

# FOOD STANDARDS NEWS



The Newsletter of Food Standards Australia New Zealand

October 2003

## FSANZ UPDATES

### PUBLIC COMMENT ON CHANGES TO CODE

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) invites public comment on a number of possible changes to the *Food Standards Code*:

#### Use of nicotine and nicotiana species in food (P278 – Initial Assessment)

Overseas there have been a number of attempts to market tobacco extracts in the form of nicotine containing lollipops, lip balm and bottled water through various different distribution channels including the Internet. Like smoked tobacco products, smokeless tobaccos are highly addictive. Currently, tobacco is neither expressly permitted nor expressly prohibited in food. FSANZ has developed this Proposal to consider restricting the addition of nicotine to food.

#### Non-culinary herbs (P260 –Initial Assessment)

In recent years, there has been an increase in both the number and extent of use of non-culinary herbs in food products, particularly beverages but also energy bars. The majority of these herbs, while they may have a tradition of use as ingredients in therapeutic goods, have not been assessed for their safety and appropriateness as food ingredients. FSANZ has developed this Proposal to consider whether non-culinary herbs should be used in food and, if so, the circumstances under which such use may be permitted.

#### Mandatory declaration of the presence of allergenic substances in food (A480 – Initial Assessment)

The Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC) has applied to FSANZ to amend certain conditions regarding the mandatory declaration of allergenic substances in food. The AFGC contends that not all products from the identified commodities known to be allergenic that must be declared pose a risk of adverse reaction. Also they contend that the current regulations are both costly to industry

*continued on page 2* »



## Where are our Australian poultry stakeholders?

The FSANZ Board has decided that the second Primary Production and Processing Standard to be developed by FSANZ, after the seafood standard, will be for the poultry meat industry.

Initially, FSANZ intended to produce a chicken meat standard but, on the advice of the Meat Standards Committee, the scope of the proposed standard was expanded to include other poultry.

The poultry industry in Australia is large, producing some 670,000 tonnes of chicken meat a year, with a retail turnover of \$2.7 billion. Australians consume, on average, 31 kilograms of chicken meat a year.

At present, food safety in the poultry industry is regulated through a voluntary standard, developed by the Meat Standards Committee and issued by Standards Australia. The

Primary Production and Processing Standard for poultry will replace this voluntary standard with a mandatory, nationally consistent standard that will be enforceable across Australia.

The FSANZ Board will consider the appointment of a Poultry Standards Development Committee (SDC) at its December 2003 meeting. An Issues Paper will be circulated for public comment in January/February 2004.

Individuals or organisations with an interest in the development of the poultry meat standard can register this interest with Ms Amanda Hill (02 6271 2632) or Dr Hong Jin (02 6271 2612). Progress with the standard will be posted on the FSANZ website at [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au) and to find it, follow the Primary Production prompt.

#### « FSAZ Updates continued

and unhelpful for allergy sufferers. This Application seeks to amend current regulations in order to limit the mandatory declarations to the presence of 'allergenic foods and any protein-containing derivatives' of these foods.

The issue of threshold levels of food allergens, that is the lowest amount of a food or food protein that is able to elicit an allergic response in sensitive individuals, is an important consideration and is currently the subject of international debate. A further issue that is raised is the limit of detection of current analytical methods to detect protein in foods and food ingredients and whether these methods are sufficient to protect the sensitive consumer. The report also seeks information on the impact of manufacturing practices on the allergenicity of food proteins and the extent to which consumers rely on and use food labels.

#### Review of gluten claims (P264 – Draft Assessment)

Under the current regulations, a 'gluten free' claim can be made on the label of a food if it contains no detectable gluten and no oats or malt. A 'low gluten' claim can be made if a food contains no more than 20mg of gluten per 100g g of food. There is debate about whether people with Coeliac disease (an intolerance to gluten) are affected by the gluten in oats or malt. FSAZ proposes that, to meet the needs of highly sensitive individuals, a 'gluten free' claim can be used where the food contains no detectable gluten and no oats or malt or their products. While for those who are less sensitive, a 'low gluten' claim may be used if the food contains less than 20g of gluten per 100g. Oats and malt may be included in foods carrying the 'low gluten' claim.

#### Food derived from insect protected cotton line COT102 (A509 – Initial assessment)

Syngenta has applied to FSAZ to approve food derived from a genetically modified (GM) insect-protected cotton, cotton line COT102. GM foods must undergo a pre-market safety assessment by FSAZ before they may be sold in Australia and New Zealand. Cotton line COT102 has been genetically modified for protection against cotton bollworm (*Helicoverpa armigera*) and native budworm (*H. punctigera*), two significant pests of cotton crops in Australia, and it also contains a gene encoding resistance to the antibiotic hygromycin. Cotton line COT102 has been developed for cultivation in North America and Australia so may enter the food supply in Australia and New Zealand via domestically produced and imported products.

#### Bacillus cereus in infant formula (A454 – Draft Assessment)

Anchor Products Limited, now Fonterra Co-operative Group Limited, a New Zealand infant

formula manufacturer, has applied to FSAZ to vary the microbiological limit for *Bacillus cereus* (*B. cereus*) in infant formula products. The Applicant proposes a new proposed limit and testing regime that will ensure the continued protection of infants. FSAZ is satisfied that, at the proposed limits, infants will not be exposed to levels of *B. cereus* that will cause illness when the formula is prepared and stored according to prescribed guidelines.

#### Winemaking (A474 – Draft Assessment)

The Winemakers' Federation of Australia has applied to update and align the provisions regulating wine in the Food Standards Code with those of other wine producing countries with which Australia and New Zealand trade in wine. These amendments are relevant to the ratification of Australia and New Zealand's multi-lateral wine agreement on trade in wine, the World Wine Trading Group Agreement on Mutual Acceptance of Oenological Practices, or MAA, which was signed by Australia and New Zealand in December 2001.

#### Extension of the stock-in-trade provisions for wine (A485 – Draft Assessment)

The Winemakers' Federation of Australia, the New Zealand Winegrowers' Association and the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation have applied to indefinitely extend the stock-in-trade provisions for vintage wines so these products can be legally sold after the expiration of the long shelf-life stock-in-trade provisions for packaged food and beverages on 20 December 2004. These vintage wines make up a very small percentage of total wine sales. If the draft variation is approved, tannin derived from chestnuts, fining agents derived from egg, fish and milk and added sulphites in concentrations of 10 mg/kg to 25 mg/kg will not be required to be listed on the label when present in vintage wine bottled prior to 20 December 2002. Where consumers are concerned about a potential adverse reaction to allergens present in vintage wine, avoiding wines with a vintage date of 2002 or earlier will eliminate the risk.

#### Polydextrose as a dietary fibre (A495 – Draft Assessment)

Axiome Pty Ltd, on behalf of Danisco A/S, has applied to FSAZ to recognise Polydextrose polymer as a dietary fibre by including in the Food Standards Code a specific method of analysis for dietary fibre in foods containing Polydextrose. Current regulation does not permit Polydextrose polymer content to be declared as dietary fibre or to be included in the calculation of total dietary fibre content. FSAZ recommends that polydextrose polymer meets the definition of dietary fibre given in Standard 1.2.8 because it is resistant to digestion in the small intestine, it is partially fermented in the large intestine; and it promotes the physiological effect of laxation.

#### Review of kava (P256 – Draft Assessment)

Kava is an intoxicating non-alcoholic beverage prepared from the root of the plant *Piper*

*methysticum*. Kava has a long history of use as a beverage in social ceremonies, particularly by South Pacific communities. Kava was also introduced into Aboriginal communities, predominantly in Arnhem Land in the 1980s as an alternative to alcohol. FSAZ is proposing to retain Standard 2.6.3 – Kava, to operate in conjunction with the National Code of Kava Management, to retain the prohibition on the mixing of kava with other foods (with the exception of food type dietary supplements regulated under New Zealand regulations), to amend the definition of kava and to retain the labelling statements related to public health. There have been recent cases of liver toxicity associated with the use of kava containing herbal preparations in capsule/tablet form presented as dietary supplements/complementary medicines. In these cases, a concentrated ethanol or acetone extract of kava has been used. As such, FSAZ is also proposing to prohibit the use in food of organic solvent extracts of kava and the aerial parts and root peelings of the plant.

#### Advice on preparation of cassava products and bamboo shoots (P257 – Draft Assessment)

Cassava and bamboo shoots contain potentially toxic compounds called cyanogenic glycosides, which break down upon disruption of the plant cells, to form hydrogen cyanide. The potential toxicity can be reduced by appropriate preparation of the plant prior to consumption as food, including peeling, slicing and cooking (for example, boiling or baking.) FSAZ considers that all consumers should be provided with appropriate information to enable the safe consumption of cassava and bamboo shoots, given that the consequences of cyanide intoxication can be severe, and has recommended that a regulatory option of requiring directions for use for the raw produce to be provided.

#### MRLs April May June July 2003 (A497 – Initial/Draft Assessment)

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (formerly the National Registration Authority for Agricultural and Veterinary Medicines) has applied to FSAZ for maximum residue limits (MRLs) for certain agricultural and veterinary chemicals in the Code. The dietary exposure assessments indicate that the residues associated with the proposed MRLs do not represent an unacceptable risk to public health and safety. There are no antibiotic MRLs in these applications.

#### Submissions

Submissions for A454 should be received by FSAZ by **5 November 2003**.

Submissions for A480, A509, A495, P260, P278, A474, A485, A497, P256, P257, and P264 should be received by FSAZ by **19 November 2003**.

# FSANZ Dairy Reference Group

FSANZ has established a Dairy Reference Group (DRG) providing an informal but regular opportunity to discuss food standards issues related to dairy products. This is an interim arrangement prior to the dairy industry and FSANZ jointly examining the need for a primary production and processing standard for dairy products.

Dairy Australia hosted an inaugural meeting of the DRG in Melbourne in July. Participants included representatives from milk producers, dairy manufacturers, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and State agencies responsible for industry compliance with, and enforcement of, food safety regulations.

FSANZ Chief Executive Officer Graham Peachey and General Manager Food Safety, Greg Roche were among the FSANZ staff present.

Briefings and discussions focused on several topics. These included FSANZ's position and planned activity with respect to raw milk cheeses – both very hard grating and soft, the current status of A1 / A2 milk and industry's wish to be more actively involved in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

The DRG identified the latter issue as being of major concern to the dairy industry because of the need for dairy regulations in Australia to be consistent with Codex principles.

Members of the DRG expressed a willingness to assist in the development by FSANZ of a nationally consistent primary production and processing standard for the dairy industry to replace existing codes of practice and start regulatory schemes. It was agreed that any food safety scheme put in place should add value to existing schemes and should, if possible, minimise the costs of regulation.

FSANZ indicated that there were no plans to commence work on a dairy standard in the immediate future. The DRG agreed that this would give all interested parties time to consider their needs in more detail and that the DRG would become the forum for discussion. It is planned that teleconferences will supplement twice yearly face-to-face meetings of the DRG. A teleconference was held in September with the next face-to-face meeting scheduled for November. For more information about the DRG and its activities please contact Jenny Williams (02 6271 2625) or [jenny.williams@foodstandards.gov.au](mailto:jenny.williams@foodstandards.gov.au).

## Welcoming ... FSANZ's new Chief Medical Advisor, Dr Bob Boyd

Dr Bob Boyd has joined FSANZ as Chief Medical Advisor. He brings with him a wealth of medical expertise to support the work of FSANZ. Based in Wellington, New Zealand, he will provide medical input to FSANZ's food standards.

Dr Boyd stressed that he is not going to work for one country any longer. 'This position is to provide medical expertise for food standards for two countries', said Dr Boyd. 'I will only be working physically from the New Zealand office, however my role includes both Australia and New Zealand. My mental picture includes both countries'.

'I look forward to working for FSANZ as over the past three years food regulation had become an integral part of my work with the New Zealand Ministry of Health', said Dr Boyd.

On 18 August 2003 Dr Boyd commenced work with FSANZ as Chief Medical Advisor. He will work closely with the Chief Scientist within the Office of Chief Scientist strengthening the medical expertise of Food Standards Australia New Zealand. Dr Boyd provides medical input and advice on current and emerging medical issues associated with the food supply. He advises staff and the Board on medical aspects of work and keeps in close contact with medical officers.



Dr Bob Boyd held joint positions of Chief Advisor of Safety and Regulation with New Zealand Ministry of Health and Principal Advisor of Public Health Medicine and was chosen to lead the formation of the New Zealand Food Safety Authority.

As New Zealand's senior representative, Dr Boyd was also involved in the creation of the new FSANZ. He advised the New Zealand Government on governance arrangements for the new joint agency and the redrafting of the Treaty between Australia and New Zealand.

Dr Boyd started his work in medicine as a Principal in a Family Medicine practice in Auckland. He moved to the New Zealand Ministry of Health (MOH) where he worked for 23 years. The majority of this time was spent leading the medicines and medical devices regulatory agency. Dr Boyd also spent time in Environmental Health, Primary Healthcare and Hospital Standards Development. He was a Health Official with the NZ Prime Ministerial Taskforce on Positive Ageing.

## Maori culture – an integral part of FSANZ



Recently, FSANZ staff in Australia were honoured to have one of the Maori leaders, Mr New Amsterdam (Amster) Reedy, to provide an insight into Maori culture.

Amster's training enhanced our understanding of the language, customs and Maori beliefs, the Waitangi Treaty and the Declaration of Independence. It explored the meaning of Maori spirituality.

Staff enjoyed Amster's reflections on Maori life. He capped the training off by teaching staff how to perform the Maori Haka.



Left (top):

Amster Reedy explaining the Maori language at the cultural awareness training

Left (bottom):

Amster Reedy teaching FSANZ staff the Haka

# What's in force and what's not!

## – an Update of Food Safety Standards in Australia

The table below is a summary of the current position in relation to each State and Territory's implementation of the Food Bill and the Food Safety Standards in their respective State or Territory as of 28 August 2003.

As the standards are introduced in each State and Territory, food businesses will also be able to seek advice directly from the

Environmental Health Officers at their local councils, or from their State or Territory health or health services department and Public Health Units.

Businesses will also be able to seek advice from their professional or industry association. Some associations are planning to develop specific guidance for their members to help them comply with the Food Safety Standards.

State/Territory	Food Bill	Food Standards Code Chapter 3 – Food Safety Standards Standards 3.1.1, 3.2.2 and 3.2.3
Northern Territory	An exposure draft of the Food Bill is expected to be released for public comment in 2003.	The Standards will not be enforceable prior to the introduction of a new Food Act.
Western Australia	The new Public Health (Food and Related Matters) Bill is planned to be considered by Parliament no earlier than the end of 2003, following consultation with stakeholders.	The Standards will become enforceable following the passing of the new Public Health (Food and Related Matters) Act. In the meantime, they will operate in conjunction with the existing Food Hygiene Regulations until they are repealed.
Queensland	Amendments to the Qld Food Act on Annex A came into effect on 1 January 2002. Public consultation on Annex B has occurred. Drafting of amendments to the Food Act based on Annex B is expected late 2003.	Commenced 1 July 2001 except for the Skills and knowledge and Notification requirements of Standard 3.2.2. Skills and knowledge came into effect on 1 July 2002. Notification depends upon outcome of a review of registration requirements, currently underway.
New South Wales	The NSW Food Bill 2003 passed the NSW Lower House. It is awaiting a 2nd reading in the Upper House (September 2003).	Commenced on 16 May 2001 with a modification to exempt certain fund raising events from the notification requirement.  NSW maintains a paper-based and an internet-based system for businesses to notify to meet the notification requirements of Standard 3.2.2. For internet notification see <a href="http://www.foodnotify.nsw.gov.au">www.foodnotify.nsw.gov.au</a>
Tasmania	The Food Act 2003 received Royal Assent in April 2003 and is due to come into effect on proclamation	Commenced 24 September 2001.
Australian Capital Territory	The new Food Act was gazetted on 10 September 2001 and came into effect on 11 March 2002	Commenced 11 March 2002
South Australia	A new Food Act based on the Model Food Act commenced on 1 December 2002.	Commenced 1 December 2002. Notification requirement of Standard 3.2.2 comes into effect 1 September 2003 and Skills and Knowledge requirement of Standard 3.2.2 comes into effect 1 December 2003.
Victoria	An amended Food Act took effect from 2 January 2002.	Commenced 2 January 2002.

## Update on the Australian Food Safety Week

10-17 November 2003

The theme for this year's Food Safety Week in Australia, to be held 10–17 November 2003, will be 'Cooking for Family and Friends' and will highlight the additional food safety risks when catering for a larger number of people than usual. This theme was selected by a vote of all Food Safety Information Council members who considered that this situation (for parties or barbecues) posed one of the greatest food safety risks for consumers.

Plans for the week are progressing well. The new Food Safety Information Council website will be up and running in October and all its contents have been re-written and brought up

to date. The website address will remain [www.foodsafety.asn.au](http://www.foodsafety.asn.au).

At the start of Food Safety Week, The Food Safety Information Council (FSIC) are again doing a video news release for television which will include film of preparation, cooking and storing leftovers at a barbecue. The messages included in this will be designed to give information on the areas where Newspoll market research last year showed lack of knowledge. The FSIC will also be sending out pre-packaged segments and Community Service announcements to all regional radio stations. All of these have proved very

successful in the past two years.

The Food Safety Information Council is also planning some further Newspoll market research. In October, prior to Food Safety Week, Newpoll will be requested to survey the key messages. This year the FSIC propose to replace one of the questions with one about whether it is safe to return cooked meat at a BBQ to the plate raw meat was on. If you would like to be added to the Food Safety Information Council contact list to receive updates, please phone Tania Bradley on (02) 62544896 or e-mail at [bradlct@austarmetro.com.au](mailto:bradlct@austarmetro.com.au).

# Asia – Pacific Region projects

## Brunei

Mr Greg Roche, General Manager Food Safety, Legal and Evaluation and Mr Steve Crossley, Program Manager Monitoring and Evaluation took the expertise of FSANZ to another level following a request from the Brunei Minister of Industry and Primary Resources to evaluate the food regulatory system in Brunei.

The Brunei Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources (MIPR) approached Australia to assist in the development of a Quality Control and Accreditation Centre (QCAC) and an integrated food regulatory system for Brunei. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) was identified as the Australian agency best placed to undertake a scoping exercise to assess the need for a QCAC in the wider context of the Brunei food regulatory system.

The two FSANZ's Officers visited Brunei in early August as guests of the government of Brunei and with the assistance of the Australian High Commission in Brunei.



( Left to right ) Ms Elena Balogh, Second Secretary, Australian High Commission to Brunei Darussalam, Mr Greg Roche, FSANZ General Manager Food Safety, Legal and Evaluation, Dato Idris Belaman, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, Government of Brunei Darussalam and Mr Steve Crossley, Program Manager Monitoring and Evaluation

FSANZ has provided a report to the Brunei Government on some options for future development of Brunei's food regulatory system.

## Chinese Senior Delegation visits Canberra

Dr Wu Zhongze, Vice Minister, Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) of the People's Republic of China led a senior delegation from MOST to FSANZ to discuss collaborative arrangements between the two agencies. Dr Wu stressed that the Chinese Government is committed to improving food safety in China and is very impressed by the progress and great achievements made by Australia particularly the work done by FSANZ. Dr Wu confirmed that China is keen to learn from our experience. To this end, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MOST and FSANZ will be signed

during October. Discussion on further collaborative arrangements will continue when the Chairman of FSANZ, the Hon. Rob Knowles visits Beijing in October.

The first activity planned under the MOU will be the delivery of an introductory training program focussing on the key components of food regulatory systems and Australia's experience. The program will be tailored to the needs of senior government and industry managers. It is expected that the two-week program will be delivered in China in late November / early December. AusAID will provide the necessary funding.



Mr Graham Peachey, FSANZ CEO and Dr Wu Zhongze, Vice Minister, Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) of the People's Republic of China ( centre ) pictured with FSANZ staff and other members of the Chinese delegation.

## Important Notice – Check your Bookmarks and email addresses

It has been over twelve months since we changed our name to Food Standards Australia New Zealand. During this time we continued to accept website and email

references to [anzfa.gov.au](http://anzfa.gov.au) and [anzfa.govt.nz](http://anzfa.govt.nz), allowing people time to familiarise themselves with our new address, [foodstandards.gov.au](http://foodstandards.gov.au) and [foodstandards.govt.nz](http://foodstandards.govt.nz).

As of 30 September 2003, references to [anzfa](http://anzfa.gov.au) in domain names will no longer be valid and the old addresses will not work.

To ensure that all website and email addresses are accepted, please update any bookmarks

## New advice on mercury in fish coming soon

FSANZ is working closely with health professionals, consumer groups, government agencies and the seafood industry to update the advice on fish consumption in relation to mercury in fish. This information will be available from late November 2003 and will be distributed widely to health professionals and to the public through the media.

Mercury occurs naturally in the environment and accumulates in the aquatic food chain, including fish, as methylmercury. This means all fish will contain some methylmercury – this is a natural process.

Fish is the main source of methylmercury in the diet for most people. The amount of methylmercury in fish depends on how long the fish lives and what it eats. The big, long living or predatory fish, such as swordfish, shark/flake and some tuna tend to accumulate higher levels of methylmercury.

Exposure to high levels of methylmercury can damage the nervous system. Unborn babies are particularly vulnerable because their brain is developing very rapidly. Some studies have reported a link between consumption of fish by mothers and subtle developmental delays in their children. These changes could only be detected using special tests that measure learning and behaviour. In contrast, for adults, the first sign of excessive exposure to methylmercury is usually numbness and tingling in the fingers, lips and toes. Effects in adults occur at much higher levels of exposure than that linked to effects in children.

The good news is that the level of methylmercury in most fish is very low. As most people only consume moderate amounts of fish, the benefits of eating fish far outweigh the risk posed by the small amount of methylmercury present.

Regulations are in place that set a limit on the amount of mercury that can be present in fish that is sold. These limits ensure that the vast majority of people in the community are not exposed to significant health risks through the presence of mercury in fish.

or contact lists to [foodstandards.gov.au](http://foodstandards.gov.au) or [foodstandards.govt.nz](http://foodstandards.govt.nz).

For the website:

[www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au) or  
[www.foodstandards.govt.nz](http://www.foodstandards.govt.nz)

For email:

[firstname.lastname@foodstandards.gov.au](mailto:firstname.lastname@foodstandards.gov.au) or  
[firstname.lastname@foodstandards.govt.nz](mailto:firstname.lastname@foodstandards.govt.nz)

# Chief Scientist Dr Marion Healy discusses the use of non-culinary herbs in foods

Culinary herbs, such as basil, bay leaves, marjoram and thyme, have traditionally been added to food to provide flavour and aroma. Recently, however, there has been an increase in the use of non-culinary herbs in foods, especially in energy bars and drinks. Herbs such as ginkgo biloba, evening primrose, schizandra, brindleberry and echinacea are increasingly found in food products. Questions have been raised about the safety, appropriateness and regulatory status of the food uses of such non-culinary herbs.

Many of the non-culinary herbs now being added to foods have traditionally been found in therapeutic products, particularly complementary medicines. However, the majority have not undergone a safety assessment to determine their suitability for use in foods. There are significant differences between the regulation of therapeutic products and the regulation of foods which impact on safety. Firstly, non-culinary herbs used in foods are not controlled by the quality control standards required for therapeutic products. Secondly, food use of non-culinary herbs may result in exposure of a broader segment of the population, and thus raise additional safety concerns. Thirdly, foods, unlike therapeutic products, are not accompanied by advice on safe use of the product (such as dosage and potential side effects), nor are there a reporting mechanisms for adverse effects resulting from food use.

Thus, while the risks associated with the use of a non-culinary herb in a therapeutic product

are reasonably well managed, this may not be the case when the same non-culinary herb is used in foods. No direct comparison can be inferred between the safety of non-culinary herbs in a therapeutic product and the safety of the same non-culinary herbs presented in a food form. This is contrary to the general expectation of consumers that food and its ingredients are safe when used in reasonable quantities and at a reasonable frequency.

Non-culinary herbs, particularly those that have a history of use in therapeutic products, are presumably being added to food to elicit a physiological or pharmacological effect, raising questions about the appropriateness of using food as the vehicle to deliver such substances. Most non-culinary herbs currently being added to food do not have regulatory approval, nor has the safety been assessed for food use. The current regulations address the health risk posed by certain high-risk plants and fungi by prohibiting or restricting their addition to food, but this does not apply generally to non-culinary herbs.

FSANZ is currently considering whether there is a need to amend the *Food Standards Code*, to ensure that if non-culinary herbs are used in food, they will not introduce any additional public health and safety concerns. This issue is being considered as proposal P260 and public comment is being sought on the initial assessment document, which can be accessed from the FSANZ web site at [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au) or [www.foodstandards.govt.nz](http://www.foodstandards.govt.nz).



## What is FSANZ?

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) protects the health and safety of the people in Australia and New Zealand by maintaining a safe food supply.

We are a bi-national independent statutory authority that develops food standards for composition, labelling and contaminants, including microbiological limits, that apply to all foods produced or imported for sale in Australia and New Zealand.

In Australia, Food Standards Australia New Zealand develops food standards to cover the whole of the food supply chain – from paddock to plate – for both the food manufacturing industry and primary producers.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand works in partnership with Australia's Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and the New Zealand Government. We also seek to engage industry, consumers and public health professionals in our work.

## Contact details

### Australia

PO Box 7186  
Canberra BC 2610  
Australia  
Ph: +61 2 6271 2222  
Fax: +61 2 6271 2278  
[www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)  
Email: [info@foodstandards.gov.au](mailto:info@foodstandards.gov.au)

### New Zealand

PO Box 10559, The Terrace  
Wellington 6036  
New Zealand  
Ph: +64 4 473 9942  
Fax: +64 4 473 9855  
[www.foodstandards.govt.nz](http://www.foodstandards.govt.nz)  
Email: [info@foodstandards.govt.nz](mailto:info@foodstandards.govt.nz)

## The New Zealand Foodsafe partnership

The New Zealand Foodsafe Partnership was set up by representatives from the food industry, consumer groups, public health groups, MAF Food (now the New Zealand Food Safety Authority) and the Ministry of Health, to promote consistent and appropriate food safety messages to New Zealand consumers.

The group's aim is to reduce food borne illness by providing consistent and appropriate food safety and food handling information for New Zealand consumers.

The New Zealand Foodsafe Partnership promotes food safety messages to consumers with an emphasis on the 4Cs - clean, cook, cover, chill. Their messages are:

- **Clean** hands before handling food. Wash knives and utensils and scrub chopping boards.
- **Cook** chicken, meat patties and sausages thoroughly. Reheat leftovers till steaming hot.
- **Cover** food. Store raw and cooked food separately.
- **Chill** food. Use a chilly bin or frozen pad while food is not in the fridge

For more information about their activities this summer see their website [www.foodsafe.org.nz](http://www.foodsafe.org.nz).

## Need assistance about the joint Food Standards Code?

Call the **Food Code Hotline** for information on the new food standards for the cost of a local call on 1300 652 166 in Australia or 0 800 441 571 in New Zealand or email [advice@foodstandards.gov.au](mailto:advice@foodstandards.gov.au).

## ORDERING THE FOOD STANDARDS CODE

To obtain a copy of the Code contact Anstat Pty Ltd

**Phone** +61 3 9278 1144

**Fax** +61 3 9278 1145

**Mail** PO Box 447, South Melbourne Victoria

**On-line** <http://anzfa.anstat.com.au>

Articles from *Food Standards News* may be reproduced with appropriate acknowledgement.

ISSN 1445-7911