



Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry

Imported Food

Australia's food safety requirements

AFGC webinar

26 August 2024

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Residues & Food Branch / Exports & Veterinary Services Division



Presentation outline

- Overview of food regulatory system in Australia
- Overview of managing food safety risks
 - Surveillance and risk food
 - Mandatory foreign government certification
 - Food safety management certificates
- What happens when food fails inspection
- Managing emerging risk and incidents
- Food trade and import data



At border compliance: Biosecurity and food safety

Biosecurity (*Biosecurity Act 2015*)

- Some food not permitted for import
- Some food requires permits and/or certification
- Some food may require treatment before being imported
- Border inspection and testing may apply

See [BICON](#) for import conditions



Food must pass biosecurity requirements first

Food safety (*Imported Food Control Act 1992*)

- Risk-based border inspection scheme
- Some food requires certification
- Border inspection and testing may apply

Australia's food regulatory system



- Develops domestic food standards and guidance
- Provides imported food risk advice
- National coordination of food recalls & incidents



Australian Government
Department of Health

- Coordination of committees responsible for food policy and consistent implementation of food standards
- Coordination of foodborne illness surveillance



Australian Government
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Fisheries and Forestry

At the Australian border

- Regulatory compliance of imported & exported food
- Food safety incident response

States and territories

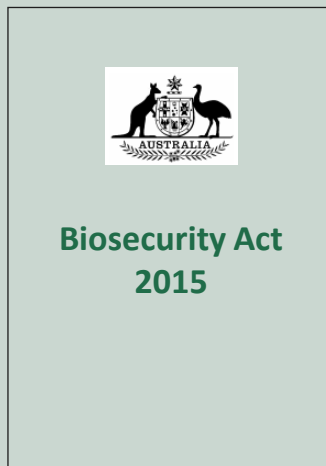


Post border

- Regulatory compliance & enforcement of food for sale in Australia
- Incident response

Imported food legislation

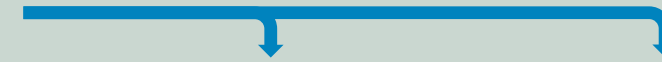
The department is responsible for administering the following legislative requirements covering imported food for human consumption



Protects Australia against biosecurity risks



Protects Australia against unsafe food



Sets out how the Imported Food Inspection Scheme (IFIS) works



Lists food that is risk food & food that requires certification

Imported Food Inspection Scheme

- Imported Food Inspection Scheme (IFIS) targets imported food based on food safety risk
- We receive risk advice from FSANZ about the hazard and degree of food safety risk
- Imported food is inspected to check it meets Australian requirements, primarily the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code
- Imported food for human consumption must meet biosecurity requirements first.



Risk and surveillance food

- When FSANZ advises that food poses a medium to high risk, we recommend to our Minister that the food is classified as risk food in the Imported Food Control Order.
- All other food is classified as surveillance (or low risk) food.

If food/hazard combination **poses a medium or high risk** to public health



It is a **risk food**

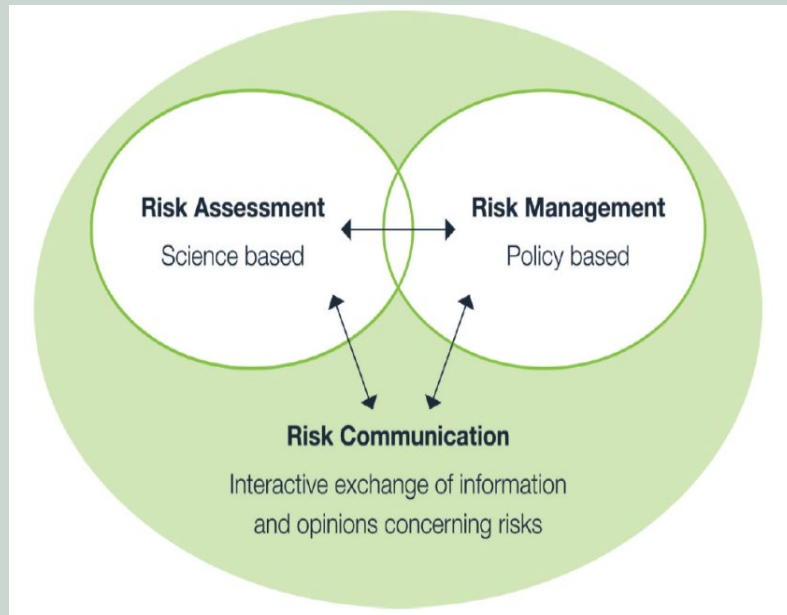
If food/hazard combination **does not pose a medium or high risk** to public health



It is a **surveillance food**

Risk management approach

The strategy applied is proportionate to the level of risk posed to public health.



Risk management tools

Emergency powers

Mandatory government certification

Food safety management certificates

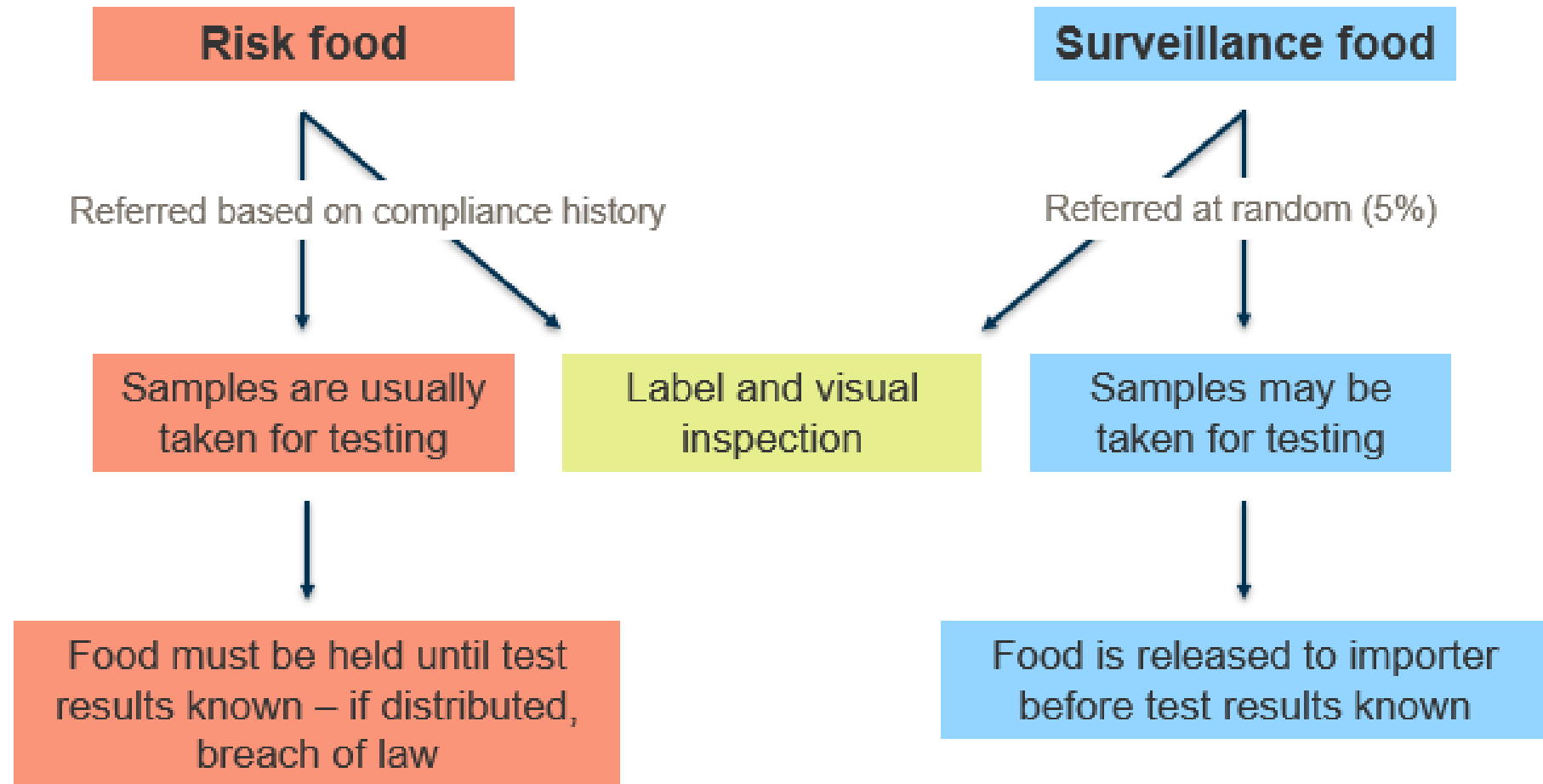
Classification, inspection and testing of risk food

Inspection and testing of surveillance food



Level of risk

At border inspection and testing



Enforcement at the border

We have imported food authorised officers (approx. 250) at every main port in Australia – Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth Sydney.

Assessment officers

Officers who assess import entries and check consignment documentation submitted with the entry. For food requiring inspection, they ensure the relevant tests are assigned to the entry.

Inspection officers

Authorised officers who travel to the importer's premises to inspect food and to take samples, if the food requires analysis.



**Each year we process
around 20,000 entries**

What happens when food fails inspection?



Risk food

- Inspection rate returns to 100% until compliance is demonstrated
- After five consecutive passes rate is reduced to 25%, after 20 passes rate is reduced to 5%.

Surveillance food

- A holding order is applied. All future consignments of that food are referred for inspection until compliance is demonstrated, usually after 5 consecutive passes / 2 years without any imports.
- When a holding order is revoked, inspection returns to 5% rate.

Who do we notify?

- We email the exporting country's embassy in Australia, about risk or surveillance food that is noncompliant.
- Labelling fails are not included, as these fails are up to the importer to manage.

Food classification	Rate of referral/inspection		
Risk food Medium or high risk	Start	100%	
	5 consecutive passes	25%	
	Further 20 consecutive passes	5%	
	Any fail		
Surveillance food Not medium or high risk	Start	5%	
	Any fail	100%	

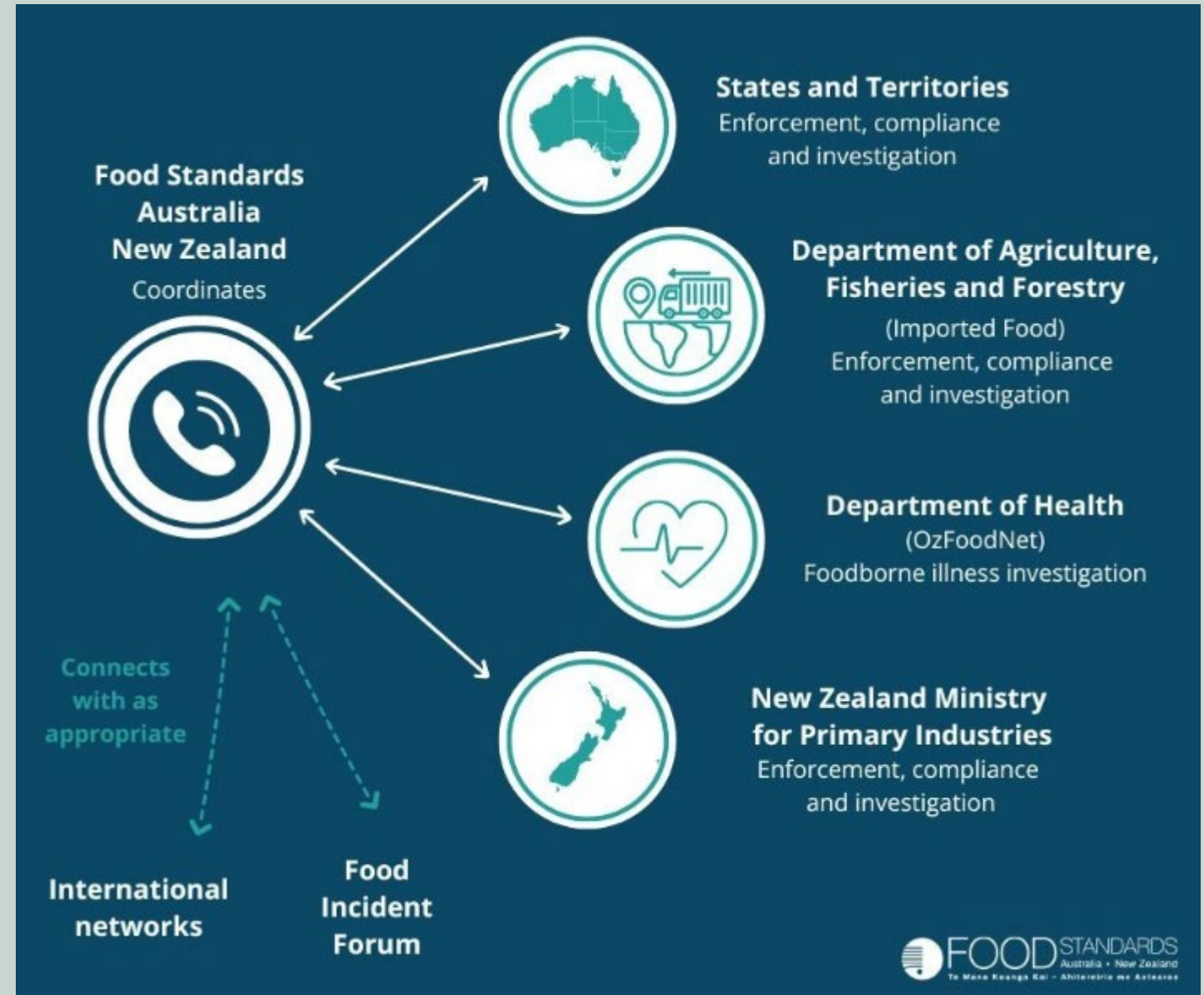
Food safety incident response

FSANZ coordinates food safety incidents in Australia, including recalls

All food regulators sit on a Bi-national Food Safety Network

At the border we:

- monitor international alerts and recalls to assess if any risks with food being imported
- have powers to stop unsafe food coming into the country and to apply border testing.

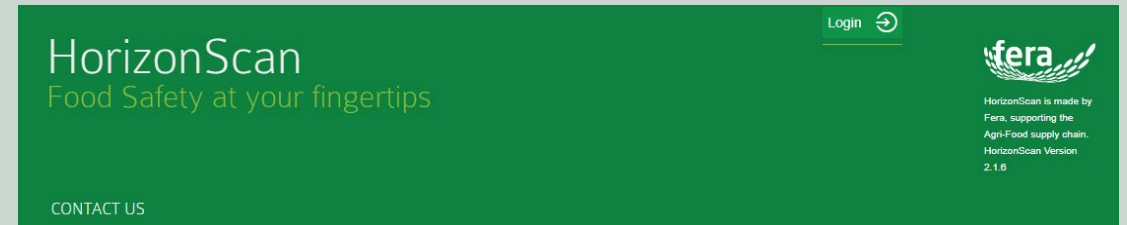


Imported Food Monitoring and Incident Response

Duties

- Monitor international and domestic food safety issues.
- We notify the state and territory food regulators where the food importers are located.
- Support food incident response actions within Australia.
- Assist with domestic recalls.
- Develop/maintain imported food web content and other stakeholder communication and guidance material.

So far in 2024, we have investigated over 170 food safety issues.



Leslie brand Clover chips – undeclared gluten

How we prioritise investigation:

Identify the hazard and potential impact on human health or safety

- **Higher priority – investigated**
- **Lower priority – may be investigated**

Clover chips barbecue corn snacks

Through daily monitoring:

- Noted many overseas notifications and alerts involving Leslie brand clover chips due to undeclared allergen - gluten
 - 4 importers initially / 3 more importers identified
 - 9 holding orders placed to target imports
 - Total of **21,884 kg** Clover chips imported since Jan 2023
- 5 recall notices published by FSANZ about Leslie brand Clover chips nation-wide.



Power BI

Castleglen Filipino Foods - Leslie's Brand Clover Chips Barbeque Corn Snacks 145g



Castleglen Filipino Foods is conducting a recall of the above product. This recall only applies to those products that do not declare the allergen listed below. The product has been available for sale at Asian Grocery Stores in QLD, SA and NT, and at Asian grocery stores and independent retailers including IGA in WA.

Date Marking: Best Before 20.11.2024

Problem:

The recall is due to the presence of an undeclared allergen (Gluten).

Food safety hazard:

Recent incidents with imported food

- **Mushroom gummies – unexpected toxicity**

- Reports of adverse reactions in multiple states following consumption
- One importer identified and holding order placed to target future imports
- Warnings issued by state health authorities
- Food recall



- **Alleged contamination of cooking oil**

- Media reports claiming cooking oil in China is being transported in tankers that were previously used to transport fuel and other liquids
- We import oil that could be considered 'cooking oil' from China
- We sought assurance from China that exports to Australia are safe
- Unable to identify specific oil producers in China that may be contaminated, we recommend industry seeks assurances from their suppliers.

A contaminated cooking oil scandal in China has provoked outrage and raised fears over safety

By Gavin Butler and Kai Feng
Posted Sat 13 Jul 2024 at 5:59am



FSANZ recall statistics

Recall detail	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total number of recalls per year	87	109	80	75	87
Recall due to undeclared allergen(s)	32	51	38	29	41
Percentage of total recalls per year	37%	57%	48%	39%	47%
Undeclared allergen recalls – domestically produced food	21	27	26	14	23
Undeclared allergen recalls – imported food	11	24	12	15	18
Percentage of undeclared allergen recalls – imported food	34%	47%	32%	52%	44%

Robertson, Peter (Peter.Robertson@aff.gov.au) is s

Imported Food Notices (IFNs)

Provide information about changes to import requirements for food imported into Australia

IFNs provide information to:

- our staff
- importers and brokers
- appointed analysts (laboratories)
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)
- Other regulatory agencies.

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Food

- How to import food >
- Import requirements by food type >
- Documents and declarations >
- Inspection and testing >
- Appointed analysts >
- Certification >
- Notices**
- Legislation

IFN 01-23 - Listeria monocytogenes in enoki mushrooms

Date of effect: 03/03/2023

Attention

Importers of enoki mushrooms and brokers acting on their behalf.

Purpose

The purpose of this notice is to raise industry awareness of the risk of *Listeria monocytogenes* (*L. monocytogenes*) contamination in enoki (enokitake) mushrooms being imported into Australia.

Notifications of *Listeria monocytogenes* in enoki mushrooms

Recently, there has been an increase in the number of overseas food incident alerts and notifications concerning enoki mushrooms contaminated with *L. monocytogenes*. The consumption of contaminated enoki mushrooms has been associated with illness and deaths. The increase in notifications has raised concerns in relation to the cultivation and processing of enoki mushrooms.

Importer's responsibility

It is the importer's responsibility to ensure they import food that is safe and suitable for human consumption.

If you import enoki mushrooms, we recommend you ask your supplier to provide you with evidence that the mushrooms have been produced under a food safety management system that effectively identifies and controls foodborne hazards of concern, including *L. monocytogenes*. You must also ensure the product is labelled in accordance with Australia's food standards and that temperature control has been applied during transport and storage for the safety of the food.

Enoki mushrooms are not ready-to-eat and should be fully cooked before being eaten. Instructions for cooking must be included on the label as per clause 2 of Standard 1.2.6 - Information requirements - directions for use and storage of the [Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code](#) ¹.

When enoki mushrooms are eaten raw or undercooked consumers, in particular those at-risk, may expose themselves to becoming sick.

Next steps

The department has asked Food Standards Australia New Zealand for advice on the risks associated with enoki mushrooms for human consumption. Depending on the outcome of that advice, the department will consider if additional risk management measures need to be applied at the border.

We will communicate any further changes to the import requirements for enoki mushrooms as they occur.

Background

Listeriosis is an illness usually caused by eating food contaminated by the bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes*. The bacteria are widely distributed in the environment and can grow in food at refrigeration temperatures. Most people who are exposed to *Listeria* will only develop mild symptoms, though illness can be severe in those most at-risk. Those at increased risk of illness include pregnant women and their unborn babies, newborn babies, the elderly and people of all ages with weakened immune systems.

Symptoms of Listeriosis can include vomiting, nausea, persistent fever, muscle aches, severe headache and neck stiffness.

Subscribe for updates

Stay updated on changes to the requirements for imported food. Subscribe to the Imported Food Inspection Scheme [Imported food notices](#) ¹.

General enquiries

Call 1800 900 090

[Contact us online](#)



Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**

Plain English allergen labelling

Undeclared allergens in food present a significant health risk to people with food allergies.

On 25 February 2021, new mandatory allergen declaration requirements were added to the Food Standards Code to make it easier to identify allergens present in food.

Food that is manufactured/produced from **25 February 2024** must comply with the new requirements. The 3-year transition period ends on 24 February 2024.

Allergens that must be declared include:

- fish, crustacea and mollusc
- sesame seed
- individual tree nuts: almond, Brazil nut, cashew, hazelnut, macadamia, pecan, pine nut, pistachio and walnut
- wheat (with or without gluten), rye, barley, oats and their hybridised strains, if they contain gluten (or products of these foods)
- milk
- egg
- peanut
- soybean
- added sulphites in concentrations of 10 mg/kg or more
- lupin.



The new mandatory allergen declaration requirements are published in **Standard 1.2.3** of the Code.

For food required to bear a label, **allergens** are to be declared:

- in the **statement of ingredients** for each ingredient, food additive, or processing aid, that is, or contains, an allergen and also in a separate but **co-located summary statement** beginning with the word 'contains'
- using **bold** type to make allergen declaration easier to identify from surrounding information
- in a size of type no less than that used for other text
- using the name '**gluten**' in the summary statement if the allergen is wheat, barley, rye, oats or their hybrids containing gluten.



Example statement of ingredients:

Ingredients

Water, vinegar, canola oil, sugar, capsicum, **egg** yolk, **almonds**, garlic, parmesan cheese powder (**milk**), sea salt, **wheat** flour, mustard powder, thickener (1412), flavour (**wheat** maltodextrin, **sesame** oil), antioxidant (320).

Contains: egg, almond, milk, wheat, gluten, sesame.

More information:



DAFF website



FSANZ website



Food Industry Guide to
Allergen Management
and Labelling

AGRI196.1123

IFIS inspection and testing summary 2023

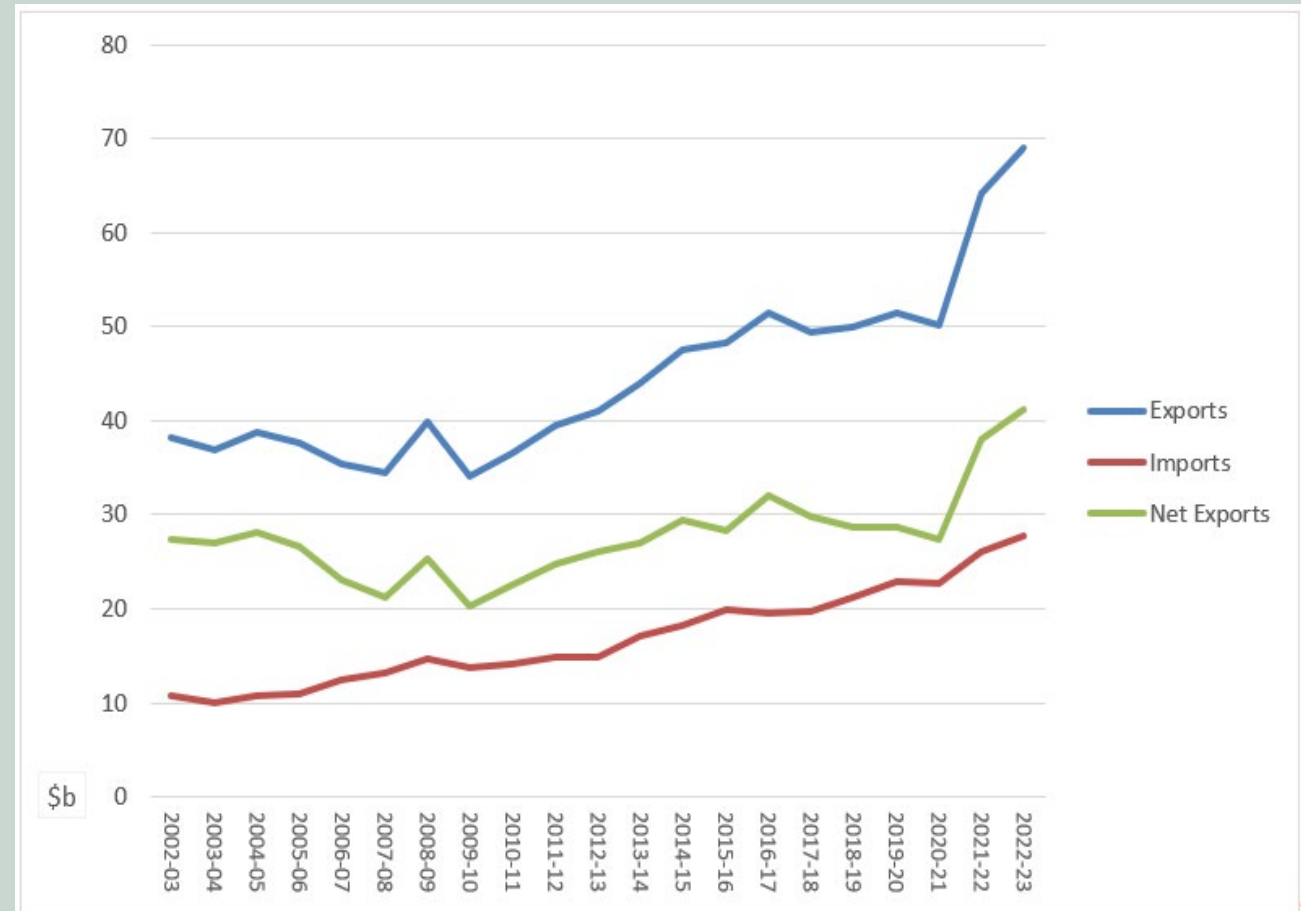
The value of food imports into Australia has increased steadily over the last 20 years

By value, New Zealand remains the major source of imports, accounting for 15% of food imported in 2022-23

In 2022-23, fruit and vegetables were the main commodity imported, followed by processed food and beverages

In 2023, the compliance rate for all imported food inspected was **98.4%**

Australian food trade by value 2002-03 to 2022-23



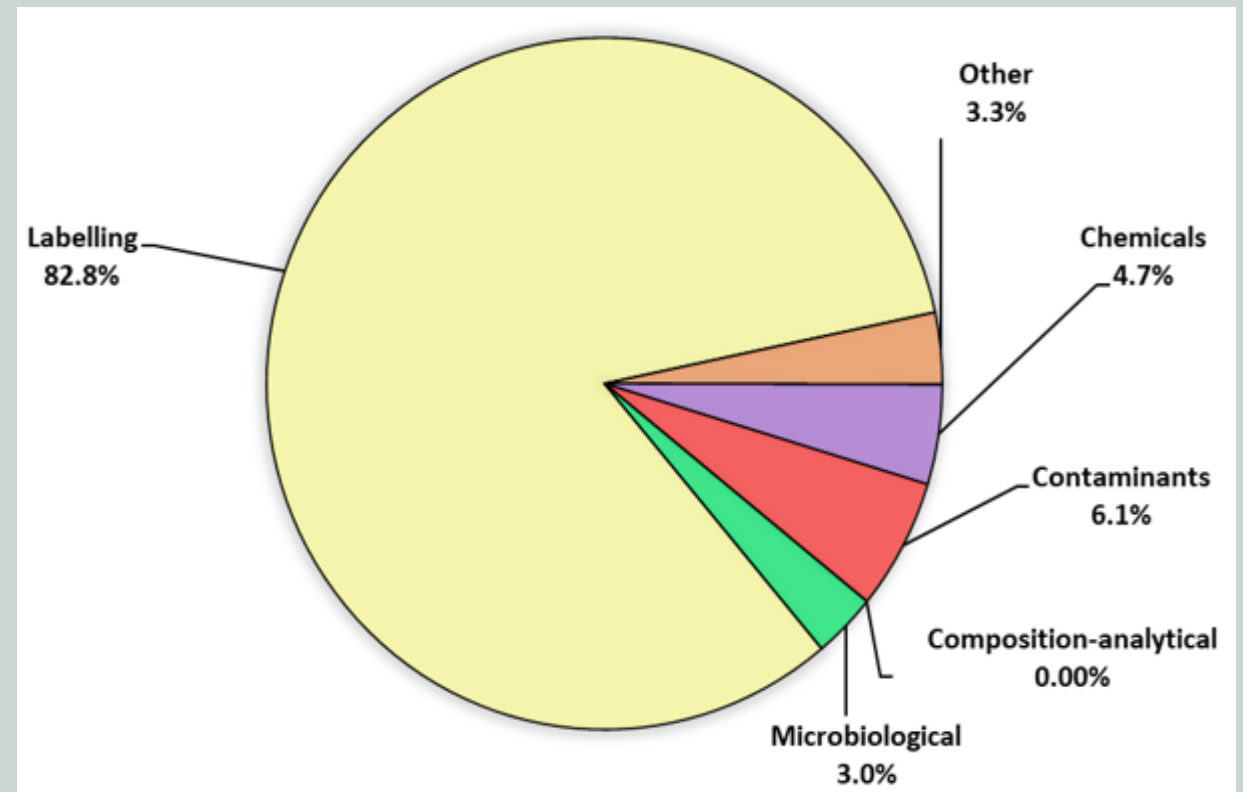
IFIS inspection and testing summary 2023

Compliance rate for all food inspected was 98.4%.

During this period:

- **20,691** entries (or shipments) of imported food were referred and subject to inspection or analysis
- **42,620** lines of these entries were inspected. Of these lines
 - **22.4%** were risk food
 - **72.3%** were surveillance food
 - **5.3%** were surveillance food subject to a Holding Order
- **123,237** tests (including label and visual checks) were conducted on the food, comprising
 - **51,919** label and composition assessments
 - **19,187** analytical tests
 - **52,131** other tests (including visual and certification).

Noncompliant test results by test type 2023



Food Import Compliance Agreements

- A more efficient way of regulating compliant food importers to manage food safety risks
- Voluntary alternative arrangement for Australian food importers
- Recognises importer's existing food safety management system – HACCP based
- FICA importers not subject to routine inspection & testing under the IFIS
- Importer manages sampling & testing to meet requirements
- Arrangement regulated through department audit
- Can include all types of food & scale of business
- Importer has greater control over assessment & clearance
- Does not exempt importers from Biosecurity Act requirements



Reporting data

We publish a monthly report on noncompliant food detected under the IFIS

The report details risk and surveillance food that is found to be noncompliant including:

- compositional requirements: such as a non-permitted additive
- because they are not permitted: such as a prohibited plant or fungi
- analytical testing: such as detection of *Salmonella spp.*

Food that has failed due to labelling noncompliance is not included in the report

We publish annual reports covering the activity of the IFIS

Questions?

Keep up-to-date on changes to imported food requirements by subscribing to our Imported Food Notices on the department website

