Risk communication for complex food safety issues

Lorraine Belanger
Australian food regulation system

Standards setting (FSANZ)

Policy
Ministers from states and territories/Fed Govt/NZ

Enforcement
States/territories/NZMPI DAFF
Challenges for risk communicators

- Science v.s simple
- The political imperative
- Clearance nightmares
Risk communication

- The interactive exchange of information and opinions throughout the risk analysis process concerning hazards and risks, risk-related factors and risk perceptions, among risk assessors, risk managers, consumers, industry, the academic community and other interested parties, including the explanation of risk assessment findings and the basis of risk management decisions.

_Codex, 2001_
Where we got to

Interactive exchange of information about risk between risk assessors, and risk managers, and among FSANZ, news media, interested groups and the general public.
How do we tackle these issues?

- Good working relationships
- Awareness of need for speed
- Continuous improvement
- Process
Emerging issues

- Key parts of the framework
- Clearing house
- Lines of communication
- All needed in the loop
RC in action

- Say what you know
- Be clear about what you don’t know
- Keep it simple
- Be aware of perception versus reality
RC principles

- A two-way process
- Understanding people’s perceptions of risk
- Opportunities for public involvement in decision making
- Timely and accurate information
- Internal communication
Complex issues e.g.……

- Not “mega” in nature
- Speed can be everything but…
- What to do when the public won’t come to the party
Call to action

- Analogue of Viagra
- Diet products
- DMAA
Tea and coffee

- Sibutramine in coffee and chocolate
- Analogue of Viagra
- Both popular, both mostly internet sales
- Drug or food?
DMAA
- DMAA (1,3-dimethylamylamine)
- Therapeutic Goods Administration action
- Action by the enforcement agencies
- Consumer warning
Good v.s. bad – Bonsoy and seaweed

- Iodine
- Too much in much-loved product
- How to sell the too much of a good thing message
Communication gone wrong
Madonna; Brisbane and almonds with salmonella
My yoghurt’s OK

Carly Smith Ohhnn, I just bought their strawberry yoghurt for me and my baby. I’m also pregnant. Although strawberry is not contaminated, this does leave an unpleasant taste in my mouth. 😊
October 31 at 11:36am • Like

Renae Taylor That’s pretty scary!
October 31 at 12:24pm • Like

Brenda Pearson Wow I only buy the Vanilla. Phew!
October 31 at 2:49pm • Like

Paul Holden Watch the space!
October 31 at 3:26pm • Like

Sarah Wilson I will continue to eat their low fat and quality products with full confidence - best dairy products hands down
November 1 at 12:12am • Like • 1 like

Josiah Wilson Have no fear, E. Coli is NOT here! I have absolute confidence in this product and will continue to enjoy the B-D Farm Paris Creek range, I can say that their quality control is second to none and refuse to believe such claims.
November 1 at 12:20am • Like • 0 like

Lisa Weston I’m also happy to keep supporting B-D Farm Paris Creek. Their products are excellent, and I know they take a lot of care with their quality control. This sounds like a communication issue on behalf of FSANZ, to me...
Monday at 3:26pm • Like

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Hi Lisa - food recall action is taken by the company involved to address food safety issues. Monitoring is a really important part of food safety practices for any manufacturer and recall processes are in place to get products off the market when an issue is identified. You can find out more about how food recalls work here: https://fsanz.gov.au
FSANZ for consumers - Food Standards Australia New Zealand www.foodstandards.gov.au
A food recall occurs when a food product that poses a health and/or safety risk is withdrawn from sale. See More
Yesterday at 9:54am • Like • Remove Preview
How we get our message out

- Small agency
- Use the tools available – website is focus
- Increasingly using social media
- Stakeholder relations to get message out
- Media
Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)

Government Organization

FSANZ is a government agency that develops standards (regulations) for the sale of food in Australia and New Zealand. Offices in Canberra and Wellington. More information at www.foodstandards.gov.au

About

Status

Write something...

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) shared a link

3 hours ago

The European Food Safety Authority has published their initial review on the GM maize and herbicide study

Recent Posts by Others

Biju Han

Any FSMS/ISO 22000 certification bodies in NT - Australia? 4 hours ago

Jo Ley

All you need to know about food standards and consumer in... 5 hours ago

Samantha Smylie

There has been a lot of talk on the news today about baby f... 27 September 2012 9:59pm

Saadet Uğur

There are food additives listed in Australia? 24 September 2012 1:22pm
Finally – what’s in store re communication

- Risk messaging
- Literature review, qualitative, quantitative
- What does “low” or “Negligible risk” mean to consumers
THE END