

COMMUNIQUE

The SafeFish partnership held its quarterly meeting in Sydney at the Fish Markets at Pyrmont on Tuesday 24th October 2017. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Anne Astin. The SafeFish partner's committee are responsible for providing general oversight and strategy, and assisting in the identification of emerging and contemporary food safety issues impacting the seafood industry as well as assisting in communicating the technical outputs of SafeFish through appropriate channels in Australia and overseas to facilitate the resolution of these issues.

The discussions and outcomes from the meeting included the following:

1. Collaboration between New Zealand and Australian researchers

Many of the food safety and trade issues facing the Australian and New Zealand seafood industries are similar. By collaborating on research and extension activities Australia and New Zealand could gain advantage of leveraged funds, resources and shared expertise. SafeFish and Seafood New Zealand are currently exploring potential areas of collaboration that will benefit seafood in both countries.

2. Australian Food and Grocery Council (AFGC) presentation to the SafeFish partners

Dr. Geoffrey Annison, AFGC Deputy CEO presented an overview of the AFGC, and a summary of the harmonization of food safety certification project that was undertaken in 2015 to consolidate and provide a national approach to the auditing processes for the baked goods industry.

3. Harmonised Australian Retailer Producer Scheme (HARPS)

SafeFish are currently developing a proposal to implementing a harmonized certification scheme for seafood based on work already progressed by AFGC through Food Innovation Australia Limited for other sectors. SafeFish will be liaising closely with the AFGC when developing the HARPS proposal above to draw on their expertise in the area.

4. SafeFish Website Update

The SafeFish website has recently been updated and reformatted to carry a similar theme to partner websites such as the Fisheries Research & Development Corporation (FRDC) and Fish names portals. Up to date information on the technical program, issues at Codex, technical reports that have been undertaken and other important information relevant to SafeFish can now be found on the website.

5. Food Authenticity Project

A Seafood Authenticity review that aims to identify the available provenance and authenticity tools available in Australia is currently underway. The objective is to provide a summary on the current 'state of play' to the Australian seafood industry and key considerations, including estimations of the development and on-going management costs. The report will also provide examples of where such tools have been used within the seafood sector, and two or three case studies of these (including why that particularly tool was chosen, if it was successful and any measure of success). The review is due to be completed by March 2018. Following this, a peer review process will occur to ensure that the information is robust and comprehensive.

6. Implementation of Marine Biotoxin Test Kits

A grant has been obtained from the Package Assisting Small Exporters (PACE - DAWR) to assist the bivalve industry adopt the Neogen rapid test kit for detection of paralytic shellfish toxins. These rapid tests complement and in some cases replace existing test methodologies that are slow, thus improving risk management of this issue. Seafood Training Tasmania has been contracted to provide training for the Tasmanian Industry with the grant allowing the purchase of 10 readers and multiple test kits for distribution to industry. The South Australian Research & Development Industry (SARDI) will conduct proficiency testing of the trained industry members to validate reliability of the test kit in situ. This development will save the bivalve industry considerable time and money (up to \$500k per annum) in the screening for marine biotoxins in their products.

7. Codex Alimentarius update

SafeFish have been monitoring and providing input into the following Codex standards and Codes of Practice for seafood:

- Methylmercury in fish;
- Control guidance document in fish for Histamines
- New standard under development for Ciguatoxins;
- Alignment of Food Additives in seafood products
- Use of Non Dioxin-like PCBs;
- Lead in fish;
- Changes to the risk management of gentian (crystal violet) in food
- And an update on the new standard for fish oils.

The following Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) notifications from trading countries have also been monitored for seafood:

- Hong Kong – Update on changes to maximum levels (MLs) for metals
- Korea – New maximum levels (MLs) for Squid and Crustaceans (Lead and Cadmium)
- India – New maximum residue limits (MRLs) for veterinary drugs

For more information on any of these issues, please contact the SafeFish secretariat or visit the Codex section of our website.

The next meeting of the SafeFish partners is currently scheduled for March 2018. The date and destination will be distributed at a later date. The partner meetings are open to observers: interested parties are invited to contact the SafeFish secretariat to register their interest in attending.

Visit SafeFish website for further information: www.safefish.com.au

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