

**Retailers and Manufacturers Liaison Committee Meeting (RMLC) 29
Minutes and Actions
5 May 2015**

The meeting opened at 11.00am

Item 1 and 2 Welcome, minutes and actions arising

The Chair, Steve McCutcheon (FSANZ), welcomed participants to the meeting and noted that the actions arising from the previous meeting had all been completed except for Item 6.3 – Metal Contaminants, which was waiting on FSANZ to progress the project.

Item 3 Food Policy and regulations

Jenny Hazelton (Department of Health) provided updates on the matters below:

- Phase 1 of the review of mandatory fortification of bread is in the final stages. Once finalized, the report will be used to commence phase 2 where the Department of Health will work with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, looking at nutrient intakes in the diet and population health effects. Phase 3 will bring this all together, is out for tender and is expected to be completed by the second quarter of 2016. The report on Phase 1 is being shared only with contributors to the report at this time.
- Australian Guide to Healthy Eating will be rolled out towards the end of this month (currently undertaking work with indigenous people) and completed by the end of the financial year.
- Review of nutrient reference values is close to finalisation. Currently working on sodium, fluoride and iodine. Once finalised, this will then go out for public consultation with the view of having the NHMRC adopt the nutrient reference values in due course.
- The Health Star Rating system social marketing campaign has been rolling out since January 2015. Phase 2 is commencing in late May. Currently, there are 600 products on the shelf with the rating. It was noted that the HSR Advisory Committee has agreed to the Heart Foundation monitoring and evaluation of the health star rating system.

Lee-Anne Swift and Yvette Dethridge (Department of Agriculture) provided an update on the matters below:

- Country of Origin labelling. The Department of Industry and Science held consultations around Australia last week with feedback going towards developing the framework. If the project progresses, the reform will go through the normal processes to change the standard. There will be webinars available for those that missed the consultation period. Ministers were intending to take the matter forward to the Food and Consumer Ministerial Forums. The timeframe for completion is 18 months. Katherine Rich asked if evidence had been supplied about accusations of “toxic vegetables” being imported via New Zealand. Department of Agriculture advised the issue had been raised in consultations but no evidence provided.

- Halal certification. The Minister for Agriculture stands by the position that Halal certification is a business decision which supports Australia's exports.
- Proposed changes to improve guidance and support for importers.
- Changes to risk foods. FSANZ was continuing to review risk assessments – currently this covered fish (histamines), cassava chips and would now include raw milk cheese. Heavy metal testing changed last Nov. Now conducting fruit and vegetable testing, E-coli in berries from China and random testing of all other berry imports (all tests to date had been negative), and mackerel product from Thailand (scromboid).

Action arising:	Nil
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Item 4 Food Recalls and Mandatory Reporting

Amanda Hill (FSANZ) briefed the meeting about communication and information sharing between regulators and industry, particularly around the Hepatitis A incident with frozen berries. Members agreed that communication needs to be improved and that further discussions on these issues are required. FSANZ coordinates a Food Safety Incident Protocol and a National Food Safety Network but neither was triggered by Victoria for the berry incident. Engaging with industry under the protocol was discussed in 2014. Industry advised of flow-on costs from the event (complaints lines, consumer anxiety etc) and that Coles was still working through response to enquiries.

Paper provided. Amber Gallagher (FSANZ) provided an update on the Safe Food Production Queensland and Dairy Australia workshops, the template guide for food businesses to develop a food recall plan, the upcoming annual jurisdictional recall meeting in June 2015 and summary and analysis of recent food recalls.

Paper provided. Tania Martin (FSANZ) provided an update on mandatory reporting, including the potential repeal of food-related mandatory reporting legislation (an amending Bill had been referred to the Senate Economics and Legislation Committee, submissions to the Committee were available on line, all except one supported repeal) and food-related mandatory reporting statistics.

It was noted that FSANZ made a submission in support of the repeal.

<p>Action arising: FSANZ to send the link to the National Food Incident Response Protocol to the RMLC members. FSANZ to provide feedback from RMLC on communication and information sharing between regulators and industry during food safety issues/incidents at an upcoming workshop in May 2015 with state and territory regulators on the National Food Safety Network.</p>

<p>RMLC members to trial the template style guide for food businesses to develop a recall plan, and provide feedback to FSANZ recall coordinator on food.recalls@foodstandards.gov.au by Friday 19 June 2015.</p>

Item 5 FSANZ Standards Matters

P1031 – Allergen Exemptions

Jane Allen (FSANZ) provided an update on the proposal which is considering exemption of certain foods (wheat and whey distillates, soy oil, soy derived tocopherols and phytosterols, glucose syrups derived from wheat) from the mandatory requirement to make certain declarations as allergens.

FSANZ has sought further scientific evidence and expert guidance relating to:

- Extrapolating the available safety data for using an exemption limit of 20ppm (compared with 10ppm) gluten in glucose syrups to highly sensitive wheat allergic individuals; and
- Quality assurance processes used domestically and internationally (US, Canada, Europe) for such syrups.

The risk assessment and associated text in the call for submissions will be updated in accordance with these considerations and on final advice from FSANZ's Food Allergy and Intolerance Scientific Advisory Group.

FSANZ is anticipating this taking place over May/ June 2015 with a view to releasing the call for submissions soon after.

P1026 – Lupin as a new allergen

Dr Leigh Henderson (FSANZ) provided an update on lupin as a new allergen. The concern arose from a number of published cases of anaphylaxis following increased uptake of lupin as an ingredient. The risk assessment concluded that lupin is an emerging food allergen of public health significance. FSANZ has prepared the call for submissions and is currently working on a consultation Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS). This needs the approval of the Office of Best Practice Regulation.

FSANZ anticipates the call for submissions document will be released for public comment by the end of the June.

P298 – Benzoate & Sulphite permissions in food

Dr Leigh Henderson (FSANZ) advised the RMLC of FSANZ's proposed approach to manage the exceedance of safe levels of sulphite exposure seen in young children.

FSANZ considers that a regulatory option is required. FSANZ has also established that there has been no noticeable voluntary reduction in sulphite levels in sausages, despite ongoing discussions with industry over a number of years. Likely to propose a change in levels for dried fruit (apricots) and sausages.

P1024 – Nutritive substances and novel foods

Dr Leigh Henderson (FSANZ) provided an update on P1024 advising that the focus has been on safety and assessing the types of risks associated with adding new foods to the food supply and working forward from there.

FSANZ is working towards releasing the first call for submissions report (CFS) in mid-year.

FSANZ proposes to meet with industry (and other stakeholders) during the comment period after the release of the CFS (noting that the comment period will be extended to longer than the standard 6 weeks). There will be workshops in Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland.

Action arising: Jane Allen (FSANZ) to provide the speaking notes on P1031 to the RMLC members.

Item 5 Communications Update

Lorraine Belanger (FSANZ) advised the RMLC that FSANZ is currently developing a Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2015-19. This will be a living document with implementation plans for each year.

FSANZ is also conducting an in-depth stakeholder interview research project in May–June which is looking at determining what information is of value to stakeholders and what we might do more of in a deregulatory environment.

The berries incident was the biggest issue FSANZ has dealt with in some time. This incident highlighted confusion about roles in the system and the need for this to be the focus of ongoing communication.

Other issues attracting attention in last six months have included the raw milk standard.

Action arising: Nil

Other business:

Kirstin Grinter (Nestle) invited RMLC members to the Food Allergen Management Symposium from the 12th – 14th May 2015 at the Coogee Bay Hotel in Sydney.

Next meeting

Members agreed to a proposed next meeting date of Thursday, 24th September 2015. 10.00am-3.00pm (AEST) 12:00pm-5.00pm (NZ Wellington time)

Attendees

FSANZ: Steve McCutcheon; Dr Leigh Henderson; Lorraine Belanger; Peter May; Amanda Hill, Tania Martin, Amber Gallagher, Jane Allen, Lucinda Barlow.

Australian Department of Health: Jenny Hazelton

Australian Department of Agriculture: Lee-Anne Swift, Yvette Dethridge

AFGC: Fiona Fleming

NZFGC: Katherine Rich

INC: Carole Inkster

NZMPI: Sally Johnston

Australian Industry Group: Jennifer Thompson

Fonterra: Carol Bate

Parmalat Australia Ltd: Kim Staples

Foodstuffs NZ: Melissa Hodd

FBI: Tony Beaver

Australian Beverages: Colin Felder

Lion: Bree-Anne Pagonis

Dairy Australia: Kira Goodall

Nestle: Kirstin Grinter

Coles: James Whittaker

Woolworths: Marianne Tegel

Apologies

Rob Solomon (Department of Agriculture)

Lucy Briscoe (Unilever)

Julie Iommi (Dairy Australia)

Stephanie Rajczyk (Nestle)

Nadene Smith (Woolworths)

Jackie Healing (Coles)

Julie Newlands (Unilever)

Mark Phythian (Department of Agriculture)

Janine Waller (Lion)

Helen Mair (Dairy Australia)