

## SafeFish Prioritisation Workshop

SafeFish has reviewed existing and emerging seafood safety and trade and market access issues to ensure that its upcoming technical work program provides the best outcomes for the industry.

**Issues and hazards ranked high priority were:** export restrictions for canned abalone into China based on Chinese sulphite regulations, harmful algal blooms and their impact on seafood, ciguatera toxins in fish, *Vibrio* species in bivalve shellfish, food fraud and food authenticity and arsenic in *Amusium* scallops.

**Medium priority issues were:** off-label chemical use in Australia, per and poly fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) – formally known as perfluorinated compounds (PFC) and parasites in finfish.

Water retention chemicals in fish and potentially high levels of mercury in crustaceans were ranked as low priority issues.

## Current activities to address these issues are:

**Sulphites in Canned Abalone:** SafeFish is currently providing technical support to Abalone Association of Australasia and the Seafood Trade Advisory Group to resolve the market access issue of sulphites in canned abalone to Chinese market. AAA has unsuccessfully submitted applications to Chinese government to allow this food additive. They have approached SafeFish for technical input into the submission again. SafeFish staff met with AAA in March 2017, reviewed the previous submissions and planned a way forward. SafeFish projects funds will be used to progress the technical aspects of this issue.

**Food Authenticity:** A project has been developed to review the purposes and aims of food authenticity tools, the tools currently available e.g. genetics, trace elements, radio isotopes, detail advantages and disadvantages for each under the different circumstances, and provide details of some case studies where they have been used by the seafood industry. The project will give industry assistance to determine if they if they want to go down this path, and which methodologies they should be looking at to address the aims they want to achieve.

**Rapid biotoxin test kits:** An application to the Package Assisting Small Exporters has been submitted to implement rapid biotoxin screening test kits in bivalve industry as an approved screening tool. The application includes development of appropriate training and QA/QC schemes to support industry use.

**ASCRC Grant:** SafeFish has been granted approval to set up a biotoxin contamination facility to support seafood industry research (see separate agenda item on this).

## Research Project Update:

**Validation of rapid test kits:** The validation of the rapid test kits in mussels and oysters has been finalised and results are very promising for the industry. The kit was shown to be highly successful in oysters, but had some issues with mussels. Two international publications are in preparation to ensure trading partner acceptance of this tool.

**Processing and packaging of seafood for safe shelf- life extension:** The guide has been prepared by CSIRO and reviewed by Plant and Food, NZ. The guide will be published as a booklet for distribution. A training workshop will be held by SafeFish, CSIRO and Seafood Victoria.

## CODEX Activities:

SafeFish is currently providing technical input in to: maximum limits for mercury, lead, histamine and ciguatera in fish, maximum residue limits for isoeugenol (Aqui-S) in seafood, non-dioxin like polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in the Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products, and alignment of the food additives across all Codex documents.

## Communications

### SafeFish Partners Meeting:

The quarterly partners' meeting was held in Melbourne on 7th March 2017. Discussion and decisions were made on future chair appointment criteria, communication strategies, SafeFish operations review and sustainability of SafeFish. A special presentation was given by Tristan Kitchener on Horticulture's HARPS (Harmonised Australian Retailer Produce Scheme) requested by FRDC to see the possibilities of introducing of such scheme in Seafood sector.

### SafeFish and University of Technology Sydney showcase Australian shellfish food safety research & Host Chinese seafood researchers

On 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov 2016, over 70 Australian scientists, students, regulators and industry members participated in the Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Programs' biannual conference, organised by SafeFish and UTS in Sydney. The conference highlighted the research occurring in Australia in shellfish food safety, and included talks from visiting scientists from New Zealand and China. Sessions included biotoxins, microbial pathogens and chemical contaminants and emerging technologies.

To promote technical exchange between Australian and Chinese scientists in food safety and market access for seafood Alison Turnbull and Dr. Tom Madigan hosted Professor Yuxui Zhai and Dr. Zhijun Tan from the Yellow Fisheries Research Institute in Qingdao from the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> November in Sydney.

**SafeFish 2015/16 Annual Report has been published and distributed.**

**A short summary of the SafeFish Prioritisation Workshop has also been distributed.**