

PrimeSafe eNews

December 2021 edition



Topics

- Meat and Pet Meat: 2021 in review
- Seafood: 2021 in review
- PrimeSafe Licence Portal
- Renewals reminder

This has been a very challenging year for meat, seafood and pet meat businesses. PrimeSafe has endeavoured to provide assistance by sharing information, conducting remote audits and issuing many licences through the new licence portal. We will continue to provide you with support and advice so that you can continue to prosper in your business. We wish you a safe, restful and joyous festive season.

*Brendan Tatham
PrimeSafe Chief Executive Officer*

Meat and pet meat

Although meat businesses were considered essential and free to process and trade during COVID-19, this year has thrown up many challenges for industry. 2021 highlights include:



- Meat Industry Consultative Committee meetings (MICC)
- Development of Food Safety Culture Model (FSC)
- Engagement with Department of Health (DoH) on food safety and with Department of Jobs, Precincts and Resources (DJPR) on pet meat issues
- Communications & engagement - Industry Forums on listeria management, food safety culture and pet meat requirements, factsheets and eNews
- Information on Listeria for high risk ready-to eat meat products during the festive season

MICC meetings

MICC comprises of PrimeSafe staff, industry representatives, the Chief Veterinary Officer and Department of Health. The meeting provides an opportunity for PrimeSafe to provide relevant information to industry, as well as the industry to identify and discuss emerging issues for PrimeSafe's consideration. Issues discussed at the last two meetings included:

- PrimeSafe's new licensing management system, which includes a licence portal and auditor portal
- Food safety culture presentation of the PrimeSafe's FSC model and details of the upcoming pilot project
- Changes to Standards for processing of kangaroos for human consumption and specific labelling format of allergens to meet the requirements of the Food Standards Code Australia New Zealand
- Changes to auditing which included remote audits during COVID-19 and reduction of audits for businesses that only handle packaged meat
- Discussion on communication material which included, industry forums, eNews, factsheets and guidelines released by PrimeSafe

FSC

An introduction to food safety culture was published in eNews 13 and updates published later in eNews 14. Further information on FSC and PrimeSafe's FSC model can be found on the [PrimeSafe website](#). PrimeSafe has initiated a pilot FSC project for selected businesses that process and package high risk ready-to eat smallgoods. The project is expected to take a year and will be extended to include retail of meat and seafood.

DoH engagement

PrimeSafe together with DoH and Agriculture Victoria have developed a coordinated approach to address the prevalence, load and illness caused by three main pathogens, *Salmonella spp.*, *Campylobacter spp.*, and *Listeria monocytogenes*. The Victorian Salmonella strategy 2017-2020 was incorporated into the Australian Foodborne Illness Strategy 2019-2022 to include strategies for reduction of Listeria and Campylobacter which have become increasingly responsible for gastroenteritis illnesses in Australia. Actions for the working group included whole genomic sequencing which has been used as a targeted approach for Salmonella, tracing the exact genotype by linking farm-specific genotypes of poultry-to-poultry products found within the food supply chain. In addition, PrimeSafe continues to provide assistance to businesses for Listeria by holding regular industry forums and providing Listeria information in this eNews.

DJPR engagement

PrimeSafe has discussed FSC with DJPR and will receive funding for the FSC project which will commence in 2022. Other matters for discussion included pet meat issues and dog deaths which was caused by indospicine found in horse meat that grazed on Indigofera plants in Northern parts of Australia.

Communications and publications

Information was released through PrimeSafe industry forums which were held in March and October 2021 which included Listeria management, FSC, good manufacturing practices and pet meat requirements. Other information streams included MICC meeting and eNews 13 and 14 (April and August 2021). A factsheet on pet meat requirements was published in November 2021.

Information on Listeria for high risk ready-to eat products

With the festive season fast approaching, it is important to keep ready-to-eat meat products such as hams, salamis, and cold cooked meats safe for consumers. This can be done so by adhering to good manufacturing practices including good hygiene and temperature control during processing, packaging, display, and storage. Listeria monocytogenes can cause serious illness if present in ready-to-eat products that will not be cooked or heated before consumption. The following guidelines can assist you in managing listeria in your facility:

[Australian Meat Regulators Group Standard 4.2.3 Guidelines for the Management of Listeria](#)

[PrimeNote Listeria Management for Ready to Eat Meat Products](#)

Seafood

Like meat, seafood industries have been impacted by COVID-19. The following are key highlights for 2021

- Seafood Industry Consultative Committee Meeting (SICC)
- Development of Food Safety Culture Model (FSC)
- Engagement with Department of Health (DoH) on food safety and with Department of Jobs, Precincts and Resources (DJPR) and Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA) on bivalve shellfish



SICC meeting

The inaugural SICC meeting was held in November, with an agenda similar to MICC as well as additional discussion of seafood pathogens and required testing. More engagement is required with industry partners in the future.

FSC

The FSC model was presented at the SICC meeting, however the FSC project will not be done for seafood licensees initially as more engagement is required between PrimeSafe and seafood businesses.

DoH and DJPR engagement

PrimeSafe engaged with DoH on bivalve shellfish issues and the prevalence of *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, which is a pathogen found in oysters. Victoria does not have a large local oyster industry, with only one oyster harvester approved to harvest in the state. The *Vibrio* issue involved product from South Australia which has a large oyster industry both for domestic and export.

DJPR and VFA together with PrimeSafe have joint responsibility for harvesting and handling of seafood therefore for PrimeSafe attends the Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Advisory Committee (ASQAAC) meetings to discuss the food safety requirements for bivalve shellfish.

PrimeSafe Licence Portal

PrimeSafe implemented an online licence portal in May 2021. This portal allows licensees to apply for a new licence, renew their licence, view their current licence, and edit their details. Any major changes - such as change of proprietor, throughput, business name change etc. - still require approval from PrimeSafe.



In addition to the licence portal, there is an auditor portal which allows auditors to upload completed audits and other information as required.

Thank you to all licensees that have registered and are using the portal to submit new and renewal applications. If you still haven't registered then please [click here](#) for further information or take a look at the [How-To Guide](#).

Renewals reminder

The following licence categories are required to be renewed before 31 December 2021.

- Retail Butcher Shops
- Seafood Retailer
- Further Seafood Processing Facility – Processors and Wholesalers



If you operate any of these PrimeSafe licensed businesses, you need to renew your licences prior to 31 December 2021. To complete the renewal, you must check and complete the renewal form which you have been sent and pay the licence fee.

You can do this via the [PrimeSafe Licence Portal](#) if you have registered, or by filling out the paper copy and sending it to PrimeSafe.

You can pay your licence fee with a credit card or BPAY through the Portal. If you are using paper copy, payment instructions can be found on the back of the renewal form.

To pay by credit card please call 03 9685 7333. A credit card surcharge fee will be added to the licence fee at the time of the payment. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, access to the PrimeSafe office is limited and you must contact PrimeSafe prior to attending.

How do I contact PrimeSafe?

For licensing, information support or compliance enquiries, you can contact PrimeSafe by:

- **Phone** (03) 9685 7333
- **Email** info@primesafe.vic.gov.au
- **Online** [About the PrimeSafe Licence Portal](#)

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