

Food for Thought

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Introduction

Welcome to the third edition of the Food Unit's Food for Thought Newsletter. This issue summarises the *Food Advisory Forums* held in Perth, February 16, 17 and 18 and provides updates on the *Food Act 2008*.

Food Advisory Forums



From left: Jane Landon, Dr Tim Lobstein, Mike Daube, Jim Dodds & Dorothy MacKerras

The Food Unit in partnership with the Public Health Advocacy Institute of Western Australia, Perth Epidemiology Group, Dietitians Association of Australia WA Branch, hosted the visit of two prominent UK food policy experts, Dr Tim Lobstein (Director of the Childhood Obesity Programme International Obesity TaskForce) and Jane Landon (Deputy Chief Executive, National Heart Forum UK) to provide insights, based on their experience, on food law and health-related policy options for Australia.

The discussion on the Australian context was led by senior public health officials, Dr Dorothy MacKerras Zealand (Chief Public Health Nutrition Advisor, Food Standards Australia New (FSANZ)) and Mr Jim Dodds (Director of Environmental Health, Department of Health WA).

Objectives

The meetings were designed to start a dialogue and strengthen partnerships to assist the development of food-related policy options and strategies to improve public health. A secondary objective was to provide professional development opportunities to nutritionists and dietitians.

Topics

The forums covered a variety of topics including:

- The Politics of Food
- Food Law and Obesity
- Food-related Policy Options for Obesity
- Using Nutrient Profiling of Food for Health Interventions
- Substantiation of diet-disease relationships for health claims on food labels – another use of epidemiology
- Nutrient Reference Values in Public Health

Participants

In excess of 100 participants from around Australia attended the meetings over the three days, including government, policy makers, researchers/academics and non-government representatives.

Outcomes

The forums included justifications and strategies to support the following outcomes:

1. An evidence-based approach provides justification for taking action.
2. Nutrition labelling to assist food choices contributing to a healthy diet
 - Front of Pack Labelling
 - Banning junk food advertising to children
 - Nutrition Criteria for health claims
3. Policy options for obesity

For a full report of these outcomes please see the Food Unit Communiqué 2 at

www.public.health.wa.gov.au/1/50/2/food.pm

Fine Food Perth



The Fine Food Perth Seminar took place on the 22 – 24 March 2009 and is the largest food industry event in Western Australia. Held every 2 years, it provides participants with an awareness of the current range of food products available, face to face contact with personalities of industry, a greater understanding of products and a first hand interface with equipment producers, who can explain the products and their applications.

It featured over 180 exhibitors including food manufacturers, growers, distributors, importers and equipment providers with representation from WA and other parts of Australia.

More information on this exhibition can be viewed at the website:

<http://www.finefoodperth.com.au/index.html>

Updated Food Industry Recall Protocol

Food Standard Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has just released an updated version of the Food Industry Recall Protocol: A Guide to Writing a Food Recall Plan and Conducting a Food Recall. The protocol was reproduced to ensure that food businesses have up-to-date methods of responding to food safety and related issues.

The updating of the protocol followed a thorough consultation process with the food industry, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aging, state and territory jurisdictions and other stakeholders. The Protocol is available from the FSANZ website:

http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/srcfiles/Food%20Recall_WEB.pdf

Or in hard copy by emailing:

Food.recalls@foodstandards.gov.au



Trans Fatty Acids Survey

The Food Unit has recently contributed to a national Trans Fatty Acids (TFA) Survey 'follow-up sampling programme' being undertaken by FSANZ.

Standard 1.2.8 of the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code* (Food Standards Code) states that Nutrition Information Panels (NIP) must only provide information on TFA if a nutrition claim is made in respect to cholesterol, saturated, trans, polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fatty acids, omega-3, omega-6 or omega-9 fatty acids.

TFA are created by hydrogenation, which is the processing or superheating of vegetable oils and fats during production and are present in manufactured margarines, fried foods, shortenings and baked goods. TFA are also found naturally in some animal-based foods (beef, lamb and dairy products). Large amounts of TFA in the diet can increase cholesterol levels and the risk of heart disease. For this reason TFA should be limited in the diet.

In Australia there is a voluntary approach by

industry to lower amounts of TFA in food products and to declare TFA on the NIP when no nutritional claim is made. In the US, the Food and Drug Administration amended labelling regulation in January 2006 to require TFA be declared on all NIP food labels.

Previous TFA surveys found that although it is primarily a voluntary measure by industry, two-thirds of the levels of TFA stated on the NIP were inaccurate and this may be deemed as false or misleading to the consumer. Recommendations have included further monitoring to assess the effectiveness of non-regulated measures and to include total and saturated fats in future sampling surveys.

Detailed information can be sourced from -
Food Labelling: *Trans Fatty Acids* in Nutrition Labelling, Nutrient Content Claims, and Health Claims (Small Entity Compliance Guide). 2003. Available:
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/transqui.html#fn1> [24 July 2008]

Food Standards Australia New Zealand. 2007. *Trans Fatty Acids in the New Zealand and Australian Food Supply – Review Report*. Available:
http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/srcfiles/Transfat%20report_CLEARED.pdf [24 July 2008]

Meet the Team – Marilyn Macfarlane

Marilyn Macfarlane joined the Food Unit in June 2008 and is working for the policy team in the role of Senior Scientific Officer. Marilyn's background is in Environmental Health and Health and Safety. Her last role was Senior Policy Manager (Health and Safety) for the Learning and Skills Council in England. Prior to that, she worked in local government in England and Scotland as an Environmental Health Officer.

Marilyn is a vital member of the Food Unit Policy Team and is currently preparing and delivering workshops and presentations to Local Government all over WA on the *Food Act 2008*.

Marilyn is also finalising policy documents including the Food Unit Roles & Responsibilities, the Food Unit Communication Strategy, Notification of Convictions and formulating ongoing Food Unit Notices.

Food Act 2008 Update

The *Food Act 2008* (the Act), once fully proclaimed, is intended to be the stand alone piece of legislation regulating food safety in WA. As such, on proclamation of the Act, the *Health (Food Hygiene) Regulations 1993* will be repealed in full.

Drafting of new food regulations to provide the necessary administrative framework for applying the *Food Act 2008* in WA is well underway. It is important to note that the new regulations will not resemble the *Health (Food Hygiene) Regulations 1993*.

The Food Safety Standards contained within the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code are outcome based food standards and replace the prescriptive approach currently found within the *Health (Food Hygiene) Regulations 1993*.

Table of Events

The events below have been arranged in response to local government requests. The Food Unit would be interested in hearing from any regions who would like to have a workshop presented for their staff and this is the preferred method of contact.

Past Events	Where	Title	Dates	Topics Covered
Two Half Day Seminars	Perth	Food Seminars	11 & 18 Sept 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Act Food Regulatory Systems National and State Food Surveillance Systems Emerging Trends in Nutrition Food Unit Communication Strategy
Three Day Meeting/Workshop	Perth	Food Advisory Forums	16 & 17 Feb 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food law Food-related policy development and obesity
Half day interactive workshops	Broome	Implementing the Food Act	3 rd Feb 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WA Food Regulations Revisiting the Act and new food regulations Identifying local concerns and issues
Current Events		Title	Dates	Topics Covered
Half day interactive workshop	Jurien Bay	Implementing the Food Act	4 th Mar 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WA Food Regulations Revisiting the Act and new food regulations Identifying local concerns and issues
Environmental Health One Hour Seminar	Perth	Auditing & Compliance Strategy	27 th Mar 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Auditing Compliance and Enforcement
Half day interactive workshop	Capel	Implementing the Food Act	31 st Mar 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WA Food Regulations Revisiting the Act and new food regulations Identifying local concerns and issues
	Kalgoorlie		24 th April 2009	
	York/Boddington		29 th May 2009	
Half day interactive workshop	Karratha	Implementing the Food Act	30 th April 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WA Food Regulations Revisiting the Act and new food regulations Identifying local concerns and issues
Future Events		Title	Dates	Topics Covered
One Week Auditing Workshop	Perth	Lead Auditor in Food Safety Management Systems	15 – 19 June 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing compliance with food safety programs Communication and negotiation in conducting food safety audits Conducting food safety audits Identifying, evaluating and controlling food safety standards

For food safety inquiries please contact the Food Unit on:

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Thoughts, comments and topic suggestions are also welcomed.