

FOODWISE

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



Survey reinforces need for better allergen labelling on packaged food

A more reliable food labelling system is required to inform food allergic consumers on safer food choices, according to a recent survey conducted by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

The survey reinforces how important it is for food businesses to consider the potential of cross contamination during manufacturing and declare the presence of allergens when labelling their products (through mandatory declarations and precautionary advisory labelling).

Almost 200 allergy specialists were asked if they had seen any patients in the past three months who suffered anaphylaxis after eating a packaged food where the suspected trigger was not listed as an ingredient.

Continued page 2...

FEBRUARY 2018 ISSUE 46

Featured this issue:

GENERAL

A&NZ Ministers endorse National Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy	4
Record 3.5 million customer connections in 2017	6
Biosecurity update	7
Alcohol labelling regulations under review	10
Retail food safety guide author awarded FRP Scholarship	20

MEAT

Inspections and Audits	12
------------------------	----

SEAFOOD

Food Agility CRC funds new oyster innovation project	14
Oyster and land based aquaculture unaffected by state planning reforms	15

DAIRY

Inspections and Audits	16
------------------------	----

EGGS

Inspections and Audits	17
------------------------	----

PLANTS

Inspections and Audits	18
------------------------	----

VULNERABLE PERSONS

Inspections and Audits	19
------------------------	----



Department of
Primary Industries
Food Authority



Calendar dates

MARCH 2018

7

Egg Industry Consultative Committee meeting, Newington

23 March – 3 April

Sydney Royal Easter Show, Sydney

APRIL 2018

5

FRP Retail & Food Service Information Session, Kiama

11

Meat Industry Consultative Committee meeting, Newington

MAY 2018

1

NSW Seafood Industry Forum, Sydney Fish Market

9

NSW Shellfish Committee meeting, Newington

22

NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee, Newington

Continued from front page...

Almost 200 allergy specialists were asked if they had seen any patients in the past three months who suffered anaphylaxis after eating a packaged food where the suspected trigger was not listed as an ingredient.

Their responses, and other research, has led to calls for the food industry to improve food labelling – including making it clear when foods are safe or at low risk of cross-contamination during manufacturing.

The release of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute document is timely as it coincides with another detailed survey on allergens prepared by the NSW Food Authority.

This survey aimed to determine the prevalence of undeclared allergens in a variety of packaged and unpackaged foods and examine the different allergen labelling formats and language used by manufacturers.

Over 500 samples were tested for a range of allergens. Seventy-two samples were unpackaged retail samples with a gluten free claim and 448 samples were packaged with either a 'free from' claim, a 'may contain' statement, or no

statement at all. Allergens tested for included gluten, dairy, peanuts, almonds, soy and egg.

Of the unpackaged retail samples, 26.4% contained gluten – ranging from 7.1 ppm to greater than 8000 ppm. In addition, nine of these samples were also labelled dairy free and four contained dairy ranging from 9 ppm to 1800 ppm.

Of the packaged retail samples, 12.5% (56) contained allergens not in the ingredients list. Twelve had a 'free from' claim for the detected allergen, 12 had no statement about the detected allergen and 23 had a 'may contain' statement about the detected allergen.

Just over 9% of samples (41) contained an allergen not in the ingredients list at levels greater than 100 ppm. The majority of these were dark chocolate (or contained dark chocolate as an ingredient) containing milk which was not listed as an ingredient but may have had a precautionary 'may contain' label. Milk contamination of dark chocolate is a known problem which the chocolate industry is proactively addressing.

Further education in the retail sector is required to ensure the safe transportation, storage and display of these products to reduce the chance of cross contamination.



The National Allergy Strategy (launched in 2017) has online training material for the retail sector available at: foodallergytraining.org.au

The NSW Food Authority will continue to promote this training at its retail food meetings, amongst Environmental Health Officers inspecting this sector, and online. An allergen module is included in Food Safety Supervisor certification.

More information: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/industry/allergen_survey_report_2018.pdf

On 25 May, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) will make lupin* the 10th allergen food or ingredient that must be declared on food labels. The others are: peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, sesame seeds, fish, shellfish, soy and wheat.

Food businesses have 12 months to meet this new requirement.

On 25 May, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) will make lupin* the 10th allergen food or ingredient that must be declared on food labels. The others are: peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, sesame seeds, fish, shellfish, soy and wheat.

** Lupin, like other protein containing foods (such as peanut, soybean, dairy or shellfish) may trigger an allergic reaction in a small number of people. It can be found in a wide range of food products including, but not limited to, bread, bakery and pasta products, sauces, beverages and meat based products.*

In Australia, 1 in 20 children and 1 in 50 adults have a food allergy (National Allergy Strategy, 2017).

An allergic reaction can include a range of symptoms such as rashes, vomiting, diarrhoea, swelling of the throat and, in severe cases, anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a potentially life threatening allergic reaction that requires immediate medical attention.

Symptoms include difficulty breathing, swelling of the tongue and throat, difficulty talking and dizziness.

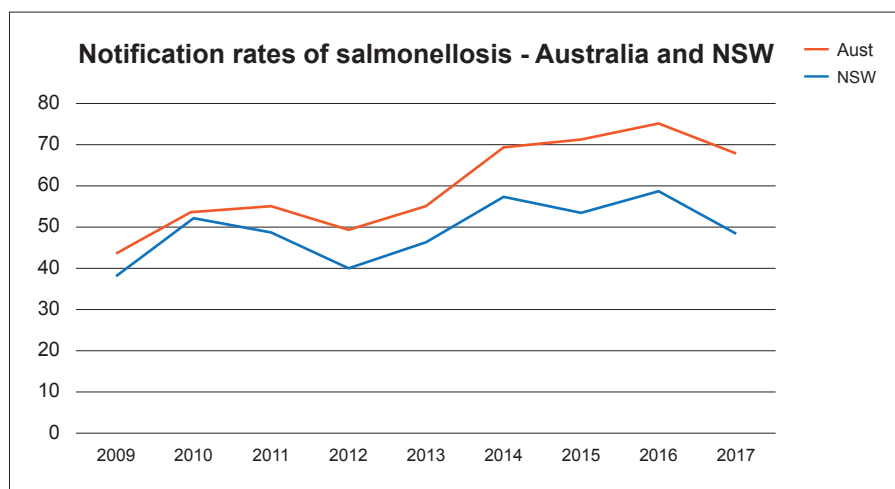
A&NZ Ministers endorse National Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy

The Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation* provided in-principle support to the aims and objectives of the Australian Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021+ at its meeting on 24 November 2017.

The strategy aims to significantly reduce the number of per capita human cases of foodborne campylobacteriosis and salmonellosis by 2021. NSW has set a target of 30 percent for this.

For *Salmonella*, results to the end of 2017 show overall notification rates (not just foodborne) in NSW have dropped by 17 percent since 2014: our 'marker' point in the NSW Food Safety Strategy 2015-2021. This is largely due to focusing effort on reducing illness linked to raw egg products and poor hygiene at a retail level. Other initiatives have included working with small egg farms to improve hygiene and grading, and working with the fresh produce sector to improve handling of commodities such as rockmelons.

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Notification rates of salmonellosis (2009-2017). Rate expressed as number of salmonellosis cases/100,000 population. Source: National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System

The Forum's vision, approach and objectives for foodborne illness reduction over the next four years are outlined in the strategy, which will undergo extensive stakeholder consultation over the next four months before being implemented.

National estimates for 2010 showed there were:

- 234,000 cases of campylobacteriosis – involving 3,200 hospitalisations and three deaths.
- 56,200 cases of salmonellosis – involving 2,100 hospitalisations and 15 deaths (circa 2010).

The strategy aims to stop the increase and then reduce these numbers significantly by 2021.

The Forum hopes to achieve this by:

- Working closely with industry to innovate and drive reforms
- Focussing efforts on critical outcomes and food safety culture
- Using research and evidence
- Targeting the most relevant parts of the food supply chain (eg. poultry, egg and horticulture industries, food service and consumers).

Consultation is now open and submissions are invited on the Australian Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021+

health.gov.au/internet/fr/publishing.nsf/Content/australia-foodborne-illness-reduction-strategy-2018

Consultation is now open and submissions are invited on the Australian Foodborne Illness Reduction Strategy 2018-2021+

The consultation period began in February and closes on 29 March 2018. States and Territories will consult at the local level, and Food Standards Australia

New Zealand will consult nationally, bringing together industry sectors. For more information, and to participate in the consultation process, visit: foodregulation.gov.au

* The Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation is chaired by the Federal Assistant Minister for Health, Dr David Gillespie. Australian state and territory Ministers, the New Zealand Minister responsible for food safety and the Australian Local Government Association also participate. The Forum oversees Australia and New Zealand's collaborative food regulation system which protects the health and safety of consumers. The rigorous system reflects the many businesses and stakeholders in the food supply chain, providing a firm platform on which our food industries can operate.

Aussie food shoppers embrace Health Star Rating

More than three in five Australians who bought a product with a Health Star Rating in 2017 reported that it had influenced their product choice, according to a survey of 2,500 shoppers conducted by the Heart Foundation.

The Heart Foundation reported a significant increase in the number of shoppers who correctly understand the rating (based on the comparison period March 2017 to July 2017). Products with one star are considered unhealthy, while products with five stars are considered a healthier choice.

So far, at least 150 companies have adopted the rating – across more than 8,400 products. Excluding

brand names, the Health Star Rating remains the third most recognised food logo in the supermarket, with two thirds of Australians having 'high confidence' in it.

As part of a continual improvement program, the Health Star Rating program is currently undergoing a five year review. Stakeholders are encouraged to participate in the consultation process and provide ideas on how to improve the system.

The Health Star Rating (HSR) Advisory Committee (HSRAC) oversees the voluntary implementation of the HSR system. Many stakeholder workshops have been held since the introduction of the system.

To participate in the five year review visit: healthstarrating.gov.au/internet/healthstarrating/publishing.nsf/Content/stakeholder-engagement

A report on the review will be released in 2019.

Record 3.5 million customer connections in 2017

The NSW Food Authority and NSW DPI Biosecurity connected with customers a record 3.5 million times online and by phone in 2017 – 45 percent more than the year before.



Website and social media channels

The most popular topics for visitors to the websites and social media channels for the Food Authority and DPI Biosecurity in 2017 were:

Food safety

- Name & Shame register
- Food recalls
- Scores on Doors
- Home-based businesses
- Food safety during pregnancy
- Labelling requirements

Biosecurity

- Brown marmorated stink bugs
- White spot disease in prawns
- American foulbrood disease in beehives
- Weeds

Helpline

Established in 2004, the Food Authority Helpline has recently been expanded to include biosecurity helplines for domestic quarantine and exotic plant pest and disease related enquiries and reporting.

Among the most popular topics our Helpline customers contacted us about during 2017 were:

Food safety

- Food safety during pregnancy
- Starting a food business
- Food Safety Supervisor information
- Labelling requirements

Biosecurity

- Interstate requirements for bringing fruits, vegetables, plants and other materials such as bees and honey across borders into NSW
- Information on animal stock movement requirements
- Bees (e.g. disease, exotic bees, insects affecting bees)

In 2018, the Helpline will continue to expand, offering an improved experience to customers interested in biosecurity matters.

Connect with us

- foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
- facebook.com/nswfoodauthority
- [@NSWFoodAuth](https://twitter.com/NSWFoodAuth)
- youtube.com/user/NSWFoodAuthority
- dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity
- facebook.com/NSWDPI.Biosec
- NSW Food Authority Helpline: 1300 552 406
- Biosecurity Helpline: 1800 084 881

Biosecurity Update

Biosecurity protects our economy, environment and community from pests, diseases, weeds and contaminants. Operating under the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, it is a shared responsibility that encourages the highest levels of biosecurity. Everybody has a role to play in protecting NSW from biosecurity risks.

Livestock traceability – maintaining the integrity of the Australian pork industry

In a move which aims to significantly improve pig traceability and biosecurity risk management, mandatory reporting of all pig movements was introduced nationally on 1 February 2018. The new requirements bring the National Livestock Identification System for pigs (NLIS Pigs) in line with existing NLIS Cattle, and NLIS Sheep and Goat movement reporting.

Pig movement reporting is vital in the event of food safety issues or an emergency animal disease outbreak, as it provides authorities with the ability to quickly identify animals and understand where disease may be present. In addition to underpinning food security, safety and public health, improved pig traceability and effective biosecurity measures are critical in maintaining the integrity of Australian pork and ensuring the ongoing viability of Australia's valuable pork export market.

PigPass is a national tracking system which links pigs to their property of origin and provides real time information on the movements of all pigs in Australia whether the

movement is for one pig, 10 pigs or 1,000 pigs. From 1 February 2018, processing any pigs that do not have a completed PigPass could result in a penalty notice.

The general biosecurity duty of pig owners can be discharged by complying with the NLIS Regulation and by following industry standards, codes of practice, guidelines or other NLIS advisory material and by registering on the PigPass website.

For more information visit pigpass.com.au or ring the PigPass Helpdesk on 1800 001 458.

Biosecurity, the Biosecurity Act 2015, and online training

To help increase awareness of the new Act, and increase understanding of stakeholders in their responsibilities, the NSW DPI has developed an online learning package for training authorised officers however it is accessible to all everyone to increase their knowledge and skills.

Ten learning modules covering key aspects of the new legislation are included in the EMTrain system, which can be accessed at emtrain.dpi.nsw.gov.au*

Have your say on the national management of Ovine Johne's Disease

The sheep and wool industry is being invited to have its say on the future management of Ovine Johne's Disease (OJD) in Australia. Since the disease was first recognised as a cause of significant mortalities in sheep flocks in the early 1990's, there has been a national Ovine Johne's Disease Control or Management Plan.

WoolProducers Australia and Sheep Producers Australia are seeking feedback from the sheep and wool industry on the future management of OJD to ensure it is effectively managed and its spread minimised. They have developed a discussion paper and are seeking feedback from interested stakeholders by 12 March 2018.

The discussion paper and further information is available at: animalhealthaustralia.com.au/ojd-review/

An online producer survey is also available at: surveymonkey.com/tr/ojdplan

**The materials available on this site were correct the the time of publication (April 2017) and are for educational purposes only. Undertaking online training does not entitle you to be an authorised biosecurity officer.*

Humid weather prompts calls for more vigilant pest control

The warm, humid weather in NSW this summer has prompted calls for food businesses to be more vigilant in their pest control regime.



The Food Standards Code requires food businesses to take all practicable measures to prevent pests entering the premises, and to eradicate and prevent pests from inhabiting the premises.

During the warmer months, pests are more likely to seek out food, water and shelter.

Common pests such as rats, mice and cockroaches can carry bacteria and viruses that can contaminate food and food contact surfaces.

NSW Food Authority penalty notice statistics – published in relation to breaches of FSANZ 3.2.2 24(1) pests – have shown consistently more breaches during the warmer months than the cooler months.

During the warmer months, pests are more likely to seek out food, water and shelter.

Practical pest prevention

The Food Standards Code requires food businesses to take all practicable measures to prevent pests entering the premises, and to eradicate and prevent pests from inhabiting the premises.

Requirements for **licensed food businesses** include maintaining:

- detailed procedures in their food safety programs – outlining measures to maintain the premises to a standard of construction hygiene and housekeeping to prevent the entry and harbourage of pests
- a pest control pre-requisite program – outlining the day-to-day measures in place to control pests at the premises or in food transport vehicles.

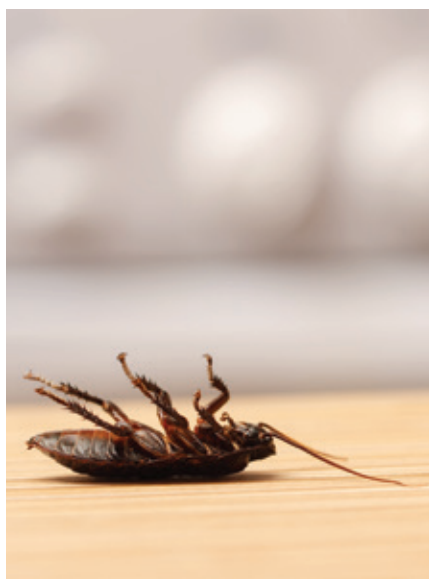
Using the services of a licensed pest controller is not a legal requirement for food businesses, however it is strongly advised to assist your business to comply with the Food Standards Code.

Requirements for **non-licensed food business** include undertaking appropriate measures to:

- prevent the entry of pests
- eradicate and prevent harbourage of pests.

Measures to prevent **entry of pests** include:

- sealing all holes, gaps and cracks in walls, ceilings and floors
- installing and maintaining flyscreens to window and door openings
- keeping doors closed when not in use
- installing weather strips at the base of doors.



Measures to eradicate and prevent **harbourage of pests** include:

- regular checks for signs of pests
- maintaining the food premises and equipment in a clean condition (a cleaning schedule may assist)
- keeping food covered in sealed containers
- storing food, equipment and food containers off the floor
- keeping garbage storage areas clean and tidy
- removing rubbish regularly and ensuring external areas are clean and well-maintained
- removing unused equipment and fixtures from the premises
- implementing a suitable pest control program which may require the services of a licensed pest controller.

Merits of using a licensed pest controller

Given the technical aspects of pest control, and the amount of time it can take to do it properly, there is merit in engaging the services of a licensed pest controller. These professionals can assist in demonstrating your commitment to meet the food safety requirements and to achieve compliance.

Most professional pest control companies will provide a detailed inspection and treatment report to verify the pest control program, which should include the following information:

- routine pest inspection activities undertaken
- type, location and size of pest activity sighted
- action taken to eradicate activity and follow up required
- type and quantity of chemicals used
- documentation that chemicals used are suitable for use in the area treated
- list of all structural and hygiene issues which encourage pest entry and activity.

Food safety officers will be looking for the above documentation as evidence of compliance. If an authorised officer from the NSW Food Authority or local council identifies a pest control issue that needs to be rectified, a variety of enforcement actions can be initiated.

Businesses should ensure pest eradication and prevention is a key business practice, rather than losing customers and risking fines. Failing to take appropriate measures to eradicate and prevent the harbourage of pests is a common offence on the Food Authority's Name and Shame register.

More information:

foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/retailfactsheets/pest_control.pdf

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Alcohol labelling regulations under review

The alcohol industry will be consulted on potential label changes in Australia and New Zealand.

The most recent meeting of the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation (held in Melbourne in November last year) identified alcohol labelling as a key issue for the industry.

Discussion at the meeting focussed on pregnancy health warnings on alcohol products, energy labelling of alcoholic beverages, and sugar free claims on alcohol.

The outcomes of these discussions were as follows:

Pregnancy health warnings on alcohol products

Industry uptake and implementation of voluntary pregnancy health warnings on alcohol products have increased over time. However, there continues to be some product categories where adoption is low. With this in mind, Forum Ministers asked the Food Regulation Standing Committee* to expedite the development of a policy options consultations paper including:

- mandatory versus voluntary application
- most appropriate pictogram
- most appropriate and easiest to understand message to discourage drinking during pregnancy.

Energy labelling of alcoholic beverages

Responses to targeted consultation on the energy labelling of alcoholic beverages finalised during 2017 are being used to develop policy options for wider consultation to be undertaken in 2018.

The evaluation reports of the voluntary labelling initiative to place pregnancy health warnings on alcohol products and summary reports on the energy labelling of alcoholic beverages targeted consultation are available on the Food Regulation website.

Evaluation report on pregnancy health warnings

health.gov.au/internet/fr/publishing.nsf/Content/pregnancy-warnings-alcohol-labels

Summary report on energy labelling of alcoholic beverages

foodregulation.gov.au/internet/fr/publishing.nsf/Content/activities-energy-labelling

The most recent meeting of the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation (held in Melbourne in November last year) identified alcohol labelling as a key issue for the industry.

Sugar free claims on alcohol

An increasing number of alcoholic beverages sold in Australia claim they are '% sugar free'. Forum Ministers are concerned that these claims are misleading and that some alcohol is being promoted as a 'healthier' choice for consumers when public health advice is to limit alcohol intake. They have asked Food Standards Australia New Zealand to review the matter in relation to the Standard as well as claims about carbohydrate and its components (e.g. sugar claims on food containing more than 1.15% alcohol).

** The Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC) is a sub-committee of the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation (the Forum). The FRSC is responsible for coordinating policy advice to the Forum and ensuring a nationally consistent approach to the implementation and enforcement of food standards.*

New update streamlines regulation for councils

The NSW Food Authority's latest food regulation update will help councils focus more on poor performing businesses and conduct fewer inspections on those who perform well.

The update, which will come into effect on July 1 this year, follows extensive consultation – including face-to-face meetings with 67 of the 129 councils across NSW.

As well as helping them better manage their enforcement responsibilities, the update also clarifies council's role regarding new trends such as home-based food businesses and specialist food delivery apps.

The update refreshes the Food Regulation Partnership (FRP)* established between NSW Food Authority, councils and other agencies in 2008. It has not been significantly updated since then.

Key changes for 2018 include:

- new guidance on markets and food trucks
- extra information on fees and charges
- an improved inspection checklist.

Free training will be offered to local council officers at events across NSW from March to July this year.

For more information email us at: contact@foodauthority.nsw.gov.au

The new guidelines for enforcement agencies are available at: foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/guide

** Through the FRP, the Food Authority supports councils in their role monitoring food safety in local retail food businesses. The Independent Pricing And Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) has praised the FRP as a "model of state and local government interaction". In 2016, the NSW Auditor-General recognised the FRP's role in helping the State achieve a lower rate of foodborne illness than the national average.*

FSANZ Call for submissions

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

A1144 - Re-categorising Coconut Milk for Food Additive Permissions

Written submissions are due by **6pm (Canberra time) 19 March 2018**.

Read more: foodstandards.gov.au/code/applications/Pages/A1144.aspx

A1153 – Endo xylanase from *T. reesei* as a Processing Aid

Written submissions are due by **6pm (Canberra time) 29 March 2018**.

Read more: foodstandards.gov.au/code/applications/Pages/A1153.aspx

A1151 – β -Galactosidase from *Papiliotrema terrestris* as a Processing Aid (Enzyme)

Written submissions are due by **6pm (Canberra time) 12 April 2018**.

Read more: [foodstandards.gov.au/code/applications/Pages/A1151-Beta-Galactosidase from Papiliotrema terrestris as a Processing Aid \(Enzyme\).aspx](http://foodstandards.gov.au/code/applications/Pages/A1151-Beta-Galactosidase from Papiliotrema terrestris as a Processing Aid (Enzyme).aspx)

P1044 – Plain English Allergen Labelling

Written submissions are due by **6pm (Canberra time) 12 April 2018**.

Read more: foodstandards.gov.au/code/proposals/Pages/P1044PlainEnglishAllergenLabelling.aspx

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MEAT



This industry sector has maintained a high compliance rate, with

96%

of businesses recording an acceptable audit result.

Inspections and audits

From October 2017 to December 2017, the Food Authority conducted 279 inspections and 747 audits of licensed meat businesses. This industry sector has maintained a high compliance rate, with 96% of businesses recording an acceptable audit result.

The table below shows comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the meat sector between the same reporting periods in 2016 and 2017.

Reporting period	Oct – Dec 2016	Oct – Dec 2017
Total audits	725	747
Total inspections	241	279
Acceptable audit rate	94%	96%



SEAFOOD

Study reaffirms safety of NSW shellfish



A NSW Food Authority peer-reviewed study – *An Assessment of Potential Heavy Metal Contaminants in Bivalve Shellfish from Aquaculture Zones along the Coast of New South Wales, Australia* – has demonstrated that heavy metals do not present a food safety risk to shellfish consumers.

Published in Food Protection Trends*, the study shows the low risk of potential heavy metal contaminants in NSW shellfish aquaculture areas. Shellfish samples were collected and tested from NSW shellfish producing estuaries every three years between 1999 and 2014. This is a key requirement for shellfish aquaculture, set out in the national guidelines (the Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program). The program helps ensure the classification of shellfish harvest areas is appropriate to protect consumers.

Inspections and audits

From October 2017 to December 2017, the Food Authority conducted 101 inspections and 122 audits of licensed seafood businesses. This industry sector has maintained a high compliance rate of 95%, 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 2016 and 2017.

Reporting period	Oct – Dec 2016	Oct – Dec 2017
Total audits	115	122
Total inspections	89	101
Acceptable audit rate	93%	95%

To date, this is the most comprehensive dataset available on heavy metals in NSW shellfish and is compliant with the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code and international dietary guidelines.

We already knew that NSW oysters rocked. Now we get to share this news with an audience of over 9,000 International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) members worldwide.

More information: foodprotection.org/publications/food-protection-trends/

* Food Protection Trends is published by the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP)

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Food Agility CRC funds new oyster innovation project

A salinity sensor network – with the potential to improve harvest area management plans in the oyster industry – has become one of the first major projects with the newly formed Food Agility Cooperative Research Centre (CRC).



The NSW Department of Primary Industries (including the NSW Food Authority and Fisheries) has partnered with the University Technology Sydney and The Yield to use Food Agility CRC funding to deploy this network across select estuaries in NSW.

It aims to provide a greater understanding of mortality issues, harmful algal blooms and possibly improve harvest area management plans through improved sustainability and better yields. The first sensors have been installed and are reporting data in the Pambula, Hawkesbury, Georges, Manning and Port Stephens estuaries.

The project is valued at \$3million over three years.

Food Agility CRC

The Food Agility CRC aims to empower Australia's food industry to grow its comparative advantage through digital transformation.

Comprising 54 participants from food, technology and research sectors, it aims to develop and use digital technologies for sharing data to build brand, markets, jobs and exports across the food value chain so that:

- producers can capture value by responding to rapidly changing consumer preferences
- exceptional quality and food safety records can drive the 'brand'
- environmentally and socially sustainable practices are driven by data
- reduced risks incentivise investment
- a digitally capable workforce drives productivity and higher margins
- trans-disciplinary research solves business problems, and
- industry can access social media and consumer preference market insights.

More information: foodagility.com

The Yield

The Yield uses real-time data to help oyster growers improve on-farm productivity. The same data is used by:

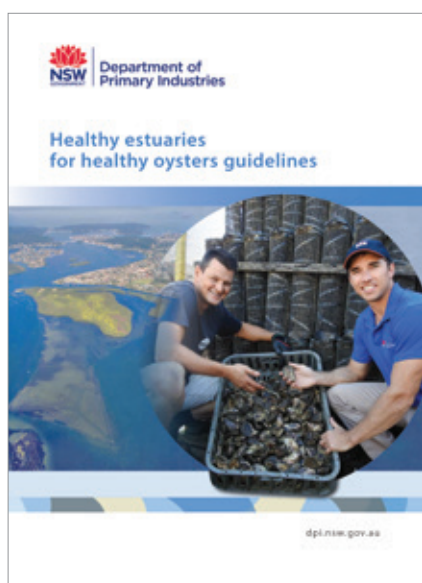
- food safety authorities – to reduce the cost of compliance with food safety standards
- growers – to improve on-farm productivity
- retailers – for food traceability and provenance
- researchers – to develop better ways of managing disease risk.

More information: theyield.com/

The salinity sensor network aims to provide a greater understanding of mortality issues, harmful algal blooms and possibly improve harvest area management plans through improved sustainability and better yields.

Oyster and land based aquaculture unaffected by state planning reforms

Proposed state planning reforms by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (the department) will not affect oyster and land based aquaculture (SEPP62).



The department proposes to improve the operation of the NSW planning framework (relating to primary production and rural development) by changing the planning system – to further support sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and rural development.

The provisions relating to SEPP62 are being carried over to the consolidated state environmental planning policy unamended.

The reform plan was one of a range of issues discussed at the November 2017 meeting of the NSW Shellfish Committee, held at NSWFA Headquarters.

Other topics included:

Financial audit of local shellfish programs

The NSW Food Authority is required to assess local shellfish programs' end of financial year records and statements to ensure funds are being used in accordance with legislation. The office of the NSW Auditor-General oversees this assessment and has advised that a more thorough evaluation of a few select local programs will occur from 2018 onwards. Local shellfish programs will be reminded of their responsibility to ensure all funds can be accounted for (right down to individual line items).

Healthy estuaries for healthy oysters guidelines

These guidelines were launched at the NSW Oyster Conference in Merimbula on 23 August 2017. They can be viewed and downloaded at the DPI Aquaculture website: dpi.nsw.gov.au/fishing/aquaculture

The NSW Shellfish Committee comprises six industry representatives (five oyster farmers and one wild harvest), the NSW Food Authority, DPI Fisheries, Aquatic Biosecurity and an OceanWatch Oyster Extension Officer. Other industry or government bodies attend as required.



Phil Baker appointed new chair of ASQAAC

The Food Authority's Senior Shellfish Operations Officer, Phil Baker, is the new Chair of the Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Advisory Committee (ASQAAC). The 39th meeting of the committee met in Adelaide last November, where Phil was elected for a two year term.

Major items discussed at the meeting included:

- proposed controls for imported shellfish
- alignment of biotoxin regulatory levels with international standards
- phytoplankton laboratory proficiency, and
- relay controls for biotoxin management.

DAIRY



Dairy has enjoyed a high compliance rate for a long time now, mainly due to food safety controls being correctly implemented.

Inspections and audits

From October 2017 to December 2017, the Food Authority conducted 25 inspections and 164 audits of licensed dairy businesses. This industry sector maintained a high compliance rate, with 96% of businesses recording an acceptable audit result. Dairy has enjoyed a high compliance rate for a long time now, mainly due to food safety controls being correctly implemented.

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 2016 and 2017.

Reporting period	Oct – Dec 2016	Oct – Dec 2017
Total audits	187	164
Total inspections	35	25
Acceptable audit rate	95%	96%



EGGS

Inspections and audits

From October 2017 to December 2017, the Food Authority conducted 24 inspections and 58 audits of licensed egg businesses. This industry sector has maintained a high compliance rate, with 95% of businesses recording an acceptable audit result.

The table below shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the egg sector between the same reporting periods in 2016 and 2017.

Reporting period	Oct – Dec 2016	Oct – Dec 2017
Total audits	45	58
Total inspections	31	24
Acceptable audit rate	95%	95%



From October 2017 to December 2017 the Food Authority conducted

24

inspections and

58

audits of licensed egg businesses.



PLANTS



This industry sector has recorded a compliance rate of

93%

However, given the small numbers of licensees in this sector that failed an audit, variances are not significant.

Inspections and audits

From October 2017 to December 2017, the Food Authority conducted eight inspections and 45 audits of licensed plant product businesses. This industry sector has recorded a compliance rate of 93%. However, given the small numbers of licensees in this sector that failed an audit, variances are not significant.

The table shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the plant sector between the same reporting periods in 2016 and 2017.

Reporting period	Oct – Dec 2016	Oct – Dec 2017
Total audits	38	45
Total inspections	11	8
Acceptable audit rate	92%	93%



VULNERABLE PERSONS



Inspections and audits

From October 2017 to December 2017, the Food Authority conducted 55 inspections and 394 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 is due to the correct implementation of food safety controls and ensuring staff have the necessary skills and knowledge.

The table below shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the vulnerable persons sector between the same reporting periods in 2016 and 2017.

Reporting period	Oct – Dec 2016	Oct – Dec 2017
Total audits	379	394
Total inspections	43	55
Acceptable audit rate	97%	98%



From October 2017 to December 2017 the Food Authority conducted

55

inspections and

394

audits of licensed hospitals and aged care businesses.



New resources



Factsheets:

- 4 hour / 2 hour rule
- Regulatory food safety auditor (RFSA) system

Translations:

- Retail meat combined food safety program and retail diary – Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Turkish and Arabic

Other:

- Allergen Survey 2018
- Annual Report 2016-17

Retail food safety guide author awarded FRP Scholarship



Amy Schembri (pictured above with Professor Barney Glover, Vice-Chancellor of Western Sydney University) has been awarded the NSW Food Authority Food Regulation Partnership (FRP) Scholarship in Environmental Health for 2017.

An environmental health officer at Penrith City Council, Amy helped develop a food safety guide for food retailers that outlines Food Standards Code requirements and how to achieve them.

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The FRP Scholarship was established in 2008. It promotes the importance of food safety and supports opportunities in food surveillance careers through undergraduate training and networking.

It is available to students enrolled in the Bachelor of Natural Science (Environmental Management) degree at Western Sydney University who undertake a food safety based project.