



3 June 2016

Food Standards Australia New Zealand
Boeing House
55 Blackall Street
BARTON ACT 2600

Attention: Standards Management Officer

**Proposal P1027 – Call for submissions
Managing Low-level Ag & Vet Chemicals without Maximum Residue Limits**

The Food & Beverage Importers Association (“FBIA”) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Call for submissions on Proposal P1027 – Managing Low-level Ag & Vet Chemicals without Maximum Residue Limits. The FBIA made a submission to the earlier Consultation Paper issued by FSANZ in February 2015.

The purpose of this Proposal is to address issues posed by a ‘zero tolerance’ approach to food commodities for which a maximum residue limit (MRL) has not been established in Schedule 20 of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. The difficulties with the “zero tolerance” approach have been well articulated in the Public Consultation Paper and again in the Call for submissions. When low level residues of agvet chemicals with no MRLs are found in a food, that food becomes illegal for sale, even if it poses a very low or zero risk to public health. With the increasing sensitivity of analytical techniques, the ability to detect minor levels of residues is increasing and the likelihood of significant trade issues for domestic and imported food growing.

The FSANZ proposal recognises the problems caused by the ‘zero tolerance’ approach and aims to introduce a more balanced method for accommodating the presence of low level inadvertent residues of approved agvet chemicals in food commodities.

FSANZ proposes:

1. Generally to establish “All other foods except animal food commodities” maximum residue limits by a process that includes a full risk assessment and dietary exposure assessment for each chemical
2. Specifically to trial that process by setting “All other foods except animal food commodities” MRLs for 19 agvet chemicals

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We welcome the recognition of the problem and appreciate that this plan provides some relief from the “zero tolerance” approach.

In our view, however, the FSANZ proposal is unnecessarily complicated, resource intensive and not timely in dealing with the problem of minor agvet chemicals residues. The process will provide MRLs, but in a piecemeal and patchwork fashion. Given the number of permitted agvet chemicals, it may take many years to provide an adequate coverage of permitted residues limits. This does not seem to be a very effective way to deal with a problem that may occur irregularly, for when it does occur, there are significant trade implications.

Accordingly, we are disappointed that again, the Default Limits approach has been rejected. This approach has been applied in New Zealand for many years without any obvious deleterious impact on public health. The advantages of a default limit are that there is a clear, measurable and transparent standard that is easy to understand and apply by both regulators and industry.

That said, despite our lack of enthusiasm for the FSANZ solution, we would support the proposed setting of MRLs for the 19 agvet chemicals.

Should you have any questions on the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of A J Beaver.

A J Beaver
Secretary