SafeFish Prioritisaton Workshop

Every few years SafeFish reviews its technical work program in order to help provide the best outcomes for the industry. The review involved identifying existing and emerging food safety, trade and market access issues/ hazards. Any issues that would require technical input to resolve were prioritised in the risk ranking workshop by SafeFish partners. Similar reviews have occurred in 2011 and 2014. The outcomes from these reviews include:

a) raising awareness of issues of importance to the seafood industry with funders,
b) form a priority listing for future SafeFish work and
c) encourage researchers and funders to address the issues.

A workshop was held at South Australian Research and Development Institute, Adelaide on 25th November to rank the issues/ hazards collated by SafeFish from Australian epidemiological data, food recall data (domestic and import), international emerging risks networks, Codex Alimentarius Commission, Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (DAWR) – National Residue Survey and import testing programs, SafeFish enquires and surveys, direct contact with the seafood industry and stakeholders.

Thirteen issues/ hazards were identified by SafeFish secretariat for consideration, and information on each issue collated. A risk matrix was used to assess each issue. The risk matrix considered risks in the following categories: trade and market access, public health, regulatory impacts, economic impacts, reputational impacts (media/ political) and environmental /sustainability issues.

Information was provided to the participants to enable ranking of risk across each category. The likelihood and consequence of impacts in each risk category where assessed for each issue, leading to a numerical value being assigned for each assessment. Values from 1-6 were of high risk, 7-15 of medium and 16-25 of low risk.

Each issue was assessed and scored by all participants, followed by a discussion and agreement of final scores. A summation sheet was generated showing what the major risk for each issue is, and how it ranked overall. Final rankings were:

High priority	**Medium priority**	**Low priority**
Export restriction for canned abalone into China based on Chinese sulphite regulations	Off label chemical use in Australia	Water retention chemicals

Harmful algal blooms (HABs) and their impact on seafood	Per and poly fluoroalkyl substances (PFASs) – formally known as perfluorinated compounds (PFC)	Potentially high levels of mercury in crustaceans
Ciguatera	Parasites in finfish	
Vibrios in bivalve shellfish		
Food fraud and food authenticity		
Arsenic in *Amusium* scallops in WA and QLD		

One issue, the development and validation of rapid biotoxin tests kits, could not be assessed using the current matrix, as it was a benefit not a risk.

SafeFish will now consider how to progress each issue, and where to place resources for the best impact over the next few years.

If you would like more detail on any of these items, a copy of the risk ranking report, or have an interest in progressing any of the issues identified as high priority please contact Alison Turnbull (Alison.turnbull@sa.gov.au).

SafeFish and University of Technology Sydney showcase Australian shellfish food safety research

On Thursday 3rd November over 70 Australian scientists, students, regulators and industry members participated in the Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Programs' biannual conference, organised by SafeFish and UTS in Sydney. The conference highlighted the research occurring in Australia in shellfish food safety, and included talks from visiting scientists from New Zealand and China. Sessions included biotoxins, microbial pathogens and chemical contaminants. Highlights of the day were the plenary presentation from Prof. Gustaaf Hallegraeff from the University of Tasmania highlighting the impact of harmful blooms world-wide and the high toxicity of the recurrent bloom species on the east coast of Tasmania, and the wide variety of presentations on rapid test kits under development and validation. The future for food safety looks to improve significantly as businesses and regulators gain access to new tools to address current and emerging issues.

View the presentations from the day on the SafeFish website: http://safefish.com.au/technical-program

SafeFish Hosts Chinese seafood researchers in Sydney

To promote technical exchange between Australian and Chinese scientists in the area of food safety and market access for seafood Alison Turnbull and Dr. Tom Madigan hosted Professor Yuxui Zhai and Dr. Zhijun Tan from the Yellow Fisheries Research Institute in Qingdao from the 2nd – 4th November in Sydney, assisted by Simon Liu, interpreter.

The delegations discussed topics of mutual interest and potential future collaborations, focusing on scientific methods to determine food authenticity, improved utilisation of all components of fish, and biotoxin uptake, depuration and transformation pathways. Professor Zhai and Dr. Tan undertook a tour of the commercial biotoxin facilities at Advanced Analytical Australia in the afternoon, to learn about the methods of analysis used in Australia, and the way the shellfish biotoxin monitoring program is operated.

The visiting scientists participated in the Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Programs' biannual conference (see above) where Dr. Tan gave an overview of the work conducted at the Yellow Seas Fisheries Research Institute, with a marine biotoxin focus.

Cultural excursions included a tour of the Sydney Fish Markets, the Australian section of the Taronga Zoo, and a harbour cruise, taking in the sights of the Harbour Bridge and Opera House.

Professor Zhai and Dr. Tan have a better understanding of the Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program and how it is implemented, and have made many contacts with researchers in Australia.

Discussions will continue on future research collaboration in the fields of marine biotoxins, food authenticity and seafood utilisation.

For more information please contact Alison Turnbull (Alison.turnbull@sa.gov.au).