## Food Standards Australia New Zealand 2022 Stakeholder Forum: Future Ready Food Standards

## **EVENT OUTCOMES**

Collaboration, transparency, engagement and trust must remain at the centre of standards setting to ensure the joint Australia New Zealand food regulation system is future ready.

More than 300 delegates at the 2022 FSANZ Stakeholder Forum heard rapid change and uncertainty driven by global megatrends and systems disruption is presenting major challenges as well as new opportunities for the food sector, policy makers and regulators.

Nations globally are grappling with a growing set of complex problems in providing a safe, nutritious and secure food supply for their citizens.

Disruptions to global and domestic supply chains and food production systems are impacting the price of inputs, availability of ingredients and affordability of staples and fresh produce. Technology and innovation are driving rapid advances in food production, manufacturing and service. Food-related disease, access to nutritionally-adequate food and food-borne illness continue to affect population health around the world.

The Forum heard our bi-national food standards and regulatory arrangements need to keep pace with challenges like these, at a minimum. Ideally, standards setting would forecast and pre-empt change and manage uncertainty.

Future ready food standards and regulation would be agile enough to reflexively accommodate new and unforeseen events and impacts while proactively accounting for global megatrends and the disruptions and innovations that flow from them.

A system with these attributes would continue to support industry to innovate and remain internationally competitive, ensure a safe and secure food supply and contribute to improved public health outcomes.





Forum presentations and discussions explored the system's current state and ideas for change, with a number of themes emerging to guide work to deliver future ready food standards. These included:

- <u>We have a strong base</u>. The joint Australia New Zealand standards development process is tried and tested. FSANZ can use this solid base to trial more agile, responsive approaches that meet contemporary needs and anticipate future challenges.
- <u>Reform is within reach</u>. The food regulation system modernisation agenda and the continuing FSANZ Act Review both deliver 'live' opportunities to build on and improve the system's future readiness. FSANZ can continue to work with the Department of Health and stakeholders to support reform.
- <u>Be collaborative</u>. Stakeholders want to collaborate on improvements to standards setting. FSANZ is seen as an independent leader that is deeply engaged with stakeholders, a position it can leverage to bring stakeholders together and foster collaborative approaches.
- <u>Build on the foundation of trust</u>. Stakeholder trust in standards setting and compliance is vital. FSANZ is trusted by stakeholders and can work to build relationships between stakeholders and across the system.
- <u>Keep engaging</u>. Stakeholders see regular, transparent engagement and open dialogue as key enablers of effective standards setting and compliance processes. FSANZ can use its existing forums and consultation mechanisms to expand and improve the quality and effectiveness of engagement.
- <u>Be transparent</u>. Stakeholders are seeking improved visibility into standards setting and compliance to ensure regulatory settings are fit for purpose. FSANZ and other system partners must remain open to sharing information and consulting on change.
- <u>Uncertainty is here to stay</u>. Stakeholders are increasingly exposed to uncertainty driven by global megatrends and systems disruption. FSANZ and system partners can work together to embrace uncertainty and use foresight tools to make decisions on the best available evidence, trends and intelligence.
- <u>Digital transformation has huge potential but must be people and client centred</u>. Stakeholders see both opportunities and challenges in digital transformation. Digital tools and services can deliver efficiencies, streamline processes and support collaboration but must be developed within a robust framework to be people and client centred, ensure ethical use of data, protect privacy and generate trust. FSANZ can use its digital transformation agenda as a platform to engage and collaborate with stakeholders to ensure products and initiatives meet their needs and address shared challenges.

Above all, FSANZ recognises that developing future ready food standards is a shared endeavour. We welcome and value the opportunity to continue working collaboratively and productively with all system stakeholders to protect the health and safety of consumers while supporting industry to grow, innovate and expand trade opportunities.

FSANZ thanks all Forum speakers, panellists and delegates for their participation, input and insight. We will continue analysing presentations and panel discussions to inform our future work.