

New Zealand Food Safety

Haumaru Kai Aotearoa



A Strategy for New Zealand Food Safety

Strategy Refresh
2022 – 2024





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Foreword

The *New Zealand Food Safety Strategy 2019 - 2024* was launched in 2019. A lot has occurred since its launch, including the COVID-19 pandemic; significant challenges to traditional international food production and trade; and the launch of the *Fit for a Better World* roadmap. As we approach the Strategy's midpoint, we need to respond to the changes in our environment and ensure that New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa is implementing the work that will make the greatest difference for New Zealand. This refresh of the New Zealand Food Safety Strategy will guide our direction for the next two years.



New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa's role has not changed. We help ensure consumers can trust the food they eat is safe, suitable and accurately labelled. We work to maintain the integrity of the food safety system by ensuring industry compliance and leading responses to foodborne illnesses when they arise. We lead implementation of the Government's food safety policy decisions, develop standards, and ensure the right regulatory requirements are in place to support businesses to make safe and suitable food for New Zealand and its export markets. Ensuring New Zealand's food is trusted and recognised by overseas markets is vital and makes it easier for businesses to export and grow the value of New Zealand's food exports. To support market access, we provide export assurances on behalf of the New Zealand Government to overseas governments, as well as providing guidance to food businesses.

While we have overall responsibility for New Zealand's food legislation, some areas exist where responsibility intersects, including a co-regulatory role with 67 territorial authorities, under the Food Act 2014. We also work with our counterparts in Australia, because New Zealand shares a joint food standards system, and we work closely with the Ministry of Health to support public health and wellbeing. All our advice, guidance, risk management and regulations are underpinned by robust scientific evidence.

Our core services traverse the whole food chain from farm to plate and we must ensure our services are excellent and continuously delivered. Delivery of core services in the food safety system are fundamental to achieving our vision.

We continue to embrace the vision New Zealand food: trusted and recognised by everyone, everywhere. It is essential both within New Zealand and overseas that we have a food safety system that will continue to maintain and grow our reputation as a trusted provider of safe and suitable food.

Our guiding principles remain relevant and are fundamental to achieving our outcomes:

- **Manaaki** – caring for others
- **Whanaungatanga** – collaboration and relationships
- **Ngā manukura** – visible leadership
- **Mana** – integrity/authority
- **Tiakitanga** – guardianship of the food system

This Strategy Refresh builds on the important core services that we provide every day.

The Refresh identifies two outcomes: *New Zealand Food is safe and suitable* and *New Zealand's food sector thrives*. We set out our priorities and initiatives that will make the greatest impact for these outcomes. We also have identified two foundations with their own priorities and initiatives: *Grow a genuine partnership with Māori* and *Strengthen our organisation to deliver*. Our foundations will ensure that we are better equipped to work towards our outcomes and deliver on them.

We will review and monitor our delivery to ensure we are progressing and implementing the right initiatives that make the greatest difference.

While this is a refresh rather than a new strategy, we know that it will only be successful if it works in conjunction with all our partners, consumers and industry who play a part in the wider food safety system. As food travels from the farm to the plate, we will be working hard to uphold the trust and confidence of you all.

Ngā manaakitanga

Vincent Arbuckle
Deputy Director-General
New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa

Strategy Refresh

New Zealand Food Safety 2022-2024

WHAKATAUKI

Ko tāu rourou, Ko tāku rourou, Ka ora ai te iwi

By sharing your food basket with my food basket the people will thrive

OUR VISION

New Zealand food: trusted and recognised by everyone, everywhere

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Manaaki – caring for others

Whanaungatanga – collaboration and relationships

Ngā Manukura – visible leadership

Mana – integrity/authority

Tiakitanga – guardianship of the food system

OUR OUTCOMES

New Zealand food is safe and suitable

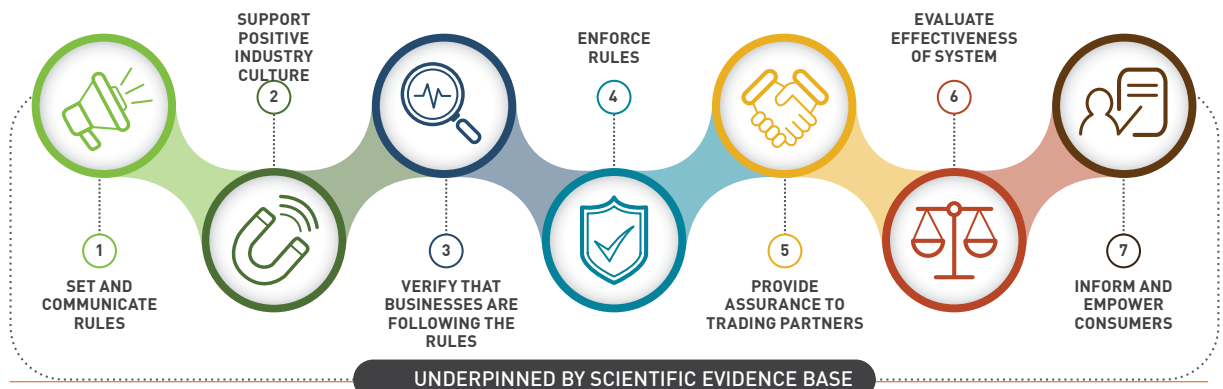
New Zealand's food sector thrives

OUR FOUNDATIONS

Grow a genuine partnership with Māori

Strengthen our organisation to deliver

OUR FUNCTIONS ACROSS THE FOOD PROCESS



Who we are and what we do

Our role

New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa is a business unit of the Ministry for Primary Industries. Under New Zealand law, the food industry is responsible for producing safe and suitable food and demonstrating compliance with standards. New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa oversees the functioning of the food safety system as a whole. We set the regulatory standards relevant to each part of the food supply system and verify that they are being met on a continuous basis. We also work with industry to develop food safety guidance, promote food safety culture within industry and monitor food safety and suitability outcomes.

Territorial authorities (known as local councils) are a key partner in the domestic food safety system. As co-regulators with New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa under the Food Act 2014, territorial authorities provide the permission for local food businesses to operate, and ensure compliance. In the New Zealand food safety system, a number of private companies assist with verification and laboratory services.

Our key functions are to:

- Set the rules and standards and support all stakeholders to understand them.
- Work closely with industry to develop guidance on achieving food safety and suitability.
- Promote a strong industry food safety culture.
- Verify that food businesses are in compliance with rules and standards.
- Enforce rules and standards.
- Provide assurances to trading partners that exported food and other primary sector exports meet their rules and standards.
- Monitor and evaluate the performance of the regulatory system.
- Inform and support consumers to make the choices that are important to them.
- Monitor and work with industry and partner agencies to prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from adverse food safety events.
- Apply science and risk assessment to the greatest extent possible in all of our work.

The benefits of these functions are that food is safe and suitable, consumers can make informed choices, the food sector can thrive and innovate without undue regulatory burden, and overseas governments can have a high level of confidence and trust in our export assurances. A well-functioning food safety system is an essential part of the production and sale of food. A very high proportion of the food New Zealand produces is destined for export and this places a special responsibility on New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa. New Zealand exports around \$41 billion in food and beverages every year to consumers around the world. This trade represents New Zealanders' jobs which support families and our lifestyle. Our robust Food safety system plays an important role in the maintenance and improvement of market access for New Zealand products.

Our changing context

The New Zealand Food Safety Strategy was launched in a context that already faced challenges and opportunities throughout the food supply chain. This refresh acknowledges significant shifts in our environment since 2019.

Ministry for Primary Industries – Fit for a Better World

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) vision is for New Zealand to be the world's most sustainable provider of high-value food and primary products. In response to the pandemic and to realise the food and fibre's sector potential while adapting to its challenges, MPI developed the *Fit for a Better World* roadmap to support a shift towards a more productive, sustainable and inclusive food and fibre sector, complete with 10-year targets. More broadly MPI focuses its efforts on four outcomes: prosperity, protection, sustainability and visible leadership. As part of a large and diverse organisation, New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa contributes to the MPI outcomes and *Fit for a Better World* roadmap through initiatives embedded within our own Strategy Refresh. This ensures that we are playing our part to support the shift towards a more productive, sustainable and inclusive food sector, while ensuring New Zealand food is safe and suitable.

Trade and market forces

There has been changes in the global political and economic context affecting supply chains, exporters' access to offshore markets and a changed economic environment for New Zealand. The entire food supply chain within New Zealand is adapting to these changes, and New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa must play our part to support the ability of the food sector to maintain and increase the value of its exports and those products for the domestic market. At the same time we must continue to monitor for any possible effects from both supply chain and food security pressures on food safety and suitability.

Consumer preferences and behaviour

Consumers continue to prioritise high-quality food that is safe. Increasingly consumers are considering issues such as nutrition, food security, animal welfare, climate change and sustainability in their food choices. There is increasing consumer demand for assurances around the authenticity and traceability of their food. Sharing the New Zealand Food Story on the international stage has never been more important. These expectations place increased pressure on the regulator to strengthen the food safety system's ability to keep New Zealand food safe and suitable.

Māori – Crown relations

In December 2019, Te Arawhiti launched the Māori Crown Relations Capability Framework to strengthen public sector capability to work with Māori and ensure the public sector can build on relationships with Māori and enter into enduring partnerships. Haumarū Kai Aotearoa/New Zealand Food Safety is responding to this framework and ensuring that Māori Crown relations and te ao Māori perspectives are considered in all that we do.



Our outcomes and foundations





Outcome New Zealand food is safe and suitable

This outcome puts consumers at the centre of what New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa does. New Zealand food covers imported food, food produced and consumed in New Zealand, and food produced in New Zealand and exported to overseas consumers. The complexities of the food safety system mean that the system must cover all foods and beverages as well as pet food, animal feed, agricultural compounds, veterinary medicines and other animal products.

New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa must ensure that the food safety system minimises health risks to consumers, whether they be in New Zealand or overseas. Food also needs to be suitable, which means it needs to be labelled and identified correctly, and not contain anything unexpected.

At the same time, many consumers want to make informed choices about the food they eat, based on other characteristics of food such as its source, ingredients, means of production and a range of other certifications. We must ensure that accurate and trusted information for New Zealand food enables consumers to make food choices that will better support their health and lifestyle preferences.

Consumers themselves also play an important role in food safety. Appropriate handling and preparing of food can have a significant influence in minimising foodborne illness. New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa will support consumers to make decisions and act in ways that will support their health. New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa also will ensure that mātauranga Māori is reflected in the food safety system and in our communication with consumers.

We will continue to provide our core services and functions to ensure that New Zealand food is safe and suitable. These priorities and initiatives point to where we will focus our effort over the next two years.

Priorities	Initiatives
We will mitigate the risks of foodborne or dietary illnesses and hazards to protect consumers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the flour milling sector to implement mandatory fortification of non-organic bread-making wheat flour with folic acid to reduce the incidence of neural tube defects. • Implement further regulatory controls to protect consumers from the risk of <i>Salmonella</i> Enteritidis in eggs and poultry. • Implement a comprehensive work programme to reduce food safety and animal welfare risks from antimicrobial resistance • Progress our <i>Campylobacter</i> Action Plan to reduce human foodborne campylobacteriosis by 20 percent over five years (by 2025). • Carry out a Total Diet Study focused on New Zealand infants and toddlers to assess exposure to certain food safety risks. • Include Mātauranga Māori and Tikanga in the design and communication of our food safety system. • Work with MPI Regulatory Systems Policy to progress the trans-Tasman food regulatory system project to reduce sugar in sugary drinks.
We will equip consumers to make informed food choices and understand safe food preparation practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deliver a consumer food safety and suitability promotion programme. • Ensure effective communication with Māori consumers in our consumer food safety and suitability promotion programme. • Develop and promote new food safety and nutrition guidance for pregnant women in conjunction with the Ministry of Health. • Deliver a consumer intelligence surveillance programme to inform more effective methods of engaging with New Zealand consumers on food safety and suitability. • Strengthen co-ordination with the public health sector to promote food safety and adequate nutrition in food composition and diet.
We will strengthen the food safety system's ability to detect, prevent, respond to and recover from a food safety event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support industry preparedness for food recalls with new guidance and ensure compliance with annual recall practices. • Design and deliver an integrated emerging food safety risk system that provides intelligence to inform priorities and action. • Develop and implement an action plan to lift the food safety system's readiness for, response to and recovery from significant food safety events in collaboration with key partners. • Strengthen our co-regulator relationship with Territorial Authorities. • Undertake a pro-active food compliance operation to address a priority sector. • Promote, with the New Zealand Food Safety Science and Research Centre, the National Food Safety Science plan for New Zealand.

Outcome New Zealand's food sector thrives

A well-functioning food safety system that ensures that New Zealand food is safe and suitable for consumers supports the success of New Zealand's food sector. The production and sale of food generates a thriving economy for all New Zealanders and is important for New Zealand's prosperity. The food sector covers those producing, transporting, making, storing and selling food.

A high proportion of the food we produce is destined for export and this places a special responsibility on New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa. We work closely with our trading partners to ensure that the food safety standards we implement in New Zealand are acceptable to overseas governments, and we share standards for composition and labelling, developed under the Joint Food Standards System between New Zealand and Australia.

While New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa works to ensure a robust food safety system that supports safe and suitable food, we are also aware that we need to be a regulator that achieves this outcome efficiently with manageable impacts on industry.

New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa is also mindful that balance is needed between rules and regulations and the flexibility the food sector needs to innovate and grow to meet the demands of consumers. We will continue to provide our core services and functions across the food safety system and provide oversight of the system. These are priorities and initiatives where we will focus our efforts over the next two years to ensure New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa is in the best position to get the balance right.



Priorities	Initiatives
<p>We will ensure that New Zealand's food safety legislative framework and regulatory standards remain robust</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement the Organics Regulations and Standards. • Implement the amended Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act to regulate inhibitors. • Proactively manage risk and increase assurance in relation to imported food. • Prioritise international engagement in Codex Alimentarius International Food Standards, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, and with other international food safety regulatory counterpart organisations to align New Zealand with international standards. • Reset strategic priorities for Australia New Zealand Food Standards for 2023-2026.
<p>We will support the food sector to maximise domestic and international trade opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver on Future of Certification – Upgrade certification systems to enable New Zealand to trade more effectively and flexibly with new and existing trading partners. • Improve the platform for country listings for export premises. • Use food science to develop a robust plan to support food health and provenance claims for industry to enable higher value exports. • Support MPI Market Access and International Policy teams in their work to negotiate preferential trade access conditions for New Zealand primary sector exports, with counterpart agencies. • Encourage and support food safety and suitability scientific research that assists industry to maximise new opportunities in alternative proteins and production methods. • Actively contribute to the Food and Beverage Industry Transformation Plan. • Increase stakeholder engagement with small and medium sized food businesses to build their regulatory capability.

Mā tō tātou whanaungatanga e whakataki i te ritenga tika
By our kinship we strive to meet our present and future needs



Foundation

Grow a genuine partnership with Māori

With this foundation New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa seeks to actively grow a genuine partnership with Māori to support their economic, social and cultural aspirations for food safety and the Māori food sector.

We will focus on lifting our Māori - Crown relations capability and understanding of Maori interests. This will ensure New Zealand Food Safety/Haumarū Kai Aotearoa can work effectively with Māori to share food safety issues and enable Maori interests, challenges and opportunities to be included in our planning and built into the delivery of our core services.

The priorities and initiatives in this foundation will strengthen our ability to undertake our role and all functions, be a better Tiriti partner and build new and enduring relationships around food safety and in the food sector into the future.

Priorities	Initiatives
<p>We will grow our capability to partner with and understand the interests of Māori</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lift Māori cultural competency and capability of our people ensuring better relationships with our Tiriti partner. • Implement a bi-directional communication approach with Māori to enable the sharing of food safety issues and the integration of Maori priorities and opportunities into New Zealand Food Safety/Haumaru Kai Aotearoa planning. • Increase our understanding and capacity to manage food safety through mātauranga Māori and tikanga.
<p>We will build relationships with a range of Māori entities to understand and support their economic and cultural aspirations in the food sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop pilot partnerships with Māori entities to uncover their unique interests, challenges and opportunities and partner to support their aspirations. • Work with other Government agencies, industry and Māori to support the Mānuka Honey initiative.

Foundation

Strengthen our organisation to deliver

In order to provide our key functions and carry out the important work detailed in our *Strategy Refresh*, we need skilled and experienced people supported by robust systems and processes. We have a strong team in place but we need to look to the future. This means a deliberate focus on supporting and developing a strong and diverse workforce to ensure we have the capability to oversee the food safety system going forward. We need to ensure that our processes and systems are fit for purpose and serve those that use them. We will be guided by the New Zealand Food Safety Advisory Board as we strengthen our organisation to deliver and respond to changes in the context in which we operate.

The priorities and initiatives in this foundation will strengthen our ability to undertake our role and functions to ensure good results now and better position New Zealand Food Safety/Haumaru Kai Aotearoa for the future.

Ki te kahore he whakakitenga ka ngaro te iwi
Without foresight or vision the people will be lost



Priorities	Initiatives
We will strengthen our food safety system workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a Workforce Capability Development Plan to ensure we have the leadership and technical talent for the future. • Actively grow the diversity of our workforce. • Address our critical health, safety and wellbeing risks and improve worker participation.
We will improve systems and processes to deliver for our partners and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a long term cost recovery and finance plan. • Enhance our organisational risk management system and plans. • Develop a digital system roadmap to target our investment and enhance our systems. • Develop and deliver an engagement plan to work better with our partners and stakeholders.





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