.

Read more: foodstandards.gov.au/code/proposals/Pages/P1048.aspx

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MEAT

Additional translations now available for NSW Retail Meat Food Safety Program & Diary



Three additional translations of the NSW Retail Meat Food Safety Program & Diary – Turkish, Arabic and Korean – are now available on the Food Authority's website.

Released in March, these translations complete our highly successful Training and Implementation project which targets compliance, skills and knowledge.

Inspections and audits

From January 2018 to March 2018, the Food Authority conducted 179 inspections and 412 audits of licensed meat businesses. This industry sector has maintained a high compliance rate with 95% of businesses recording an acceptable result.

The table shows comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the meat sector between the same reporting periods in 2017 and 2018.

Reporting period	Jan – Mar 2017	Jan – Mar 2018
Total audits	458	412
Total inspections	168	179
Compliance rate	94%	95%

Released in March, these translations complete our highly successful Training and Implementation project which targets compliance, skills and knowledge. They follow the release in November 2017 of the Chinese Simplified, Chinese Traditional and Vietnamese versions. There are now seven translations for this program.

Making key food safety documents more accessible through translation assists industry to achieve compliance by fully understanding their food safety requirements.

This DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance Training unit initiative aimed to simplify this sector's requirements under legislation by working closely with the DPI Stakeholder Engagement & Communications unit.

The project has helped us to better engage with culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) to achieve high and sustained outcomes for food safety.

To view the full suite of translated versions please visit: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/meat/retail-meat-premises-butchers and look under the section listed: Food safety program & retail diary.

The project has helped us to better engage with culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) to achieve high and sustained outcomes for food safety.



Meat Industry Consultative Council, April 2018

Topics discussed at the latest Meat Industry Consultative Council (MICC) meeting – held in Sydney on 11 April – included:

Food Safety Program compliance report

The meeting heard that between 1 July 2017 and 31 December 2017 1,120 audits and 420 inspections were conducted. Of these, there were 43 failed audits and 40 failed inspections. The compliance target of 95% for the sector is being met, with the meat industry recording a high compliance rate of 96% for the period. There were 139 enforcement actions (comprising five warning letters, 96 improvement notices and 38 penalty notices). One foodborne illness investigation was conducted during this time. These figures are reflective of the large numbers of licensees in the meat industry, which is one of the biggest sectors regulated by the Department.

Of the 1,120 audits and 420 inspections conducted, there were 43 failed audits and 40 failed inspections. The compliance target of 95% for the sector is being met, with the meat industry recording a high compliance rate of 96% for the period.

NSW DPI Antimicrobial Resistance risk assessment

The Council received an update on work currently underway in NSW DPI to develop a joint DPI/Local Land Services (LLS) policy on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) which will feed into the national AMR strategy. A working group (comprising DPI, LLS and external stakeholders) has developed an AMR risk assessment. Its aim is to determine the role of the NSW Government in the use of antimicrobials in animals that create AMR threats to human and animal health and the environment. Recommendations from this assessment will underpin development of the AMR policy, together with consultation with relevant stakeholders which will take place in June.

Australian Meat Regulators Working Group (AMRG) report

A report was tabled on the Australian Meat Regulators Working Group. Its aims are to provide a conduit between industry and meat regulatory bodies regarding food safety regulatory tools and guidance which support Australian meat industries. The group also promotes consistency across jurisdictions of issues management regarding food regulatory matters in the meat sector. It consists of senior officers from most jurisdictional regulatory authorities with responsibility for meat safety, as well as FSANZ and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR).

National adoption of poultry process hygiene criteria

Members were updated on the national adoption of poultry process hygiene criteria following consultation with the poultry industry in March. NSW and Queensland already have regular reporting around poultry processes and criteria which works well. Members supported rolling out this program nationally. This will help achieve consistency and set a national benchmark to see how plants perform and to help drive performance. This material can also be used for trend analysis.

Also presented at the meeting were updates on the National Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021 and biosecurity activities.

View the full summary of outcomes from the meeting at: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/industry/MICC_11_April_2018_meeting_outcomes.pdf

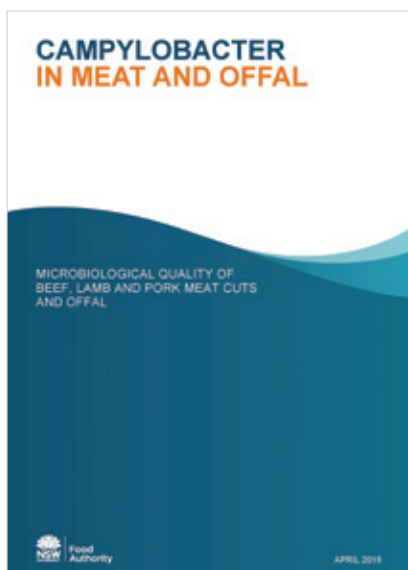
The next meeting of the Meat Industry Consultative Council will be held on 28 August 2018.

The Meat Industry Consultative Council is attended by representatives from the Australian Meat Industry Council, Australian Pork Limited, Australian Chicken Meat Federation, NSW Farmers' Association, Australian Meat Industry Council, meat businesses and NSW DPI.



Survey shows *Campylobacter* bacteria commonly found in offal

A survey conducted by the Food Authority has shown that *Campylobacter* is commonly found in lamb, beef and pork offal and their cuts of meat.



In Australia, *Campylobacter* is one of the most common causes of bacterial gastroenteritis. Most infected people will experience diarrhoea, cramping, abdominal pain, and fever that lasts from two to 10 days.

The *Campylobacter* in Meat and Offal survey was conducted to gather information on the prevalence and level of *Campylobacter* in beef, lamb and pork (for both cuts of meat and offal) at retail level in NSW.

The *Campylobacter* in Meat and Offal survey was conducted to gather information on the prevalence and level of *Campylobacter* in beef, lamb and pork (for both cuts of meat and offal) at retail level in NSW.

A total of 569 samples of pre-packaged or unpackaged raw meat and offal were purchased from supermarkets and butchers between March 2015 and December 2016. Pre-packaged samples were generally bought from supermarkets and large wholesale butchers, the unpackaged samples from independent butchers.

All samples were sent (under temperature control) to the laboratory within 24 hours of purchase. They were tested for *Campylobacter* (presence/absence and enumeration), *Salmonella* (presence/absence), and *E.coli* (enumeration). pH and water activity were also measured and recorded.

The results showed that:

- lamb offal was more contaminated with *Campylobacter* than beef or pork offal,
- beef meat had a lower prevalence of the other organisms tested – possibly due to procedures at abattoir level, herd management and procedures unique to the beef industry,

- there was little difference between unpackaged and packaged products, and
- more work is required to determine prevalence of *Campylobacter* at abattoir level and whether there is an increase in prevalence during processing and display.

Improving the microbiological quality of lamb and pork offal requires further investigation, particularly with regards to *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*. Thorough cooking and safe handling of these foods is essential.

The completed survey report can be found at: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/scienceandtechnical/campylobacter_in_meat_and_offal.pdf

Campylobacter can be present in soil, water, wild or domestic animals and manure. It is mainly spread to humans by eating or drinking contaminated food, water or unpasteurised milk. *Campylobacter* can also be spread via the hands of infected people, or from contact with cats, dogs, farm animals and plants that carry the bacteria.

SEAFOOD



This industry sector has maintained a high compliance rate of

94%

with no serious enforcement actions being taken.

Inspections and audits

From January 2018 to March 2018, the Food Authority conducted 124 inspections and 52 audits of licensed seafood businesses. This industry sector has maintained a high compliance rate of 94% with no serious enforcement actions being taken.

The table below shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the seafood sector between the same reporting periods in 2017 and 2018.

Reporting period	Jan – Mar 2017	Jan – Mar 2018
Total audits	74	52
Total inspections	127	124
Compliance rate	95%	94%



Oyster Industry Strategic Implementation Group final report released

The final report of the Oyster Industry Strategic Implementation Group (IG) is now available on the NSW Food Authority website.

Formed as a sub-group reporting to the NSW Shellfish Committee in 2016, the IG was given two years to identify industry improvements and set a strategic implementation strategy.

The Group's findings and recommendations were approved by

the Shellfish Committee in February and deemed as 'final'. This report provides a summary of key activities and initiatives that have been achieved by the group since it was established.

It also includes a number of key recommendations moving forward. See table below:

Formed as a sub-group in 2016, the IG was given two years to identify oyster industry improvements and set a strategic implementation strategy.

Theme area	Desired outcome	Priority action
Production Systems	Consistent access to high quality oyster seed stock	The breeding-hatchery-nursery system is commercially viable
Markets	Stronger industry led marketing	Acceptance and use of grading standards widespread in industry
Environment & Disease	Environmental stewardship	Expand EMS to all estuaries
Industry Structure & Governance	Growers can access capital to develop their businesses	Improve ability to secure bank and other sources of finance
Industry Structure & Governance	Self-reliant and coordinated industry representation	Reinvigorate linkages within and between industry and representative structures
Policy	Leases are secure and well managed	Review and improve Shellfish Program, biosecurity arrangements and the NSW Oyster Industry Sustainable Aquaculture Strategy

The report was prepared with the assistance of:

- Select Oyster Company
- NSW DPI
- NSW Food Authority
- NSW Farmers Association
- Aquaculture Research Advisory Committee
- OceanWatch Australia
- NSW Local Land Services
- Sapphire Coast Wilderness Oysters

A copy of the report is available at: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/industry/progress_report_Oyster_strategic_implementation.pdf



NSW Seafood Industry Forum, May 2018

A wide range of issues impacting the seafood industry were discussed at the most recent NSW Seafood Industry Forum – held in Sydney on 1 May.

These included:

Food Safety Program compliance report

The Forum was advised that between 1 July 2017 and 31 December 2017 189 audits and 170 inspections were conducted in the seafood sector. Of these, there were nine failed audits and nine failed inspections. There were 17 enforcement actions (comprising two warning letters, 12 improvement notices and three penalty notices). There were no foodborne illness investigations. Statistics show the industry is running above its 95% target, with a 95.2% compliance rate for the sector.

CSIRO biocontrol agent

Members expressed concern about the proposal to release a CSIRO biocontrol agent to eradicate carp fish from Australian waterways. They also raised concerns about the environmental impacts of mass fish mortality across inland fisheries and the effects this will have on water quality. These concerns will be passed on to the NSW DPI, with additional information circulated to members as required.

Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome

Members were advised that the oyster industry in NSW faced 'no additional risk' of contracting Pacific Oyster Mortality Syndrome (POMS), following the detection of the virus in feral/wild Pacific Oysters in South Australia in March. Since then, active surveillance by the SA Government has found no further evidence of POMS in any oyster farming area in the State. NSW DPI will continue reminding NSW seafood processors of the restrictions in place regarding waste and waste water conditions that manage risk.

Ciguatera research

Members raised concerns over the need to progress research into ciguatera fish poisoning. Large numbers of Spanish Mackerel over 10 kgs are being caught which cannot be sold – a resource that fishers want to be able to access. It was noted that data sharing and engagement is occurring internationally on this issue and members were encouraged to apply to SafeFish for a ciguatera research grant.

White spot disease

Members received an update on advice from the Queensland Government that white spot syndrome virus had been discovered through active wild prawn surveillance in northern Moreton Bay in April 2018. The meeting heard there is no evidence of white spot syndrome virus in any of the wild prawn populations or prawn farms in NSW.

The NSW DPI actively participates in an extensive proof of freedom surveillance program that follows OIE guidelines. It also maintains active compliance, enforcing the Biosecurity Control Order that places restrictions on the movement of uncooked decapod crustaceans and polychaete worms into NSW. Work is also continuing with the NSW prawn aquaculture industry to ensure appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place for farm activities.

Other topics discussed at the meeting included updates on the National Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021, Country of Origin Labelling for seafood for immediate consumption, and the DPI International Engagement Unit.

For a full summary of meeting outcomes visit: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/industry/NSW_SIF_outcomes_1_May_2018.pdf

The NSW Seafood Industry Forum is attended by representatives from the Professional Fishermen's Association, the Commercial Fishermen's Cooperative, NSW Aquaculture Association, Sydney Fish Market and NSW DPI.

DAIRY



Inspections and audits

From January 2018 to March 2018, the Food Authority conducted 17 inspections and 125 audits of licensed dairy businesses. During this period the dairy industry sector has maintained a high compliance rate with 97% of businesses recording an acceptable result due to the correct implementation of the food safety program and its controls.

There were no serious enforcement actions taken against licensed dairy business during this period.

The table below shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the dairy sector between the same reporting periods in 2017 and 2018.

Reporting period	Jan – Mar 2017	Jan – Mar 2018
Total audits	179	125
Total inspections	41	17
Compliance rate	96%	97%



From January 2018 to March 2018, the Food Authority conducted

17

inspections and

125

audits of licensed dairy businesses.





NSW Dairy Food Safety Scheme Evaluation completed

The results of an evaluation into the NSW Dairy Food Safety Scheme (Scheme) are now available on the Food Authority's website.

The Scheme details how the industry is regulated, providing a safety management framework to control the food safety risks associated with this high-risk product. It specifies controls for the safe handling of milk, and products made from milk, intended for human consumption – covering the milking of animals, through to collection, processing, storage and transport.

The Food Authority consults with the dairy industry on matters relating to the Dairy Food Safety Scheme via the NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee.

The data analysed for the evaluation focused on a five-year period – from July 2011 to June 2016.

What the evaluation involved:

- Documenting the implementation of the Scheme since 2004
- Comparing the Scheme's objectives with its achievements and recommended improvements
- Determining the efficiency of the delivery of the Scheme, and
- Documenting benchmarks at key control points in the supply chain.

What the evaluation found:

- There were no foodborne illness outbreaks in NSW linked to locally made dairy products
- There were nine recalls of NSW-manufactured dairy products
- 96% of manufactured dairy products tested were within prescribed microbiological limits
- Industry fully complied with prescribed agricultural and chemical residue limits.

What could be improved:

Although key findings indicated that the Scheme is well managed and administered, the evaluation highlighted some areas where some additional activities may be undertaken:

1. Confirm that use of off-label veterinary chemicals in animals covered by the Scheme can only occur under the direction of a registered veterinarian.
2. Add Property Identification Code and email fields on Byte's licensing renewal forms to facilitate more rapid communication with licensees during incidents, such as biosecurity or foodborne illness outbreaks. A project to capture this information is underway.

The data analysed for the evaluation focused on a five-year period – from July 2011 to June 2016.

To view a copy of the evaluation visit: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/scienceandtechnical/dairy_food_safety_scheme_evaluation.pdf

The NSW dairy industry is regulated by the NSW Food Authority under Food Regulation 2015. The Scheme is subject to a risk assessment each time the food regulation is re-made. Risk assessments were completed in 2009 and 2014. Licence fees were also reviewed in 2009. These provided opportunities to identify ongoing and emerging issues, assess existing approaches and propose improvements.

Overall, the evaluation found that the Scheme had met its primary objective – to ensure that NSW dairy food sold for human consumption is safe to eat.

EGGS

Egg Industry Consultative Committee, March 2018

There was a 54 percent decrease recorded in the incidence of *Salmonella* Typhimurium (the most common foodborne serotype) in NSW between January 2014 and March 2018, according to a report tabled at the most recent Egg Industry Consultative Committee (EICC) meeting. The last outbreak linked to raw egg foods occurred in December 2016 .

This reduction can be attributed in part to DPI's work with small egg farmers – educating them on improved handling, sanitation and management of their farms.

Members agreed that the 54 percent decrease is a great outcome, but there is still need for increased vigilance.

Held in Sydney on 7 March, other topics discussed at the EICC meeting included:

Food safety program compliance report

Members heard that between 1 July 2017 and 31 December 2017, 127 audits and 49 inspections were conducted. There were just eight failed audits and three failed inspections. No foodborne illness investigations were conducted in the egg sector during this time and the compliance rate for the sector remains steady at 94% which is a pleasing result.

Inspections and audits

From January 2018 to March 2018, the Food Authority conducted 15 inspections and 40 audits of licensed egg businesses. This industry sector has recorded a compliance rate of 93%.

There were no serious enforcement actions taken against licensed egg business during this period.

The table shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the egg sector between the same reporting periods in 2017 and 2018.

Reporting period	Jan – Mar 2017	Jan – Mar 2018
Total audits	37	40
Total inspections	16	15
Compliance rate	93%	93%

Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy

Members were advised that the DPI is finalising a draft report on this strategy, as well as undertaking a survey of dairy farmers' knowledge of antibiotic use. Depending on the results of the survey, a similar one may be conducted with egg industry producers, focusing on smaller operators.

National Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021

Members noted an information paper on a draft strategy for reducing foodborne illness in Australia by 2021. Backgrounding this paper was a presentation on the Australia and New Zealand food regulation system, which included:

- a brief overview of the regulatory system
- an outline of priorities for 2018-2021

- strategies for moving towards success, and
- ways the Forum hopes to achieve this success together – by working closely with industry.

Areas focussed on in NSW since the introduction of the NSW Government's Food Safety Strategy 2015-2021 (to reduce foodborne illness caused by *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter* and *Listeria* by 30 percent) were also outlined. This work has helped reduce notification rates of salmonellosis in NSW.

You can download the full summary of meeting outcomes at: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/industry/EICC_7_March_2018.pdf

The next meeting of the Egg Industry Consultative Committee will be held on 8 August 2018.

PLANTS



From January 2018 to March 2018, the Food Authority conducted

14

inspections and

16

audits of licensed plant product businesses.

Inspections and audits

From January 2018 to March 2018, the Food Authority conducted 14 inspections and 16 audits of licensed plant product businesses. This industry sector has recorded a compliance rate of 77%. However, given the small numbers of licensees in this sector that failed an audit, variances are not significant.

The main audit items attracting Corrective Action Requests (CAR's) during the period were for hygiene & sanitation (failure to maintain the premises in a clean condition), Food Safety Program issues (failure to prevent the harbourage of pests) and analytical testing. The Food Authority will be targeting its future oversight and implementing strategies to address these critical and high-risk issues and poor performers.

The table shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the plant sector between the same reporting periods in 2017 and 2018.

Reporting period	Jan – Mar 2017	Jan – Mar 2018
Total audits	31	16
Total inspections	17	14
Compliance rate	77%	77%





Survey reveals *Campylobacter* bacteria rare in NSW plant products

Campylobacter – one of the most common causes of bacterial gastroenteritis in Australia – is rare in plant products produced in NSW, according to a new survey.

The *Campylobacter in Plant Products* survey (produced by the Food Authority) gathered information on the prevalence and level of *Campylobacter* in packaged and unpackaged plant products sold in NSW.

A total of 397 plant products samples were purchased from supermarkets, greengrocers and farmers' markets between March 2015 and December 2016. These were sent (under temperature control) to the laboratory within 24 hours of purchase. The samples were tested for *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella*,

E. coli and standard plate count (SPC). Water activity and pH were also measured and recorded and all samples photographed.

The results showed the prevalence of *Campylobacter* to be just 1.5%. This is similar to other published works and also agrees with the suggestion that additional processing may increase the prevalence of *Campylobacter* contamination.

The completed survey can be found at: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/scienceandtechnical/campylobacter_in_plant_products.pdf

Most people infected with *Campylobacter* will experience diarrhoea, cramping, abdominal pain, and fever that lasts from two to 10 days. *Campylobacter* can be present in soil, water, wild or domestic animals and manure. It is mainly spread to humans by eating or drinking contaminated food, water or unpasteurised milk. *Campylobacter* can also be spread via the hands of infected people, or from contact with cats, dogs, farm animals and plants that carry the bacteria.

NSW takes tough stance on suspected citrus canker

Citrus canker (*Xanthomonas citri* subsp. *citri*) is an exotic plant pest that poses a serious threat to Australia's citrus industry. It is caused by the bacterium *Xanthomonas axonopodis*. Infection causes lesions on the leaves, stems, and fruit of citrus trees, including lime, oranges, and grapefruit.

Following strong evidence that citrus canker has been detected in Darwin, the NSW Government has issued a Control Order prohibiting the entry of all citrus from the Northern Territory (including plants, fruit and leaves) into the State for at least three years (unless revoked prior).

According to DPI's Deputy Director General, Biosecurity & Food Safety,

Dr Bruce Christie, the Order is a necessary precautionary measure to protect NSW citrus industries. The citrus industry is Australia's largest fresh fruit exporter, worth in excess of \$200 million annually.

For more information visit: dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/news-and-recent-arrivals/citrus-canker

VULNERABLE PERSONS



This industry sector has maintained a high compliance rate with **98%** of businesses recording an acceptable audit result.

Inspections and audits

From January 2018 to March 2018, the Food Authority conducted 51 inspections and 351 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 due to the correct implementation of food safety controls and ensuring staff have the necessary skills and knowledge.

The table shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the vulnerable persons sector between the same reporting periods in 2017 and 2018.

Reporting period	Jan – Mar 2017	Jan – Mar 2018
Total audits	332	351
Total inspections	67	51
Compliance rate	98%	98%



MANUFACTURING

Changes to Country of Origin food labelling requirements from 1 July 2018

Food Businesses are reminded that the two-year transition period for the food industry to migrate from the country of origin labelling requirements contained within the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code* (Code) to the *Country of Origin Food Labelling Information Standard 2016* (Standard) comes to an end on 30 June 2018.



From 1 July 2018, businesses must label their products according to the requirements of the Standard.

From 1 July 2018, businesses must label their products according to the requirements of the Standard, which is administered under Australian Consumer Law (ACL) and no longer a requirement under the Food Standards Code.

The Standard commenced under ACL on 1 July 2016 and regulates the country of origin information that must be provided for most food offered or suitable for retail sale in Australia. It's important that producers, manufacturers, processors, and importers, as well as retailers, are aware of the obligations imposed by the Standard.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has published a range of tools to assist the food industry in complying with the new labelling requirements and this information can be found on their website: acc.gov.au/business/advertising-promoting-your-business/country-of-origin-claims

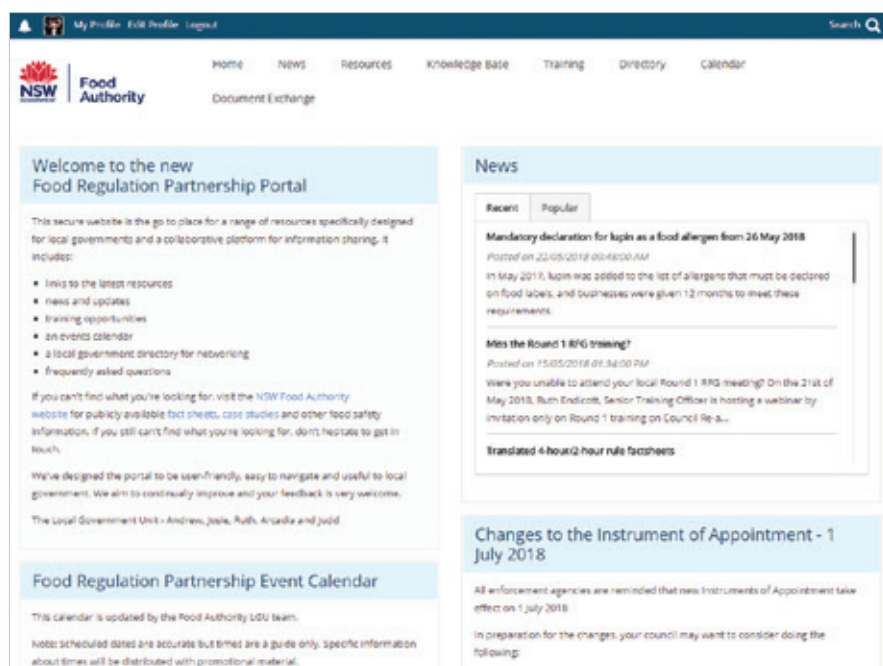
The Standard regulates the country of origin information that must be provided for most food offered or suitable for retail sale in Australia. It's important that producers, manufacturers, processors, and importers, as well as retailers, are aware of the obligations imposed by the Standard.

All queries relating to Country of Origin labelling should be directed to the ACCC via acc.gov.au/contact-us/contact-the-acc

Importers can find information specific to food imported to Australia on the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources website: agriculture.gov.au/import/goods/food/notices/ifn03-18

User friendly FRP portal launched

A new, user friendly web portal for members of the Food Regulation Partnership (FRP) is now available online.



The portal allows greater capacity for information sharing and collaboration between the 131 FRP members (which includes the NSW Food Authority).

The Food Regulation Partnership is made up of the NSW Food Authority, 128 councils, the Office of Environment and Heritage (Kosciuszko National Park) and the Lord Howe Island Board. It ensures food sold in NSW is safe for human consumption and correctly labelled.

The FRP provides the framework to support activities such as the authorisation of EHOs who conduct food safety inspections of retail food outlets, the Scores on Doors program and the Name & Shame register.

If you are an EHO or Council staff member and have any questions please email food.contact@dpi.nsw.gov.au or call 1300 552 406.

The portal allows greater capacity for information sharing and collaboration between the 131 FRP members (which includes the NSW Food Authority).

Members can sign-in securely to the website and access a range of resources designed specifically for local government. These include:

- Links to the latest resources
- News and updates
- Training opportunities
- An events calendar
- A local government directory for networking
- Frequently asked questions.