

COMMUNIQUE

Due to COVID-19, we are facing a time where there are incredible disruptions to food chains. Given this, food safety could not be more important. If you have any concerns, issues, or need information or support please visit the following sources of information for assistance:

- For regulations and standards, visit the [Food Standards Australia, New Zealand website](#)
- For COVID specific food safety information, visit <http://seafoodsafetycovid19.wordpress.com/>
- For COVID specific information relating to travel, food safety, seafood demand, reputational risk, supply chains and other impacts, visit the [FRDC COVID-19 webpage](#).
- For information and links to resources to assist Australian seafood exporters manage the impact of COVID on their businesses, visit the [Seafood Trade Advisory Group webpage](#).
- For assistance with incident response, please contact the [SafeFish secretariat](#)
- For import/export controls and assistance, visit the [Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment website](#).
- For the national peak-body representing Australian seafood, visit the [Seafood Industry Australia website](#)
- For assistance with New Zealand seafood (standards, food safety, trade etc.) visit the [Seafood New Zealand website](#)

SafeFish held its quarterly meeting virtually through Zoom on Friday 24th July 2020, chaired by Dr. Anne Astin. The meeting included participants from the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment, the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, Food Standards Australia, New Zealand, the New Zealand Seafood Industry Association, representatives from Australian seafood industry sectors (wholesale, processing, import and export fields), and researchers. Highlights of the discussions and the decisions made can be found below:

1. Seafood Industry Australia (SIA) partnership with SafeFish

Veronica Papacosta has accepted the role of SafeFish partner representing SIA. SafeFish and SIA will continue to work collaboratively in the areas of seafood food safety, market access and incident response. SafeFish is currently assisting with the development of the SIA's industry risk register related to food safety. SIA has played a significant role of late in assisting the seafood industry to recover from market constraints that have arisen as a result of COVID-19.

2. New bid for SafeFish 2021 to 2025

Have your say! What should or could SafeFish be doing differently for you or your organization in the future?

The SafeFish secretariat has commenced the process to develop a bid for FRDC investment for SafeFish from 2021 to 2025. A survey to understand the elements of food safety and market access that should be included, and what stakeholders would like to see in the new program will be developed and sent to stakeholders in the coming months. Alternatively, please let us know your views by contacting the [Secretariat](#) directly.

3. Project work for 2020

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, there has been an increase in on-line sales and takeaway options for seafood products. As such, the partners have identified a need for work in this area. The secretariat is looking to develop a project addressing risk management of raw and ready-to-eat (RTE) seafood

and would value your opinion on what is required. What is the actual issue (is a quality tool required, should there be an education program focussing on handling/preparation/storage for consumers? etc.) and who should the project target (consumers, processors, retailers, all of the above)? If you have any recommendations or would like to be involved in the work, please contact the [Secretariat](#).

As a result of the new focus on RTE seafood, the gap analysis on food safety risks associated with climate change will be delayed.

4. **On the SafeFish Radar: Microplastics and traceability**

Analysis of samples for the microplastic survey in Australian fish have now been completed. The plastic load detected in all species of seafood tested was low. This is a good news story for the industry, and SafeFish will now work with the University of Adelaide to compile talking points around the positive findings, as well as an infographic to detail the results. The scientific evidence on potential exposure and health risk of microplastics in the food supply is still evolving. After scrutinizing the available literature, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has indicated that the risk to human health is low and has therefore issued a watching brief on this issue (for more information [click here](#)). SafeFish will also continue to be involved in this space and monitor relevant research.

Another area of interest for SafeFish is traceability. A lot has been happening on this topic including the advancement of food integrity systems and the development of new block chain technologies. Current projects relevant to the seafood industry are as follows:

- [Global dialogue on seafood traceability \(GDST\)](#) – Industry forum dedicated to drafting the first-ever global standards for seafood traceability.
- [Global sustainable seafood initiative \(GSSI\)](#) - GSSI aims to become a globally accepted tool for objective and transparent assessment of sustainability and provide recognition of credible and responsible seafood certification schemes.
- [Global food safety and standard initiative \(GFSI\)](#) - a business-driven initiative for the development of food safety management systems to ensure food facilities are processing safe food for consumers.
- Traceability Systems Chooser tool being developed by [Honey & Fox](#) - An interactive decision support tool to assist agriculture, fishing, and aquaculture producers identify their business needs for traceability systems
- [National food traceability implementation program run by Deakin University](#) – Assists with tracking and tracing food products from farm to fork in domestic and export markets.
- Numerous FRDC projects on integrity systems in collaboration with Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG), Food Innovation Australia Ltd. (FIAL), and Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA).

As most of these initiatives have implications for food safety risk management, they are of particular interest for SafeFish where we hope to add value and input into in the future.

5. **November SafeFish meeting**

The next SafeFish meeting will be held virtually on November 12th 2020. These meetings provide an excellent opportunity for our many stakeholders to attend and engage with partners and other key industry, research and government members. We welcome contributions from our many members to present or table discussions related to matters they or their sector are facing, areas of interest or specific expertise they can offer. If you would like to attend or present at our next meeting, please contact the [secretariat](#) to register your interest.

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