Statement of Strategy 2015-2020

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safe:food
queensland

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Foreword

Safe Food Production Queensland (SFPQ) provides certainty about food safety across the food supply chain through a science and risk-based regulatory framework. This gives consumers confidence and facilitates an environment that sustains economic growth.

Queensland's reputation as a supplier of safe and wholesome products is dependent upon maintaining standards that fit the expectations of our diverse range of overseas markets, as well as our consumers in Australia. SFPQ is the regulatory body in Queensland that is charged with maintaining food safety standards in the primary production sector.

SFPQ is well regarded nationally for its contribution to Australia's food safety network and for its involvement in the development of standards. The Agency continues to identify new ways to detect and respond to food safety issues whether these issues arise locally or are generated by external influences.

SFPQ's regulatory activity is harmonised with national and international standards giving Queensland a strong platform for trade and consumer protection.

The Agency continues to implement Government priorities, particularly in reducing the regulatory burden on business. Initiatives in the SFPQ Strategic Plan focus on simplifying food safety requirements while encouraging greater awareness of the benefits of safe and wholesome products.

SFPQ continues to deliver efficiencies through our information systems to make the benefits of regulation apparent and make existing resources go further.

Through our work with industry consultative committees, SFPQ generates ideas to support food business, inform a more holistic approach to policy development and lead responsive national policy initiatives that achieve industry growth.

We recognise that to achieve SFPQ's overall aim of protecting consumers domestically and consumers of Australian food abroad, a strategy that addresses all of the key influences in the Queensland food safety arena is required. This statement of strategy provides a framework to ensure that SFPQ and its policies adapt within an ever-changing global and national food scene.

The potential threats to food safety remain; keeping them under control is key and is a responsibility shared by industry, consumers and regulatory organisations.

Introduction

Who we are and what we do

SFPQ was created through the *Food Production (Safety) Act 2000 (the FPS Act)* and is a statutory body responsible for regulating food safety in the primary production and processing sectors. SFPQ is the equivalent of a small enterprise with 40 FTE's and is directly accountable to an expertise-based Board reporting to a Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries.

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Working in collaboration with our partners, SFPQ oversees monitoring of food safety controls. In partnership with the food industry and the community, we work to inform, develop and administer policy and legislation appropriately so that food in Queensland and consumers are safe.

Science remains at the heart of SFPQ's work to develop and improve standards for all consumers and suppliers.

Safe Food Production Queensland
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Safe Food Production Queensland Vision and Values

Vision

- Food produced or consumed in Queensland is safe and suitable.

- Consumers, both at home and abroad will have confidence and trust in the integrity of the food safety control system and that the highest international standards are applied in the agri-food sector.

- SFPQ is as an influential agent for change putting a culture of food safety at the heart of every accredited food business in Queensland.

- Recognition as a credible and respected food safety agency in which people are proud to work.

Values

- Diligence, professionalism and integrity

- Effectively and efficiently dealing with our clients and the community

- Fairness and equity

- Respect for the law and for other people

- Avoidance of real or apparent conflicts of interest

Strategic Priorities and Objectives

SFPQ's strategic direction for 2015-2020 involves three strategies that address the challenges and opportunities being faced by the food production and processing sector. It provides the direction to SFPQ staff, informs consumers and other stakeholders of up to date independent scientific advice and demonstrates alignment of our deliverables with the Queensland Government's objectives for the community.

The plan strives to achieve a balance between responsible regulation (consumer expectations) and individual responsibility of businesses to demonstrate a food safety culture.

The three strategic priorities are to:

1

Strategic Priority 1

Ensure the Queensland food safety system is affordable, sustainable and continually improving

2

Strategic Priority 2

Work in partnership with all stakeholders in the food chain to facilitate compliance with food standards

3

Strategic Priority 3

Ensure that SFPQ is responsive, efficient, effective and delivers value for money

Strategic Priority 1

Ensure the Queensland Food Safety System is Affordable, Sustainable and Continually Improving.

1

Strategic Priority 1 is to contribute to a food safety system which is affordable, sustainable and continually improving. Key to the success of this work will be the utilisation of scientific advice and risk assessment on which to base risk management and enforcement decisions. SFPQ will use an evidence based approach to underpin advice to our stakeholders on the development of food safety policy and food safety measures.

Key Objectives

- To ensure that risk management decisions are based on sound evidence

- To employ regulatory processes supported by current science and best practice

- Use developments within the technology sector and identify opportunities for developing business solutions

- To engage with other agencies and work in collaboration with industry in delivering food safety outcomes that meet and exceed expectation

The aim is to identify and accurately assess risks using an evidence-based approach.

To achieve this we will:

- Use notification reporting processes to inform regulatory approaches and priorities

- Conduct or obtain scientific risk assessments as the basis for risk management decisions

- Seek cost effective compliance solutions for the food sector

Expected Outcomes

- SFPQ is recognised nationally and internationally as a reliable source of food safety advice

- SFPQ has the scientific information available to underpin its risk assessment and risk management activities

Success Indicators

- Food safety regulation that is transparent, accountable and innovative

- Scientific analysis informs risk management approaches aimed at improving food safety and health promotion

- Rapid risk assessment capability to support improved food incident management activities

Strategic Priority 2

2

Work in Partnership with All Stakeholders in the Food Chain to Facilitate Compliance with Food Standards

Strategic Priority 2 places an onus on SFPQ to work in partnership with key stakeholders in the food business sector and to build confidence and trust in the Queensland regulatory system through effective risk communication and dialogue with all concerned.

SFPQ will engage with these sectors at many levels to reinforce the message of responsibility and to encourage improvement in standards of food safety.

Key Objectives

- To actively engage with the food industry in constructive dialogue towards adoption of the highest standards of food safety and legislative compliance

- To provide useful resources for food businesses to assist in compliance with food regulation in a manner proportionate to their size, capability and development

- To support the work of national bodies engaged in the advancement of the Australian food regulatory system

... build confidence and trust in the Queensland regulatory system through effective risk communication and dialogue with all concerned.

To achieve this we will:

- Maintain and develop industry pathways to underpin constructive dialogue with industry sectors

- Embrace and contribute to the knowledge networks developed by other agencies engaged in food production and regulation

- Support specialist information, technical workshops and seminars

- Assist small businesses in meeting their food safety training needs through advice, published guidance and contemporary initiatives

Expected Outcomes

- Industry-wide voluntary adoption of high food safety standards and hygiene practices that meet global benchmarks

- Implementation of food legislation that protects consumers' health in a manner that reduces burden on the development of the food industry

- SFPQ is recognised by the food industry as adding value to business

Success Indicators

- Effective engagement mechanisms in place between SFPQ and industry

- Positive trend in relation to notifications involving food produced in Queensland

Strategic Priority 3

3

Ensure that SFPQ is Responsive, Efficient, Effective and Delivers Value for Money

Strategic Priority 3 is about building a high performing organisation and recruiting, retaining and developing staff so that they have the depth and range of skills to deliver on SFPQ's vision. Against a backdrop of budget constraints, the challenge for SFPQ is not only to maintain the same level of standards and services, but to continue to improve them during the period of this Plan. SFPQ will seek to improve productivity and implement cost effective strategies within the context of the regulatory framework.

Key Objectives

- Develop and maintain IT and communications systems to support and enhance service delivery

- Develop and manage systems for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data in relation to monitoring compliance in accredited businesses

- Create a strong performance culture with the capacity to continuously improve and maximise productivity

To achieve this we will:

- Maintain and upgrade IT systems and infrastructure so that they provide the best value for money

- Establish appropriate disaster recovery and business continuity facilities

- Be open and transparent in all communications

- Review and enhance existing performance management systems and continue to provide for the on-going training and continued professional development of staff
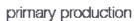
Expected Outcomes

- SFPQ delivers its services in an effective and efficient manner whilst providing value for money

- Conformance with corporate governance requirements

- Consumers and industry kept informed of known and emerging risks associated with food or the food chain

Success Indicators

- Deliver minimal, cost effective regulation that leaves a small imprint on day to day business operations

- Information systems that make the benefits of regulation apparent
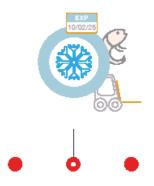
- Efficiencies that make existing resources go further

Delivering: Food Safety, Confidence a

primary production

Risk

Contamination by disease-causing microorganisms like Salmonella, E-coli, Listeria, Campylobacter and viruses.

Actions

- Food safety schemes
- Accreditation, audits and assessments
- On farm management
- Consultation
- Sampling and analysis

processing & manufacture

Risk

Persistence and/or contamination by disease-causing microorganisms and viruses due to poor process control, temperature control, hygiene and facility cleaning.

Actions

- Food safety schemes
- Accreditation, audits and assessments
- Research
- Trade level product recalls
- Animal welfare training in abattoirs
- Consultation

storage & distribution

Risk

Poor temperature control, inappropriate storage conditions and packaging, hygiene and cleaning allow hazards to increase.

Actions

- Food safety schemes
- Accreditation, audits and assessments
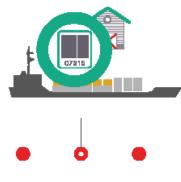- Sampling and analysis
- Monitor food and temperatures

retail

export

consumption

Risk

Poor temperature, pest control, hygiene and cleaning introduce hazards and allow them to increase.

Risk

Market access compromised in one or more of hundreds of export destinations

Risk

Poor temperature control, cross contamination, understanding of labelling, cleaning and personal hygiene introduce hazards and/or allow them to increase.

Actions

- Food safety schemes

- Accreditation, audits and assessments

- Training and education

- Monitor labels

- Consumer product recalls

- Vulnerable persons

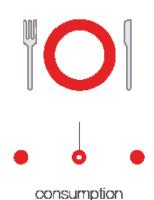- Food regulation partnerships

- Consultation

Actions

- Domestic standards underpin export certification

- Collaborates with DoA and FSANZ

- Facilitate foreign country reviews

Actions

- Food safety schemes

- Accreditation, audits and assessments

- Interpreting labels

- Act on complaints

- Sampling and analysis

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