



Grahame Turk, Managing Director Sydney Fish Markets, Minister Macdonald, food consultant Tania Nash, Food Authority D-G George Davey and AMA (NSW) President Dr John Gullotta at the launch of the Mercury in Fish education campaign.

Food Authority mounts mercury in fish public education campaign

Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald launched the NSW Food Authority's first major public education campaign to promote the healthy consumption of fish among pregnant women at the **Sydney Fish Markets** on May 11.

The campaign aims to dispel common myths about mercury levels in fish, while highlighting the positive nutritional benefits many species provide. A benchmark survey commission by the Food Authority found that 44 per cent of

women aged 18 to 40 did not know which fish they should limit during pregnancy and breast-feeding. The Authority produced 500,000 wallet cards, outlining how many serves per week of various species are safe for pregnant and breast-feeding women.

The wallet cards will be distributed throughout NSW by doctors; midwives; dieticians; fish outlets; NSW Health, and **Coles** supermarkets. The campaign, which received considerable media attention, conforms with international best practice - in particular **World Health Organisation (CODEX)** guidelines to provide timely and accurate information to consumers to enable them make healthy dietary choices.

To help drive the message, the Food Authority enlisted the support of the following broad range of influential government, community and health advocacy groups - **Australian Medical Association (NSW Branch); Australian Consumers' Association; NSW Health; NSW Midwives' Association; Food Standards Australia New Zealand; Dieticians' Association of Australia; Australian Breast-feeding Association; Sydney Fish Markets and Master Fish Merchants' Association of Australia.**



Point of sale materials to help consumers make

The campaign is an example of the NSW Government working with industry, medical and community groups to deliver an important health message to women across NSW. Since its inception in April 2004, the Food Authority has been assessing public awareness on important food issues. Further public education campaigns to improve consumer knowledge and awareness will be launched over the coming year.

Food Authority Director General joins Beijing Olympics Expert Board on food safety

Food Authority Director-General George Davey, recently accepted an invitation to join the Beijing Olympics Expert Board on Food Safety, consolidating a strong relationship he forged with Chinese officials late last year.

The Board advises the Beijing Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (BOCOG) to ensure food safety during the Beijing 2008 Olympics.

In October 2004, Mr Davey was invited to speak at an International Food Safety Conference in Beijing in anticipation of the 2008 Olympics. Mr Davey also met BOCOG representatives and other local authorities to discuss food safety issues and to provide an overview of how food safety was managed during the Sydney Olympics.

The Expert Board, established by the Beijing Food Safety Administration and BOCOG, is expected to provide independent expert advice on food safety issues for the Beijing Olympics Games.



Prestigious dairy industry award presented to NSW Food Authority Director General



DIAA Federal President Janos Kaldy presents D-G George Davey with the John Bryant Gold Medal

NSW Food Authority Director-General George Davey has been awarded a prestigious dairy industry award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the sector.

Dairy Industry Association of Australia Federal President Janos Kaldy presented Mr Davey with the **John Bryant Gold Medal**, awarded to individuals who make significant contributions to the Australian dairy industry over many years.

Mr Davey received the award on Thursday, May 12 at the DIAA (NSW Division) Annual Gala Dairy Dinner in Sydney.

Mr Kaldy said the award recognised Mr Davey's 21 years' service to the industry, which he described as

a "considerable achievement" - "his contribution spans several fields of expertise, including dairy food quality and safety, standards development, supply management, policy, industry representation and marketing and promotions. His sphere of influence has been felt in national and international arenas. He has led positive change in the industry in all of his endeavours, and continues to do so today."

Mr Kaldy said Mr Davey pioneered HACCP-based food safety and quality management systems on dairy farms, in factories and for milk distribution centres and delivery.

"His contribution to the DIAA since joining its predecessor organisation, the Australian Society for Dairy Technology in 1987, has been wide-reaching and significant," Mr Kaldy said.

Food Authority team member leads Australian delegation to Roquefort



The Food Authority's Edwina Mulhearn led an audit team of representatives from FSANZ and AQIS to France in April to examine sheep milk farms, cheese making facilities, traditional caves for cheese maturation and cheese packaging plants for Roquefort cheese in the Aveyron Region.

This followed an application by the French Government to allow Roquefort cheese to be exported to Australia after a ten year absence from the local market. A long-time favourite among *bon vivants*,

Roquefort cheese has a considerable following among Australian foodies. Edwina and the audit team examined facilities and operations, plant condition and systems documentation to assess the level of control over hazards associated with producing raw milk cheese. FSANZ and AQIS will now determine whether Roquefort cheese can return to the Australian market.

The opportunity to participate in the review provided Edwina with an excellent insight into the role of government food safety agencies in France.

• **Edwina has been seconded to AQIS for six months to review the dairy export program service delivery model for Australia. Edwina's secondment is in recognition of her standing as a senior dairy auditor within the dairy industry and dairy regulatory sector.**



Entrance to the cave where Roquefort cheese is stored in the Aveyron Region



Visit by New Zealand Food Safety Authority staff boosts cooperation



George Davey with John Schouten and the Authority's Enforcement Manager Christine Turney

John Schouten, Program Manager - Enforcement, Compliance and Investigation Group for the **New Zealand Food Safety Authority** visited the Food Authority in March.

Mr Schouten was given an overview of the Food Authority's enforcement unit and met with senior executives. While in NSW, Mr Schouten also joined Food Authority staff on a visit to a dairy farm.

Mr Schouten's trip is further evidence of increased cooperation as well as information/expertise sharing between the Food Authority and its New Zealand equivalent.

New Zealand Food Safety Authority Directors Announced

The New Zealand Food Safety Authority's review of its internal structure and processes to ensure it is "fit for purpose" and properly positioned to meet the future requirements of consumers of New Zealand food, both domestically and internationally, is proceeding.

As part of the process, directors for the new functional rather than sector-based groups have been announced. All existing directors have been reaffirmed within the new structure, reinforcing the emphasis that this change is an "evolution rather than revolution". It is designed to continue to position NZFSA as one of the world's leading



NZFSA directors and NSW Food Authority executive members during a recent NZFSA visit

food safety regulatory authorities. Following NZFSA's announcement in early April that it is reviewing its internal structure, Andrew McKenzie, NZFSA's Executive Director, recently announced the following appointments:

Geoff Allen as Director Compliance and Investigation; Sandra Daly as Director Communications and Infrastructure; Tim Knox as Director New Zealand Standards; Carol Barnao as Director Export Standards; Debbie Morris as Director Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines and Director Approvals; Tony Zohrab as Director Market Access; Steve Hathaway as Director Science; Carole Inkster as Director Policy and Director Joint Food Standards and Steve Gilbert Director Verification Agency (which remains entirely unchanged in focus and structure).

New Food Authority scheme for safe fruit and vegetables an Australian first

Consumers will continue to get safe fruit and vegetable foods as part of a new scheme introduced by the NSW Food Authority. The Food Authority has been working since last April to identify potential "high priority" food areas that need special attention to help food businesses identify risks and reduce them.

The Plant Products Scheme only covers the following five product types: fresh cut fruit (usually consumed raw); fresh cut vegetables (usually consumed raw); vegetables in oil; unpasteurised juice and seed sprouts. No other fruit or vegetable foods are affected. The Scheme only involves businesses involved in the production, storage and transport of the above product types. Similar schemes have already been successfully introduced by the NSW Food Authority in the dairy, seafood and meat industries. More information, see [www.http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/fb-plant.htm](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/fb-plant.htm).



Chinese man sentenced to death for selling toxic liquor

A Chinese court has sentenced a 26-year-old man to death for his role in a scandal in which moonshine “baijiu” killed 14 people. Cheng Caiming, a chemicals company owner, sold 15 barrels of industrial alcohol, disguised as drinkable alcohol, to a wholesaler last May. The alcohol was later sold to four illegal breweries which made a liquor mixed with formaldehyde that killed 14 people and injured 41. The court sentenced Cheng on Wednesday and jailed 14 other defendants, including the wholesaler, for up to 13 years for their involvement in the case. (FSNET)

Food thermometers - the best way to tell if burgers are done all the way through!

Researchers at Washington State University have verified that judging the “doneness” and safety of a cooked hamburger patty by its colour isn’t a reliable test. Hamburgers that are brown all the way through can still harbour dangerous, even deadly, bacteria. Val Hillers, retired WSU Extension food safety specialist, said research found 25 per cent of burgers tested had not reached a safe internal temperature even though they were brown throughout. Hillers said variations in the meat can result in some burgers remaining pink in the middle although they are cooked to a safe temperature while others appeared brown inside when they were not completely cooked. Short of cooking them until they resemble charcoal, the best way to assure burgers and other thin cuts of meat have been cooked to a safe temperature is to test them with a food thermometer, Hillers said. He added using a food thermometer meant you can be sure the meat has reached a safe temperature without overcooking. (<http://pubs.wsu.edu/> and entering “thermometer” in the search box.)

Texas restaurant health inspections to be available on line

The Texarkana/Bowie County Family Health Centre will make results of routine health inspections of Texarkana, Texas restaurants available to the public on its Website due to public requests. Restaurants are routinely inspected by a health inspector to see that they comply with safety guidelines. Kathy Moore, director of the health centre, said the Centre received “lots of requests through the years from people who are concerned or curious” about how restaurants rate. Moore said she hopes making inspection results public will encourage restaurants to take inspections “a little more seriously”. Bowie County Health Inspector Donna McLaughlin, who inspects approximately 300 food service establishments in Texarkana, Texas, by surprise visit twice a year, said it’s time customers were made aware of how their favourite restaurants rated, adding, “a lot of cities are providing this service and we thought it was something we should offer. We’re not doing it to put someone out of business. My job is to protect the public.” (<http://www.texarkanagazette.com/articles>)

Japan to end BSE testing of some imported cattle

Japanese government authorities will allow the importation of beef from cattle aged 20 months and younger provided specified risk materials (SRMs) have been removed at slaughter. According to Asia Pulse news service, if the Food Safety Commission acts quickly, the Japanese market may reopen to U.S. beef this summer, instead of late fall, as many processors had earlier feared. (Meatingplace.com)

Airline food blamed for food poisoning - “slimy substance” and contaminated carrots”

Contaminated carrots served on several flights out of Honolulu likely caused 45 people to suffer food poisoning across 22 US states as well as Japan, Australia and American Samoa. The outbreak sparked one lawsuit, filed in late May, against airline caterer Gate Gourmet Inc., which included the carrots in meals served between August 22 and 24 - 2004. Reports say the company, based in Virginia and Switzerland, was sent a warning letter by the federal Food and Drug Administration on April 21 citing violations found in a February inspection of its Honolulu facility — such as a “pink slimy substance” dripping onto the conveyor of the pot washing machine, live cockroaches and flies, and mould growing on the windows of a refrigerator. Gate Gourmet, which provides meals for Northwest, Delta, United, Hawaiian and Aloha airlines and has locations in 30 countries, was cited as saying it responded quickly to the April letter and claims the investigation has not been able to definitely identify the source of the contamination.

