

Food Safety Update

: Quality Assurance



QA Update 14/10

Eat Safe Program is going national

The food safety rating system 'Eat Safe', created in Brisbane has recently been adopted by other councils in Queensland and Tasmania starting with Bundaberg Regional Council.

The program, introduced in 2010, awards restaurants with a 'zero to five-star rating (five being the highest) based on the outcome of audits conducted by Council officers. Businesses that receive a rating of three stars or above can display their food safety star rating onsite and online. Establishments that receive a three star rating or less are subject to annual food inspections, those awarded four stars are inspected every two years and five stars every three years. However, it is a requirement for all four and five star establishments to perform self-audits in between inspections.

Higher ratings come with controversy

There is a fair bit of controversy about the length of time between audits for those with higher star ratings. Regular checks and a rigorous self-auditing can help ensure the level of rating is maintained, however a point has been raised by Council Opposition Leader, Milton Dick, that issues can still slip through the checking system. This was made apparent when a customer recently found a live cockroach in their risotto while dining at a four star rated restaurant at Southbank.

There are still a number of improvements and issues to be resolved, but as the audit process becomes more stringent and the system more transparent, there is plenty of incentive for restaurants to strive for and maintain high ratings.

Restaurant ratings can be found on the Eat Safe section of the Brisbane City Council website.

Source: Food Safety News, by Grace Smith, 17 July 2014

Staying ahead of the curve on fresh produce safety

Australia and New Zealand have built a globally recognised reputation for producing safe, high quality fresh produce and we want to keep it that way. The Australian and New Zealand fresh produce industries joined together on the 11 August 2014 to take proactive steps to further protect this region's well-earned reputation for producing safe, quality food by committing to a new centre dedicated to investigating and

promoting the safety of the fruit and vegetables we eat and export.

Protecting our reputation is vital for both consumers and our industry. It is also essential to minimize the risk of food crises, such as those that have occurred in recent years in Europe and America - therefore the industry has joined together to establish the Fresh Produce Safety Centre.

Australia and New Zealand have been fortunate never to have experienced a disaster of the same level as overseas and through research, communication and education it is hoped the Fresh Produce Safety Centre can prevent that sort of event happening.

Source: Fresh Produce Safety Centre A-NZ News, 11 August 2014

Starting a career in fresh produce

Ten university students from Australia and New Zealand have commenced their careers in fresh produce, thanks to a prestigious Trans-Tasman scholarship which enabled them to experience the industry first-hand. The scholarship program targets top university students who might not otherwise consider produce careers. The PMA A-NZ Career Pathways Program scholarships allow students to attend the produce industries premier conference and trade show (PMA Fresh Connections 24-26 June) where they receive an industry orientation and are assigned a mentor who works in the industry.

This program provides an excellent platform for University students to discover the diverse range of career opportunities within the fresh produce industry.

Source: PMA A-NZ News, 7 July 2014

QA question: What are the water quality testing requirements IN FULL?

A number of Wholesalers who have recently completed audits have received mixed messages from their auditors regarding the testing of water required in the WQA v8 Standard.

Brismark has requested a definitive answer from a key auditing body SGS Australia so we can clarify these requirements. Attend our Food Safety Info Session on 7 October presented by the technical director of SGS Australia to find out this and other key requirements.

Our mission is to provide representation and services to the primary wholesaling sector of the fruit and vegetable industry and to hold a strategic level of ownership in Brisbane Markets Limited.

Need Brismark's Help For more information on Brismark QA service contact Lisa Dwyer on 3915 4222 or email esm@brismark.com.au