PTIN Food Safety Incident Management Workshop

Big Sky, Montana, USA
14-15 May 2011

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)
Food Safety Cooperation Forum (FSCF)
Partnership Training Institute Network (PTIN)
The Australian Food Incident Management System

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Australian Political System

- Federal system
- Comprises National Government
- 6 States
- 2 Territories
- many local Authorities
ALL HAZARDS - ALL AGENCIES

Coordinated

Partnerships

Integrated

Used Known Systems

Prevention

Preparedness

Response

Recovery

Whole of Community

Local Government

State/Territory Government

National/Australian Government

Regional/International

Industry

NGOs
Plans related to food incidents

OzFoodNet Draft Guideline for multijurisdictional outbreaks of foodborne illness

National Food Safety Incident Response Protocol (for managing tracing, testing and removal of unsafe food)

State Food Plans:
Examples:
- NSW Food Industry Emergency Sub Plan
- PIRSA Food Safety – Incident Response Plan

Industry Plans:
Examples:
- National Dairy emergency plan
- National Seafood emergency plan
- National Meat emergency plan

National Health Security Agreement and related documents
National food incidents - the last 3 years

- 2008: cyanogenic glycosides, vegetable crackers
- 2008: metal contamination, meat and frozen products
- 2008: Contaminated dairy products from China (Melamine)
- 2008: Contaminated pork from Ireland
- 2009: Hep A linked to consumption of semi-dried tomatoes
- 2010: Iodine (Bonsoy and seaweed) linked to thyroid dysfunction
- 2010: *Listeria* in melons
- 2010: Sibutramine in weight loss products
- 2011: Peanut in soy flour
- 2011: Latin Seed
- 2011: *Japan Nuclear Incident*
Lesson learned – what works well

• Preparedness is the Key
  – Documentation of roles and processes
  – Use of templates
• International cooperation and advice
• Goodwill and assistance from industry
• Coordination and cooperation amongst many government agencies
• The use of debriefs and reviews after each incident
Lesson learned – the challenges

• Each incident reveals different opportunities to improve our systems
• Incidents usually involve imported food or ingredients – international processes still evolving
• Emerging issues difficult to spot, assess and prepare for
Lesson learned – the challenges

• New issues difficult to respond to quickly – eg viruses, parasites, radiation.
• Industry preparedness varies – especially for ingredient tracing
• Linkages between government and industry systems not as well established as we would like
• Laboratory capacity
Lessons learned – the challenges

• A need to improve the efficiency of our systems, processes and documentation
• Dealing with and communicating scientific uncertainty
• Potential for loss of consumer confidence
What will be Australia’s next areas of focus

• Establishing international relationships and processes
• Refining and documenting links between the different government incident management systems
• Working with domestic industry to improve the linkages between their emergency systems and government systems
Three take-home messages

• Good preparation is essential
• Globalisation of food supply chains means international linkages are critical
• Risk and crisis communication will influence public perception
Alert

- Incident notified to central notification point
- Information circulated to all food incident contact officers

Action

- FSANZ convenes teleconferences to consider level of action required
- Action phase process followed

Stand down

- Nationally coordinated action no longer required – return to business as usual
- Debrief and review of Protocol
Australian Food Regulatory Framework

Food Regulation Ministerial Council

- Food Regulation Standing Committee (FRSC)
- Implementation Sub-Committee (ISC)

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)

Local government

National and State Health & Agriculture agencies