



Food Safety in New Zealand for University of Otago Public Health Summer School

Hilary Eade, Manager Food Policy

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Growing and Protecting New Zealand



Overview

- The food safety system
- The food sector
- Foodborne illness
- Emerging food safety issues
- MPI activities
- Policy and regulatory approach
- Key food safety work of Ministry
- Summary

The New Zealand food sector

- 40,000 regulated businesses
- 85,000 food premises
- Food retail and service turnover of \$27.6b for the year to June 2014
- Food manufacturing of \$47.2b for the year to June 2014
- Food imports of \$3.9b for the year to June 2014
- Food exports of \$29.3b out of total exports of \$51.2b for the year to June 2014 (57% of NZ exports and growing)
- Asia is now the largest destination region taking 52% of NZ's food exports in the year to June 2014 and China is the largest single destination

The New Zealand food sector (2)

- Sectors continue to evolve, for example:
 - Venison has increased from 2,810 tonnes of meat exported and 57,200 farmed deer in 1986/87 to 14,700 tonnes of meat exported and 1,030,000 farmed deer
 - Sheep meat has decreased from 385,000 tonnes of lamb exported and 64.6 million sheep in 1986/87 to 312,000 tonnes of lamb expected to be exported and 22.2 million sheep
 - Dairy has increased from 2.3 million cows in 1987 to 5 million cows in 2014
 - Wine has increased from 4,976 hectares of land and 70,000 tonnes of production in 1990, to 35,000 hectares of land to 420,000 tonnes in 2013/14

The Food Safety System (see A3 diagram)

- The food safety system covers food safety, suitability and assurances for food sold in New Zealand and overseas
- Food regulation is at the heart of the system and has five objectives that fit within two themes – public health and trade:
 - Public health is protected
 - Food is safe and suitable
 - Risks from pathogens, chemical contaminants, natural toxins and residues are identified and managed
 - New Zealand's good reputation increases access to overseas markets
 - Market access is facilitated

Foodborne illness

- In 2010 the cost to New Zealand of the six major foodborne illnesses was estimated at \$162 million*.
- Our food safety reputation underpins our food exports – the impact of significant incidents can be much higher.
- MPI foodborne disease reports available at:
<http://www.foodsafety.govt.nz/science-risk/human-health-surveillance/foodborne-disease-annual-reports.htm>

**The Economic Cost of Foodborne Disease in New Zealand, Applied Economics Ltd, November 2010*

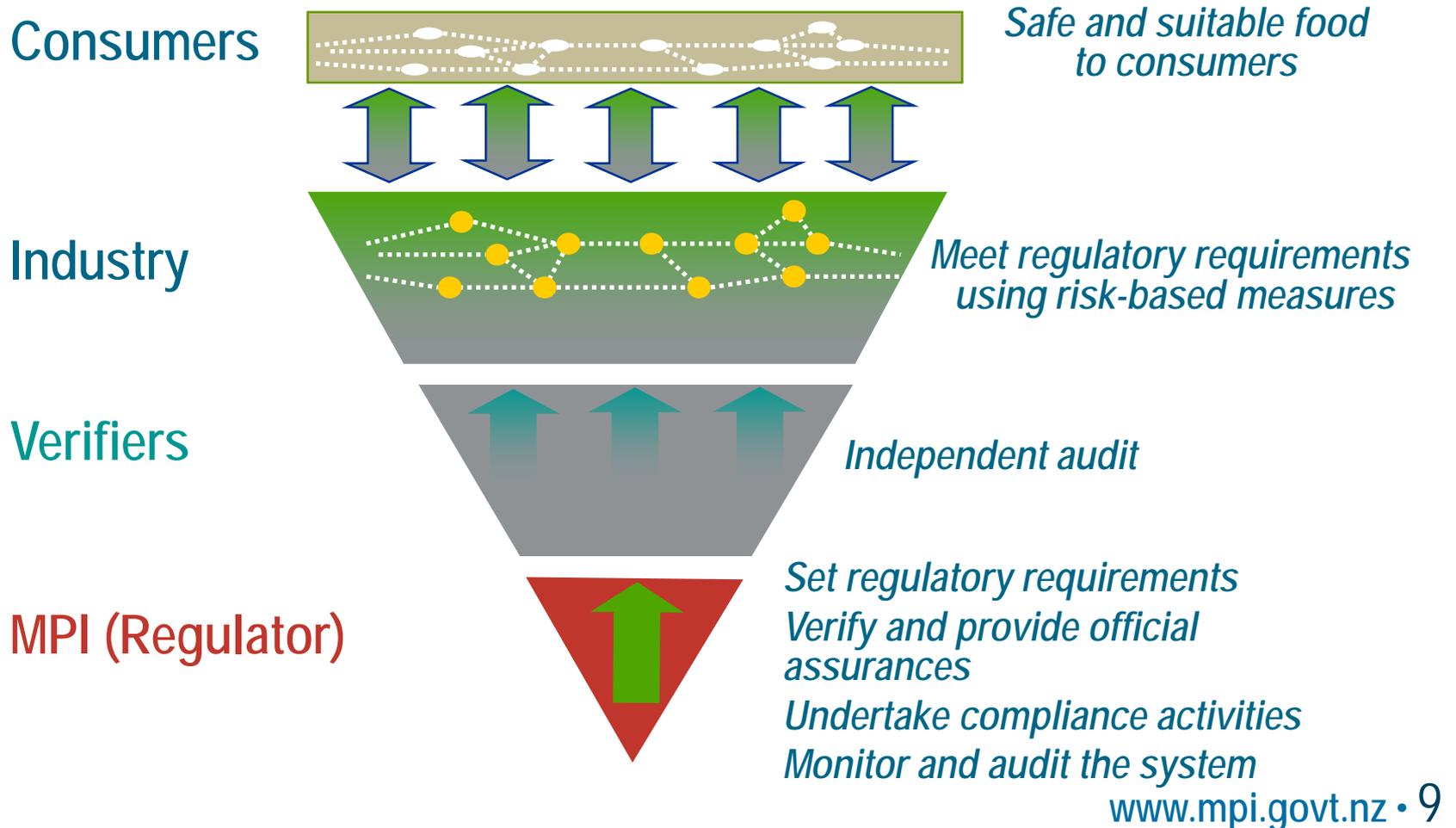
Emerging food safety issues

- New and emerging food safety risks:
 - An increasing spectrum of chemical and biological hazards in the global food supply.
 - Food production (including processing technologies) and consumption patterns are changing more rapidly than at any other time.
- Increasing consumer expectations:
 - Concerned about food safety and the presence of chemical residues in their food.
 - Want information on matters not directly related to food safety, such as animal welfare.

Emerging food safety issues (2)

- Increasing supply chain complexity:
 - Increasingly complex food production and processing is making tracing and recalls harder.
 - New Zealand will need systems in place (including regulations) to allow for the rapid tracing of product.
- Different expectations from new markets:
 - Newer trading partners expect a greater level of prescription and government oversight in our food system.
 - As New Zealand trades more with developing countries, we are encountering higher demand for official assurances and some of these are broader than in the past.

Policy underpinning the food safety system



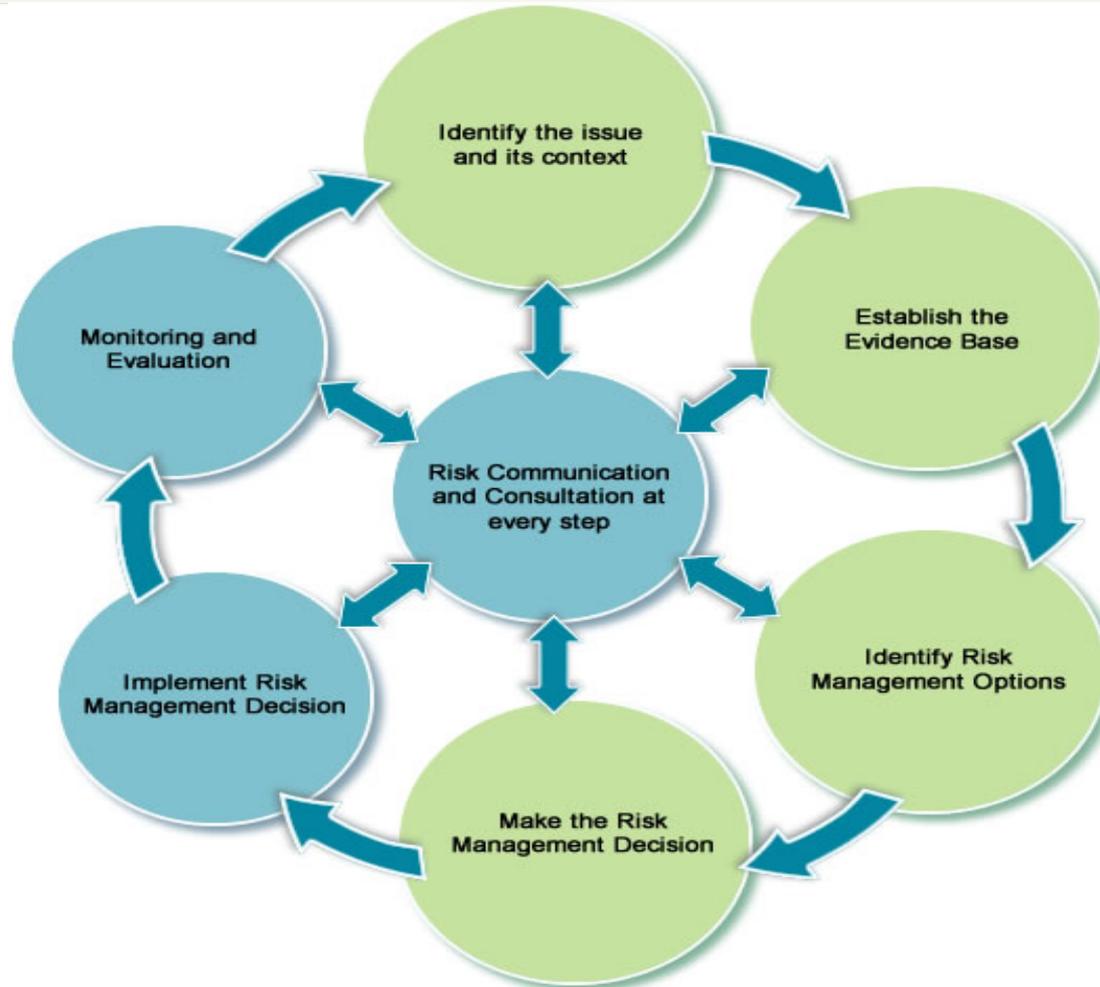
Taking a risk based approach

- Manage risks to an acceptable level – impossible to have zero risk
- Consumers need and expect access to a wide range of foods
- Consumers also need to have confidence in the food they purchase

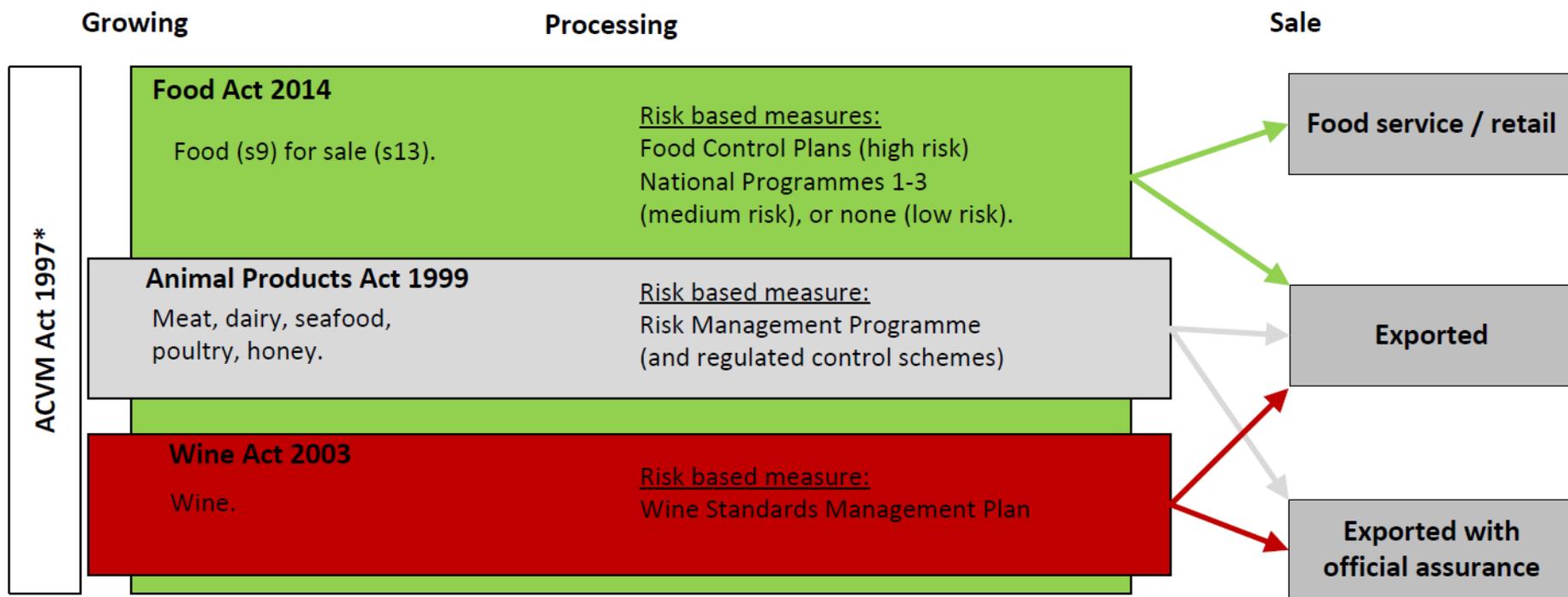
Introducing controls

- Take into account likelihood of hazards in food and severity of resulting illness
- Economic, social and environmental impacts are considered
- International rules e.g. Codex Alimentarius

MPI's risk based approach to requirements



The scope of food safety statutes



Note: everything must be safe and suitable.

Joint Australia and New Zealand standards

- 1995 Agreement between Australia and NZ concerning a Joint Food Standards System (the Food Treaty)
- The Food Treaty commits Australia and New Zealand to having the same composition and labelling standards wherever possible.
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand develops these standards.
- The trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement means that food that can be sold in New Zealand can be sold in Australia (and vice versa)

Key activities of the Ministry

- Providing policy advice to our Ministers
- Contributing to international standards for food
- Negotiating and maintaining market access
- Developing regulatory requirements based on risk and science, and supporting industry with guidance
- Working with Australia on joint food standards for composition and labelling
- Verifying that businesses meet requirements and providing export markets with assurances
- Working in partnership with industry to grow markets
- Compliance action, including enforcement where necessary
- Monitoring and auditing the food system

Key food safety work in MPI

- Strengthening the food safety system overall
 - Provenance and traceability
 - Building capability for primary industries
- Strengthening the regulatory framework
 - Developing regulations to implement the Food Act 2014
 - Food Safety Law Reform Bill
 - Reviewing policy and law for sale of raw milk to consumers
 - Reviewing the export legislation of the Wine Act 2003
 - Ongoing review of standards, including joint food standards
 - Health claims

Key food safety work (2)

- Operational and sector initiatives
 - Reviewing cost recovery rates for existing food systems
 - Food safety responses e.g. yersinia
 - Health star rating system
 - Manuka Honey
- Market Access
 - Maintaining and expanding market access
 - Strengthening the assurance system for infant formula to account for rapid growth in recent years
 - Strengthening our certification systems

Key food safety work (3)

- Primary production changes
 - Introducing a Bill to amend the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act 1997 to update provisions for the registration of agricultural compounds
- Stakeholder relationships
 - Communicating with and educating consumers about food risks
 - Working in partnership across the food sector where possible
- Information systems
 - Electronic certification (E-cert) systems that provide assurances
 - Joint Border Management System

Summary

- The food safety system is complex
- No-one owns the system – safe food is the responsibility of both government and industry
- New Zealand takes a science and risk-based approach.
- Economic, social and environmental impacts are taken into account when setting policy
- Future challenges and opportunities:
 - changing food safety risks
 - increasing consumer expectations
 - complex supply chains
 - changing trading partner expectations.