Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

New Zealand Food Safety
Haumaru Kai Aotearoa

As of 31 July 2020

Food Safety Regulatory System

The Food Safety Regulatory System primarily serves to ensure food safety and suitability throughout the supply chains for food and beverages and protect consumer interests. This includes food production, importing, processing, packaging, transporting, storage and sale, information for consumers and assurances for food exported to other countries.

In addition, the system promotes consumer awareness of food safety and authenticity, and provides information that enables consumers to make informed decisions about food and its sources. Given the importance of exported food to the New Zealand economy, contributing to international standard setting is also a key activity.

Objectives

> Food is safe and suitable and consumers make informed choices
> Food standards are evidence and risk based
> Food businesses thrive and innovate without undue cost and regulatory burden and have a strong food safety culture
> Overseas governments have a high level of trust and confidence in our export assurances.

PORTFOLIO	Food Safety
STATUTES	Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act 1997 Animals Products Act 1999 Food Act 2014 Health Act 1956 (Ministry of Health) Medicines Act 1981 (Ministry of Health) Wine Act 2003
OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WITH SUBSTANTIAL ROLES	Commerce Commission Environmental Protection Authority Food Standards Australia New Zealand Ministry of Health Ministry for the Environment Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Food Safety System Fitness-for-Purpose Assessment

MPI carried out a fitness-for-purpose assessment of the food safety system in 2019. The assessment can be found here: https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/41301-2019-food-safety-with-logos

New Zealand Food Safety has work underway to respond to this assessment as set out in the following material, in particular making sure that MPI meets customer needs.

The next food safety system fitness-for-purpose assessment is planned for 2023.

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Planned regulatory amendments to legislation – 2020/2021

MATTER NAME	PURPOSE	PLANNED CONSULTATION	STATUS
Regulation redesign programme ***Matter type: Regulations***	To redesign the regulations under the Animal Products and Wine Acts to make them easier to find and understand. This implements recommendations made by the Government inquiry into the Whey Protein Concentrate Contamination Incident.	Consultation with stakeholders began on 11 March 2020 and will continue until late 2021. There will be consultation on specific parts of the regulatory system to allow detailed discussion of the redesign proposals.	The regulatory redesign is on track to meet its legislated timeframe of March 2022.
Food recalls and risk-based plans and programmes ***Matter type: Regulations***	New regulations, enabled by the Food Safety Law Reform Act 2018, are being developed to strengthen food recalls and improve risk-based plans and programmes. The new regulations will implement recommendations made by the independent Government inquiry into the Whey Protein Concentrate Contamination Incident.	Consultation took place from 25 October 2018 to 7 December 2018.	Regulations for the risk-based plans were promulgated on 19 March 2020. The regulations for mock recalls and traceability will be developed in 2020.
Food Act (Extension of the Dietary Supplements Regulations) Amendment Bill ***Matter type: Bills***	To extend the Dietary Supplements Regulations 1985. A new regime for natural health products is being developed in parallel.	The public has an opportunity to comment on the Bill during Select Committee.	Currently with Select Committee.

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Key service design and operational changes

2019 - 2024	*New Zealand Food Safety Strategy* In December 2019 New Zealand Food Safety launched its strategy and action plan to maintain and grow the country's reputation as a trusted and recognised provider of safe and suitable food. The strategy outlines the following five priorities: 1. We will ensure New Zealand's world-class food safety system remains robust 2. We will proactively support consumers to make informed food choices 3. We will actively contribute to new thinking in international forums 4. We will work in genuine partnership with Māori 5. We will be innovative and forward-looking in meeting new challenges. The action plan supporting the strategy will enable New Zealand Food Safety to play its full part in ensuring that food imported, produced domestically or exported from New Zealand is trusted and recognised – by everyone, everywhere – and we will be actively monitoring and reviewing progress year by year. An immediate action (2020-2021) is the re-evaluation of the Campylobacter Action Plan, and implementation of new control measures to decrease the level of foodborne campylobacteriosis. There will be an evidence-based review across the chicken supply chain, from farm to fork. Actions include the evaluation of the current regulatory limit for contamination levels on meat chicken carcasses, review and strengthening of guidance for on-farm controls, and renewed engagement with consumers on good food handling practice in the home. A further immediate action (2020 – 2021) is the establishment of an emerging risks and horizon scanning system, to identify and respond to emerging threats, identify drivers of unsafe and/or fraudulent industry behaviour, and respond to changes in trade.
2018 - 2024	*Make sure MPI services meet customer needs* To help ensure New Zealand's world class food safety system remains robust, New Zealand Food Safety will identify the rules which are the most difficult to understand, accept and implement by food businesses, and co-design solutions that are fit-for-purpose and address compliance barriers. Customer feedback and insights have identified that food businesses (particularly those that are small, regional, or that export) find it challenging to navigate what are often complex requirements.
Ongoing	*New technologies and food* The use of emerging technologies in food production will challenge traditional food production methods that underpin the New Zealand primary sector. New and novel foods create new opportunities and challenges for food safety regulation. Increasing demands for regulatory involvement in authentication of high-value foods will also require increased technological capability. Over the next five years, MPI will seek to understand the regulatory capability required for ensuring the safety and suitability of these foods, develop guidance for how to validate the equivalence of innovative food technologies and manage cost-effective compliance.
2018-2020	*Improving folic acid availability in food*

	MPI is currently considering options to increase levels of folic acid in food. This is to reduce the number of pregnancies affected by neural tube defects, such as spina bifida, and to improve health equity while considering consumer choice and impacts on industry. Consultation on two voluntary options (including the status quo) and three mandatory options closed in November 2019. If a mandatory option is chosen, this is expected to be implemented through the issuing of a notice under the Food Act 2014, adopting an amendment to the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, or through adopting a New Zealand only standard. A Cabinet decision on this has been delayed due to COVID-19.
2017 - 2021	*Antimicrobial resistance* Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a rapidly evolving and serious global risk to human, animal and plant health. In addition, there is an increasing body of evidence that micro-organisms resistant to antimicrobials (which include antibiotics and other anti-microbial agents) can readily spread via the food chain to consumers. Effective risk management of AMR will become increasingly important to retention of overseas market access for New Zealand food products and primary produce according to international obligations and trading partner expectations. There is an urgent need to understand and minimise AMR if NZ is to adequately safeguard animal and plant health and maximise productivity in NZ's primary sector. MPI's risk management work includes minimising the misuse and overuse of antibiotics in animals and plants while maintaining appropriate access to effective antibiotics for plant and animal health. This plan also includes actions that raise awareness of the threat and reduce the misuse and overuse of antimicrobials. New Zealand Food Safety is working with the Ministry of Health to ensure animal and plant health interventions are as aligned as possible to support human health outcomes. New Zealand Food Safety is also active in multilateral forums such as the CODEX AMR Task Force and OIE to help ensure the effectiveness of international standards.