

FOOD STANDARDS  
Australia New Zealand  
Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri  
Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri

## Food Recalls in Australia

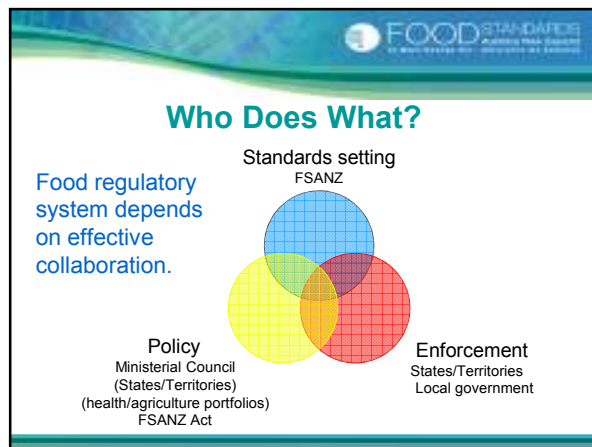
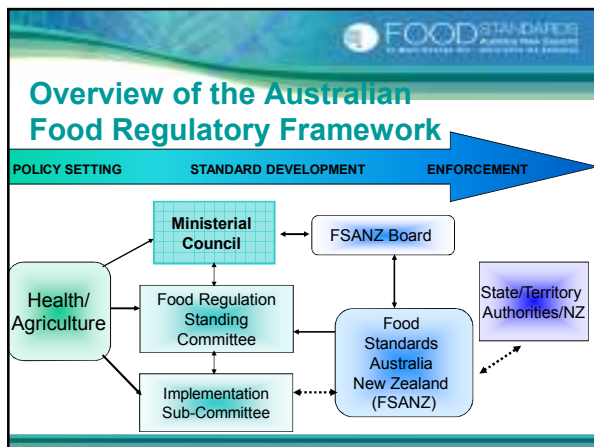
Dr Barbara Butow

APEC Recall Workshop, Manila  
4th – 6th May, 2010

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## Australian System

- Federal system
- Comprises Commonwealth Government,
- 6 States, and
- 2 Territories
- > local Government Authorities

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## Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)

FSANZ is a bi-national, independent, expertise-based statutory authority that develops food standards

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## FSANZ Set Up



Australia      New Zealand

Canberra Office      Wellington Office

**What does FSANZ do?**

FSANZ develops food standards for the composition and labelling of foods sold in NZ and Australia.

In Australia, FSANZ also develops food standards for food safety and primary production.

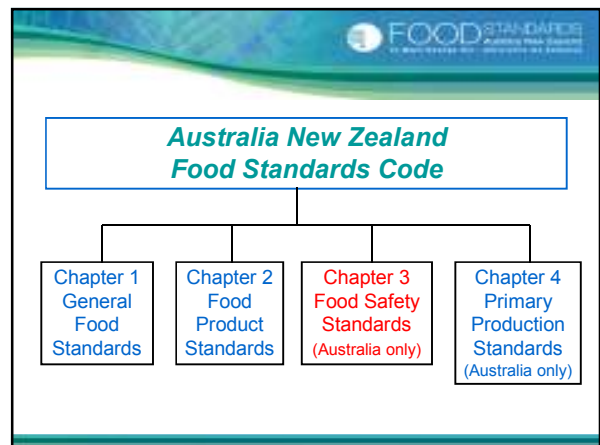
Standards are included in the **Food Standards Code**

**FSANZ objectives when developing or reviewing food standards**

- ✓ Protects public health and safety by maintaining a safe food supply.
- ✓ Provides consumers with information about food so they can make informed choices.
- ✓ Prevents misleading and deceptive conduct.

**What does FSANZ do?**

- FSANZ coordinates national food surveillance in Australia
- FSANZ coordinates **incidents** and **food recalls**
- FSANZ works closely with the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) to ensure imported food is safe in Australia
- FSANZ works closely with other government food regulatory bodies to ensure consistency in standards setting



**Standards Setting Process**

- Evidence based
- Based on risk analysis model – risk assessment, risk management and risk communication
- Consultative
- Economic and Social Analysis
- International

**Food Standards Enforcement**

- Health authorities in the Australian States and Territories
- New Zealand Food Safety Authority
- Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service - imported foods

**FOOD STANDARDS**  
Public Health Standard  
11. Food Safety and Inspection Act 2015

## The Role of States and Territories

- State Territory Food Acts adopt the Code as a regulation or as a standard
- Food standards are enforceable under State and Territory Food Acts
- A breach of the Food Standards Code is an offence

**FOOD STANDARDS**  
Public Health Standard  
11. Food Safety and Inspection Act 2015

## Food Recalls...

**FOOD STANDARDS**  
Public Health Standard  
11. Food Safety and Inspection Act 2015

## Food Recalls

- May involve one, or a number of government agencies
- Can occur at any time
- Can range from fairly simple, localised problems to complex, multi-jurisdictional (national and international)
- Are managed under an agreed set of structures, processes and protocols

**FOOD STANDARDS**  
Public Health Standard  
11. Food Safety and Inspection Act 2015

## Outline

- Objectives of a recall
- Food recall implementation – key elements
- The food recall system in Australia

**FOOD STANDARDS**  
Public Health Standard  
11. Food Safety and Inspection Act 2015

## Definitions

- **Recall** - Action taken to remove from sale, distribution and consumption foods which may pose an unacceptable risk to public health and safety
- **Withdrawal** - Product withdrawn from sale for either:
  - Quality defect
  - Before an official recall, pending further investigation

**FOOD STANDARDS**  
Public Health Standard  
11. Food Safety and Inspection Act 2015

## Objectives of a Food Recall

- Stop distribution and sale of affected product
- Inform the appropriate authorities and the public of the problem
- Effectively and efficiently remove potentially unsafe product from the marketplace



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## Legal Requirements

*The Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*

A food business engaged in the wholesale supply, manufacture or importation of food must:

- Have in place a system to ensure the recall of unsafe food
- Set out this system in a written document and make this document available to an authorised officer upon request
- Comply with this system when recalling food

Standard 3.2.2 (clause 12) 19

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## Level of recall

1. TRADE

- Food has not been available for direct purchase by the public
- Recovery of food from wholesalers, distribution centres, supermarkets/grocery stores, hospitals, restaurants

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## Level of recall

2. CONSUMER

- More extensive than trade recall
- Recovery of food from the production and distribution network (trade/retail outlets, grocery and health stores, supermarkets, consumers)
- The public must be informed through the media

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## Other terms...

Voluntary

- Occurs when the sponsor initiates the recall and voluntarily takes action to remove food from the market place

- **All of the affected food must be removed from the market place**

or

Mandatory

- Commonwealth, State or Territory Government **orders** a food to be recalled

- Only occurs when the sponsor will not voluntarily recall the product

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## Key Elements of a Food Recall

- A Plan
- A Trigger
- Initiate
- Undertake
- Evaluate (report/review)

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## Key Elements of a Food Recall

A PLAN

- needs to be fully documented

Example of information required:

- Contact phone number for the relevant food authority (Department of Health)
- Customer contact details
- Recall management
- Recall advice

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## What Triggers a Recall?




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## Possible Recall Situations

- Routine testing by a food company
- Testing or inspection by a regulatory authority shows problem
  - Incorrect labelling (e.g. undeclared allergens)
- Consumer complaint and/or illness
- Overseas authorities detect and report a problem with imported food

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## Common causes of food recalls



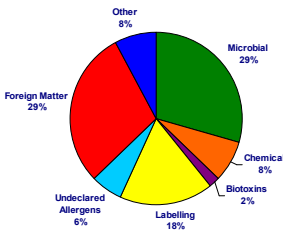
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## Common Causes of a Recall

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microbiological</li> <li>• Foreign matter</li> <li>• Chemical</li> <li>• Biotoxin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processing</li> <li>• Labelling</li> <li>• Tampering</li> </ul>
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## Food Recall Statistics - 2009



Category	Percentage
Microbial	29%
Foreign Matter	29%
Labelling	18%
Other	8%
Undeclared Allergens	6%
Chemical	8%
Biotoxins	2%

29

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## Number of Recalls

Year	Domestic Foods	Imported Foods
2002	34	24
2003	57	29
2004	51	19
2005	42	18
2006	45	23
2007	49	5
2008	42	9
2009	40	20

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## Key Elements of a Food Recall



INITIATE



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## Key Elements of a Food Recall - Undertaking a Recall

- **Notify Relevant Parties – stop distribution**
  - discussions with recall coordinator/health authorities
  - inform distribution network and customers
  - media advertisement

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## Undertaking a Recall

- **Retrieve and dispose of product**  
decide on disposal with approval of government authority



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## Key Elements of a Food Recall – Report/Evaluation

- Report on progress of recall
- Review company processes
  - plans, systems, training etc
  - implement preventive strategies
- Measures to prevent recurrence of problem

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## Food Recall Review

- Review in consultation with government and industry stakeholders
- Training of after hours recall officers has been revised and improved
- Updated versions of the Food Industry Recall Protocol and Government Authority Food Recall Protocols published in 2008

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## Conclusion

- FSANZ’s role is one of coordination and monitoring
- FSANZ assists in the recall process, but the decision whether or not to recall foods rests with the States and Territories
- Prompt and effective recall action ensures safety of the food supply and promotes consumer confidence in a company’s products

