


Submission to
Food Standards Australia New Zealand

Proposal P298

Initial Assessment Report Benzoate and Sulphite Permissions in
Food


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Australian Meat Industry Council

The Australian Meat Industry Council (AMIC) represents all companies and employers in the post farm gate meat industry. These include abattoirs, boning rooms, smallgoods manufacturers and retail butchers. AMIC has approximately 2,500 members in all states and territories of Australia.

Safety of benzoate and sulphite-containing food

Sausage manufacture is highly regulated in terms of meat, fat, protein and preservative content. HACCP controls for the manufacture of sausage insist on ingredient addition (sulphite) and; storage temperatures of finished products as CCP's. As sulphite is primarily used to ensure the safety of the food, AMIC agrees that further investigation on the toxicological data provided by the Australian Total Diet Study is warranted.

Dietary exposure

Very little research has been done in recent years looking at sulphite additions in food systems. It has been generally thought that maintaining preservative levels aligned with the Food Standards Code provided for responsibly safe food products. As this technology is mature, research and development has been centered on more leading edge or new innovative projects within the food industry.

An old scientific paper, often spoken about within the meat industry (no reference found) reported cooking fresh sausages resulted in an approximate 50% reduction sulphite content.

Technological justification for using benzoates and sulphites

Promotion of alternatives to the use of sulphites would need to ensure there were no cost disadvantages to producers and that an agreed communication and phasing in period applied.

Regulatory and Non-regulatory options

It would be premature to recommend one of the options detailed in the initial assessment report without having further assessment.