



# food focus

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*Welcome to the first edition of Food Focus under the New Zealand Food Safety Authority banner. Food Focus has been a feature in the food industry for many years. We will continue to bring you all the latest news for industry. We trust you will continue to enjoy it.*

## NZ Food Safety Authority finally arrives

More consumer protection and less duplication of services will be just two of the major benefits the newly established New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) will bring.

NZFSA, which came into being on July 1 2002, combines the functions of MAF Food and the food responsibilities of the Ministry of Health providing a more integrated approach to food safety.

The agency, which is a semi-autonomous body attached to MAF, is headed by Dr Andrew McKenzie. "Bringing these functions together in one agency will enable New Zealand to provide consistency in the management of food safety from the beginning of the food chain to the consumer," Dr McKenzie says.

The Authority will focus on providing increased protection for New Zealanders from food-borne illness and enhancing New Zealand's position internationally as a trusted food supplier.

"We will have a strong emphasis on consumer consultation and communication as well as the application of scientifically based food regulations," Dr McKenzie says.

Food is a multi-billion dollar industry in New Zealand. Some 30,000 businesses are licensed to produce, sell, manufacture and process food.

"More than 50 percent of New Zealand's export earnings come from food. About 80 percent of all the food produced in New Zealand is exported and it must be safe. Our reputation depends on it," Dr McKenzie says.

Robust food standards and regulations are of the utmost importance



*Minister for Food Safety Annette King and NZFSA Executive Director Andrew McKenzie launch the authority in Christchurch.*

to ensure that both domestically and internationally, people have confidence in the safety of the food they consume.

Over the next few years the Authority will streamline the application of the regulations and standardise requirements for food production. This will mean that the food industry will work within one food regulatory programme whether they are providing product for local or export markets.

"That's a big plus for all involved" Dr McKenzie says. "After four years of uncertainty, we are all looking forward to putting in place what we intend will be the world's leading food safety authority."

### Inside

**Authority head aims high**

**Food industry welcomes NZFSA**

**From the courts**

**Veterinary medicine exports to Europe easier**

**Meet the directors**

**Meet our people: Jenny Bishop**

### Quality Quote

Eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath.

**William Shakespeare**

# Authority head aims for world leading food safety authority

Dr Andrew McKenzie sees his new role as Executive Director of the New Zealand Food Safety Authority as key to protecting the integrity of New Zealand's food based economy.

Dr McKenzie, a veterinarian who has specialized in veterinary public health, has had a long and distinguished career in food safety. He was previously the Group Director of the MAF Food Assurance Authority. Prior to that Dr McKenzie was Chief of MAF's Regulatory Authority. He was also charged with managing the difficult and complicated task of the NZFSA start-up.

Dr McKenzie has been a leader in food safety administration for many years having amassed extensive experience in primary processing of animal products and food exports.

However, his expertise is not confined to New Zealand – he has forged a formidable reputation in the international food safety sector as well.

Dr McKenzie is deeply involved in the international food safety standard setting environment, particularly with Codex Alimentarius, where he currently chairs the Codex Committee on Meat and Poultry Hygiene.

He is also involved in chairing an international experts' group looking at improving the linkages between the international animal



*Dr Andrew McKenzie chairs the Codex Committee on Meat and Poultry Hygiene.*

health and food safety standard setting groups to ensure consistency in the development of food safety standards across the food chain.

Dr McKenzie also has had extensive involvement in implementing World Trade Organisation technical agreements.

He says he is looking forward to leading the NZFSA team.

“We will be working smarter, using all the tools and information at our disposal, from the latest in scientific information to the experiences of the people managing the systems that deliver safe food to the consumer.”

“NZFSA aims to have a significant influence in the world trading environment for the good of consumers everywhere and to enhance opportunities for New Zealand's food industries.

“The world is changing and we need to be at the forefront of these changes to protect New Zealand from any new risks that may arise.”

“Our mission is to protect consumers and enhance New Zealand's position as a trusted supplier of food. I am confident that we have staff with the technical, strategic and practical expertise to ensure we deliver flexible, cost effective science and risk based programmes to give us a world leading food safety authority.”

## Mark your Diaries

Keep your diaries free for the NZFSA's first conference. 'Building and Maintaining Confidence in NZ Food' will be the theme of the two-day conference to be held on 25 and 26 March 2003 in Auckland. Speakers are still being arranged but we are planning an exciting and interesting conference that will be useful for all those involved in the food industry, including consumers, regulators and the health sector. We'll keep you posted on venues, programmes and other information over the coming months.

## Pesticide residue expert lands JMPR job

Dave Lunn, NZFSA Dairy and Plant Product's pesticide residue expert, has been selected to become a member of the pesticide residue panel of JMPR (Joint Food and Agricultural Organisation [FAO] and the World Health Organisation [WHO] Meeting on Pesticide Residues). He is the first New Zealander to be selected for the panel.

JMPR is an independent body whose main function is providing scientific advice to the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR). It also responds to requests for advice, from a variety of sources, about pesticide residues including recommendations for Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) and Acceptable Daily Intakes (ADIs).

Dave says the pre-meeting work involves preparing draft “monographs” on the residue behaviour of pesticides of interest to the CCPR.

This usually entails analysing huge amounts of data to assess the chemical's residue characteristics and behaviours. The monographs are presented and finalised at the committee's annual three-week meetings which, this year, will be held during September in Rome.

Dave estimates that the pre-meeting work will take up to two months to complete and he is looking forward to the challenge. “My involvement is, to a large extent, a recognition of our residue assessment systems in New Zealand”, Dave says.

# Food industry puts out the welcome mat for NZFSA

NZFSA will be working closely with our key export industries. Industry groups recently outlined their response to the establishment and expectations of the new authority.

## NZ Seafood Industry Council

The seafood-processing sector is a strong supporter of a single food safety authority for New Zealand under the umbrella of MAF. Alastair Macfarlane, General Manager, Trade and Information for the New Zealand Seafood Industry Council explains why.

“The seafood industry has had a professional relationship with MAF based on mutual respect and has supported food safety continuing as a key focus for MAF – now in a semi-autonomous body. We have wanted a single agency for more than a decade.

The seafood industry has been an early adopter of internationally recognised food safety management systems. Through the joint committee of MAF industry and officials, the Seafood Standards Council, the seafood industry has led the way in adopting performance based, audited food safety management systems under the Animal Products Act.

The New Zealand Food Safety Authority will eliminate double standards applying to seafood, as has been the case up to now for the small proportion of processors supplying only the domestic New Zealand market. They have been able to opt out of the export system regulated by MAF and we look forward to that ending.

It should also be more straightforward and less costly for food processors that want to produce complex, multi-ingredient foods based on seafood ingredients.

Under a single Food Safety Authority they will only need approval from that one agency for their risk management programmes. That should in time mean more value added to New Zealand seafood in New Zealand food processing operations, more jobs for New Zealanders and a greater return for the nation.”



## Fonterra

Fonterra chief executive Craig Norgate also welcomes the establishment of the New Zealand Food Safety Authority.

“For food companies like Fonterra which supply both the domestic and global marketplace, administrative consistency across both is very important. MAF has long been responsible for quality and safety assurance for New Zealand food products destined for export markets.

In that regard it has earned high regard in the international marketplace.

It makes good sense to bring the food administration functions and expertise of MAF and the Ministry of Health together under one agency. We look forward to working with the Authority to ensure New Zealand has, and is seen to have in all our markets, an efficient and responsible world class food regulatory programme.”

## Meat New Zealand

Meat New Zealand CEO Neil Taylor welcomes the establishment of the NZFSA which for the first time brings food safety in the domestic and export markets under a single jurisdiction.

“The good food safety reputation that New Zealand has earned in overseas markets has been achieved as a result of a common intent on the part of the processors and exporters as well as regulators to ensure that industry practices are world class, which in turn contributes to customer preference for New Zealand Beef and Lamb in many markets.

Extending this approach to our domestic market increases the degree of confidence that our industry is able to give its global customers about the safety of our meat.



At the same time, Meat New Zealand will be seeking assurances from the NZFSA that it will be adopting an operational approach that minimises cost without compromising safety and also that operations are carried out in a manner that is supportive of achieving high levels of productivity within the industry.

It will also be important that domestic issues are considered in a balanced fashion recognising that over 80% of our meat is exported.

Due regard must be given to protocols that have been put in place to meet the requirements of international markets which are key to maintaining our nation's standard of living.”

## From the courts

A Hamilton man has been fined \$15,000 for operating an illegal homekill service and \$1000 for the possession and sale of illegally slaughtered meat.

Neil David Findon pleaded guilty in the Hamilton District Court on June 11 to two charges of operating as a homekill service provider without being listed under the Animal Products Act 1999 and one charge of selling or possessing for sale illegally slaughtered meat under the Meat Act 1981.

MAF investigators inspected Findon's business, Waikato Home Kill, in Sunshine Avenue, Te Rapa in December 2000. They found 20 meat packs, beef and lamb carcasses, 90 hams in various stages of processing, pig carcasses and a number of cartons of pork meat. The pork was unlabelled and unmarked indicating it was unregulated animal product. Findon admitted to operating a homekill service without being listed.

Findon was also ordered to pay court costs and solicitors fees.

A Waikato man has been fined and convicted of laying cyanide in the Hakarimata Scenic Reserve without the approval of the Medical Officer of Health.

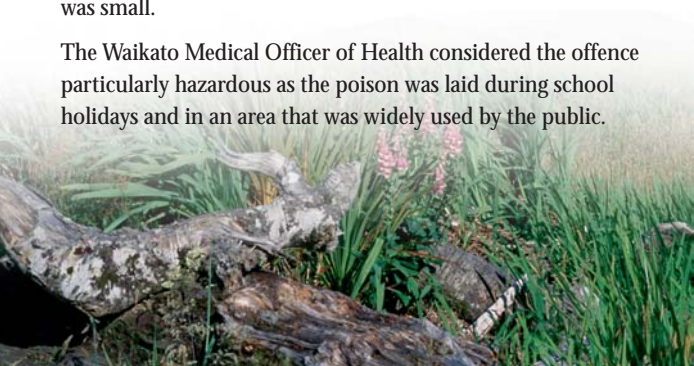
Anthony Paul Krippner, 37, a building control officer of Ngaruawahia was convicted under the Pesticides (Vertebrate Pest Control) Regulations 1983 for the application of a controlled pesticide and failure to comply with the regulations relating to the erection and removal of notices. He was fined \$600 plus court costs.

Krippner, who has been an approved operator since 1986, applied for a permit from the Department of Conservation to lay cyanide in the reserve in July 2001. He also applied for approval from the Medical Officer of Health. His application was returned however without approval because it failed to meet notification and signage requirements.

DoC and Public Health Unit staff inspected the reserve after a farmer found a large number of cyanide possum baits in the reserve close to his adjoining farm. There was a small and inconspicuous sign advising that cyanide had been laid. The track was closed to the public upon discovery of the cyanide.

Krippner said he did not reapply for permission because of the costs of preparing public notices and because his operation was small.

The Waikato Medical Officer of Health considered the offence particularly hazardous as the poison was laid during school holidays and in an area that was widely used by the public.



## Access Snippets

### Czech Republic all dressed up

The Czech Republic will once again be dressed in New Zealand wool. New Zealand wool exports were interrupted last year when the Republic issued new requirements for exported wool that contained conditions New Zealand didn't agree with. MAF has been working since then to get a new certificate that would be suitable to Czech authorities and us. The breakthrough came recently when MAF was able to present a new model certificate drawn up with the use of E-Cert to Czech officials at the OIE meeting in Paris. The model was accepted and exports will continue.

### Veterinary medicine manufacturers gain better access to Europe

Access to the European market has just got easier for veterinary medicine manufacturers. A Mutual Recognition Agreement on Good Manufacturing Process has been agreed to between New Zealand and the EC. It means that exporters of veterinary medicines will be able to export their products to Europe without having to bring foreign inspectors to New Zealand to inspect their processes before their products are accepted. Veterinary medicine exports are worth about \$150 million per annum to NZ. It's taken five years of hard work to get this Agreement signed and it has been welcomed by manufacturers.

### Organic Products a step closer to Europe

New Zealand's Official Organic Assurance Programme has been recognised by the European Union. The combined OPENZ (Organic Products Exports of New Zealand Inc)/NZFSA programme has been given a third country listing by the EU giving our organic product exporters easier access to Europe. The third country listing provides an official government-to-government assurance to the EU that organic products exported from New Zealand have been produced under rules equivalent to the EU's regulations.

### NZFSA just a phone call away

Consumers – do you want to know what to do to avoid campylobacter and other food-borne illnesses? It's simple, just ring 0800 NZFSA1. This new 0800 number has been in operation since July 1, the launch date of the New Zealand Food Safety Authority. The 0800 number is a vital tool for NZFSA to communicate with consumers. Our operator will provide accurate and comprehensive information about whatever concerns them. It will also enable the Authority to gain valuable information about what issues and concerns people have about food safety.

### NZFSA logo and imagery

The NZFSA logo and imagery has been generally well received and we think it looks great. But there's always someone isn't there? This from the latest Food Industry Week: "Sporting what's possibly New Zealand's worst logo – a barely recognisable collection of letters possibly contrived by a child – the new agency was formally launched in Wellington on Monday, and then again at a breakfast in Auckland the next morning." Beauty, they say, is in the eye of the beholder.

# Director Profiles



**Carole Inkster** heads the Policy and Regulatory Standards Group. This group provides policy advice and legal support for the NZFSA. Its work includes the review, development, reform, implementation and evaluation of legislation. The group also coordinates the New Zealand Government's response to work by FSANZ (Food Standards Australia New Zealand) relating mainly to composition and labelling.



**Steve Hathaway** is director of the Programme Development Group. This group develops risk-based programmes for food safety in New Zealand. Their work involves the development of generic implementation tools that provide consumer protection. It must also ensure that those programmes complement international approaches and allow judgement of equivalence in trading situations. This group is responsible for ensuring strong representation of New Zealand food safety strategies internationally.



**Geoff Allen** is the Compliance and Investigation Group Director. This group ensures that standards are in place and are enforced. It also investigates and prosecutes companies or individuals who breach standards and regulations. It provides feedback on the effectiveness of standards and manages any corrective actions or sanctions needed.



**Debbie Morris** is the Director of the ACVM Group. This group approves agricultural compounds and veterinary medicines and monitors their importation, manufacture, sale and use. This group also sets Maximum Residue Limits under the Food Act.



**Dr Andrew McKenzie** is the Executive Director of the New Zealand Food Safety Authority.



**Sandra Daly** is Director of the Communications and Business Services Group. This group is responsible for effective communication and consultation with stakeholders and for providing accurate, timely and relevant information. It must also ensure NZFSA has the finance, information management, human resources, legal and other support services necessary to operate efficiently and effectively.



**Tony Zohrab** is Director of the Animal Products Group. This group is responsible for setting standards for risk management programmes, regulator control schemes and market access for primary production and export of meat, game seafood, honey and other animal products. The group ensures compliance with standards; negotiates market access conditions for New Zealand's animal products; provides export assurances, accredits verifiers and registers risk management programmes.



**Tim Knox** is the Director of the Dairy and Plant Products Group. This group is responsible for setting standards for dairy and plant products to ensure they are safe and fit for purpose. The group is also responsible for negotiating market access conditions for dairy products, plant products (including wine) and organic products and providing export assurances where required. It is responsible for ensuring imported foods comply with New Zealand standards.



**Jim Sim** is the Director of the Processed Foods and Retail Sale Group. The role of this group is to ensure that products processed for sale and sold in NZ meet required safety, composition and labelling standards. This includes standards for restaurants, cafes, takeaway outlets and supermarkets.

## Meet our people: Jenny Bishop, Advisor Risk Management, Processed Foods and Retail Sale Group

Jenny Bishop is cautious about what she eats. You probably would be after seeing some of the things she's seen.

The 27-year-old former health protection officer is one of about 12 people who have moved from the Ministry of Health to the New Zealand Food Safety Authority and Jenny thinks it's a good move.

"It will be nice to have food as the priority. That's the nice thing about coming here. We (MAF Food and the Ministry of Health) will be able to combine our strengths in different areas and work together better."

Armed with a Bachelor of Applied Sciences majoring in environmental health at Wellington Polytech (now Massey University), Jenny's career in food safety began at Auckland Health Care where she was a health protection officer.

"We dealt with all sorts of strange things – a razor blade in a spice package, a fly in a roll of gladwrap, nuts and bolts in lollies, cigarette butts in sugar. Anything you can think about can be in your food."

Then of course there were the food poisoning investigations.

"For those we did case control studies. That involves interviewing people, doing a food history and talking them into providing a faecal specimen."

You can imagine how much ribbing Jenny was subjected to over that part of her job. "All the time. It's quite amusing. I would be really careful about making sure I provided a brown paper bag as well as the pottles so I didn't have to see anything," she says.

She was also involved in emergency call outs which could see her



Jenny Bishop.

inspecting ships for rats one day and overseeing the disinterment of a body the next.

Jenny began working for the Ministry of Health about three years ago. Her role has been to advise health protection officers, co-ordinate issues and develop policy. She's managed, or been involved in, about 20 food recalls.

She is also part of the team that oversees the food safety programme exemption process.

"We're in a transition process at the moment. We want everyone to go onto this new system. The supermarkets are really keen. They have all their food safety programmes and they are putting pressure on suppliers to have food safety programmes as well. They are really pushing it."

So after all that life saving you'd think Jenny would want to take it quietly on the weekends. Not so. This wonder woman also saves lives in the sea as a member of the Lyall Bay Surf Club.

"I have saved people," she says modestly.

"We do quite a bit of event life rescuing as well. There was one event where we were pulling in kids all over the place. That was in Mt Maunganui and there was one in Island Bay where we were pulling in kids as well."

And the things Jenny can't eat? Now that would be telling and we don't want to ruin your lunch.

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## Dairy inclusion in the Animal Products Act

A major focus of the Dairy and Plant Products Group this year is the move from the Dairy Industry Act (1952) to the Animal Products Act (1999).

As the dates of the Acts suggest, the Dairy Industry Act is old legislation and no longer appropriate for our modern trading environment. The Animal Products legislation is a modern outcome-based tool that currently caters for all food products of animal origin, except dairy.

The project is being led by the NZFSA Policy team, with most of the Dairy team involved in its implementation. Preparing the draft amendment to the Animal Products Act, Regulations relating to dairy specifications and considering transitional arrangements are the major focus of the team's work at present.

A change for the dairy industry will be the move from a Product Safety Programme (PSP) to a Risk Management Programme (RMP). An RMP, which is similar to the existing PSP, is a documented programme that applies HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) principles to identify microbiological, chemical and physical hazards, and demonstrate that effective controls for those hazards are in place.

Industry will be consulted throughout the process.



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Food Focus is issued by the New Zealand Food Safety Authority. It provides an overview of issues impacting on the regulatory environment for the food industries. People requiring specific information are invited to contact the Authority. New Zealand Food Safety Authority, 86 Jervois Quay, PO Box 2835 Wellington. Phone 04-463-2500, Fax 04-463-2501. Food Safety Concerns 0800 NZFSA1 (0800 693 721). Website: [www.nzfsa.govt.nz](http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz). Food Focus welcomes feedback and suggestions for future editions. Please contact: Sandra Daly, Director of the Communications and Business Services Group, Email [sandra.daly@nzfsa.govt.nz](mailto:sandra.daly@nzfsa.govt.nz).