

8 October 2019

2025 AGENDA: The 2025 Fresh Produce Food Safety Innovation Agenda

Five years on from the inception of the Fresh Produce Safety Centre Australia & New Zealand, we've achieved strong collaboration by bringing together, in a non-competitive space, the key influencers and networks from across the globe in fresh produce food safety.

With rich online resources of interpreted leading research, articles and tools, we have actively developed partnerships beyond our networks to bring to the fresh produce sector the best opportunity to tackle emerging food safety issues.

The *Guidelines for Fresh Produce Food Safety* continue to represent the most recent research-based evidence and thinking in food safety. As the custodians of the Guidelines, we ensure they are readily available as a practical resource for growers, packers and along the supply chain.

We have also developed research partnerships – ARC Training Centre in Fresh Produce Food Safety, Freshcare Limited and Australian Horticultural Research – to undertake Australian based research that provides local evidence to inform domestic and export requirements such as withholding periods for animal manures, composts and irrigation water. These findings are segue directly into the biennial updates of the Guidelines.

Key Food Safety Challenges

An emerging food safety issue is the effect of climate change. It is a theme that is gaining momentum with growers, industry bodies and the research community who are starting to delve into the ramifications on food safety of unpredictable weather patterns and climate conditions.

Without the historical intelligence and records growers rely upon to enforce their decisions, we are racing to create the knowledge bank that will allow safe fresh produce to flourish in this new and changing era.

We are responding to this challenge by undertaking global desktop research in partnership with The University of Sydney to better understand the food safety risks associated with a range of climatic conditions. Initial findings from this research are due to be completed in November 2019.

Consumer scrutiny about fresh produce traceability and food safety are increasingly a challenge for the fresh produce sector in Australia and New Zealand. With incidences from listeria to needles to frogs and spiders in packaged goods, consumers are uncertain about the robustness of the supply chain from farm to retailer.

2025 Agenda: The 2025 Fresh Produce Food Safety Innovation Agenda is our response to this challenge.

2025 Agenda

In June 2019, we hosted 30 key influencers from Australia and New Zealand's horticultural and innovation sectors to a one-day Innovation Forum. The result was a mandate that FPSC A-NZ lead the conversation and activities to investigate opportunities.

Tasked with empowering the Australian and New Zealand fresh produce industry with novel and innovative systems and processes that leads to safer fresh produce for consumers, the 2025 Agenda focuses on transformational risk management in fresh produce food safety by tapping into indigenous and global talent within fresh produce, the research community, and the technology and innovation experts outside our natural space to help find solutions.

This style of thinking is our opportunity to delve into what the future of fresh produce food safety looks like beyond 2025. We are at the start-line of the opportunity to write the future for fresh produce and reaffirm consumer trust in our systems and processes.

The initial scope (Stage One) of the 2025 Agenda is to undertake:

1. A desktop analysis to produce a review of food safety compliance systems across the globe with understanding of what components can be used in A-NZ that are transformational.
2. A study of the food safety audit to map a typical compliance system leading to the identification of process improvements at each stage, both as a technology solution and best practice human input.

Timing

The initial scoping activities will be completed by March 2020.

Upon completion of these activities, broad-spectrum industry engagement to peak industry bodies and growers, scheme owners, and government will occur to allow for full transparency of the process to-date, consultation on the findings and further opportunities for involvement.

Stage Two of the 2025 Agenda is set to begin in mid-2020.

Partners

Key stakeholders involved in the 2025 Agenda are: Perfection Fresh, Costa Group, T&G Global, RockIt, Amazon Web Services, Vodafone, IBM Food Trust, CHEP, Escavox, HarvestMark/Trimble, Intel Data Science, Merieux Nutrisciences, Freshcare Limited, GS1, HARPS, Optimum Standards, University of Queensland, and New Zealand Food Safety Science & Research Centre.