

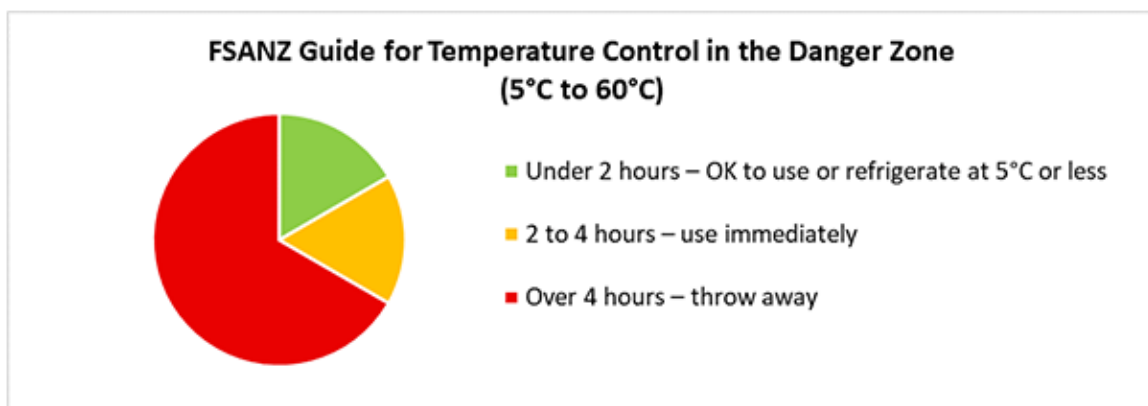
## This edition of the eNews features:

- Safety of RTE Foods
- Free Food Safety Program
- Game Meat Licensing
- Licence Renewal

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## Safety of RTE Foods

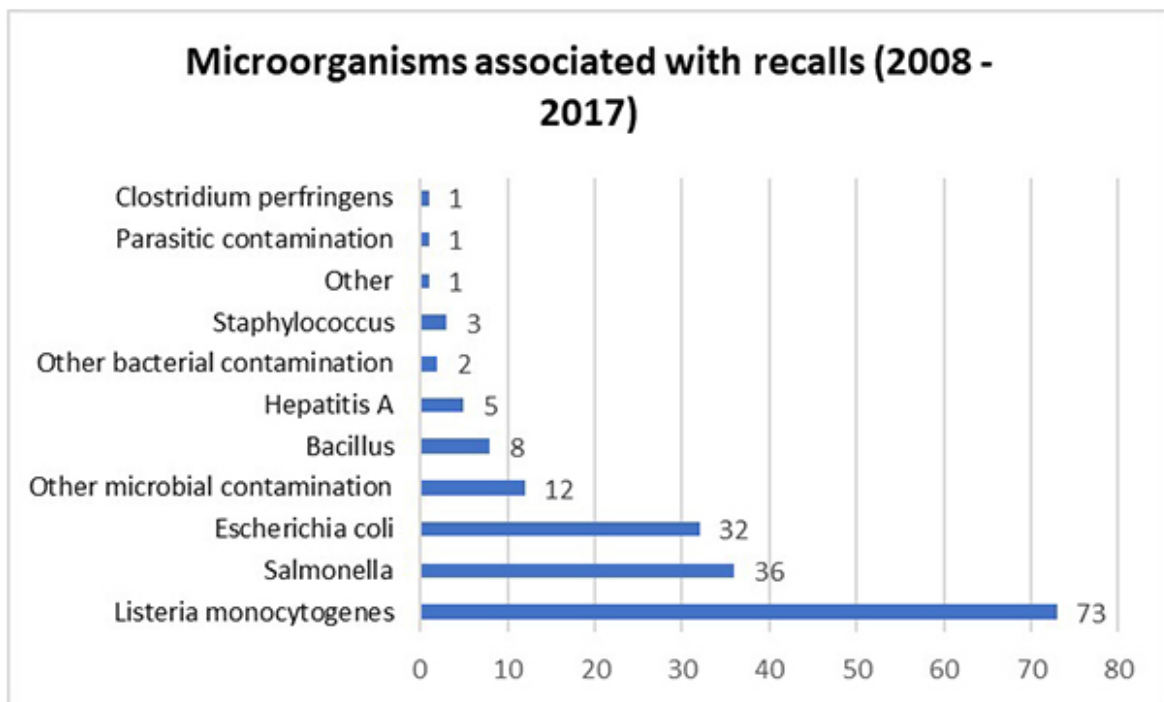
Food products, especially ready-to-eat (RTE) meat and seafood such as smallgoods, cooked seafood and raw oysters, can present some challenges for businesses that store, display and sell these foods. As the weather heats up and during the festive period, it is important for food businesses to keep all food products out of the temperature danger zone of between 5°C and 60°C. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has guidance for the control of temperature and time when potentially hazardous food is in the danger zone. RTE smallgoods products that have undergone heating and cooling processes and are further processed by cutting, slicing, dicing and shredding processes are considered to be of exceptionally high risk because the likelihood of contamination during these processes and subsequent packaging operations.



Contamination caused by poor hygiene practices, inadequate cleaning or sanitation and use of contaminated equipment can promote growth of potentially dangerous bacteria such as *Listeria monocytogenes*. *Listeria* can become prevalent when raw and cooked products are processed in the same environment and handled by the same operators without using good manufacturing practices. *Listeria monocytogenes* causes Listeriosis, a major foodborne illness that can result in milder symptoms of fever and nausea to more severe conditions such as meningitis and septicaemia. In immunocompromised individuals such as pregnant woman, newborns and the elderly it can also result in fatalities. The spread of *Listeria* can be reduced by adequate cleaning/sanitation, good manufacturing and hygiene practices, and adequate cooking and cooling processes.

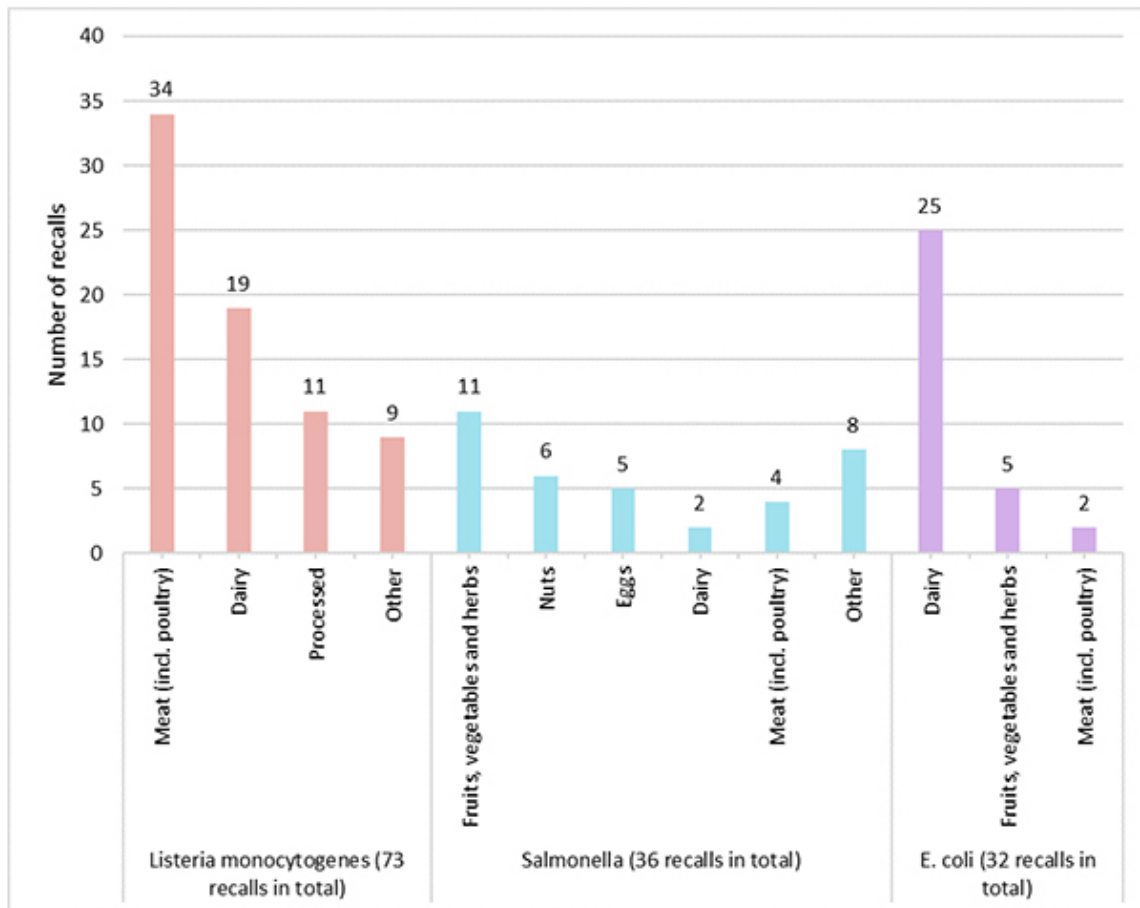
### Recall Statistics

From 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2017 there was a total of 626 recalls of food products across Australia and New Zealand, and approximately 28% of these recalls were due to microbial contamination. National data collected by FSANZ (Figure 1), shows *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Salmonella* and *E. coli* as the three microorganisms commonly associated with microbial contamination in Australia. Of the three microorganisms of concern, *Listeria monocytogenes* caused the greatest number of recalls.



**Figure 1:** Microorganisms associated with recalls from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2017 (FSANZ)

Further national data from FSANZ (Figure 2) shows that meat including poultry is the main food group recalled due to *Listeria monocytogenes* contamination. This means that it is important for businesses to develop and use a Listeria Management Plan. In fact, all businesses processing and packaging RTE products must have a Listeria Management Plan within their Food Safety Program.



**Figure 2:** Types of food recall from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2017 due to microbial contamination (FSANZ)

The Listeria Management Plan must include:

- Identification of the trained personnel who will be responsible for the Plan
- Schedule and training records for training of samplers and of key production personnel
- A sampling plan showing each area where environmental and product samples are collected
- Procedure for collecting environmental and product samples
- Testing arrangements
- Record keeping of all test results
- Response taken when Listeria is found in environment or product samples
- Review of the plan annually or when it is required.

Click [here](#), for more information on RTE products and environmental testing regime for Listeria Management.

To prevent cross contamination, here are some handy tips:

- Store raw meat, meat products and seafood in covered containers or sealed bags to prevent juices from dripping onto other food;
  - Thoroughly clean and sanitise display cases and coolrooms frequently;
  - Thoroughly clean between the cracks of surfaces and equipment;
  - Ensure adequate ventilation to minimise condensation;
  - Minimise traffic flow between raw and RTE processing areas;
  - Install physical barriers between raw and RTE meat products in display cabinets;
  - Have separate utensils for handling raw and RTE meat products and
  - Ensure staff have good hygiene practices between handling raw meat and RTE products.
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## **PrimeSafe releases a free Food Safety Program for Retail Meat**

### **Businesses**

A Food Safety Program outlines how a business controls the food safety hazards and maintains safe food handling practices to ensure that food is safe for human consumption. Food Safety Programs are based on Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP) or other risk-based programs that are able to meet the regulatory requirements of the Victorian and Australian Standards.

PrimeSafe's Information and Support team is pleased to offer Food Safety Programs for free to Retail Meat and Smallgoods Retail licensees. The Programs can be used in the pre-prepared format or amended specifically for the business's activities. Licensees wishing to make amendments will need to contact PrimeSafe, and licensees will have to pay a fee for service for PrimeSafe to make any amendments.

A Food Safety Program for seafood businesses is coming soon.

To obtain a PrimeSafe Food Safety Program or for more information about them contact PrimeSafe on (03) 9685 7333.

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## Game Meat Licensing

On 1 March 2018, the Meat Industry Regulations 2015 was amended to include wild deer as a game in Victoria. PrimeSafe has developed new food safety licensing and compliance arrangements to allow wild deer to be harvested and processed as game meat in Victoria. Harvested wild deer must be processed at either a PrimeSafe licensed Game Meat Processing Facility for human consumption or processed at PrimeSafe licensed Pet Meat Processing Facility for pet food.

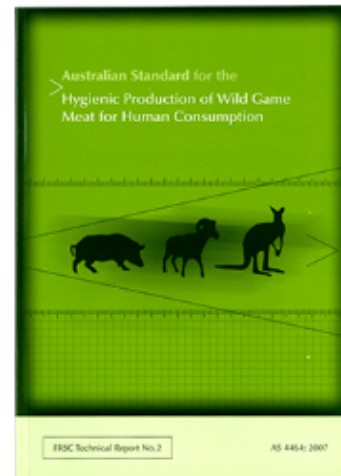
PrimeSafe has developed a new guideline to assist prospective and existing licensees to understand the requirements of Game Meat Harvesting. Click [here](#) to access the Game Meat Harvesting Guideline.

The application form for Game Meat Licensing is available to download [here](#). At this stage, applications and payments can only be accepted at the PrimeSafe office or by mail, not online.

A food safety program has been developed for game harvest vehicles and will be issued with all game harvesting vehicle licences.

For more information on game meat licensing, click [here](#).

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## Licence Renewal

PrimeSafe is mailing renewal notices to Retail Butcher Shop and Seafood Processor licensees this month.

The following licence category renewals will be sent:

- Retail Butcher Shop
- Seafood Wholesaler Category A and B
- Seafood Processor Category A and B
- Seafood Further Processor Category A and B
- Seafood Retailer including vehicle/boat.

To remain licensed by PrimeSafe to operate in 2019, existing licensees must renew their licences before 31 December 2018. To complete the renewal, **licensees must complete, sign and return the renewal form to PrimeSafe and pay the renewal fee.** 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 through the PrimeSafe website.

If you are in one of the above licence categories and don't receive your renewal by early December, please contact the PrimeSafe office via [info@primesafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@primesafe.vic.gov.au) or 03 9685 7333.

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