



Welcome to the PrimeSafe eNews. This edition features

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Audits

All meat and seafood businesses must have an approved food safety program in place before a PrimeSafe licence can be issued. All licensees are audited to assess whether they comply with their food safety program. The frequency of audits is determined by the food safety risk of the business. The majority of PrimeSafe audits are conducted by third party conformity assessment bodies (CABs) that have been approved by PrimeSafe. The list of approved CABs can be viewed [here](#).

The key areas assessed by auditors include:

- The food safety program;
- Records for monitoring and verification;
- Good manufacturing practices;
- Policies and procedures; and
- The condition of the premises and equipment so that it facilitates the safe production of meat and seafood and does not jeopardise product wholesomeness.

Some handy tips that may help to prepare for a successful audit include:

- The Operator, senior management and/or Quality Assurance Manager are present at all times during the audit;
- At the start of the audit, confirm the audit scope with the auditor to ensure you have an understanding of what the auditor will look at;
- Regularly review the procedures and records in your food safety program and make sure they are all completed;
- Documented procedures and records are easily accessible;
- All staff have been notified about the audit and the expectation involved;
- Non-conformances that were raised from previous audits have been rectified and closed out;
- Ensure that you understand the nature of any corrective action requests (CARs) and what is required to adequately address the non-conformance;
- After an audit, if you have an issue with the findings, you must first contact your audit company (CAB) then PrimeSafe.

More information on the types of CARs issued during audits can be viewed [here](#).

Reduced Audit Program

The frequency of audits is based on the level of inherent risk at each facility. The Reduced Audit Program allows a licensed facility to halve the number of scheduled audits conducted by a third party auditor. The program encourages licensees to manage their food safety program so that they can achieve a superior level of food safety compliance.

PrimeSafe will assess each applicant for the Reduced Audit Program. The assessment includes an inspection of their facility.

Prior to applying for the Reduced Audit Program, licensees should consider the following:

- If their facility has had major or critical non-conformances resulting in an intensified audit frequency or a sanction within the past 12 months, they will be ineligible.
- If their previous application for reduced audits had failed, then they are excluded from the program for 12 months.
- If the facility has been approved for reduced audits and a third party auditor identifies a major or critical non-conformance or a PrimeSafe sanction is raised, then the Reduced Audit Program is revoked and the audit frequency will revert back to the standard scheduled audit frequency.

[Click here](#) to access information on audits and the Reduced Audit Program.

Process of applying for Reduced Audit Program



Country of Origin Labelling

The Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL) Information Standard was introduced on 1 July 2016. It requires most foods suitable for retail sale in Australia to include country of origin information on product labels by 1 July 2018. Food products that are labelled and packaged on or before 30 June 2018 can be sold until the end of its shelf life.

After 1 July 2018, all CoOL queries and complaints must be lodged with the [Australian Competition and Consumer Commission \(ACCC\)](#). CoOL will no longer fall within the jurisdiction of PrimeSafe after this date.

For labelling purposes, it is important for licensees to understand the following definitions in order to make accurate claims regarding their products.


Grown in Australia	All ingredients are grown in Australia.
Product of Australia	All ingredients are grown or otherwise wholly obtained in Australia and all of its processing occurred in Australia.
Made in Australia	Product or ingredients are from Australia or overseas but underwent its last substantial transformation in Australia
Packed in Australia	Contains ingredients from multiple countries and cannot claim to have been grown, produced or made in Australia

Packaged foods that list the country where the food was grown, produced or made must have the three component standard mark label in a clearly defined box:


- **Kangaroo** in a triangle logo indicating that the product is of Australian origin.
- **Bar chart** as a visual indicator of the percentage of Australian Ingredients.
- **Explanatory text** stating whether the food was grown, produced or made in Australia, and in most instances, the percentage of Australian ingredients.

In certain circumstances, a food product will be eligible to carry a 'grown in', 'product of' or 'made in' standard mark label. Where this occurs, the business can choose which type of claim is most appropriate for the product.

Examples of standard marks



Grown in Australia



Made in Australia from at least 70% Australian ingredients

These examples of standard marks show the kangaroo, bar chart and explanatory text.

Credit: Australian Competition and Consumer Commission at www.accc.gov.au/

Food products imported into Australia and packaged in Australia, require the two component standard mark label that includes:

- Bar chart showing the percentage of Australian ingredients
- Explanatory text stating that the food was packed in Australian and in most cases the percentage of Australian ingredients.

For more information on the food labelling requirements, you can contact the Department of Industry, visit their [website](#) or see this [guide](#).

Shelf-life Labelling

Under the Food Standard Code Standard 1.2.5, most packaged food products for retail sale require date marking. By providing date marking on a product, customers have a guide as to how long they can keep the food before it deteriorates and becomes unsafe to eat.

It is the food business' responsibility to determine the shelf life of food products, therefore it is important to understand the difference between the two types of date marking:

Best-before Date: The date of which the quality of the food begins to deteriorate but may still be safe to consume after the best-before date provided it is stored correctly. Food can be sold after its best-before date provided the food meets applicable legislation and is still fit for human consumption.

Use-by Date: Foods can be eaten up until the use-by date safely provided it is stored correctly and should not be consumed after its use-by date due to health and safety reasons. Food cannot be sold after its use-by date.

[Click here](#) to access PrimeSafe Shelf Life and Labelling Requirements for Meat Products PrimeNote which will guide you in determining the appropriate shelf life and date marking for your products.

Shellfish Biotoxins

A seafood business that harvests and/or processes bivalve shellfish, must implement a documented food safety management system that effectively controls its food safety hazards. There is a mandatory requirement to monitor and test shellfish for biotoxins. However, other species of gastropods, such as abalone or periwinkles, and crustaceans such as rock lobster, prawns or crabs, can also be affected by biotoxins. Harvested bivalve species include cockles, clams, mussels, oysters, pipis and scallops. The Food Standards Code requires microbiological testing for bivalve molluscs including testing of *E. coli* in raw products and *Listeria monocytogenes* for cooked/smoked products that will be consumed as 'ready to eat'. Pearl oysters and scallops where the only part of the product consumed is the adductor muscle are exempt from testing.

In addition to the microbiological testing, the Food Standards Code also requires testing of natural toxicants that may be contained in the harvesting waters and in the product itself. Natural toxicants include metals (inorganic arsenic, lead, cadmium and mercury) and non-metals (biotoxins) which include amnesic shellfish poison (ASP), diarrhetic shellfish poisons (DSP), neurotoxic shellfish poisons (NSP) and paralytic shellfish poisons (PSP).

The implementation of pre and post harvest processing is the responsibility of each state/territory and a national manual known as the [Australian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program \(ASQAP\)](#) has been compiled to assist licensees to manage the food safety risks associated with bivalve molluscs. Each state also has a Shellfish Quality Assurance Program that prescribes sampling and monitoring requirements for water and shellfish based on historical data and prevalent food safety risks. Victoria uses the [Victorian Shellfish Quality Assurance Program \(VSQAP\)](#) published by the Victorian Fisheries Authority that also monitors the sampling and testing of water and shellfish conducted by licensees. PrimeSafe oversees the food safety of all shellfish harvested commercially from Victorian waters.

For approval of harvesting and post-harvest processing of bivalve mollusc, please contact PrimeSafe at info@primesafe.vic.gov.au



Reminders

Look out for your 2018-19 PrimeSafe licence renewal in the mail

PrimeSafe has mailed out renewal notices for Meat Transport Vehicles, and certain Meat Processing facilities, Wildcatch, Aquaculture and Meat Inspector registrations.

To remain licensed by PrimeSafe and operate after 30 June 2018, those existing licensees must renew their licences before 30 June 2018. To complete the renewal, **licensees must complete, sign and return the renewal form to PrimeSafe and pay the renewal fee**. To renew a Meat Transport Vehicle licence, the vehicle must also be inspected by your auditor or PrimeSafe. Details on inspection requirements and locations have been included with your renewal notice. [Click here](#) for more information.

Licensees can pay via BPay, cheque or money order. Cash and credit card payments are only accepted at the PrimeSafe office at 150 Albert Road, South Melbourne. Renewal fees cannot be paid online via the PrimeSafe website.

For Meat Inspectors, renewal of your registration will provide a further three years registration until 30 June 2021.

If you are currently in one of the above licence categories and haven't received your renewal notice by early June, please contact the PrimeSafe office via info@primesafe.vic.gov.au or 03 9685 7333.

Victorian Wildcatch (Abalone) and Victorian Wildcatch (Crustaceans) licence holders have also been sent a PrimeSafe declaration with their renewal notice which must be submitted to PrimeSafe before 30 June 2018. Contact the PrimeSafe office if you have any questions.

Forum

A forum about Shelf Life and Country of Origin Labelling will be held in late June with the date to be confirmed. If you are interested in attending, please let us know by emailing info@primesafe.vic.gov.au.

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