



To: Persons interested in ready-to-eat foods

Cc: Nicola Dermer, MAF Verification (AP & F), Helen Graham, MAF Incidence Response and Readiness, Bob Hutchinson, MAF Standards, John Gibson MAF Compliance and Enforcement Group, and Marion Castle, MAF Standards

From: Judy Barker, Manager (Food Standards)

Date: 14 July 2011

Subject: **CONSULTATION ON THE GUIDANCE FOR THE CONTROL OF LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES IN READY-TO-EAT FOODS**

BACKGROUND AND UPDATE

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) has developed a series of guidance documents, Guidance for the control of *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat foods. Following a technical peer review by industry and other experts during 2010 MAF is pleased to release these for wider consultation.

MAF has a *Listeria* risk management strategy with a performance target of no increase in the number of reported cases of listeriosis over 5 years (2008 to 2013). Approximately 90% of human listeriosis cases in New Zealand are foodborne and to help achieve this target MAF is working with industry to minimise the incidence of listeriosis in humans. As a first step the series of guidance documents “Guidance for the control of *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat foods” have been developed. These provide a guide to different areas of *Listeria* management, procedures and control measures, in a food manufacturing or processing environment. The guidance documents are:

- Part 1: Listeria management
- Part 2: Good operating practices (GOP)
- Part 3: Monitoring
- Part 4: Corrective actions

The guidance material is intended to be used by all food operators who produce ready-to-eat (RTE) foods which are not intended to be consumed immediately and which will be stored refrigerated for more than 3 days prior to consumption. The guidance documents are applicable to all RTE food operators under the Animal Products Act 1999 (using a risk management programme) and the Food Act 1981 regime (using a food safety programme or under the Food Hygiene Regulations 1974).

For food operators for whom *Listeria* and/or pathogen management requirements are described elsewhere, e.g. dairy and ready-to-eat seafood, the guidance is intended to provide additional information and reference. It is also intended that the guidance will assist food operators who are developing new operations and/or product lines or ranges.



We invite you to comment on the draft Guidance for the control of *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat foods. Please send us any comments by **5.00pm, Friday 19 August 2011** and include the following information with your submission:

- Name and title of the submitter;
- Organisation's name where applicable;
- Submitters address and contact details (phone, fax and e-mail if available);
- The number of the clause(s) commented on where appropriate.

Submissions should be addressed to:

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Or email emma.blazkow@maf.govt.nz

All submissions are subject to the Official Information Act 1982. Therefore if you consider that all or part of your submission is commercially sensitive or should be treated as confidential, please state this clearly when making your submission.

Yours faithfully

(signed)

Judy Barker
Manager (Food Standards)