



COORDINATE NATIONAL RESPONSE AND MONITORING

National response
Monitoring



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Food incidents

FSANZ coordinates the Bi-National Food Safety Network (the Network), a mechanism for national coordination and early information sharing and communication on food incidents. The Network includes all Australian state and territory food enforcement agencies, the Australian Government Department of Health, the Australian Government Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries. During 2016–17 twelve issues were referred to the Network, including the multi-jurisdictional outbreak investigation of *Salmonella* Hvittingfoss associated with rockmelons.

FSANZ held a third National Food Safety Incident Response Forum for government and industry stakeholders in June 2017. This included a plenary session that looked

at the *Salmonella* Hvittingfoss in rockmelons food incident in August 2016 including:

- the epidemiological investigation
- industry, retailers and government perspectives, incorporating lessons learnt and communication materials
- the use of genomics in public health investigations
- the role of food safety culture.

These workshops continue to provide an opportunity to network and share ideas with industry and government stakeholders and to gain a better understanding of challenges and hurdles in food safety incident management.

Food recalls

There were 61 food recalls coordinated by FSANZ from 1 July 2017–30 June 2017 (Figure 1). The recalls were mainly due to undeclared allergens (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Number of recalls by month (1 July 2016–30 June 2017).

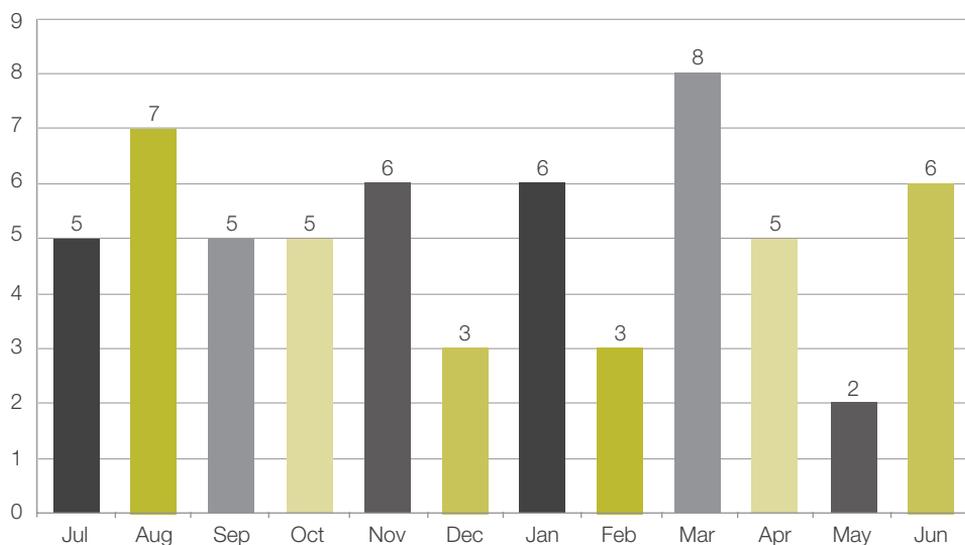
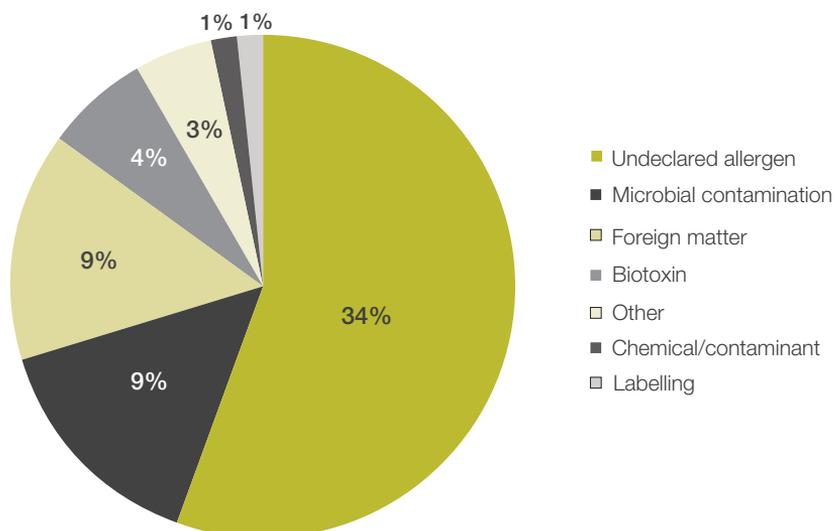


Figure 2: Reason for recalls



In July 2016, at the request of the state and territory food enforcement agencies, FSANZ added new questions about the root cause of the undeclared allergen recalls to the post recall report. FSANZ reviewed 26 allergen-related recalls and identified four broad categories of how problems occur:

- lack of skills and knowledge of labelling requirements (e.g. pasta was declared as an ingredient, but wheat was not. Manufacturers using reformulated ingredients did not reflect new ingredients on labelling. Ingredients were not fully-translated into English from the original language)
- supplier verification issues (e.g. raw ingredient contained allergen but this information was not passed on to the manufacturer)
- packaging errors (e.g. product packed in the wrong packaging. Dairy free claim on front of packet when it was meant to be a gluten free claim (ingredient list was correct))
- accidental cross contamination either of a raw ingredient, or during the final production process.

Food safety culture

The concept of ‘food safety culture’ as an important part of effective food safety management is being actively looked at internationally and domestically by industry and government. Food safety culture is how and what everyone in a company or organisation thinks about food safety and how they act in their daily job to produce safe and suitable food.

In 2016–17 FSANZ led several activities with a broad range of stakeholders including food regulatory agencies from all levels of government and large and small food businesses, to promote and improve food safety culture. Key activities were:

- running a national forum to discuss food safety culture in Australia and how it can be strengthened
- forming a food safety culture partnership to progress work in this area
- developing several resources to help businesses gauge the strength of their food safety culture and to build or enhance it.

These resources include guidance, a simple questionnaire and checklists of actions and are available on the FSANZ website.

Food Safety Culture



Food safety is
everyone's
responsibility



Avoid illness
and other costs
of mistakes



A trustworthy
product and
brand



Safe behaviour
makes safe
food

FSANZ staff also presented on food safety culture at several government/industry events at the request of state regulatory agencies and industry bodies.

During the rest of 2017 FSANZ will continue this work, including running a second national forum and developing further resources for industry and regulators.

Monitoring

Australian Total Diet Study

FSANZ's Australian Total Diet Study (ATDS) is the most comprehensive ongoing monitoring survey of the Australian food supply which investigates Australian consumers' dietary exposure to agricultural and veterinary chemicals, metal contaminants and other substances. The ATDS provides FSANZ with a scientific evidence base to assess and monitor the safety of the Australian food supply, and ensure the continued effectiveness of food regulatory measures.

The 25th ATDS, including agricultural and veterinary chemicals, metal contaminants

and various natural and anthropogenic radionuclides is due for publication in late 2017. The 26th ATDS began in April 2017 and includes analysis of a broad range of Australian foods and beverages for various compounds classified as persistent organic pollutants, including dioxins and dioxin-like compounds.

Implementation Subcommittee for Food Regulation Surveillance and Monitoring Working Group

FSANZ chairs the Implementation Subcommittee for Food Regulation (ISFR) Surveillance and Monitoring Working Group, which serves as a forum for jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand to discuss, plan and implement coordinated food survey activities and strategic data generation to address ISFR priorities. The group revises a three-year Coordinated Food Survey Plan annually, which identifies and prioritises nationally coordinated survey activities. The resulting **food survey reports**⁷ are made publically available on the FSANZ website.

⁷ <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/science/surveillance/pages/isccomponent1.aspx>