Key Successes of the Allergen Bureau

Tues 18 Sep, 2018 Foodtech Packtech, Auckland

Debbie Hawkes
Director, Allergen Bureau
(GM – Operations & Quality ANZ, Hawkins Watts)
FSANZ Allergen related Recall Stats

Undeclared Allergens are still the major cause of FSANZ recalls

Source: http://www.foodstandards.govt.nz/industry/foodrecalls/recallstats/Pages/default.aspx
Who is the Allergen Bureau?

- The Allergen Bureau is the **peak industry body** representing food industry allergen management in Australia and New Zealand.

- The Allergen Bureau is a **membership based** organisation established to provide food industry with rapid responses to questions about allergen risk management in food ingredients and manufactured foods.

- Established 2005, **pre-competitive**, ‘not-for-profit’, industry volunteer Board.
The Allergen Bureau – Our Vision and Mission

Vision

• The Allergen Bureau is a globally recognised and supported industry organisation promoting best practice food industry allergen management, risk review and consistent labelling to facilitate informed consumer choice

Mission

• To facilitate a globally accepted, consistent, science-based approach to food allergen risk assessment, management and communication that:
  ➢ guides industry best practice
  ➢ assists allergen sensitive consumers to make informed choices based on label information
Organisation

Our Members
http://allergenbureau.net/about-us/our-members

Board of Directors
Kirsten Grinter • Caroline Gray • Debbie Hawkes
David Henning • Karen Robinson

Secretariat
Dr Tom Lewis
Ray Murphy

Management Committee
Kirsten • Caroline • Debbie
Tom

Website & VITAL Online
External service providers

Operations
Ray

Scientific & Technical
Georgina Christensen • Lisa Warren
Dr Simon Brooke-Taylor • Robin Sherlock

Foodtech Packtech Sep 2018
The VITAL® Program

The VITAL (Voluntary Incidental Trace Allergen Labelling) Program is a standardised allergen risk assessment process for food industry

✓ Science-based labelling outcomes
✓ Suitable for raw materials & finished product
✓ VITAL Online – web-based, VITAL Calculator
✓ Supported by regulators

Provides reassurance through informed decision making
The VITAL® Scientific Expert Panel (VSEP) overarching scientific approach

• analysed existing published clinical data and some unpublished data ( >1800 data points )
• statistical modelling to look at implication for the allergic population
• scientifically and clinically sound, defensible and transparent
• published papers (Taylor et al 2014, Allen et al 2014)
• protection for vast majority of people with food allergy

Next VSEP meeting 16 Oct 2018, EAACI-FAAM Copenhagen
The 10 Steps of VITAL® - ‘The VITAL Procedure’

1. Determination of relevant allergens
2. Identification of intentionally added allergens
3. Identification and quantification of cross contact allergens due to ingredients
4. Identification and quantification of cross contact allergens due to processing
5. Calculation of total cross contact allergen in finished product
6. Determination of Action Levels
7. Review of labelling recommendations and sources of cross contact
8. Recording of assumptions
9. Validation of VITAL assessment
10. Ongoing monitoring

Consider VITAL as a systematic allergen risk assessment tool. It is not just about cross contact!
The VITAL® Framework

- VITAL Program
- Risk Review
- Anomalies
- Tools & Helpline
- VSEP
- Training Providers
- VITAL Online

(WG1) Risk Review

(WG2) Communication

(WG3) Certification

Framework_VITAL.png
VITAL® Working Group 1 – Risk Review

Susan Colling, Newly Weds Foods
Alan Edwards, NSW Food Authority
Jessica Feather, Woolworths
Amanda Hawkins, Cerebos
Jasmine Lacis-Lee, DTS Food Assurance
Kaye Wood, Nestlé Australia
Lisa Warren, Allergen Bureau (Project Lead)
Kirsten Grinter, Nestlé Australia (Sponsor, Allergen Bureau President)
WG1 Risk Review – Project Brief

• Helpful guidance on investigating the allergen status of food
• Appropriate for a broad food industry audience (local, international, SME, corporations)
• Expandable to include entire supply chain from primary production to finished product and food service
• Lots of detail, but easy to use
• Modern new approach!
The Risk Review interactive website
Key timings to launch of Risk Review website

- 12<sup>th</sup> Sept 2018: Initial demonstration at AIFST allergen session
- Sept 2018: Edit, edit, and edit again
- 25<sup>th</sup> Oct 2018: Allergen Bureau AGM & Member Meeting – invite our members to trial and comment
- Nov 2018: Risk Review website Live!
VITAL® Working Group 2 – Best Practice Labelling Guide for ANZ

✓ Steps for composing an ingredient list that declares allergens clearly
✓ Five worked examples that show best practice for declaring food allergens on a label
✓ Key word definitions
✓ References to other allergen declaration guidance
VITAL® Working Group 3 - Certification

✓ Completed drafting the ‘VITAL Scheme’ under ISO 17065 (thanks Bill McBride!)
  • auditable ‘VITAL Standard’
  • rules and processes to be followed by accredited certification bodies
    (to meet ISO 17065)

✓ ‘Bolt-on’ to GFSI-recognised Stds + HACCP-based Allergen Mgmt Programs

✓ Draft VITAL Standard being trialled by industry
  to ensure it can be interpreted & applied consistently

✓ Draft scheme to be reviewed by
  Certification Bodies to ensure it is
  practical & achievable for industry

Seeking JAS-ANZ accreditation of
VITAL Scheme in late 2018
Success story...

- Membership growing, with over 100 food industry organisations and individuals
  - 34 Full Members, 33 Associate Members and 44 Individual Members
  - International memberships & interest increasing

- Technical support helpline for Allergen Management and VITAL® enquiries

- Excellent free resources available via website, including regular eNews

- VITAL® Online continuing to increase in usage:
  - 2,220 registered organisations, equating to over 3,800 individual users, with ‘active users’ of VITAL Online between 340 – 540 in any month
  - Since it’s launch in August 2015, users have generated over 15,500 VITAL reports, with over 10,000 ingredients, and 8,000 recipes.
  - 18 endorsed VITAL® Training Providers across the world

- NZIFST and AIFST Best Practice in Food Allergen Management Awards
  - NZ: Donna & Mike Elston, Talley’s Ice Cream
  - AU: Sue Wilkinson, Robern Menz
Challenges

✓ VITAL® Program has regulator support but is voluntary
  Allows flexibility around response which is valuable to industry & consumers

✓ Perceived cost of compliance
  Tiered approach to VITAL Online subscription
  Free helpline support via VITAL Coordinator
  Continued investment in further industry tools

✓ International acceptance of Reference Dose (Threshold) concept
  Growing acceptance of the concept and continued science to support the approach

✓ Alignment and collaboration with multiple other guidance sources
  FSANZ Allergen Collaboration
  AFGC Allergen Management and Labelling Guide
  FTAA Allergen Protocols
  Codex Committee on Food Labelling, Allergen Mgmt Code of Practice

✓ Global acceptance of VITAL Program
Conclusion

✓ Allergen Bureau continues to respond to stakeholder needs
  • Working groups
  • Investment in development of resources to support allergen management and VITAL®

✓ Collaborate with key stakeholders
  • National Allergy Strategy
  • FSANZ Allergen Collaboration
  • FSANZ consultation pieces
  • Codex consultation groups

✓ International Collaboration

Acknowledgements and Contact Details

• Secretariat (Dr Tom Lewis & Ray Murphy)
• VITAL® Coordinator (Georgina Christensen)
  VITAL Support (Lisa Warren)
  Scientific & Technical Support (Dr Simon Brooke-Taylor)
• Website: www.allergenbureau.net
• FREE Helpline :
  ➢ email: info@allergenbureau.net
  ➢ International phone: + 61 437 918 959

Thank you!