



Advances in collaboration

Allergen Bureau Industry Seminars

Melbourne, Sydney, Auckland

April 2013

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Overview

Allergen Review

- Review findings and recommendations

Allergen Collaboration

- Membership
- Activities
- Allergen Review Recommendation 1

Allergen Review Recommendation 2 – Allergen thresholds

Current regulatory activities

- Recommendation 3 – Lupin as a allergen
- Recommendations 4 and 5 – Labelling issues
- Recommendation 6 – Exemptions from allergen labelling

Review of the Regulatory Management of Allergens ('Allergen Review')

- Current regulatory requirements came into effect in 2002
- Ministers requested a review in October 2006
- Review concluded in December 2010; Ministers endorsed Review Report findings in May 2011

Review Report available from the FSANZ website at:

www.foodstandards.gov.au/scienceandeducation/publications/allergenreview.cfm

Allergen review findings

- Recommended a Scientific Advisory Group be established (FAISAG)
- Another 6 recommendations for further work:
 1. Food exempt from bearing a label
 2. Allergen thresholds (levels that trigger an allergenic reaction).
 3. Consider lupin as a new allergen
 4. Label information – (plain language)
 5. Labelling requirements for the current list of allergenic foods
 6. Exemption of ingredients derived from allergenic foods

Allergen Collaboration

- Established by FSANZ in September 2011, following the Allergen Review
- It aims to:
 - strengthen engagement and collaboration among the range of key stakeholders involved in managing food allergens.
 - share information and develop common non-regulatory approaches to enhance the risk management of food allergens in the interest of consumers.

Allergen Collaboration Membership

Key stakeholders across the food supply chain and in the regulatory sphere:

- Food manufacturing and food service peak bodies
- Consumer and industry organisations involved in allergen management
- Major retailers and importers associations
- Jurisdiction representatives

Allergen Collaboration Activities

- Initial workshop – what would be most effective in making a difference.....
- Prepared a Communication Strategy, which describes objectives, intended outcomes and specific issues to be addressed.
- Developed consistent, accurate and clear key messages for various sectors throughout the food chain.
- Undertaken an audit of existing communication materials used by different sectors.
- A web portal to promote, host or link to shared material to be on the FSANZ website - now in development.

R1: Food exempt from bearing a label

- Allergen review noted many allergic reactions are attributed to unlabelled food eaten in restaurants and cafés.
- Overall need for raising awareness of effective allergen management practices, and further education and training of food service staff.
- Allergen Collaboration addressing this issue.

R2: Allergen thresholds (levels that trigger an allergenic reaction)

- Aware of significant advances in this area, including improved methodologies for gathering and analysing clinical data.
- FSANZ and the Food Allergy and Intolerance Scientific Advisory Group (FAISAG, a FSANZ advisory group) maintaining a watching brief on this issue.
- The EU and the US FDA are both currently investigating allergen thresholds.





Current Regulatory Activities



R3: Lupin as an allergen

- A legume related to peanut and soy, lupin is increasingly being used as an ingredient in food.
- FSANZ assessed the evidence for lupin against the key criteria for requiring labelling of allergens incl. clinical data, IgE mediated reactions, presence in food supply
- Concluded that lupin is an emerging food allergen of public health significance in Australia.
- Commenced work on *Proposal P1026 – Lupin as an Allergen*





Is current allergen labelling clear?



R4: Label information

- The Code does not require the source of the ingredient to be declared (plain English).
- FSANZ will consider this issue in conjunction with Rec 5 in a project that will consider issues (*Clarity of Allergen Labelling* project).
- The Review Report also recommended (in association with industry):
 - minimisation of the use of precautionary labelling through management of allergen cross contact.
 - a label monitoring system to track improvements in these allergen labelling practices

R5: Labelling requirements for current list of allergenic foods

- Consider improvements to:
 - existing definitions for ‘tree nuts’ and ‘fish’
 - clarify the declaration requirements for gluten vs. wheat
- Consider whether existing terminology is appropriate, e.g. ‘substances’, and ‘food products’ made from allergenic substances.
- Evidence gathering with a view to seeing if there is sufficient evidence and stakeholder support for FSANZ to prepare a proposal (*Clarity of Allergen Labelling* project, together with Rec 4).

R6: Exemptions from allergen labelling

- The Code requires a mandatory allergen declaration when an ingredient is derived from one of the listed allergen sources, regardless of whether allergenic protein is present.
- Allergen Review recognised many of these ingredients are themselves not allergenic.
- Industry identified priorities: glucose syrup and dextrans derived from wheat, refined soy oil and products from soy refining, and alcohol distilled from wheat and whey production



R6: Exemptions from allergen labelling

- FSANZ is examining the scientific and clinical data available on the allergenicity of four specific ingredients in four food groups.
- A report on the safety and related food technology issues that could underpin labelling exemptions for these ingredients will be finalised mid-2013.





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