



SafeFish Partnership Meeting

Friday 13th April 2018

COMMUNIQUE

The SafeFish partnership held its quarterly meeting at the Holiday Inn, near Melbourne Airport on Friday 13th April 2018. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Anne Astin. The SafeFish partner's committee are responsible for providing general oversight and strategy, and assisting in the identification of emerging and contemporary food safety issues impacting the seafood industry as well as assisting in communicating the technical outputs of SafeFish through appropriate channels in Australia and overseas to facilitate the resolution of these issues.

The discussions and outcomes from the meeting included the following:

1. Continuation of SafeFish Project from 2018-2021

We are pleased to announce that the SafeFish proposal to continue its operations from 2018-2021 received resounding support. Funding will be provided from the FRDC public good pool and contributions from the Abalone Council of Australia, the Abalone Growers Association, the Australian Council of Prawn Fishers, the Australian Mussel Industry Association, Oysters Australia, Southern Rocklobster Ltd., the Sydney Fish Market, the Tasmanian Salmonid Growers Association, and the FRDC Research Advisory Committees.

2. Stakeholder Engagement

The SafeFish partners would like to welcome our new financial stakeholders, and looks forward to working with them to continue to provide high quality research to assist Australian seafood. To keep stakeholders informed of our activities, and to enable greater involvement in what we do, SafeFish provides the following communications and services:

- A quarterly communique detailing the main discussions and outcomes from the partner meetings
- An annual report of all SafeFish activities
- A quarterly update on projects, communications and recent activities
- A technical helpline that can be used to discuss and/or raise potential issues of trade, public health or market access significance relating to seafood (08 8429 2259)
- The coordination of technical advice for Codex Australia to ensure that Codex standards are risk commensurate and appropriate for the Australian situation. Relevant SafeFish stakeholders are consulted throughout this process based on the issue being progressed but all interested stakeholders are welcome to be involved at any stage.
- An annual process to identify current and emerging food safety and market access issues including a prioritization workshop to rank the issues based on priority.
- Access comprehensive information about the SafeFish, technical research reports and details of all communications that we provide through the SafeFish website (including published articles for magazines/journals, workshop documents, brochures and fact sheets, technical briefs to Codex etc.). www.safefish.com

3. Collaboration with Stakeholders

The CEO's of PrimeSafe (Dr. Brendan Tatham) and Seafood Industry Association (Ms. Jane Lovell) provided presentations to the SafeFish partners detailing the core focuses, processes and expertise of both platforms. Both parties are keen to work more collaboratively with SafeFish on common

research affecting seafood in the future. In addition to this, as the peak representative body for seafood, the partners agreed that it would be beneficial to invite Seafood Industry Australia to be a formal voting member of the SafeFish partnership panel.

4. Prioritization Workshop – August 2018

The SafeFish technical program is underpinned by a strategy to identify current and emerging food safety and market access issues, prioritize these issues, and undertake technical work to provide potential solutions to overcome those of highest priority. At the last meeting, the partners compiled the following list of potential concerns that have been raised for inclusion in the prioritization process:

- The development of an Australian seafood incident response plan
- Research around improving risk management of ciguatera fish poisoning in Australia
- Establishment of epidemiology data for *Vibrios* in bivalve shellfish

At the August SafeFish partners meeting (to be held in Adelaide), a prioritization workshop will rank these issues to identify the SafeFish work program for 2018-19. As part of this process, proposed strategies for technical work to assist in resolving each issue will also be reviewed. This workshop is open to all interested SafeFish stakeholders. If you would like to register to attend, or if you would like to raise any additional issues to be considered in the process please contact the SafeFish secretariat (info@safefish.com.au or 08 8429 2286).

5. *Codex Alimentarius* update

SafeFish have been monitoring and providing input into the following Codex standards for seafood:

- *Call for experts and data relating to Ciguatoxins*. The Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee for Food Additives (JECFA) will be undertaking a risk assessment of ciguatoxin in finfish. SafeFish initiated an Australian working group to respond to the call for scientific data, including occurrence and chemical data, toxicological, epidemiological and clinical data, exposure assessment data, and risk management measures. The submitted data will ensure that the risk assessment will be relevant to Australia.
- *Control guidance document in fish for Histamines*. A guidance document for the control of histamines in fish has been produced which provides information on what can be done to manage the potential of histamine production over the entire supply chain. This document has been discussed at Codex in detail over a number of meetings and SafeFish has been involved in ensuring the information contained is appropriate for Australia. The guidance document will be sent for further discussion and potential adoption at a meeting later this year.
- *Establishing maximum levels in fish species for Methyl-mercury*. At the CCCF12 meeting in 2018, the following draft Codex maximum levels (MLs) for methyl-mercury were proposed for tuna (1.2mg/kg), alfonsino (1.5mg/kg), marlin (1.7mg/kg) and shark (1.6mg/kg) in whole fresh/frozen products. SafeFish has canvassed the seafood industry throughout the development of these MLs to ensure that they are practical for Australian products to meet for export when formally implemented.

The next meeting of the SafeFish partners will be in Adelaide in August (date to be confirmed). The partner meetings are open to observers: interested parties are invited to contact the SafeFish secretariat to register their interest in attending.

Visit SafeFish website for further information: www.safefish.com.au

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