

Scientific Interpretive Summary (SIS)

Project Title: **Consumer Knowledge, Attitudes and Beliefs with Respect to *Campylobacter* in poultry and food-borne campylobacteriosis in humans**

NZFSA has a performance goal for human campylobacteriosis of a 50% reduction in foodborne component after a period of five years. To achieve this, a *Campylobacter* Risk Management Strategy has been put in place. To inform both the risk management and risk communication activities of the Strategy, information on the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs with respect to *Campylobacter* in poultry and food-borne campylobacteriosis in humans is essential.

A telephone administered consumer survey was commissioned from ESR. A random sample of 1000 adults (+/- 3.1% margin of error) from the NZ population was interviewed in three four-week periods using a pre-tested, piloted questionnaire. The overall co-operation rate was 19.1% with a higher proportion of female respondents.

From a selected list of foods, 89% of respondents thought chicken was likely to cause food poisoning, followed by other meats (21-58% of respondents, depending on the meat type), milk and dairy products (25% of respondents) and fresh fruit and vegetables (4% of respondents).

Consumers were found to receive information on chicken-related food safety issues from a range of media sources, including television>newspaper>journals/magazines>radio. They appear to be eating chicken more frequently than 10 years ago, with the main reasons provided being taste, convenience, healthiness and value for money. Boneless portions are the most commonly purchased form of chicken, with fresh/raw being the most commonly purchased state.

Since the last survey in 2005, there appears to have been an increase in the practice of thawing chicken in the refrigerator. Half of the respondents (51%) reported that they would freeze all or part of a chicken at some point after purchase. Most purchasers of fresh chicken (86%) consume their home-frozen chicken within one month. Most consumers (84%) would buy frozen chicken if that was the only product available, though only 52% of those who normally purchase chicken fresh, would buy frozen product. Loss of convenience was seen as the major disadvantage of freezing.

Stricter farm management practices were viewed by the respondents as the most acceptable means of controlling bacteria on chicken, with chemical treatment the least acceptable. Of chicken consumers, approximately one-quarter would be prepared to pay a 10-20% premium for "safer" chicken achieved through stricter farm management practices.