



FOOD SURVEILLANCE

AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND

FOOD STANDARDS AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND

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Food Standards Australia New Zealand Panel of Analytical Laboratories

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) is establishing a panel of analytical laboratories to enhance the ability to quickly gather information and promptly respond to protect public health and safety. This is particularly relevant when current analytical data is required quickly in response to food incidents to inform the risk assessment process and subsequent risk management decisions.

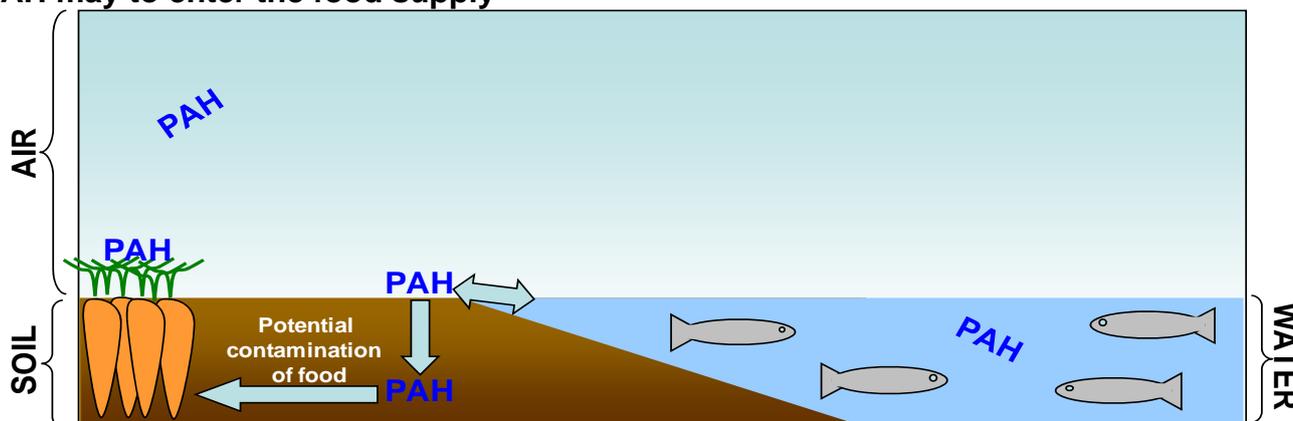
FSANZ encourages all interested laboratories to make a submission in response to the advertised Request for Tender which is available on the FSANZ website at www.foodstandards.gov.au/scienceandeducation/tenders/. All submissions need to be received by 2pm Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST) on 22nd July 2010.

Survey of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons in Australian foods

Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) are naturally occurring compounds found in the environment. They result from natural occurrences such as volcanic activity and bush fires, and are also produced by industrial processes. PAH contamination has been identified in the air, water and food sources (Figure 1) (NPIS, 2004; ATSDR 1995). Furthermore, PAH are also produced by some cooking processes, particularly through barbequing, smoking, roasting and frying (Kazerouni *et al.*, 2001). PAH contamination in the environment and food has been of world-wide focus due to the potential hazards high levels of these compounds can produce.

Many countries have studied the levels of carcinogenic PAH in food samples in an attempt to conduct a risk assessment and determine the level of exposure.

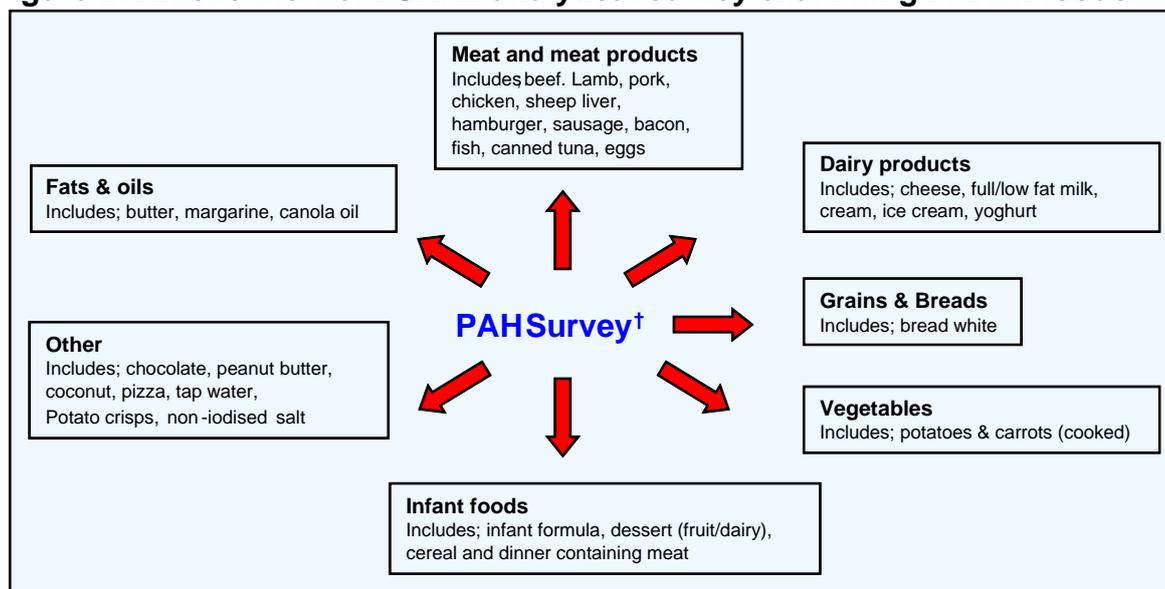
Figure 1: A schematic representation of PAH sources in the environment and the ways PAH may enter the food supply



In 2004, FSANZ commissioned an analytical survey of PAH in Australian foods and the results have been used in a dietary exposure assessment and health risk appraisal for the Australian population.

In this survey, a total of 35 foods were examined covering a broad spectrum of foods consumed in a typical diet. This included foods from the following groups: dairy, meat, vegetables, bread and bakery products, fats and oils, and infant food (Figure 2). The foods were prepared to a ‘table ready’ state (e.g. steak was cooked, eggs were boiled). Samples were collected from all States and Territories in Australia in July and December 2004, as part of the 22nd Australian Total Diet Study (ATDS) (FSANZ, 2008). Not all foods known to contain PAH or known to be major contributors to PAH exposure were analysed. This is a limitation of the survey in estimating exposure to PAH from Australian foods.

Figure 2: An overview of FSANZ analytical survey examining PAH in foods.



Notes:

† 35 foods tested from samples collected for the 22nd ATDS. All States & Territory's assisted with sample collection. Foods were prepared in 'table ready' state. Limit of Detection/Limit of Quantification varied for each specific PAH and food type

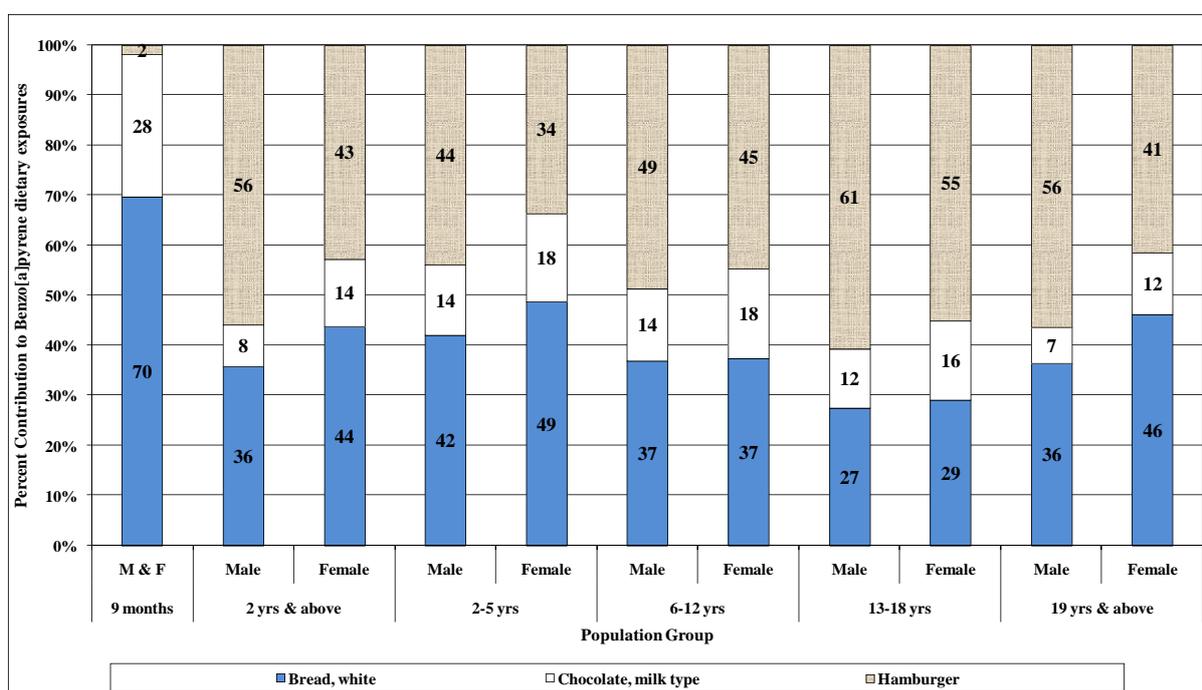
The selected foods were analysed for 20 different PAH, giving a maximum of 700 data points, of which 15% were reported as non-detects. Based on the analytical concentration data, total

PAH levels were highest in hamburger, chocolate, desiccated coconut and potato crisps. The levels in infant foods were relatively low in comparison.

Dietary exposure assessments were conducted for the following groups: 9 month old infants; 2-5 year old males and females; 6-12 year old males and females; 13-18 year old males and females; 19 years and above males and females. Dietary exposure of the general population was determined for benzo[a]pyrene, a representative PAH known to be genotoxic and carcinogenic. This is consistent with the approach taken by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA, 2005).

Dietary exposure of the general population to benzo[a]pyrene in the foods analysed is low with the main contributors being bread, hamburgers and chocolate (Figure 3). For 9 month old infants, the major contributors to dietary exposure were also bread and chocolate.

Figure 3: Percentage contribution of the major contributing foods to benzo[a]pyrene exposure in 9 month old infants and males and females aged 2 years and above[†]



[†] Percentage contributions have been calculated from lower bound values.

In the absence of sufficient data to establish a tolerable weekly or monthly intake for benzo[a]pyrene, the margin of exposure (MOE) based on the Bench Mark Dose Lower Confidence Limit (BMDL) was used to determine whether the dietary exposure to benzo[a]pyrene is of concern in the different population groups. The MOEs for all population groups assessed at the mean and 95th percentile were above 10,000 (in general, the larger the MOE, the smaller the health risk).

The data presented in the PAH report represents the most comprehensive analysis of PAH concentrations in Australian foods yet undertaken, and are used to estimate the dietary exposure of the Australian population to PAH. Based on the available data, and taking into account the inherent uncertainties and limitations, this study shows that the health risk to the Australian public arising from dietary exposure to PAH is unlikely to be of public health and safety concern.

The full report of 'Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in Australian foods' is available on the FSANZ website at

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/srcfiles/PAH%20Survey%20for%20website.pdf>

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New Zealand Total Diet Study - Fourth Quarter Results

The 2009 New Zealand Total Diet Study (NZ TDS) fourth and final quarter food analyses are now complete. This study, conducted at five-yearly intervals, tested residue levels in 123 commonly eaten foods to assess and estimate dietary exposure of the New Zealand population to chemical residues, contaminants and selected nutrients.

The foods in this study were categorised as Regional[†] or National*. All foods were sampled and tested twice, at two different times of the year to account for seasonal variations. Foods were prepared by the Environmental Science and Research (ESR) Food Safety Group, Christchurch Science Centre to an “as consumed” state (i.e. meat cooked, banana peeled) and then analysed by RJ Hill Laboratories, Hamilton. The analytes tested included elements, agricultural compounds and multi-residue pesticides. Very few issues were found, despite more analyses to a far greater sensitivity than previous Total Diet Studies.

Following analysis of more than 250,000 samples of food only a small number of issues required further investigation or follow up to determine whether there was any health risk to consumers, of which there were none. These issues were largely addressed by reminding growers and manufacturers of the need to follow good agricultural and manufacturing practices. The detection of elevated lead levels in some cereal products was a key contributor to the decision to include wheat in the 2009/10 Food Residue Surveillance Programme (results not yet available).

The analytical results from the 2009 NZ TDS are currently being used to estimate dietary exposures. It is anticipated that the full 2009 NZ TDS report will be released in late 2010.

For further information on the 2009 NZ TDS fourth quarter results, or results from the other three quarters, please see: <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/science/research-projects/total-diet-survey/2009.htm>

[†] National Foods - are not expected to exhibit any regional variability and include processed foods such as biscuits, breakfast cereals and beverages, which are uniformly available New Zealand wide. National Foods are to be sampled in a single location (Christchurch) on two occasions.

*Regional Foods - may be expected to demonstrate variation in agricultural compound, contaminant and nutrient level depending on the location in which the food was produced. Regional foods include meat, fruit and vegetables. Regional foods will be sampled in each of four locations (Auckland, Napier, Christchurch and Dunedin) on two occasions.

National Residue Survey – Summary of Results 2008-2009

The National Residue Survey (NRS) is an ongoing residue and contaminant monitoring program which assesses Australia's exported and domestically traded food commodities against Australian and applicable international standards. This program, originally established in 1961, has broadened the testing regime from pesticide residues in exported meat only, to agricultural and veterinary chemicals and environmental contaminants in a range of food products. These products include:

- Animal products such as meat products, honey, egg, wild caught and aquaculture fish.
- Cereal grains, pulses and oilseeds.
- Horticultural products such as almond, apple, macadamia nuts, onions and pears.

The NRS operates on a full cost recovery basis. Most NRS programs are funded by primary producer levies which have been in place since 1993. A few programs are funded on a fee for service basis. NRS is an industry driven scheme designed to assist industries with market access and quality assurance objectives.

Each of the 46 food commodity programs involve collecting randomly selected samples from throughout Australia. In addition to the random monitoring program, the meat industry has several targeted testing programs undertaken for meat products, for example, national organochlorine residue management and national antibacterial residue minimisation projects.

Residue testing results are assessed for compliance with the maximum residue limits established for the relevant export and domestic markets. In several programs, notably grains and horticulture, individual residue test results are forwarded immediately to grain and horticultural producers, handlers and marketers. All results are compiled and published each year in the NRS Annual Report.

NRS engages analytical laboratories, which have met proficiency testing requirements, to conduct the analyses for their programs. NRS is certified to ISO 9001: 2008 as a quality management system and is accredited to ILAC G: 2008 as a proficiency testing scheme provider.

In 2008-2009, a total of over 21,000 food samples were analysed and approximately 620,000 analyses conducted. The details of these analyses and the findings were published in the 2008-2009 National Residue Survey Annual report (available at: http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/nrs/publications/annual-reports/national_residue_survey_annual_report_2008-2009). Results for the 2009-10 program will be available around November.

A summary of the total compliance rates for 2008-09 for each category, are shown in Table 1. Total compliance rates are calculated as a percentage of the total number of samples complying with relevant standards.

Table 1: Total Compliance Rates for 2008-09 for Food Commodity by Category

Commodity	Examples	Analyses	2008-2009 Compliance (%)
Meat products	Camel, Cattle, Deer, Goat, Horse, Kangaroo, Pig, Poultry, Ratites, Sheep, Wild boar	antibiotics, anthelmintics, hormones, growth promotants, pesticides and environmental contaminants	99.9
Egg		Antibiotics, anticoccidials, pesticides	98.3
Honey		Antibiotics, pesticides, environmental contaminants,	100
Fish (wild & aquacultured)	Abalone, Freshwater crayfish, Orange roughy, Tiger prawn, Yellowfin tuna	Persistent organic pollutants, anthelmintics, antibiotics, pesticides, environmental contaminants, heavy metals	100
Grains, pulses and oilseeds	Barley, Sorghum, Wheat grain, Canola, Chickpea, Lentil, Sunflower	Pesticides, fumigants, organochlorines and environmental contaminants	99.4
Horticulture	Almond, Apple, Macadamia nut, Onion, Pear	Pesticides, physiological modifiers and environmental contaminants	100

The results demonstrate that for the participating industries, Australian primary producers and commodity handlers continue to use pesticides and veterinary medicines in accordance with good agricultural practice.

The NRS continues to monitor Australia's food commodities through ongoing survey activities and programs with the 2009-1010 programs currently underway.

For more information about the National Residues Survey please visit:

<http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/nrs>

Implementation Sub Committee Coordinated Food Survey Planning Workshop at the NSW Food Authority

The first Implementation Sub Committee (ISC) Coordinated Food Survey Planning Workshop for 2010 was held on 14 May at the NSW Food Authority in Sydney.

The aim of the workshops is to promote a consistent and coordinated approach to surveillance and monitoring activities across Australian jurisdictions and New Zealand.

The main purpose of the workshop was to establish the Coordinated Food Survey Plan (the Plan) for 2010-2013. The Plan is a three year forward plan for collaborative survey activities of national or bi-national significance. The workshop considered six new detailed survey proposals, five presented by Australia and one by New Zealand, to be included on the Plan for 2010-2013. All attendees agreed on the topics of the proposed surveys, with many jurisdictions nominating their participation.

The workshop was co-chaired by FSANZ and the NSW Food Authority and was attended by representatives from the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA), Australian State and Territory food authorities, the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry, Safe Food Production QLD and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service.

Histamine in Anchovies

Anchovies (*Engraulis* spp) are small, common saltwater fish. They are found in temperate waters such as the Mediterranean. Popular in Australia, 967 tonnes of canned anchovies worth \$9,247,000 were imported into Australia during 2007-2008 (ABARE, 2009).

Histamine is a biogenic amine that can be found in decaying fish and is a cause of food borne illness; specifically scombroid poisoning. Fresh caught fish does not contain histamine (ESR, 2001). However, once fish starts to decay or are subjected to temperature abuse, histamine can start to accumulate. Histamine is formed when histidine, a naturally occurring compound in fish, is converted into histamine by certain bacteria. Histamine formation in fish is controlled by three main factors: levels of free histidine, contamination levels of histidine decarboxylating bacteria and temperature abuse. Standard 2.2.3 in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code) states that the level of histamine in fish and fish products must not exceed 200 mg/kg.

Symptoms of histamine poisoning (scombroid poisoning) include a tingling or burning sensation in the mouth, a rash on the upper body and a drop in blood pressure. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea may also occur. Onset of intoxication is very quick, from immediate to 30 minutes, usually lasting around 3 hours; however in some severe cases symptoms can last days. It is thought that Scombroid poisoning often goes unreported as the symptoms can be attributed to an allergic reaction and are often of short duration (Lehane and Olley, 1999; Attaran and Probst, 2002).

In 2009, a case of scombroid poisoning occurred in NSW that was linked to canned anchovies. The anchovies implicated were tested and found to contain 365 mg/kg of histamine. In response, the NSW Food Authority conducted a survey on histamine levels in anchovies in oil and dried anchovies. Between May 2009 and August 2009, 45 samples of anchovies in oil, and 34 samples of dried anchovies were purchased from retail outlets across Sydney and analysed for histamine, sodium content, pH value and water activity.

The results are presented in Table 1. Water activity, pH and sodium levels are presented in Table 2. Distribution of the different levels of histamine observed in each category is outlined in Figure 1.

Table 1: Histamine results

Product type	Histamine level		
	Acceptable		Unacceptable
	not detected	<200 mg/kg	>200 mg/kg
Anchovies in oil (n=45)	28.9% (13)	68.9% (31)	2.2% (1)
Dried anchovies (n=34)	55.9% (19)	41.2% (14)	2.9% (1)

Table 2: Water activity, pH and sodium results

Product type	aw		pH		sodium (mg/kg)	
	average	range	average	range	average	range
Anchovies in oil (n=45)	0.78	0.97-0.73	5.6	6.2-4.0	5062	7117-765
Dried anchovies (n=34)	0.57	0.88-0.22	6.9	9.5-5.8	3140	19736-105

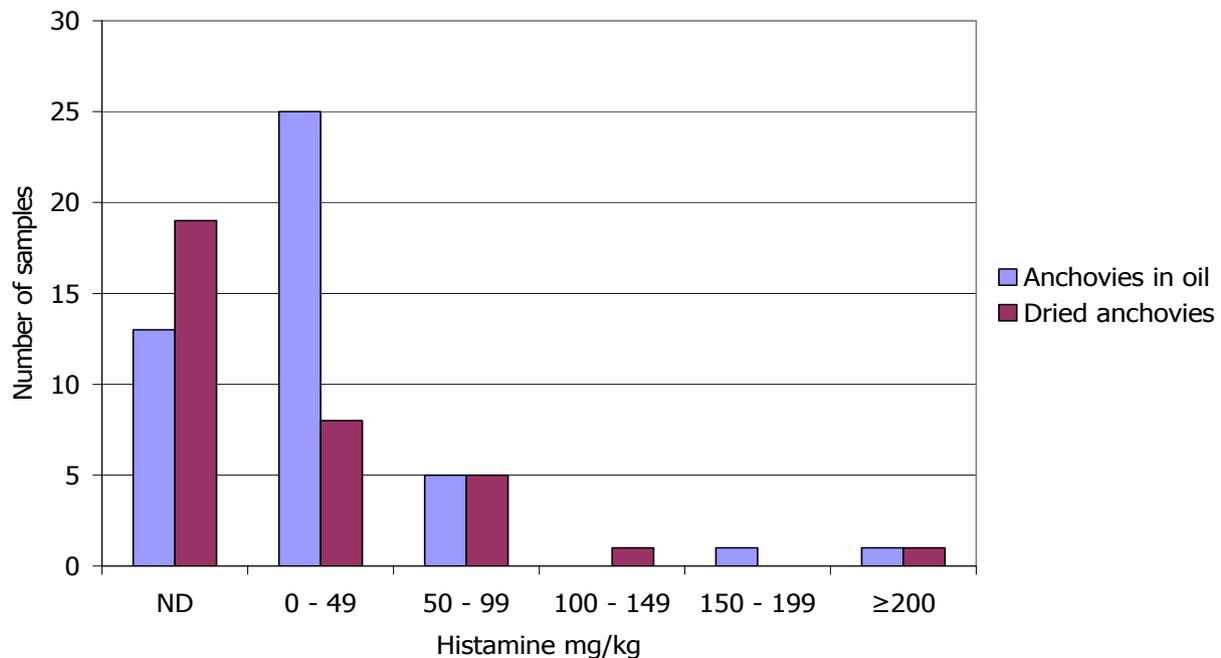


Figure 1: Distribution of histamine in samples tested

Summary of results

- 97.8% of anchovies in oil contained less than 200 mg/kg of histamine and were compliant with the Code.
- 97.1% of dried anchovies contained less than 200 mg/kg of histamine and were compliant with the Code.

Appropriate enforcement action was taken on products where the level of histamine was greater than 200 mg/kg.

Analysis of variance showed no correlation between levels of histamine, pH, water activity or sodium content.

The average level of histamine in dried anchovies and anchovies in oil tested was well below the regulatory limit of 200 mg/kg, at 33 mg/kg and 35 mg/kg respectively. Levels ranged from not detected to 518 mg/kg for samples in oil and from not detected to 483 mg/kg for dried samples. One sample of anchovies in oil was tested after storage at room temperature for several months (the manufacturer's storage instructions were store at refrigerated temperatures). The level of histamine in this sample was 2116 mg/kg (this sample was not included in the results as the sample had been improperly stored prior to testing). Subsequent samples of this batch were sourced from the wholesaler (where they had been correctly stored) and no histamine was detected. This result highlights the importance of correct storage. It was re-iterated to the wholesaler to ensure his stockists were storing this product correctly.

This survey illustrates that the majority of anchovies in oil and dried anchovies available at retail level in NSW contain less than 200 mg/kg of histamine and are compliant with the Code but also highlights the importance of correct storage for these products both prior to, and after opening.

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Hepatitis A in Semi Dried Tomatoes Incident

During March 09 to March 2010 there were 622 cases of hepatitis A in Australia, with 433 (70%) of these known to have been locally acquired. In recent years, hepatitis A in Australia has been typically overseas acquired, with only 45% (126/276) cases in 2007 and 41% (69/165) cases in 2008 known to have been acquired in Australia.

The increase in numbers of locally acquired hepatitis A cases resulted in a multijurisdictional outbreak investigation and the National Food Incident Response Protocol (NFIRP) was triggered. FSANZ coordinates government agency responses under the NFIRP. Investigations revealed a link between the cases of hepatitis A and consumption of uncooked semi-dried tomatoes. The products of concern were mixed with garlic, herbs and oil and sold loose in delicatessens and supermarkets and could also have been used by food retail outlets in food preparation. Two trade level food product recalls were instigated and a number of Jurisdictions issued press releases advising consumers to avoid eating 'unpacked semi-dried tomatoes in oil with herbs and garlic'.

Health authorities and food regulators worked closely with food companies and retailers of semi dried tomatoes to reduce the risk of further Hepatitis A infections. The Hepatitis A notifications began returning to normal levels by the end of December 2009.

During the incident FSANZ was requested to raise an emergency Proposal that included specific processing and traceability requirements for semi dried tomato producers. This Proposal is currently on hold pending the outcomes of the incident debrief and further discussions between the Jurisdictions.

Bonsoy Soy Milk Incident

On the 24 December 2009, FSANZ coordinated a national food recall and issued a media release advising people not to consume Bonsoy soy milk. This followed a cluster of nine adults aged from 29 to 47, and one child, who presented in NSW with thyroid problems. These individuals all reported consuming Bonsoy soy milk and subsequent testing of samples of this product revealed unusually high levels of iodine. The NFIRP was triggered on 5 January 2010, once it was established that this was a potentially serious nationwide public health issue.

The source of iodine in Bonsoy soy milk was found to be the seaweed Kombu (kelp), which was used to enrich and flavour the soymilk. FSANZ conducted a risk assessment on the consumption of Bonsoy soy milk and concluded that the levels of iodine in the Bonsoy soy milk were likely to exceed the safe limit for iodine when as little as 30ml (6 teaspoons) were consumed per day by an adult.

Subsequent to the recall, the manufacturer of Bonsoy has stated that all Bonsoy products are no longer being made with Kombu and that the product has been re-formulated. Batches of reformulated Bonsoy soy milk, without seaweed extract, have recently been imported into Australia and have been tested by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) for compliance. This re-formulated compliant product has been released for sale in retail outlets.

Keeping an Eye on Food Recalls

Food identified as a risk to public health and safety is recalled. Recalls are normally triggered by consumer complaints, company testing or government testing. FSANZ is the coordinating agency for all food recalls in Australia and the NZFSA is the responsible authority in New Zealand.

For further information on food recalls in Australia please refer to the FSANZ website (<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumerinformation/foodrecalls/>).

For further information on food recalls in New Zealand please refer to the NZFSA website (<http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/recalls/consumers.htm>).

Food recalls over the months of February to May 2010 are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of food recalls in Australia and New Zealand from February to May 2010

Australia*					
Date Notified to FSANZ	Recall initiated by	Reason for recall	States affected	Product description	Product affected
28 May 10	Borgo Smallgoods Co	Microbial – <i>Salmonella</i> bovismorbificans	QLD	Best Before 30.08.10 & 06.09.10 for all products Various weights in natural casing	Friulano Salame, Lismore Salame and Casalingo Salame
16 April 10	Schwepps Australia	Foreign matter - Glass	NSW, ACT, VIC, TAS, SA and NT	Best Before 10.01.11 to 15.01.11 inclusive with a 10 digit batch code commencing with 3202 2 L plastic bottles	All Cottee's Cordial Flavours
12 April 10	Montefiore Cheese (Aust) P/L	Microbial - <i>Salmonella</i>	NSW, SA, TAS, VIC and WA	400g Best Before 17.06.10 (Batch 076 & 078) 1kg Best Before 19.06.10 (Batch 076 & 078) Both in plastic wrapping	Montefiore Cheese Mozzarella Fiorello
26 March 10	Thai Ha Public Company Ltd and Woolworths Ltd	Foreign matter – Metal shavings	All and NZ	All Best Before Dates, 1kg packaging	Home Brand Jasmine Rice
22 March 10	Ricci Remond Chocolate Co Pty Ltd and Darrell Lea Chocolate Shops Pty Ltd	Chemical – metal (lead)	All and the United Kingdom, USA, NZ	All Best Before Dates All in paper/plastic bags	Ricci Yoghurt Coated Raspberry Liquorice – 225g & 185g Ricci Yoghurt Coated Mango Liquorice – 225g Darrell Lea Yoghurt Coated Raspberry Liquorice – 185g Darrell Lea Yoghurt Coated Mango Liquorice – 185g
16 March 10	Heng Fai Trading Co Pty Ltd	High levels of naturally occurring iodine	NSW and QLD	All dates up to and including Best Before 23.08.11 150g, plastic bag	Heng Fai Dried Seaweed Brand® (<i>Sargassum fusiforme</i>)

2 March 10	Woolworths Ltd	Foreign matter – plastic pieces	TAS , Hobart area, Kingston Supermarket only	Packed on 28.02.10 and Use By date 02.03.10 Average weight 500g, Styrofoam tray and cling wrap cover	Woolworths label Minced Heart Smart Beef
1 March 10	Sunfield Australia Pty Ltd	Undeclared allergen – walnuts and almonds	NSW	Use By date 10.04.10 & 20.04.10 600g, Plastic heat sealed bag	Sunfield Carrot Bar and Sunfield Date Bar
New Zealand*					
Date notified to NZFSA	Recall initiated by	Reason for recall	Regions affected	Product description	Product affected
14 May 10	Delbos Meat Products Ltd	Microbial - <i>Salmonella</i>	Auckland only	Best Before 25.10.10 240g (2 sticks/pack)	Del Sremska Pork sausage (hot), Salami style
13 May 10	Progressive Enterprises Ltd	Allergens not listed – missing printed list of ingredients on packaging	All	All 6 pack of Fresh Zone Fruit Mince Pies	Fresh Zone Fruit Mince Pies 6Pk
29 April 10	Premier Bacon Ltd	Microbiological - undercooked	Auckland only	Use By 15.07.10 Batch number 112110 950g packages	Premier Brick Shoulder Ham
26 March 10	Progressive Enterprises Ltd	Foreign matter – metal shavings	All and Australia	All Best Before Dates, 1kg packaging	Home Brand Jasmine Rice
22 March 10	Darrell Lea Chocolate Shops Pty Ltd NZ agent: House of Fine Foods (NZ) Ltd	Chemical – metal (lead)	All and Australia, USA and UK	All Best Before Dates 185g, in paper/plastic bags	Darrell Lea Yoghurt Coated Raspberry Liquorice and Darrell Lea Yoghurt Coated Mango Liquorice
23 February 10	Vitaco Health (NZ) Ltd	Allergens not listed on packaging – gluten and wheat	North Island	Best Before 05.02.11 320g	Healtheries Simple Berry Light cereal
11 February 10	Heller Tasty Ltd	Allergens not listed on packaging - dairy	North Island	Use By 18.03.10 1Kg	Hellers Sensational Chinese Honey Sausage

* For all recalls customers were asked to return product to place of purchase/ retailer for a full refund.