FOOD ALLERGEN REGULATION IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND: NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE

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OVERVIEW

• Current regulations
• Recent developments
• Non-regulatory initiatives
• Into the future …
ANZ FOOD REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Standard setting
FSANZ

Policy
Forum on Food Regulation (Ministers)

Enforcement
States and territories
NZ MPI
DAWR (imported foods)
DEVELOPING FOOD STANDARDS

Protection of public health and safety

Provision of adequate information for consumers to make informed choices

Prevention of misleading or deceptive conduct

Other Key Considerations:

- Risk analysis using the best available scientific evidence
- OBPR* requirements
- Consistency between domestic & international food standards
- Efficient and internationally competitive food industry
- Promotion of fair trading in food
- Written Ministerial policy guidelines

*Office Best Practice Regulation
# The Food Standards Code

## General Requirements
- General requirements for foods e.g. definitions, labelling, substances added to foods

## Compositional Requirements
- Compositional requirements for specific foods

## Food Safety Requirements
- Food safety requirements

## Standards for Agricultural Commodities
- Standards for agricultural commodities

## Approved Specifications
- Approved specifications

## Specific Permissions
- Specific permissions e.g. additives, processing aids, health claims, GM commodities, agvet chemicals, micro limits
SUBSTANCES THAT MUST BE DECLARED

- Cereals containing gluten
- Milk
- Soy
- Egg
- Sulphites
- Sesame Seed
- Tree nuts
- Peanut
- Crustacea
- Fish

Images of each substance are shown alongside their names.
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS
**EXEMPTIONS**

**EXISTING**

- **Coconut** *(Cocos nucifera)*

**NEW 2016**

- **Glucose syrups from wheat starch**
  - Gluten to lowest level reasonable achieved
  - Gluten also ≤ 20 mg/kg

- **Alcohol distilled from wheat or whey**

- **Soybean oil**
  - Degummed, neutralised, bleached or deodorised

- **Soybean derivatives**
  - Tocopherols
  - Phytosterols
NEW ALLERGEN – LUPIN

Lupin is a legume related to peanut and soy, and increasingly used as a food ingredient.

FSANZ has assessed safety and concluded lupin is a food allergen in Australia and New Zealand, and has proposed mandatory declaration.

Currently being considered by Ministers (due 22 May!)

If no review effective 12 months from gazettal
POTENTIAL CODE CHANGES

The issue:

The Code requires what food allergens to declare, but not how to declare them.

A lack of regulatory clarity has led to unclear wording to declare allergens.

Unclear/confusion for consumers
EXAMPLES OF UNCLEAR LABELLING

“Cereals containing gluten” instead of “Wheat”

“Fish” instead of “Molluscs”

“Sodium caseinate” instead of “Milk”
PROPOSAL P1044 – PLAIN ENGLISH ALLERGEN LABELLING (PEAL)

Requiring food labels to use clear and plain English terminology when declaring allergens

Scope

- Looking at the wording, not introducing new allergens
- Make clearer for manufacturers how to meet labelling obligations
- Not included
  - format/presentation
  - precautionary allergen labelling

Major proposal – at least 2 public consultation rounds

1st round later in 2017.
AUSTRALIAN RECALL TRENDS

- Undeclared allergen
- Microbial contamination
- Foreign matter
- Other recall types
FSANZ CAMPAIGN

Aimed at reminding food businesses about the need to get allergen labelling right

- Media release
- Website
- Social media
- YouTube
REGULATION IS ONLY PART OF THE STORY
ALLERGEN COLLABORATION

- Established by FSANZ in September 2011
- Key stakeholders in allergen management

- Aims:
  - to strengthen engagement and collaboration among the range of key stakeholders involved in managing food allergens.
  - to share information and develop common non-regulatory approaches to enhance the risk management of food allergens in the interest of consumers.
Focus Area 1: Targeted communication
   a) Food service sector
   b) Stakeholders on action levels

Focus Area 2: Communicating with hard to reach groups e.g. Food importer/SME education
ALLERGEN COLLABORATION
ACTIVITIES

Initial workshop – what would be most effective in making a difference

Developed a Communication Strategy - consistent, accurate and clear key messages for various sectors throughout the food chain

Audit of existing communication materials used by different sectors

Launched a web portal to promote key messages and link to shared best practice material, hosted on the FSANZ website http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/foodallergies/food%20allergen%20portal/Pages/default.aspx

FOOD ALLERGEN PORTAL
a one-stop shop for information

A food allergen website portal has been created to provide a one-stop shop for everyone involved in managing food allergens, including those in the restaurant and catering industry.

Mr Stockwell says one of the first tasks of the collaboration was to develop a suite of consistent, accurate and clear key messages about food allergen management.

“These key messages are targeted at various sectors throughout the food chain, including the food industry, which has an important role in helping to manage food allergies.”

Launched last year and hosted on the FSANZ website, the portal provides best practice information and links to useful resources. A food industry page details the key messages that should be followed.
INDUSTRY INITIATIVES

“agreed that in relation to allergen labelling, further work be undertaken by FSANZ through the Allergen Collaboration to promote the uptake of voluntary labelling initiatives and that a report be provided to the Forum within 12 months. Ministers also acknowledged the work to date by industry.”

Communique of the Australia New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation November 2016
INTO THE FUTURE
GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT

• Education and resources – industry, consumers, public
• Hard to reach groups incl CALD

FOOD ALLERGY WEEK
14-20 MAY 2017
ANALYTICAL THRESHOLDS

• Improvements in analytical methods = reduction in allergen detection limits
• Detection threshold vs clinical significance?
• Regulatory implications?
• FSANZ:
  ➢ Watching brief on these issues
  ➢ Food Allergy and Intolerance Scientific Advisory Group (FAISAG)
IS THIS THE FUTURE?
QUESTIONS AND THANK YOU

FSANZ links: www.facebook.com/Food.Standards
            @FSANZNews
            www.foodstandards.gov.au

FSANZ Allergen Portal:

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