

Contact us:

[info@primesafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@primesafe.vic.gov.au)

(03)9685 7333

# PrimeSafe eNews

Issue | 18 | December 2022



## *In this Issue*

- ▶ [Changes to Retail sale of Packaged Meats](#)
- ▶ [Definition of a Farm in Victoria](#)
- ▶ [Licensee Management System](#)
- ▶ [Prohibition on harvesting prawns in Gippsland Lakes](#)
- ▶ [Reminder about approval of alternative processes](#)
- ▶ [Food Safety](#)

## Message from the CEO

Welcome to the December 2022 edition of the PrimeSafe eNews.

In this edition, we cover:

- Recent law changes
- Reminder for licence renewals
- Use the new, improved PrimeSafe Licensee Portal
- Restrictions remain on seafood harvesting in Gippsland Lakes
- Update on food safety culture pilot
- Reminder about approval of alternative processes

We also want to take this opportunity to wish you a happy holiday season. It has been a busy year for many of our licensees. We hope you get an opportunity to recharge and get ready for the year ahead.

It has also been a busy year for the PrimeSafe team. As well as our regular service, we have also completed a review of our Corporate Plan to ensure we are working most effectively with our licensees and other stakeholders.

The PrimeSafe office will be closed on the public holidays during the Christmas and New Year's period.

Michael Coffey  
**CEO, PrimeSafe**

## Changes to Retail Sale of Packaged Meats

Retail packaged meat is defined as having been processed, packaged in a hermetically sealed impermeable container and labelled at a PrimeSafe licensed facility for retail sale within Australia.

From 1 January 2023, the Meat Industry Act 1993 (the Meat Industry Act) no longer applies to the retail sale of packaged meat and related activities. This means that these activities will be exempt from the requirements of the Meat Industry Act, including the requirement to be licensed by PrimeSafe.

The retail sale, handling, storage, and transport of certain types of packaged meat poses a low food safety risk relative to other meat-handling activities. This exemption provides simpler regulatory arrangements for these low-risk activities.

Under the exemption, these activities will be regulated under the Food Act 1984 (Food Act). With this exemption, you may no longer need a PrimeSafe licence for the retail sale of pre-packaged meat depending on the type of activities you undertake. Instead, you may need to register with your local council.

For further information on the packaged meats exemption, please [click here](#) for the Retailing Packaged Meats in Victoria Fact sheet.

For all enquiries regarding to the retailing packaged meat exemption, please forward your email to [info@primesafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@primesafe.vic.gov.au)

## Meat Industry Act changes the definition of a Farm in Victoria

*The Agriculture Legislation Amendment Bill passed the Victorian Parliament in 2022.*

One of the changes this legislation makes it to amend how a farm is defined in section 3 of the *Meat Industry Act 1993* (the Meat Industry Act). This definition is only used to determine if animals can be slaughtered on farm for personal consumption, with this activity not regulated under the Act.

Previously, land had to meet the following requirements to be classified as a farm under the Meat Industry Act:

- (a) not less than 2 hectares in area;
- (b) outside a radius of 32 kilometres from the Melbourne General Post Office; and
- (c) used for agricultural or pastoral purposes.

The new definition of **a farm means land that is used for the primary production of animals.**

The new definition will be used from 1 January 2023

The new definition does not set prescriptive parameters for the definition of farm so may increase the number of farms on which slaughter for personal consumption is permitted.

If you are unsure whether your land meets the new criteria to be defined as a farm under the Meat Industry Act, contact PrimeSafe on (03) 9685 7333 or [info@primesafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@primesafe.vic.gov.au)

## Licensee Management System

### Licensee Portal Changes

You can renew your licence online, through the [PrimeSafe Licensee Portal](#). In recent months, we have updated the PrimeSafe Licensee Portal, to make it even easier to use.

The first time you use the PrimeSafe Licensee Portal, you will need to set up an account with your name and email. You then request access to existing licences.

If you already have an account (for example you set up one last year), log in with your email and password.

If you use the PrimeSafe Licensee Portal, you can pay your licence fee with a credit card or BPAY.

[More information about using the PrimeSafe Licensee Portal.](#)

## Licence Renewals Reminder



The following licence categories are required to be renewed before 31 December 2022.

- Retail Butcher Shops
- Seafood Retailer
- Further Seafood Processing Facility - Processors and Wholesalers

If you operate any of these PrimeSafe licensed businesses, you need to renew your licence/s before 31 December 2022.

To complete the renewal, you must:

### 1. Check and complete the renewal form

Renewal Forms were sent to licensees who do not have licensee portal access. You can complete the paper form and send it to PrimeSafe.

For Licensees that have access to the portal, please complete your renewal online through the PrimeSafe Licensee Portal. Guides for how to use the PrimeSafe Licensee Portal are available [here](#).

### 2. Pay the licence fee

If you are using the paper form, follow the payment instructions on the back of the renewal form.

If you use the PrimeSafe Licensee Portal, you can pay with a credit card or BPAY. Follow the instructions provided in the portal.

## The prohibition on harvesting prawns in Gippsland Lakes has been revoked

The prohibition on harvesting of prawns for sale for human consumption has been revoked in the Gippsland Lakes area. However high levels of toxins associated with blue green algae are still being detected in bugs and crabs. You still cannot commercially harvest shellfish and crustaceans for human consumption from the Gippsland Lakes.

Fin fish harvested from the Gippsland Lakes must have gills and guts removed before retail sale for human consumption. The testing of shellfish remains ongoing. For further information contact PrimeSafe on (03) 9685 7333 or [info@primesafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@primesafe.vic.gov.au)

## Approval of Alternative Processes

For the approval of an alternative process or technique, a proposal must be submitted to PrimeSafe with a HACCP plan including procedures that verify the food safety equivalence. The food safety level must be equal to or higher than the technique described in the Standards. The proposal must include one of the following:

**Validation** of the alternative technique by microbiological analysis (where appropriate) confirming that the proposal demonstrates an equivalent or better outcome required by the relevant Standard. Note: The microbiological analysis must include a comparison of the microbiological results achieved using

procedures that comply with the relevant Standard and the results achieved using the proposed alternative techniques.



**Verification** of a technique from a recognised scientific or credible source that has validated the technique. Monitoring records are required to verify that the alternative technique is implemented correctly in the current facility.



## Food Safety

### Update on Food Safety Culture pilot

PrimeSafe ran a food safety culture pilot in 2021–22. The pilot tested how PrimeSafe can work with licensees to use business culture to improve food safety. Three businesses that produce high-risk ready-to-eat meat products took part in the pilot. In November, PrimeSafe hosted a forum to discuss the experience of the businesses that participated in the program. PrimeSafe will give a report to Agriculture Victoria in early 2023. We will also give an update on next steps for licensees next year.

### Free Food Safety Program



PrimeSafe offers free Food Safety Programs to Retail Meat and Seafood businesses on request. Other free food safety programs are booklets that can be obtained by licence holders of a meat transport vehicle, a game harvest vehicle, or a wildcatch seafood business.

Food safety programs can also be tailored to include more complex processing activities and these types of programs can be created under a fee for service arrangement with PrimeSafe.

To obtain a free PrimeSafe Food Safety Program or for more information, contact PrimeSafe on (03) 9685 7333 or [info@primesafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@primesafe.vic.gov.au)