

Recommendations of the Inquiry's final report

Inquiry recommendation (verbatim)	Proposed response
Compliance	
<p>1 The ministry, in consultation with the dairy industry and verifiers, should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revise the rules for non-routine reworking that requires a product disposal request ○ Ensure the industry's strict compliance with reporting times for product disposal requests, critical exception reports and export non-conformances ○ Continue to strengthen its monitoring and auditing activities to ensure early detection of potential food safety problems. 	<p>MPI is working with industry and verifiers to ensure compliance with risk management plans and reporting requirements. This work will continue.</p> <p>MPI will revise the rules for non-routine practices, and is strengthening its auditing and monitoring capability and has commenced unannounced audits.</p>
Preparedness	
<p>2 The ministry should continue its work to ensure readiness for a food safety response, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finalising its food incident protocol (as part of its single scalable response model), ensuring it is consistent with CIMS and benchmarked against international models. A draft should be provided to the food industry and other key stakeholders for comment before final publication ○ Undertaking regular exercises/simulations of its food incident protocol ranging from smaller desktop exercises through to large-scale, multi-agency rehearsals ○ Ensuring staff are fully trained to respond to food incidents. 	<p>As part of strengthening its core regulatory and operational capability, MPI will ensure it is fully prepared and resourced to respond to any future food safety incidents. This will include finalising the development of a single, scalable response model based on the internationally recognised Co-ordinated Incident Management System (CIMS). The model will be tested with industry and other key stakeholders, including Civil Defence, before being finalised.</p> <p>Two MPI-led simulations are planned for 2015, and MPI is also participating in Fonterra's simulations.</p> <p>MPI will also work with industry to strengthen its ability to trace and recall products during a food safety incident.</p>
<p>3 In any food incident, the ministry should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Start, and document, a risk assessment identifying both scientific and strategic risks as soon as practicable and update the assessment as the incident develops ○ Document the use of statutory powers, particularly Director-General statements, including written advice from officials about available options and the underlying scientific and risk assessment information on which recommendations are based ○ Co-ordinate with all relevant parties to ensure a single integrated response. 	<p>MPI is committed to learning the lessons from the WPC incident. Its new response model will address these specific recommendations.</p>
<p>4 The ministry should establish a group of scientific experts along the lines of the previous NZFSA academy.</p>	<p>MPI will work with the new Food Safety Science Research Centre to identify scientific experts (domestically and internationally). The Food Safety Science Research Centre will also support the work that MPI and the Ministry of Health have recently initiated to establish a panel of scientific, clinical and public health experts.</p>
<p>5 The law should be amended to give the ministry a specific statutory power to compel disclosure of relevant information (including test results) needed to respond effectively to a food safety incident. The power should include the ability to disclose such information to any affected party.</p>	<p>This recommendation will be addressed as part of the Food Safety Law Reform Bill that will be introduced in 2015.</p>
Additional targeted funding	
<p>6 The ministry should receive targeted funding to ensure it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Has the resources –over and above those needed for day-to-day operations – to conduct a regular programme of simulations ○ Completes the much-needed reform of dairy regulations. 	<p>\$7.9m over four years will be provided to MPI to address these recommendations.</p>
Testing	
<p>7 The law should be amended to make clear what tests must be conducted in accredited laboratories.</p>	<p>MPI will ensure the regulations make clear what tests must be conducted in accredited laboratories and will advise Ministers on any amendments needed early in 2015.</p>
<p>8 Industry participants should be required to seek approval from the ministry when no accredited laboratory or validated method is available for diagnostic testing, or a significant variation to a validated method is unavoidable.</p>	<p>This requirement will be included in the regulatory amendments noted above.</p>
<p>9 The ministry, the New Zealand Food Safety Science and Research Centre (in the process of being established) and laboratories should collaborate to establish, test and maintain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mechanisms for sourcing controls (such as reference cultures and antitoxins), if required for non-standard testing in New Zealand ○ A global register of accredited laboratories and scientific experts able to undertake, or advise on, microbiological testing, especially for pathogenic and uncommon organisms ○ Arrangements (including customs and biosecurity clearances) that ensure minimal effects on cultures during transport to overseas laboratories for tests that cannot be conducted in New Zealand. 	<p>MPI will work with the new Food Safety Science and Research Centre, once it is fully established, to ensure that these recommendations are fully implemented as soon as possible.</p>