

FOODWISE

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



Manufacturing Rice Based Desserts

Rice based desserts or ‘rice cakes’ are very popular in Asia and commonly sold in Asian grocery stores in NSW.

Due to their abundant nutrients, high water activity and almost neutral pH, they are a good medium for microbial growth. This means they meet the criteria to be categorised as a potentially hazardous food (PHF) and are required to be stored under temperature control.

However, if the products are made under controlled conditions, they are safe to be consumed within 48 hours of manufacturing, even when they are stored at room temperature.

They are a good medium for microbial growth, due to their abundant nutrients, high water activity and almost neutral pH and meet the criteria to be categorised as a potentially hazardous food.

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Department of
Primary Industries
Food Authority



Calendar dates

SEPTEMBER 2017

22

Sydney Royal Taste of Excellence Awards (RAS)

OCTOBER 2017

17

NSW Seafood Industry Forum, Sydney

NOVEMBER 2017

TBC

Vulnerable Persons Industry Forum

8

NSW Shellfish Committee

9

Retail & Food Service Information Session and Food Regulation Partnership Forum, Parramatta

Peter Commins hangs up his badge

After almost 45 years on the job, Peter Commins, Systems Integrity Officer with the DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance team, has hung up his Authorised Officer badge for the last time.



Peter Commins

Peter joined the Dairy Industry Authority as a trainee Field Officer back in 1977, when he was given a scholarship to study Dairy Technology at Hawkesbury Agricultural College before officially earning the title of Dairy Field Officer.

Peter was kept very busy in his 45 years in food safety having worked in all capacities including as a Field Officer, Standardising Officer, Field Manager Southern Region, Enforcement Officer and Systems Integrity Officer. He was also involved in implementing and auditing all Food Safety Schemes, was an accredited Authorised Officer for Export of dairy and eggs, has been on every oyster estuary on the coast, and was a

representative on various committees such as the Environment Committee for Wingecarribee and Hawkesbury Councils.

For 35 of his 45 years with us, he also took on the role of Dairy Produce Judge for the Royal Agricultural Society.

We have no doubt that Peter's vast experience, guidance and gentle manner was well regarded by all stakeholders in the NSW food industry, matched only by that of his colleagues.

We wish Peter all the best in his well-earned retirement years with his family.

We have no doubt that Peter's vast experience, guidance and gentle manner was well regarded by all stakeholders in the NSW food industry, matched only by that of his colleagues. We wish Peter all the best in his well-earned retirement years with his family.

Business as usual for Biosecurity & Food Safety Compliance

Due to changes brought in by the new Biosecurity Legislation on 1 July 2017, compliance officers are now authorised to administer the new *Biosecurity Act 2015* as well as the *Food Act 2003*.



Now known as Biosecurity & Food Safety (BFS) compliance officers, they continue to be committed to enforcing a high level of compliance in food businesses.

Now known as Biosecurity & Food Safety (BFS) compliance officers, they continue to be committed to enforcing a high level of compliance in food businesses. They do this by ensuring food industries meet previously set compliance targets, respond to food incidents as well as undertake compliance investigations. On average, BFS compliance officers complete around 1,000 audits and inspections of food businesses a month which can result in several enforcement actions as well as up to as many as 30 foodborne illness investigations.

The recent changes have seen the role of BFS compliance officers extend to ensure that potential biosecurity risks are now also managed before an outbreak can occur. This includes auditing Interstate Certification Assurance's (ICA) programs, issuing plant health certificates, as well as performing investigations originating from industry and community complaints involving plants, animals and bees. BFS compliance officers are also tasked with surveillance on fruit fly traps, take samples for testing and identification of different plant types, such as cannabis, as well as enforcement actions such as advisory and warning letters, issuing penalty and seizure notices.

The recent changes have seen the role of BFS compliance officers extend to ensure that potential biosecurity risks are now also managed before an outbreak can occur.

Good biosecurity practices benefit business through increased access to premium markets around the globe, improved efficiencies and yield, decreased costs of production and benefits our environment and community through the supply of healthy safe food.

BFS compliance officers enforce the Food and Biosecurity Acts, under the Compliance Policy and Enforcement Policy (refer article page 11).

While the responsibilities of BFS Compliance have broadened, the faces, uniform and regulatory requirements remain the same and officers will continue to work closely with all businesses to ensure that the best possible compliance outcomes are achieved.

Free online allergen training for food service now available!

A FREE online training course was recently launched by the National Allergy Strategy, a partnership between Australia's peak allergy bodies, the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCI) and Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia (A&AA).



The course addresses the following information:

- Food allergen risks for allergic consumers
- The most common food allergens
- Safe food preparation for allergic customers
- Safe food storage for allergic customers
- Communicating about allergy causing foods with other staff
- Communicating about allergy causing foods with suppliers
- Communicating about allergy causing foods with customers
- What to do if a customer has an allergic reaction
- Useful websites for more information

You can access the free *All about Allergens* online training, via a National Allergy Strategy website at foodallergytraining.org.au

The *All about Allergens* online training was developed in response to engagement with key stakeholders in the food service industry.

The *All about Allergens* online training was developed in response to engagement with key stakeholders in the food service industry.

The comprehensive program provides need to know information relevant for those in the food service industry. It contains five units and was designed using videos and interactive activities so that information is presented in a fast, engaging and easy to understand way. It even includes a final quiz where participants can print out a certificate following successful completion.

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Lupin added to mandatory allergen labelling list

On 25 May this year, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) added lupin to the list of 9 allergens that currently must be declared on food labels. Food businesses have 12 months to meet the requirement.



From 25 May 2018, the 10 foods or ingredients that must be declared are **peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, sesame seeds, fish, shellfish, soy, wheat and now lupin**. These ingredients must be declared on the food label whenever they are present as ingredients or as components of food additives or processing aids. Sulphites in concentrations of 10mg/kg or more must also be declared on food labels of packaged foods.

Lupin, like other protein containing foods (such as peanut, soybean, dairy or shellfish) may trigger an allergic reaction in a small number of people. Lupin 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.

Remember, 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 if requested. Food service staff must provide accurate information when a customer asks about allergens in foods that are being served.

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Consumers have a legal right to receive, on request, written or verbal information on allergen content when buying takeaway foods or eating out.

All allergen resources developed by the NSW Food Authority will be updated to include Lupin as an allergen that must be declared on food labels prior to 25 May 2018.



Biosecurity – protecting NSW’s economy, environment and community



The *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) and the *Biosecurity Regulations 2017* were rolled out as scheduled on 1 July 2017, creating a new landscape for minimising, preventing and eliminating biosecurity risks in NSW.

Commencement of the Act

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The new Act and regulations provide a new, clearer framework for improving biosecurity.

There are extensive resources available online to help understand and apply the new legislation, including factsheets, forms, policies, procedures and links to the [Biosecurity Act 2015](#). Visit the NSW DPI website at dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurityact to review these resources.

General biosecurity duty – a shared responsibility

The NSW Biosecurity Strategy 2013-2021 introduced the principle of shared responsibility with the vision:

‘Government, industry and the people of NSW working together to protect the economy, environment and community from the negative impacts of animal and plant pests, diseases and weeds for the benefit of the people of NSW.’

One of the key messages in rolling out the new legislation and regulations is that biosecurity is not just for primary producers or hobby farmers, but is something that everyone in NSW is a part of. This means that most people

will have a ‘general biosecurity duty’ when dealing with any biosecurity matter and carriers.

Essentially, you are not expected to know about all biosecurity risks, but you are expected to know about risks associated with your industry, business, day-to-day work and hobbies.

The general biosecurity duty supports the concept of ‘shared responsibility’. It increases flexibility in how we can manage biosecurity risks, such as animal and plant pests and diseases and contaminants. It provides a strong foundation for a proactive and outcome-focused framework based on education and advice instead of prescriptive regulations and processes, but also includes strong deterrents for non-compliance.

This reflects the NSW Government’s commitment to reducing red tape and strengthening relationships to drive economic growth, productivity and innovation and create a positive business environment. Industry and community stakeholders can play a proactive role in developing and implementing solutions to effectively manage biosecurity risks.

The NSW DPI website has factsheets, policies, procedures, forms and other useful information to help you understand your potential general biosecurity duty as well as the more

regulatory management tools in place. Visit dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurityact to access this information.

Food security

People around the world share a heightened awareness of the constraints facing world food production.

Modelling indicates that global food production will need to double between now and 2050 to meet expected demand. It is clearly important that we do everything we can to protect our food production from pests, diseases and weeds that negatively affect productivity; this includes protecting our stored and dried food products and our agricultural and fisheries resources.

Food security covers a broad range of issues as it is a critical component of the entire food industry supply chain in NSW, from paddock to plate.

Biosecurity Act 2015 Training and Implementation Program

To adequately prepare Authorised Officers tasked with Compliance and Enforcement duties under The Act, a comprehensive training and implementation program was developed and delivered by the NSW DPI Biosecurity & Food Safety (BFS) Compliance Training unit, with the assistance of ~ 30 Local Land Services, Local Control Authorities, NSW Fisheries and Invasive Species Officer knowledge champions.

Ten on-line educational modules were developed through the Department's emergency management learning and management system (LMS) portal EMTrain.

These modules focus on key components of The Act, and were designed to address not only the base level of knowledge required for an Authorised Officer to undertake their compliance and enforcement duties, but drive consistency with respect to proportionate and risk based decision making, and compliance and enforcement response.

The content of the modules was further designed to enable the understanding of the general biosecurity duty and risk based decision making; the interaction of biosecurity legislation instruments; Authorised Officer powers; the use of management, enforcement and compliance tools; and to determine when there is a breach of the legislation, what offences and accompanying penalties apply.

From May to August 2017, 889 officers attended an intensive face to face program delivered across 31 locations through 59 sessions, complementing the almost 1,000 people who have completed the EMTrain on-line learning modules.

While the on-line modules and face to face training program serve as resources for Authorised Officers,

they can also be used as an educational resource for industry and other stakeholders. The training enables stakeholders to increase knowledge and awareness of their roles and responsibilities under the Act, helping them to adequately prepare their business, operation systems and themselves for the prevention, elimination, minimisation and management of biosecurity risks or biosecurity impacts as required under the Act.

By successfully delivering this project, the BFS Compliance Training unit has assisted the Department in delivering on a major commitment of the NSW Biosecurity Strategy and NSW State Government priorities by:

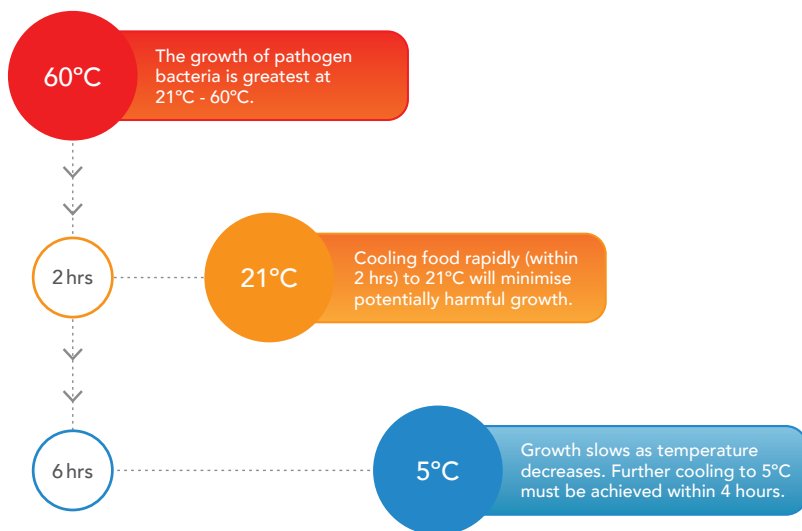
- Increasing compliance through education
- Increasing skills and knowledge of Authorised Officers
- Enabling consistency of Authorised Officers through resource development

The EMTrain system can be accessed at emtrain.dpi.nsw.gov.au

Modelling indicates that global food production will need to double between now and 2050 to meet expected demand. It is clearly important that we do everything we can to protect our food production.

Cooling potentially hazardous food

A common contributing factor to food poisoning in a food business is incorrect temperature zone. This is when food is held for too long at temperatures where harmful food poisoning bacteria can grow.



The procedure used to cool PHF will depend on the size or amount of the food to be cooled, the density of the food as well as the cooling capacity of the equipment used to cool the food.

The cooling of cooked PHF needs to be as quick as possible to prevent the growth of pathogenic bacteria to unsafe levels. The less time that cooked PHF remains at temperatures between 5°C and 60°C during the cooling process, the less opportunity there will be for foodborne pathogens to grow.

The procedure used to cool PHF will depend on the size or amount of the food to be cooled, the density of the food as well as the cooling capacity of the equipment used to cool the food.

For more information on how to ensure your cooked PHF is cooled correctly, including how you can safely reduce cooling times, refer to our Fact Sheet *Cooling Potentially Hazardous Food* at foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/retailfactsheets/cooling_potentially_hazardous_food.pdf

It is important that food businesses make sure cooked potentially hazardous food (PHF) has been cooled in accordance with the following standard from the Food Standards Code:

It is important that food businesses make sure cooked potentially hazardous food (PHF) has been cooled in accordance to Food Standards Code.

Standard 3.2.2, Clause 7(3) Food Standards Code

A food business must, when cooling cooked potentially hazardous food, cool the food:

- within two hours – from 60°C to 21°C, and
- within a further four hours – from 21°C to 5°C,

unless the food business demonstrates that the cooling process used will not adversely affect the microbiological safety of the food.

Name and Shame serves up nine years of food safety

The NSW Food Authority's Name and Shame register reached an important milestone recently, chalking up nine years of operation and more than 11 million views of its webpage.

The vast majority of food businesses in NSW do the right thing, however, since its establishment in July 2008, more than 7,000 food retail businesses have appeared on the register. At its peak in 2009/10, 3.4 per cent of food businesses in NSW were placed on

the register however that figure has fallen to just 1.6 per cent in the past financial year which is largely a result of very few repeat offenders.

Complementing the register is the *Scores on Doors* program, which highlights those businesses doing the right thing by displaying their food safety and hygiene score on the door, reassuring customers that food safety standards have been met.

Through the Food Regulation Partnership, the Food Authority and local councils work together at the retail business level to regularly inspect cafes, restaurants and retail food outlets to verify compliance with the Food Standards Code.

The role that local councils play in inspecting and educating these businesses is critical to ensuring continued improvement of food safety in NSW.

Biosecurity domestic quarantine Helpline dishes out one year of advice



The biosecurity domestic quarantine Helpline also had reason to celebrate recently, when they celebrated their first birthday!

One of the many benefits of the integration of biosecurity and food safety in DPI has been the ability to tap into well established, efficient food safety systems, including the Helpline.

We're delivering an enhanced customer experience, collecting data we can track and analyse, and improving business efficiency.

In its first year, the Helpline team have resolved 83% of the 2,700 biosecurity calls and emails received, this is in addition to the 20,690 food safety enquiries and complaints!

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Food Safety Culture

Food safety culture in a business is not just about processes, it's about behaviours. It's how everyone (owners, managers, employees) thinks and acts in their daily job to make sure that the food they make or serve is safe.



Wendy Henderson and Amanda Hill (FSANZ), Lone Jespersen (Chair of the Global Food Safety Initiative technical working group on Food Safety Culture) and Dr Craig Shadbolt (NSW Food Authority)

Food safety is about having pride in producing safe food every time, recognising that a good quality product must be safe to eat.

A good food safety culture can protect consumers from foodborne illness, a brand's reputation and a business from financial loss.

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Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) in partnership with the NSW Food Authority recently ran a workshop demonstrating why food safety is everyone's responsibility. The workshop also highlighted the importance of focusing on food safety culture and behaviour-based models to drive improvements with food safety requirements in food businesses.

It was well attended by over 50 officers from local, state and interstate government as well as staff from the Food Authority.

Participants heard from Amanda Hill and Wendy Henderson from FSANZ, as well as Lone Jespersen, Chair of the Global Food Safety Initiative technical working group on Food Safety Culture. A workshop/discussion session was facilitated which examined the current culture of businesses and agencies and explored ways to improve food safety culture of food businesses.

FSANZ is developing national resources to assist businesses, and the input from workshop participants was valuable.

Visit the Food Safety Culture section of the FSANZ website at foodstandards.gov.au/foodsafety/culture/Pages/default.aspx for more information, access to resources and to undertake a health check of the food safety culture currently within your food business.

You can also stay informed and get involved by emailing foodsafetyculture@foodstandards.gov.au to join the food safety culture partnership.

Education – our most effective compliance tool



Bruce Christie delivers the Gold Partner address to delegates

The NSW Food Authority were once again proud to be the Gold Partner of the Australian Institute of Food Science & Technology (AIFST) 50th Anniversary Convention held in Sydney recently. Deputy Director General Biosecurity & Food Safety, Bruce Christie gave the Gold Partner Address where he welcomed almost 500 delegates to the Convention.

Leaders from the Australian food industry shared their insights around the importance and impact of technology, science and innovation on the industry moving into the future.

Themed *The Future of Food*, leaders from the Australian food industry shared their insights around the importance and impact of technology, science and innovation on the industry moving into the future.

With an estimated 600 million people worldwide falling ill after eating contaminated food*, Craig Shadbolt, Manager, Food Incident Response & Complaints delivered a presentation on work that Biosecurity & Food Safety are doing to reduce the incidence of foodborne outbreaks, work that has already started to yield positive results in Australia, particularly in NSW.

Our most effective compliance tool is education, and CEO Food Authority Lisa Szabo, Research Horticulturist SP Singh and Senior Labelling Compliance Investigator Andrew Davies all contributed to this by also delivering presentations, ensuring Convention delegates are aware of their obligations so our food stays safe, our communities stay healthy and consumers can continue to make informed choices.

More information on the AIFST can be found at aifst.asn.au/

*World Health Organization (2015). WHO estimates of the global burden of foodborne diseases, Foodborne disease burden epidemiology reference group 2007 – 2015, Switzerland.

Achieving compliance

NSW DPI Biosecurity and Food Safety compliance officers protect the environment and community by reducing, removing and mitigating the risk of harm to people and the environment.

They do this by enforcing and monitoring compliance with the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and the *Food Act 2003* as outlined in the Compliance Policy and Enforcement Policy.

The *Biosecurity and Food Safety Compliance Policy* details how we encourage voluntary compliance and detect and deter non-compliant behaviours.

The *Biosecurity and Food Safety Enforcement Policy* details how we encourage compliance through proportionate and escalated enforcement actions that ensure fairness and consistency.

You can access both policies at foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/ip/audits-and-compliance/compliance

Goulburn hosts the retail food service information session



Dr Lisa Szabo, CEO NSW Food Authority, Cr Paul Braybrooks, Chair of the Food Regulation Partnership and Goulburn Mulwaree Mayor, Bob Kirk

Over 100 participants attended a Retail and Food Service Information Session at Goulburn on 20 July 2017.

The event was organised by NSW Food Authority in partnership with Goulburn-Mulwaree Council.

This free event brought together representatives from local food businesses and charities, council Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) and representatives from NSW Biosecurity and Food Safety branch to discuss food safety regulation.

After the formal welcome by Goulburn-Mulwaree Mayor Bob Kirk, attendees heard from the regulators about food safety topics including managing allergens as well as updates on popular programs such as *Scores on Doors* and *Name and Shame*. Following the presentations, the panel answered questions on topics ranging from footpath dining permits to the safety of reusable travel mugs.

Feedback from attendees praised the knowledge of the speakers, the

organisation of the day and the ability to ask questions of regulators in an open forum.

The Retail and Food Service Information Session provides a valuable and unique platform for open dialogue between retail food businesses, councils and staff from the Biosecurity and Food Safety Branch. The session is attended by members of the Food Regulation Forum ministerial advisory committee such as Local Government NSW, Environmental Health Australia and NSW Small Business Commissioner, helping inform and represent our key stakeholders.

The next Retail and Food Service Information Session will take place in Parramatta on 9 November 2017.

FSANZ Call for submissions

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

Call for submissions – P1028 – Infant Formula

To revise and clarify standards relating to infant formula comprising category definitions, composition and labelling. Written submissions are due by **6pm (Canberra time) 28 September 2017**.

Read more: foodstandards.gov.au/code/proposals/Pages/P1028.aspx

Call for submissions – A1143 – Food derived from DHA Canola Line NS-B50027-4

To seek approval for food derived from canola line NS-B50027-4, genetically modified to produce omega-3 long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids, particularly DHA, in the seed. Written submissions are due by **6pm (Canberra time) 26 October 2017**. Read more: foodstandards.gov.au/code/applications/Pages/A1143-DHA-Canola-Line-NS%E2%80%93B500274.aspx

*reproduced with permission from Food Standards Australia New Zealand

Prosecution - MC Yee Noodle Factory



A Sydney noodle manufacturer was recently fined a total of \$27,000 and ordered to pay professional costs of \$9,000 after he pleaded guilty in the Downing Centre Local Court

to 13 charges relating to failures in hygiene, construction failures and harbouring pests on food premises.

In facts tendered to the court, NSW Food Authority officers inspecting the premises noted the walls, floors and ceiling of the building were not sealed and didn't prevent the entry of pests, that there was pest, rodent and cockroach activity within the food processing and storage areas, that food wasn't adequately protected from potential contamination and that surfaces, fittings, fixtures and equipment were unclean with accumulation of food waste, grease, oil and other visible matter.

CEO of the NSW Food Authority Dr Lisa Szabo said "this really is a reminder for businesses to put some thought to upholding the highest food safety standards, if you do the wrong thing you will suffer the consequences.

"NSW consumers deserve to have confidence in knowing the food they purchase is safe to eat and will cause no harm to them or their family."

Further information about current food safety breaches in NSW can be found on the NSW Food Authority's Name and Shame register at foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/offences

Prosecution - Bill's Chicken

A Sydney chicken producer was recently prosecuted and fined \$34,000 by the NSW Food Authority and ordered to pay more than \$6,000 in costs after pleading guilty to 12 breaches of the Food Standards Code relating to failures in hygiene, maintenance and Food Safety Program monitoring.

He also pleaded guilty to two charges under section 21 of the Act for failing to comply with the Food Standards Code.

Included in the facts tendered to the Court were photographs and observations that showed rusted and corroded trolleys and benches used to transport and process chicken meat intended for sale; that there was no

soap or paper towel in staff change rooms to keep their hands clean, processing equipment and utensils such as knives were unclean and there was visible rubbish and cigarette butts on the premises.

CEO of the NSW Food Authority Dr Lisa Szabo said the court result served as a reminder to all food businesses and individuals as to why food safety systems are crucial.

"Food businesses are obliged to keep their premises clean and properly maintained and ensure their food is safe and suitable for human consumption and comply with the standards in the *NSW Food Act 2003*," Dr Szabo said.

"We demand a high level of food safety is upheld across the food supply chain because it serves as an important protection measure of public health.

The Food Authority will continue to check for, and take enforcement action against, licensed businesses that fail to maintain their premises and equipment to a standard that ensures the safe production of food in NSW.

Details of the case has since been added to the [Name & Shame Register of offences \(prosecutions\)](http://foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/offences/prosecutions/offences-details-bills-chicken) list on the Food Authority website at foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/offences/prosecutions/offences-details-bills-chicken

MEAT



From April 2017 to June 2017, the Food Authority conducted

381

inspections and

726

audits of licensed meat businesses.

Inspections and audits

From April 2017 to June 2017, the Food Authority conducted 381 inspections and 726 audits of licensed meat businesses. This industry sector has recorded an improvement in compliance rate of 96% for previous financial year 2016-17.

The improvement in the compliance rate was a result of the introduction of the Audit Notification letter which was implemented in October 2016. Licensees are now being provided with this letter to advise 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.

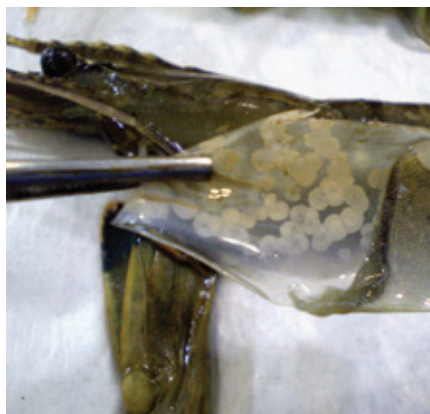
The below table shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the meat sector between reporting years 2015/16 and 2016/17.

| Reporting period | 2015 / 16 | 2016 / 17 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Total audits | 2755 | 2645 |
| Total inspections | 1879 | 2189 |
| Acceptable audit rate | 87% | 96% |



SEAFOOD

Stop White Spot – new control orders in place



NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has made an amendment to the *Biosecurity (White Spot Disease of crustaceans) Control Order 2017* to allow for the movement of certain decapod crustaceans from the Queensland White Spot infected area into NSW that have been assessed as negligible risk provided strict biosecurity measures are in place.

However, DPI would like to remind everyone that it is crucial to maintain continued vigilance to ensure NSW remains free of White Spot.

Species that are now allowed to be moved (uncooked) into NSW under the revised Control Order include blue swimmer crabs, mud crabs, lobsters and spanner crabs. **Movement of these species is considered of negligible risk if the following biosecurity conditions are met, including:**

Inspections and audits

From April 2017 to June 2017, the Food Authority conducted 200 inspections and 85 audits of licensed seafood businesses. This industry sector has recorded a compliance rate of 93%.

The main areas where critical defects have been raised at audit continue to be with process control, analytical testing, and food safety program monitoring. There have been no consecutive audit failures and the vast majority of defects raised have been rectified immediately which demonstrates 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 2015/16 and 2016/17.

| Reporting period | 2015 / 16 | 2016 / 17 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Total audits | 674 | 407 |
| Total inspections | 1357 | 1175 |
| Acceptable audit rate | 90% | 93% |

- The product to be moved is destined for human consumption only, and
- All wastes and waste water must be disposed of to council approved landfill or sewer systems, and
- No live animals or uncooked product of the animals moved are to be returned to any NSW waterway.

Authorised Officers from DPI will be undertaking activities to ensure compliance with these biosecurity conditions.

If you suspect an incursion of white spot or any other disease, please contact the 24 hour emergency animal disease hotline on 1800 675 888 or your local Fisheries Officer immediately.

More information can be found at dpi.nsw.gov.au/about-us/media-centre/releases/2017/stop-white-spot-spreading-check-out-new-control-orders



Two new harvest areas approved for export

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources recently approved Goodnight Island harvest area in Shoalhaven River and Top Lake harvest area in Merimbula Lake for export. This approval allows shellfish from these areas to be exported overseas.

This brings the total number of export approved harvest areas to 26, which represents just over a third of the total number of harvest areas in NSW.

In order for harvest areas to achieve export approval, the local shellfish program must show an exemplary level of compliance with both the

NSW Shellfish Program and the Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program requirements.

Congratulations to both the Goodnight Island and Top Lake harvest areas for their continued efforts to produce safe food, and as a result, achieve export status.

Managing the risks of ciguatera poisoning

Ciguatera Poisoning is a form of food poisoning, and the most common food poisoning event related to finfish consumption in Australia. It is caused by eating warm water finfish that carry ciguatera poison (toxin). These are generally fish that spend some or most of their life-cycle on coral reefs, however, not all tropical reefs are affected and some fish are less susceptible than others. Of fish in Australia, Spanish Mackerel has caused the highest number of cases of ciguatera poisoning.

The University of Technology Sydney (UTS) recently conducted a study to learn more about ciguatera poisoning. The results suggested that the relationship with a size of a fish, and the likelihood of it carrying ciguatera poison (toxin) requires further investigation. There was also evidence to suggest that consuming the head or other viscera of toxic fish, such as the intestines, roe or liver, may increase

exposure as well as the severity of the symptoms.

There are a number of strategies in place to manage ciguatera poisoning, with sales of high risk fish limited, and risk reduction programs operated by regulators as well as industry.

We know that ciguatera toxin does not affect the appearance, odour or taste of a fish and that processes like cooking or freezing will not destroy the toxin and there is no method for removing it from the fish.

A fact sheet *Ciguatera Poisoning* was recently developed to assist fishers understand the symptoms and how to manage the risk. This can be accessed on our website at foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/retailfactsheets/ciguatera_poisoning.pdf

It is also recommended that fishers are aware of ciguatera high-risk areas and species size limits.

It is recommended that fishers are aware of ciguatera high-risk areas and species size limits.

This information is available in the Sydney Fish Market's Schedule, *Seafood Handling Guidelines* at sydneyfishmarket.com.au/Portals/0/PDF/seafoodhandlingguidelines.pdf

If you wish to view the results of the study, you can access *Safeguarding seafood consumers in New South Wales from ciguatera fish poisoning* at frdc.com.au/research/Final_Reports/2014-035%20-%20DLD.pdf



In Australia, Spanish Mackerel has caused the highest number of cases of ciguatera poisoning



Risk Assessment of the Seafood Safety Scheme

The NSW Food Authority recently updated the risk assessment for the Seafood Food Safety Scheme.

The risk assessment examined possible risks that can impact upon food safety of the seafood in NSW and provides scientific and technical information to maintain and improve seafood safety. It supports continuation of the scheme and notes low levels of familiar common problems and some emerging issues.

Seafood supply in NSW comes from three major sources, i.e. wild catch, aquaculture and imported products. This risk assessment considered only those risks that can impact upon food safety of the seafood in NSW (imported seafood products are required to meet

the same national food standards) and was conducted using the Codex Alimentarius Commission approach that consists of the following steps:

1. hazard identification
2. hazard characterisation
3. exposure assessment, and
4. risk characterisation.

The risk assessment conducted on seafood products from the three major supply chains identified the following key health hazards associated with each:

- **Wild catch** - scombroid poisoning, ciguatoxin and norovirus
- **Aquaculture** - potential environmental pollutants, algal biotoxins and norovirus

- **Imported products** - microbiological contamination (*Listeria monocytogenes*) and histamine detection

The Seafood Risk Assessment also looked at the risks of different categories of seafood and found histamine (scombroid poisoning), biotoxins and bacterial contamination (*Vibrio* spp.) as the major concerns in NSW, affecting fish, shellfish and crustaceans, respectively.

You can access the updated Risk Assessment of the Seafood food safety scheme at foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/scienceandtechnical/risk_assessment_seafood_safety_scheme.pdf

An overview of seafood supply, food safety and regulation in NSW

CEO Food Authority and Group Director Food Safety, Dr Lisa Szabo, along with members of the Food Science team; Malik Hussain, Themy Saputra and Bruce Nelan, recently had an article published in *Foods*, a peer-reviewed, scientific online journal which was titled *An Overview of Seafood Supply, Food Safety and Regulation in New South Wales, Australia*.

The article provided a brief overview of seafood sources, food safety concerns, foodborne illness outbreaks and regulation of the seafood industry in NSW.

NSW has a dynamic seafood industry that ensures the supply of a variety of high quality seafood products, which pose a low food safety risk to consumers.

With seafood consumption increasing in Australia, especially in NSW where average per capita seafood consumption is higher than the national average (currently 15kg), this is great news for consumers of seafood. It comes as a result of a coordinated approach by multiple agencies who regulate and manage the food safety of seafood in NSW,

with the NSW Food Authority playing a major role. It does this by adopting a holistic approach to managing overall risks through implementation of the Seafood Safety Scheme, targeted programs to control specific hazards and by partnering with local government who inspect restaurants and cafes.

You can access the full article at mdpi.com/2304-8158/6/7/52/htm

DAIRY



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.

Inspections and audits

From April 2017 to June 2017, the Food Authority conducted 30 inspections and 143 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 2015/16 and 2016/17.

| Reporting period | 2015 / 16 | 2016 / 17 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Total audits | 745 | 778 |
| Total inspections | 249 | 176 |
| Acceptable audit rate | 93% | 97% |





NSW Dairy Industry Consultative Committee, May 2017

Issues considered by the committee at its meeting in Sydney on 23 May included:

Figures from the **Food Safety Program Compliance Report**, 1 July 2016 to 31 December 2016 include 441 audits (12 failed audits), 101 inspections (10 failed inspections).

The Committee noted the top three audit items where higher observed levels of critical issues were identified during the period were within process control (failure to complete monitoring records and paperwork), food safety programs and analytical and testing.

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With a target of 95% compliance across all sectors by 2021, members were advised that the dairy industry is doing very well with the compliance rate already over this target at 96%.

Members also noted key food safety indicators and industry trends for the

last three years for dairy producers and processors which had been developed in association with Safe Food Production Queensland to harness current practices and monitoring data to provide a more targeted and efficient approach to verification. This included bulk milk cell counts, total plate counts, pickup temperatures, antibiotics and pathogen notifications.

An update was given on the **National Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Strategy** to increase awareness and understanding of AMR and its implications for both human and animal health. It was noted that the Australian dairy industry's use of antibiotics is one of the lowest in the world, and strict regulatory and commercial controls are applied to both the supply and use of antimicrobial drugs in dairy cattle.

It was recognised that Australia is in a good position with antibiotic use, and the ones that are used are not of any real concern, with the exception of Ceftiofur which the industry needs to be aware of. Members were advised that the Department is currently developing a strategy in which it will seek input from committee members and which will be made available to industry.

The Committee received a demonstration on the **food labelling portal** on the Food Authority website.

The Committee received a demonstration on the food labelling portal on the Food Authority website.

The portal was launched late in 2016, and was designed to help people deconstruct the areas of Country of Origin labelling. The next phase is to provide a self-assessment tool that can be used for food packaging labelling which will be product rather than industry based. There was positive feedback from members on this initiative as it helps industry and consumers understand the new labelling requirements.

Other items discussed included the **Evaluation of NSW Dairy Food Safety Scheme**, a demonstration on the **Raw Milk Cheese Food Safety Tool** as well as a **Communications and Biosecurity Legislation** update.

For a full summary of meeting outcomes, visit foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/industry/nsw_DCCM_outcomes_may_2017.pdf

EGGS

Antibiotic use in the Australian egg industry

An article on antibiotic use in the Australian egg industry was recently written by Dr Peter Scott, Managing Director of Scolexia and published in Eggstra, an Australian Eggs publication.

In the article, Dr Scott states that “the intensive animal industries and companion animals have a responsibility in the judicious use of antibiotics to limit the occurrence of antibiotic resistance in the treatment of bacterial disease” and that it “is not only for the sustainability of therapeutic antibiotic use in animals but also the concern about cross over of antibiotic resistance organisms into humans.”

An article on antibiotic use in the Australian egg industry was recently written by Dr Peter Scott, Managing Director of Scolexia and published in Eggstra, an Australian Eggs publication.

Inspections and audits

From April 2017 to June 2017, the Food Authority conducted 4 inspections and 56 audits of licensed egg businesses. This industry sector has recorded a high compliance rate with 97% of businesses recording an acceptable audit.

The below table shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the egg sector between reporting years 2015/16 and 2016/17.

| Reporting period | 2015 / 16 | 2016 / 17 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Total audits | 152 | 207 |
| Total inspections | 102 | 55 |
| Acceptable audit rate | 93% | 98% |

It is acknowledged that Australia ranks as amongst the lowest in the world in terms of the amount of antibiotics used in the intensive animal industries. “To ensure the Australian egg industry maintains, and even improves its status, it will continue its role in the National Antibiotic Stewardship program and will also continue to be involved in both formal and informal antibiotic residue and resistance surveys.”

“By collectively implementing good husbandry, quality facilitation and in-feed additives the productivity and welfare of layers can be maintained with the reduced use of antimicrobials and the Australian layer industry can continue to achieve best world practice.”

The full article, including information on the current situation in Australia, the consequences of increases in birds farmed under free range and cage-free systems and antibiotic resistance in humans, can be accessed in the Eggstra 2017 Summer edition at aecl.org/media/publications/

**Reproduced with the permission of Dr Peter Scott, B.Sc., B.V.Sc., PhD.*

It is acknowledged that Australia ranks as amongst the lowest in the world in terms of the amount of antibiotics used in the intensive animal industries.



Egg Industry Consultative Committee, August 2017



Issues considered by the committee at its meeting in Sydney on 9 August included:

Figures from the **Food Safety Program Compliance Report**, 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 include 207 audits (4 failed audits) and 55 inspections.

The Committee noted the top three audit items where higher observed levels of critical issues were identified during the period were within construction and maintenance (25%), process control (20%) and hygiene and sanitation (10%).

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During the 12-month reporting period there was a reduction in foodborne illness outbreaks in comparison with previous years. It was also noted that during this period there were a total of 53 instances of egg stamping machines breaking down, and in all cases, the Department worked closely with the licensee to ensure traceability systems were in place until required repairs were completed.

Members were advised that delivery of the **Salmonella Strategy** in NSW is on track with the rate of *Salmonella* Typhimurium reduced from 13 outbreaks in 2014, to just one recorded so far this year. The development and publication of *Food safety guidelines for the preparation of raw egg products* as well as ongoing training for local council EHOs and retail food businesses and targeted compliance operations – have all contributed to the reduction.

A presentation titled **Egg exports overview** was given by a representative from DPI's International Engagement unit. Members were advised of ways that the Department can support industry in providing opportunities for access to international markets; including an outline of potential opportunities, and also included an update on Korea's egg import status.

Members were advised that delivery of the **Salmonella Strategy** in NSW is on track with the rate of *Salmonella* Typhimurium reduced from 13 outbreaks in 2014, to just one recorded so far this year. The development and publication of *Food safety guidelines for the preparation of raw egg products* as well as ongoing training... have all contributed to the reduction.

Other items discussed included an update on the **anti-microbial resistance strategy**, the **enforcement approach relating to cracked and dirty eggs** and the **notification of egg stamping machinery failures**. A **Communications and Biosecurity Legislation** update was also given.

For a full summary of meeting outcomes, visit foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/industry/EICC_9_Aug_2017_summary_of_outcomes.pdf

PLANTS



From April 2017 to June 2017, the Food Authority conducted

12

inspections and

29

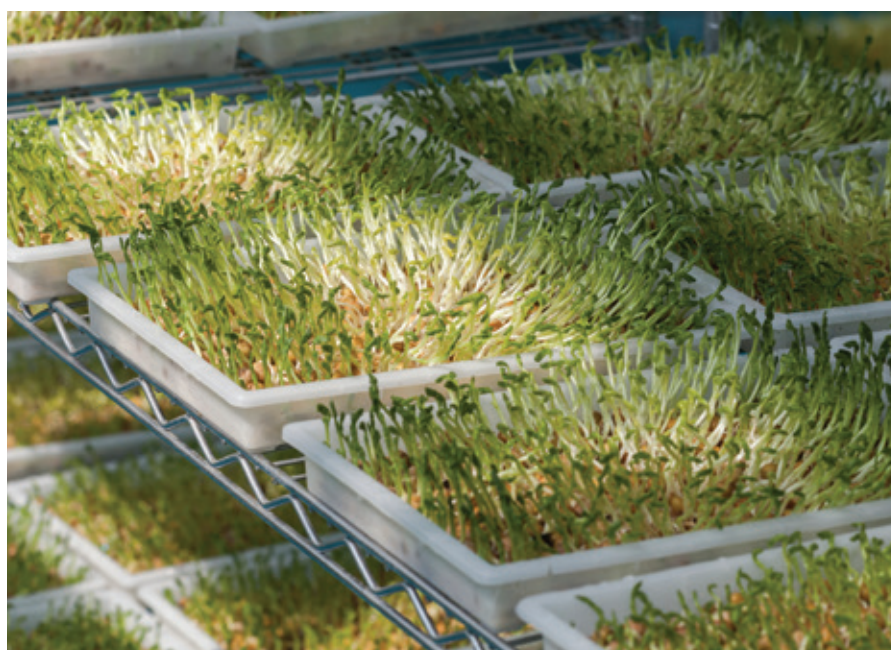
audits of licensed plant product businesses.

Inspections and audits

From April 2017 to June 2017, the Food Authority conducted 12 inspections and 29 audits of licensed plant product businesses. This industry sector has recorded a compliance rate of 90%.

The below table shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the plant sector between reporting years 2015/16 and 2016/17.

| Reporting period | 2015 / 16 | 2016 / 17 |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Total audits | 145 | 125 |
| Total inspections | 103 | 54 |
| Acceptable audit rate | 78% | 91% |



VULNERABLE PERSONS



Inspections and audits

From April 2017 to June 2017, the Food Authority conducted 89 inspections and 526 audits of licensed hospitals and aged care businesses. The sector has maintained a high compliance rate with 98% of businesses recording an acceptable audit result. The sector has maintained this high compliance rate for an extended period due to the correct implementation of food safety controls and ensuring staff have the necessary skills and knowledge.

The below table shows yearly comparable data for compliance and audit activity in the vulnerable persons sector between reporting years 2015/16 and 2016/17.

| Reporting period | 2015 / 16 | 2016 / 17 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Total audits | 1785 | 1926 |
| Total inspections | 121 | 293 |
| Acceptable audit rate | 98% | 98% |



This industry sector has maintained a high compliance rate of

98%

for an extended period, due to the correct implementation of food safety controls and ensuring staff have the necessary skills and knowledge.



Continued from front page...

To reduce the risk of food poisoning when making these products, certain conditions must be followed, incorporating:

- high quality ingredients
- effective heat treatment
- hygienic handling of food
- the correct 'use by' date

To reduce the risk of food poisoning when making these products, the following conditions must be followed:

- **High quality ingredients** should be purchased from reputable suppliers and stored as per the manufacturer's instructions.
- Use an **effective heat treatment** - this means either steaming or boiling for at least 15 minutes and placing sweet soup desserts in a small container as soon as possible after cooking to make sure they cool quickly (refer to page 8 for the article on the importance of cooling cooked PHF correctly)
- Always **handle food hygienically** which means keeping ready-to-eat and raw ingredients separately and ensuring all food contact surfaces and equipment are not used for both without being thoroughly cleaned and sanitised in between use. All food handlers

must have the appropriate skills and knowledge appropriate to their activities and adequate hand washing is undertaken regularly, preferably using single-use towels to dry hands.

- The **shelf life** of products that are manufactured using high quality ingredients, with sufficient cooking time and in a clean and hygienic processing area can be displayed at room temperature for up to 48 hours. The 'use by' date on the product must be: manufacturing date + 1 day.

Further information can be found in the factsheet Manufacturing Rice Based Desserts at foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/industry/rice_based_desserts.pdf

You can also refer to the Project Outcomes report which outlines details around the Rice Based Desserts Project including the issue, what we did, what we found, the outcome as well as the next steps. This can be accessed at foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/projectoutcomes/rice_based_desserts_project_outcomes.pdf

A survey of rice based desserts was also conducted, and these findings can be accessed at foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/scienceandtechnical/rice_based_desserts_survey.pdf

New resources



- Manufacturing rice based desserts – Factsheet, Project Outcomes and Survey Report
- Cooling potentially hazardous food – Factsheet
- Rice based desserts – Translations (Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai, Laos)
- Food recall plan – Translations (Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean)
- Nutrition Information Requirements – Translations (Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean)
- Edible Insects - Factsheet