

NSW Seafood Industry Forum

Wednesday 16 October 2013

Summary of meeting outcomes

The NSW Seafood Industry Forum (SIF) held a meeting in Sydney on Wednesday, 16 October 2013. Specific issues considered by the Forum at its meeting are detailed below.

NSW Food Authority food safety program compliance report

The Forum noted a report on the Authority's seafood compliance, enforcement and inspection activities during the period from 1 January to 30 June 2013. It was noted that during the period there had been 395 acceptable rated audits with the vast majority A rated, which meant they had received a score of 15 or less points at audit, and that the failure rate has been dropping over the last two reporting periods. This is a good result for the sector.

Members also received a breakdown of acceptable versus unacceptable audits by licence categories and of critical Corrective Action Requests (CAR's) issued across the seafood sector which result in an automatic audit failure. It was noted that process control continues to be the main reason for audit failures. A breakdown of overall CAR's issued during the period was also presented which indicated an increase in the level of CAR's issued for pre-requisite programs. An outline of enforcement activities in the sector during the period was also presented.

The Forum noted an outline of the Authority's vehicle inspection program conducted at the Sydney Fish Market (SFM) in April 2013 to focus on unlicensed food transport vehicles and maintenance of licensed vehicles. Over 60% of unlicensed vehicles found by Authority officers during the program had since applied for a licence. It was advised that the Authority's new wireless technology for its inspection system is of great benefit in tracking back businesses and it will continue to conduct similar inspection programs at the SFM in the future.

Licensed fishing boat project

Members noted a report tabled for information on a joint project between the Authority and NSW Fisheries to identify and escalate compliance with licensing of commercial fishing vessels. During the investigation the Authority data-matched 260 individuals against current licensed seafood businesses. The project has been successful in increasing levels of compliance and in making people aware of the requirement to be licensed if they wish to continue in the industry.

Health Claims Standard

An information paper on a new Health Claims Standard which commenced in January 2013 with a three year transition period for its implementation in January 2015 was noted. This was brought to members' attention to ensure that the seafood industry is aware of the truth in labelling requirements for claims made about nutritional content of food.

Publication of summary of review of seafood illnesses

The Forum received a paper presented on behalf of the Seafood Importers Association of Australasia Inc. raising concerns at the misinformation and misconception in the community about the safety of seafood consumption and recommending this be addressed in the public arena. It was noted that the Authority is working to formulate messages on the safety of seafood consumption for publication on its web-site and will also raise this issue through other forums on which it is represented.

Food Regulation 2010 statutory remake – user review survey findings

Members noted a paper outlining key findings of the User Review Survey conducted in July 2013 as part of the remake of the *Food Regulation 2010*. The Authority's Chief Executive Officer thanked the Forum for the participation of their members across the sectors in the survey, and indicated that there will be further consultation throughout the remake process.

The next meeting of the NSW Seafood Industry Forum will be held in the first half of 2014.