The New Zealand Food Safety System and Regulatory Model: A condensed explanation

New Zealand Food Safety/Haumaru Kai Aotearoa

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1 Introduction

This document provides an explanation of the New Zealand Food Safety System as it operates at the present time.

The paper outlines:

- The New Zealand Food Safety System;
- The New Zealand Food Safety;
- Risk Management Framework;
- The development and application of the NZFS Regulatory Model; and
- The benefits and challenges of the Regulatory Model in operation.

The document aims to facilitate broad stakeholder understanding of the NZ Food Safety System and Regulatory Model and to provide context for conversation on the design, operation, and ongoing development.

The New Zealand Food Safety System (National Food Control System) refers to the people, organisations, businesses, regulatory controls and tools, infrastructure, and wider components that work together within New Zealand to deliver food safety, suitability, and related assurances. New Zealand Food Safety (NZFS) – a business unit of the Ministry for Primary Industries – under delegated authority from the Director-General, has the primary lead and accountability for leadership, oversight, and coordination of the Food Safety System and for the design, development, and implementation of core regulatory systems, tools and structures upon which participants in the national system operate. Refer Figure 1.

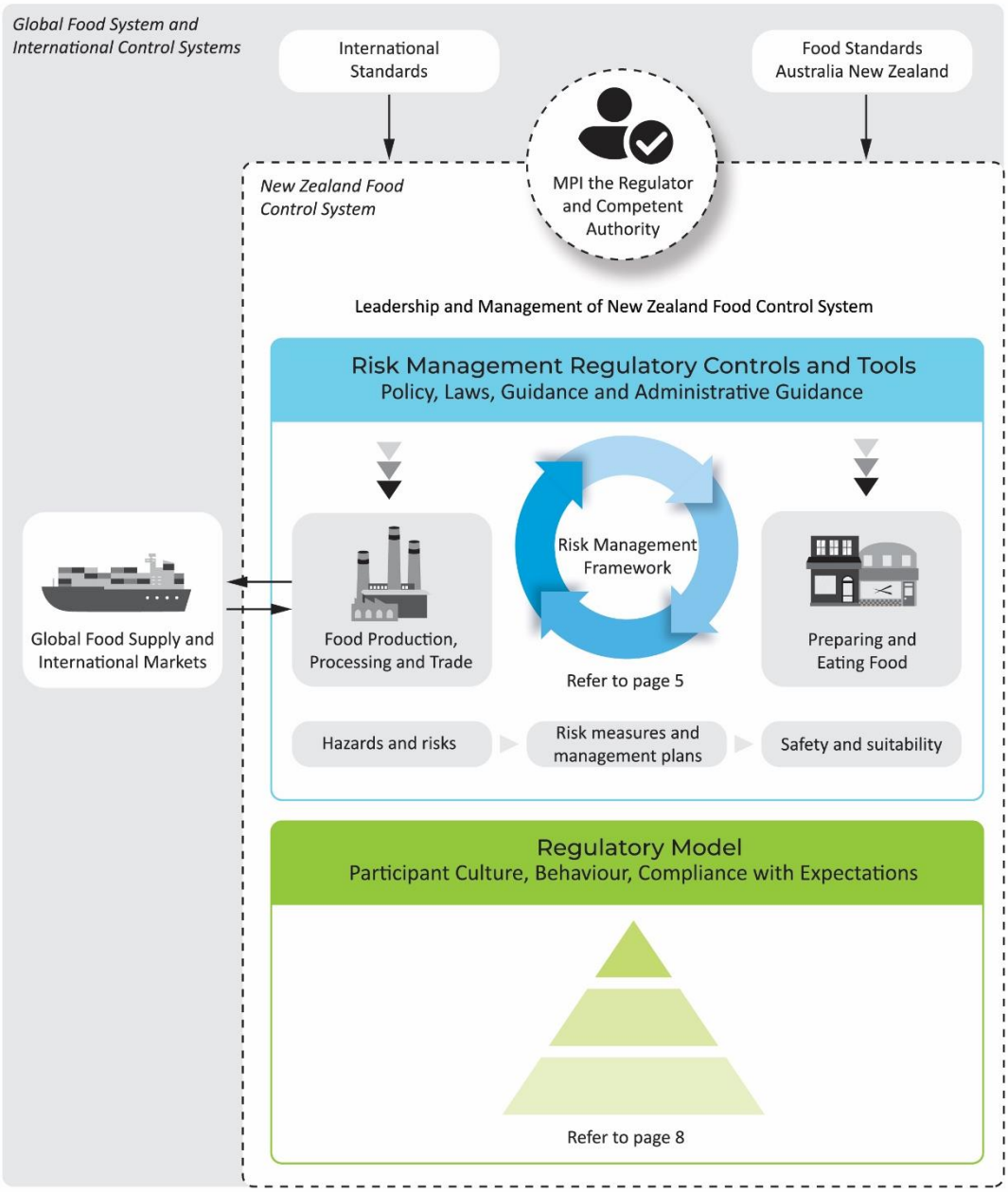
Food Standards Australia New Zealand established under the New Zealand Australia Food Standards Treaty, is responsible for developing common standards (composition, labelling and contaminants) for foods available in Australia and New Zealand as set out in the Food Standards Code. The Code is a law that applies in New Zealand, and MPI is responsible for its implementation including compliance.

The NZFS Risk Management Framework (RMF) describes the process of how requirements (legislative instruments and other regulatory tools) are developed to manage risks, participants, and other matters within the Food Safety System. The RMF describes how NZFS incorporates a science, evidence and risk-based approach in the decision-making process and standards development cycle.

The Regulatory Model (the Model) is a core policy structure that sets out a hierarchy of accountabilities, roles and responsibilities for the key participants operating within the Food Safety System and associated assurance systems. The Model underpins the structure of laws, standards, and operational guidance,

which collectively influence food safety participant culture, behaviours, and the day-to-day operation of the Food Safety System.

Figure 1: International Context and the New Zealand Food Safety (National Food Control) System



2 The New Zealand Food Safety System

2.1 Objectives of a food safety system

The New Zealand Food Safety System spans the whole food chain, from the producer to the consumer, and encompasses all the ways in which the safety and suitability of New Zealand foods and related primary products are ensured.

The New Zealand Food Safety System is also designed to underpin New Zealand's trade through aligning standards and systems that reflect international best practice, in turn influencing international best practice, and supporting the use of equivalence and systems-based assurances.

2.2 International recognition of the New Zealand Food Safety System

The New Zealand Food Safety System is highly regarded and trusted across the world and provides assurance to trading partners. New Zealand has been able to share its food safety system experience with regulators internationally, with some trading partners agreeing to the recognition of systems equivalence for the purpose of trade. New Zealand's food safety system is recognised by

- Australia through the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Agreement;
- The United States under formal System Recognition Arrangement;
- United Kingdom, European Union and Switzerland through a Sanitary Equivalence Agreement;

and several other agreements with the competent authorities in other countries.

2.3 Developing food safety requirements under the Risk Management Framework

The Food Safety System is supported by regulatory and non-regulatory tools that are designed, developed and implemented with an outcomes-based approach to setting expectations and only setting prescriptive standards where necessary.

The Risk Management Framework (see Fig. 2) outlines NZFS's approach to risk management and standards development for the Food Safety System. Risk analysis is used during the process and comprises three core components: risk assessment, risk management and risk communication.

Figure 2: NZFS Risk Management Framework

The RMF is applied across the food chain to guide the development of controls through providing a systematic framework approach to assessing and managing risk. This includes managing the risk of introducing hazards.

3 History and development of the regulatory model

The Food Safety Regulatory Model (the Model) first emerged from the work of an Independent Scoping Review Team, which was established in 1996 to review the Quality Management division of the then Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). The Model's intended outcomes included:

- Improving the management of the regulatory regime, by refocusing the role of government from the delivery of regulatory services to management of the regulatory system;

- Managing the whole range of risks to public health, including those microbes, residues;
- Placing an appropriate level of responsibility on food processors for the safety of their product, rather than depending on a Government mandated, "command and control" inspection regime;
- Facilitating innovation and efficiency within the sector, for example, food processors accepting responsibility for quality systems to manage all food safety and wholesomeness;
- Meeting requirements of consumers, including those required by governments, or adopting modern process control methodologies such as "hazards analysis critical control point" (HACCP); and
- Supporting the development of direct relationships between consumers and food manufacturers, which arise from increasing consumer- and retail-driven demands for quality products (1996/1997, 11 March 1997).

When first introduced in the late 1990s, the Model was referred to by Flynn in an address to the10th Congress of World Food Safety, as the Optimal Regulatory Model (ORM) (Flynn, 1999). The ORM represented a major shift away from the prescriptive "command and control" form of government intervention in food safety, which involved the government not only acting as the rule maker and enforcer but also, as a result, taking on responsibility for ensuring product safety. Government officials were frequently involved in the micromanagement of safe food operations, usually through official inspection.

The ORM's development closely aligned with trends and influences that came to prominence during the 1980s and 1990s[1]. New Zealand governments of the day sought policies to:

- Minimise unjustifiable government intervention in the economy.
- Separate the policy and regulatory functions of government from service delivery.
- Remove the monopoly and often underperforming provision by government of services that could be devolved to the private sector.
- Introduce user-pays and cost-recovery policies and mechanisms.

[1]For example, submissions to the 1988 MAF discussion document *Review of the Meat Act 1981* demonstrated considerable industry support for the introduction of competition in meat inspection, including support from producer boards and Federated Farmers. Consultation undertaken by the 1996/1997 Independent Scoping Review Team also indicated "universal support" for the introduction of contestability to services provided by MAF Quality Management.

At that time, operators devoted resources to developing and adopting risk management and quality control systems, which would meet market expectations. Developing systems to meet market expectations included accreditation to relevant International Standards Organisation (ISO) standards, such as the ISO 9000 series. Later, international organisations such as Codex and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) encouraged food producers to adopt tailored risk-based management practices to ensure process performance, improve food safety outcomes, and accept responsibility for the safety and suitability of their products.

Before the development of the ORM, some initiatives had been introduced by the regulator to encourage the New Zealand food industry to adopt self-controlling quality assurance measures to confirm food safety. These initiatives included the Dairy Industry Regulations 1990, made in accordance to the Dairy Industry Act 1952, which enabled dairy companies to use product safety programmes (PSPs) to manage food production processing and safety and provided for separated functions of the government as Regulator, Recognised Providers of Service and Industry Operators. The 1996 amendment to the Food Act 1981 introduced Food Safety Programmes (FSPs) as a voluntary alternative to the prescriptive Food Hygiene Regulations 1974. In 1996, Cabinet also reviewed the functions of MAF Quality Management, and determined that a range of the services it delivered should be made contestable, including meat inspection.

In 1997, the Independent Scoping Review Team's report proposed the ORM as an appropriate alternative model.

Over 20 years have passed since the implementation of the Regulatory Model philosophy under the Animal Products Act 1999, and subsequent incorporation into the Wine Act 2003, Food Act 2014, and wider assurance programmes. As a result, there is general alignment in the approach to control regimes under the three Acts and with wider assurance programmes.

While the core Model principles are now incorporated into much of New Zealand's food safety regulatory and non-regulatory systems, there are some differences in the way the Model is operationally applied across these systems. Despite these differences, each framework of controls delivers recognised equivalent outcomes.

4 The current regulatory model

4.1 Overview

The Food Safety Regulatory Model (see Fig. 3) represents government's approach to engaging with the hierarchy of participants within the food chain to ensure the safety and suitability of New Zealand foods.

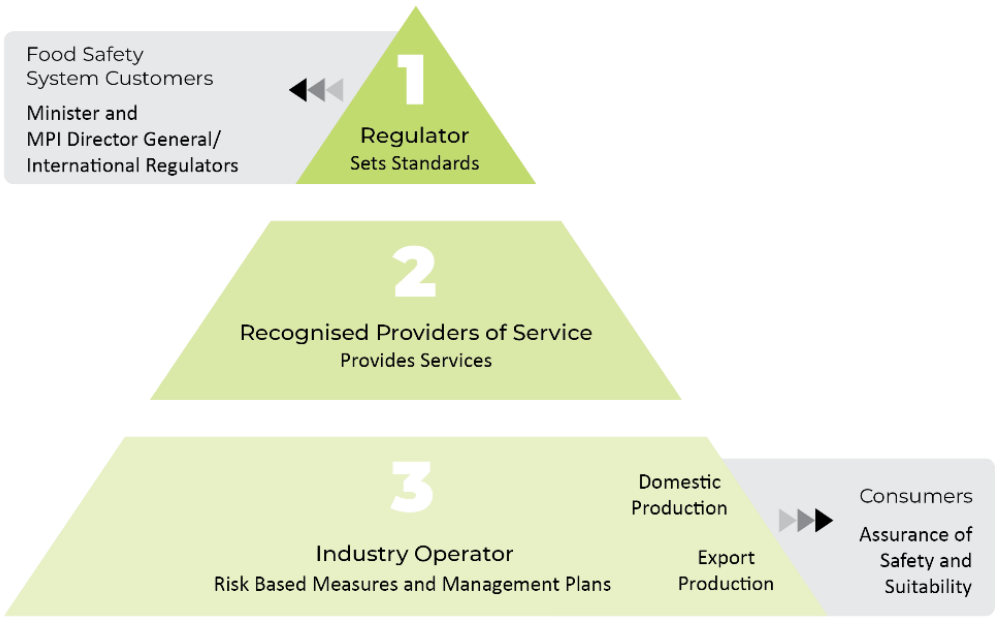
The Model presents a structure for the Food Safety System in terms of accountabilities, roles, and responsibilities, and guides appropriate behavioural and cultural expectations of participants. The Model should be applied consistently across all parts of the primary production and food processing sectors, unless otherwise recognised by MPI as appropriate, regardless of regulatory tool or where a product is sold.

The Model is relevant to products that pose both low and high risk, with flexibility built into the design and operation of the individual business risk management measures and the intensity of independent verification.

The Model applies to sectors indirectly related to food-safety, but require assurances for international markets such as the organics, wine, live animals, germplasm, seed varietal and phytosanitary sectors.

To be effective across all sectors and subsectors, the Model requires a consistent approach to the detailed design and implementation of sector policy settings, vision and system stewardship, leadership, operational management, monitoring, enhancement, and review.

Figure 3: The food safety regulatory model to ensure the safety and suitability of New Zealand foods



4.2 Participants in the Model

There are three main participants in the Model: the Regulator, Recognised Providers of Service – which includes Recognised Agencies, Laboratories and Persons, Evaluators and Verifiers) – and Industry Operators. They assume complementary

roles and responsibilities, which enable the Model to function as an effective tool to achieve the objectives of the New Zealand Food Safety System.

4.2.1 The regulator

MPI is the government's food safety "competent authority" in New Zealand, under its international multilateral and trade agreements. Its functions are shared between NZFS – the Regulator (system and technical leadership) and MPI's Policy and Trade business unit (policy setting, international relationships, sanitary, phytosanitary and technical barriers to trade issues and confirming market access expectations), working alongside other New Zealand government agencies.

Key accountabilities of the Regulator

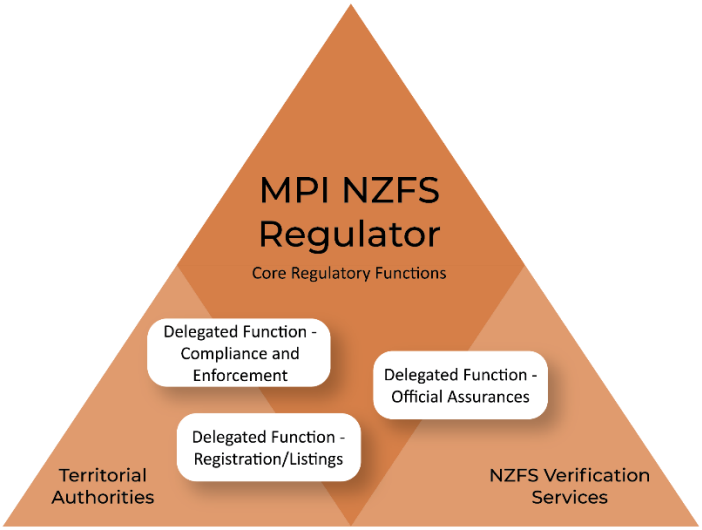
- Lead, proactively steward and manage the New Zealand Food Safety System to meet government and overseas market expectations.
- Develop and deliver policy and key functions that maintain trust and confidence in the operation of the Food Safety System, including business registration, approvals, audit activities, business guidance, compliance and enforcement and standards development.
- Set requirements to provide businesses with certainty through legislation, regulation, notices, and standards.
- Produce scientific input and research to inform risk assessment and standards in food safety.
- Provide education and guidance to businesses and consumers on how to implement best food safety and suitability practices.
- Approve, authorise and oversee Recognised Providers of Service and their competencies, which support the functioning of the Food Safety System.
- Provide official government assurances, including export certificates, to support and maintain market access for exports.
- Conduct ongoing monitoring and review of the Food Safety System and its components to ensure they consistently meet expectations.
- Promote the advancement and negotiation of international standards, such as Codex, to support food trade and harmonisation of requirements.
- Identify, assess, and manage food safety recalls, incidents, and emergencies.

Regulatory Model flexibility to meet sector needs

The Regulatory Model represents the base MPI policy expectation for the design and development of regulatory systems in New Zealand. The Model has been shared widely internationally and is acknowledged as a core component underlying the New Zealand Food Safety System's recognition.

To meet sectorial needs, MPI policy settings allow deviations from the core model.

Figure 4: Legislative and delegated regulatory functions within the Regulatory Model



Examples of Model flexibility

There are a range of functions to be delivered within the Food Safety System that are considered "government regulatory functions" and most appropriately delivered by government entities.

Many of the regulatory functions and operations under the Model are considered core "government accountabilities", such as standards development, registration of participants, systems audit, provision of core government official assurances, compliance, and enforcement. NZFS is the central Regulator with overall leadership and management accountability for the Food Safety System.

Through legislation, accountabilities and functions under the Model can be further assigned or delegated to other food system participants with clearly defined expectations, obligations, roles, and responsibilities (see Fig. 4 and 5).

In these cases, NZFS retains overall accountability for the integrity of the Food Safety System and leadership and oversight of performance and will actively monitor and audit performance of the participants against the agreed expectations.

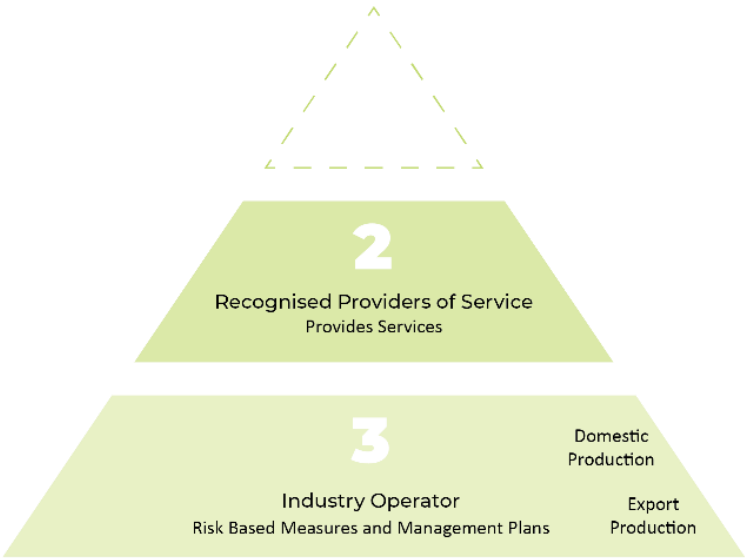
A number of non-core regulatory functions, roles and responsibilities are assigned to other participants and service providers such as Recognised Agencies, Laboratories and Persons.

4.2.2 Recognised providers of service

The main service provider in the Model's second tier is the recognised Verifier and/or Verification Agency (see Fig. 6). A verifier ensures the standards and provisions of relevant legislation, requirements of the administrative programmes and expectations of the regulator are upheld, and that the overall controls for food safety are operating as required.

Verifiers must operate independently to industry operators and be free from conflicts of interest.

Figure 5: Recognised providers of service (including Verification functions)



Recognised agencies, laboratories and persons

Recognised agencies, laboratories, and persons provide services that support the operation and delivery of key functions under the Model. Services include providing independent evaluation of risk measures against NZFS expectations, verification, and laboratory services.

The Animal Products Act 1999, the Wine Act 2003, the Food Act 2014, and the organic assurance programme enable specified functions and activities to be assigned by the Regulator and performed by Recognised Agencies, Laboratories or Persons. This includes verification. Under the Food Act 2014, Territorial Authorities are recognised third-party verification service providers for nominated sectors.

To be formally recognised by MPI, agencies, laboratories and persons must meet certain criteria. The criteria are similar for both government and non-government agencies, laboratories, and persons. However, due to international agreements, some functions and activities may only be performed by government officials.

MPI recognition specifies the functions and activities that are permitted to be performed by the Recognised Agencies, Laboratories and Persons. MPI can withdraw or suspend recognition if the criteria or the terms of recognition cease to be met except for Territorial Authorities.

Once an agency is recognised, it must fulfil the following duties to ensure its competency:

- Functions and activities must be within scope of the recognition.
- Must be adequately resourced and systems are maintained to carry out these functions.
- Maintain impartiality and independence and manage conflicts of interest.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Provide the required reporting to MPI.

The functions performed by Recognised Agencies, Laboratories and Persons include:

- Independent evaluation of business owner risk-based measures.
- Verification services.
- Export assurance verification.
- Ante-mortem and post-mortem examination services.
- Laboratory testing, analysis and calibration.
- Sampling for monitoring and surveillance.
- Other functions or activities required and specified by MPI as the Regulator.

A list of Recognised Agencies, Laboratories and Persons, and the functions and activities they are recognised for is publicly available on the MPI website.

The Verifier

There are two key types of verification service provider under the Model:

- Verification that is required by international agreement to be provided by central MPI employees – Government Verifiers.
- Verification and evaluation services provided by third-party providers.

While using Government Verifiers[1] usually occurs to meet overseas market expectation for core government regulatory oversight of business activities within some sectors, it may also occur when a third-party Verifier is not available.

Government Verifiers and Third-Party Verifiers[2] are closely related in the delivery of verification and evaluation. Both can provide a single business or group of businesses verification of the effectiveness of the controls the Industry Operator has in place for its identified hazards and risks. The Verifier remains accountable to the Regulator but is also responsive to the Industry Operator it provides the verification service to. Clarity of accountability encourages Industry Operator ownership of compliance, while the Verifier retains the accountability to escalate its response and apply regulatory sanctions in close association with MPI if necessary.

All Verifiers operate under a "user pays" model; it is the Industry Operators who pay for the provision of Verification services while benefitting from independent feedback on the effectiveness of their risk control programmes.

Responsibilities of the Verifier

- Remain accountable to the regulator for performance.
- Work to ensure calibrated verification service delivery is applied consistently and in alignment with the regulator's expectations.
- Meet performance, competency standards and/or criteria set by the regulator. This increasingly includes obtaining accreditation to relevant New Zealand or international standards.
- May support official assurances process to confirm that a product is produced in accordance with risk-based measures and market expectations.
- Verify the results of laboratory testing, analysis and calibration of animal material or products.
- May perform sampling for monitoring and surveillance purposes.
- Third-Party Verifiers provide independent observation and verification of an Industry Operator's quality control system and risk-based measures to assess whether it is meeting legal and regulatory requirements, and, where they are not, require the Industry Operator to take corrective action.

[1] **Government Official Verifiers** are employed by NZFS Verification Services or are MPI employees.
[2] **Third-Party Verifiers** are employees of independent verification agencies and that have been officially recognised by MPI in accordance with the Animal Products Act 1999, Wine Act 2003, Food Act 2014 or other official programmes such as organics. Third-Party Verifiers undertake the same function as Government Verifiers and are used where markets do not require Government employees , such as the market for dairy products that fall under the Animal Products Act 1999 and food that is produced by operators under the Food Act 2014.

Performance-based verification

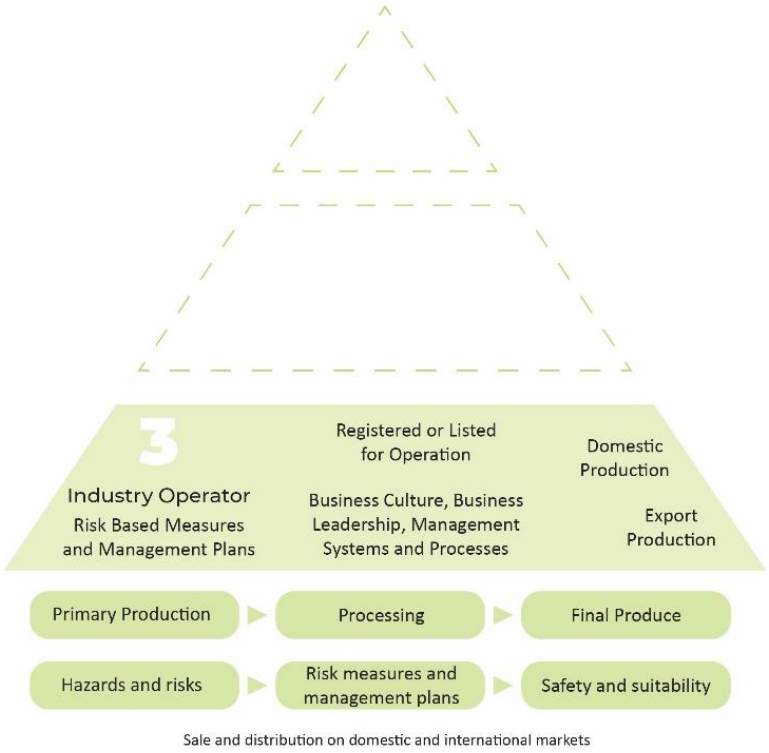
Under a risk-based approach to verification, Industry Operators who demonstrate high levels of compliance are visited by Verifiers less frequently. Poor-performing Industry Operators are subject to more regular checks to confirm the applicable risk-based control measures the business has for food safety are being satisfactorily implemented. This mode of operation is referred to as “performance-based verification” (PBV) in the Food Safety System. PBV standards set the minimum frequencies of verification, known as “steps”, including the initial verification step for new production sites.

4.2.3 The industry operator

The Industry Operator is responsible for appropriate resourcing and capability within the business to manage food safety. Under the Animal Products Act and Wine Act, when registering a risk-based measure, MPI must also consider whether the operator is a ‘fit and proper person’, having regard to any specified convictions when considering the person’s application for registration.

The third tier in the Model represents the Industry Operator (Fig. 6). In New Zealand, the Industry Operator must legally ensure its produce is fit for purpose, safe and suitable for consumption and meets expectations. To meet regulatory expectations, unless exempt (for example, low risk business activity), the Operator must design and/or adopt risk-based measures (management plans) and engage the services of a Verifier. Verifying operator performance and wider system monitoring ensures the Food Safety System operates as intended.

Figure 6: The role of the Industry Operator in the Regulatory Model



Food Industry Operators must also support a positive business compliance culture. This includes providing leadership to staff and a commitment to maintaining and implementing company systems and processes that work to enhance management of risk.

Industry Operators must develop appropriate food safety culture, food safety leadership and implementation of food safety management systems and processes that meet NZFS expectations. The specific obligations the Industry Operator must meet when required are:

- Identify and manage hazards and risks.
- Apply Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points principles.
- Establish good operating practice procedures.
- Demonstrate product safety.
- Manage non-conforming product.
- Facilitate the auditing process.

4.3 Competencies and interdependencies of regulatory model participants

Verifiers must meet competency requirements set by the Regulator and conform to these on an ongoing basis. This includes meeting the competency requirements for recognition as a Verifier. Recognised verification service providers must also, where required, continually meet International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) standard requirements and complete regular assessments of service delivery competence when required.

NZFS, as Regulator, supports Verifier competency through providing ongoing professional development opportunities, training, and calibration programmes. The training programmes provided include the NZFS Verifier Academy.

The Regulator ensures the independence and performance of Third-Party Verifiers through setting clear expectations and providing oversight of activities. This can include the monitoring of ISO Accreditation audit outcomes of third-party agencies, overseas audits and internal Regulator monitoring of day-to-day system performance.

4.4 A role for the consumer

The various roles and responsibilities encompassed by the Model ensure domestic and international consumers are supplied with safe and suitable produce at the point of sale. Consumers also have a role to play through appropriate handling, preparing, storing and management of food under their control to minimise the risk of illness. NZFS, as the Regulator, works alongside other agencies to ensure New Zealand consumers are well informed and able to make educated decisions at home to minimise their chances of becoming sick through food.

5 The benefits of the regulatory model

The Regulatory Model significantly enhanced the Food Safety System by doing the following.

Refocusing the role of the Regulator: The Model has enabled MPI, as the Regulator, to delegate responsibility for delivering services to non-government participants (where appropriate and possible), allowing it to instead focus on managing and improving the overall Food Safety System. The Model has also enabled the Regulator to largely separate its policy and regulatory functions from service delivery.

Clarifying the role and responsibilities of the Regulator and delegated functions: The Model serves to underpin, enable and support constructive and collaborative working relationships between the participants while managing clarity of

roles and functions within the system. This also ensures NZFS and Territorial Authorities act together to meet the objectives of the Food Act 2014, while respecting their separate but sometimes overlapping Regulatory accountabilities (registration and enforcement).

Ensuring a consistent approach to the Food Safety System across regulatory acts: The Model is applied consistently across all sectors of the food industry, and whether the product is sold domestically or internationally.

Encouraging industry responsibility for food safety: The Model incentivises the Industry Operator to take appropriate responsibility for quality control, safety, suitability and labelling of its products. This is a significant change from the reliance on government inspection under the old "command and control" regime. This allows the Industry Operator to focus its efforts where they are required and to adjust culture and practice to align with fulfilling government objectives and requirements.

Providing clear and transparent delineation of roles: The Model has clarified and made transparent the roles and accountabilities of each of the participants in the Food Safety System.

Facilitating the use of best international practice, process control including the use of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) methodologies: Under the Model, standards, where appropriate, are risk-based rather than prescriptive, and the Model provides for verification systems rather than reliance on inspection-based checking. HACCP methodologies are widely recognised internationally, and the establishment of a New Zealand Food Safety System compatible with an HACCP-based approach has played a role in securing New Zealand a position as a trusted supplier of safe and suitable food in international markets. Within the context of the Risk Management Framework, Good Operating Practice (GOP) provides supporting systems and a foundation for the HACCP-based approach and covers all aspects of good practice relevant to food production and processing including, where relevant, Good Agricultural Practice (GAP), Good Hygienic Practice (GHP) and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP).

Enabling New Zealand to have its Food Safety System recognised internationally: Taking a consistent approach to food safety system design and implementation has meant MPI has been able to attain systems-level recognition with several importing countries, therefore enhancing certainty and reducing barriers to trade. In addition, New Zealand has succeeded in having its systems recognised as the basis for trade, irrespective of the product.

Giving confidence to overseas markets: The Model incorporates a robust verification step in the official assurances/certification process. This ensures consumers and officials in overseas markets have confidence in the integrity and ethics underlying the official assurances and export certificates provided by the New Zealand Government.

Facilitating a contestable market for verification services: Industry Operators in some food sectors can now choose between two or more suppliers of verification and related services.

Establishing a direct obligation of the Industry Operator to produce safe and suitable foods to protect the consumer: By assuming responsibility for managing risk and quality control, the onus has been placed on the Industry Operator to respond to consumer and retail demands for safe and suitable products.

6 Challenges faced by the regulatory model

6.1 The availability of Verifiers

A recognised challenge for the Model has been the limited pool of Verifiers approved or recognised by the Regulator. When the model was implemented in the late 1990s, it was expected that a contestable market for verifiers would develop over time. The development of a fully functioning contestable market has not occurred to the extent expected can be largely attributed to New Zealand's geography and the characteristics of the New Zealand food industry.

Due to the size and distribution of business across New Zealand, many sectors are smaller when compared to the meat, dairy or seafood sectors. These smaller sectors can contain a large proportion of operators who are geographically widespread or inexperienced with risk-based management processes. As a result, potential third-party agencies may find it difficult to build a business case to justify entry into the market for verification. Some sectors are dominated by a few large operators and are also reliant on export markets, which means it is imperative overseas market access requirements are satisfied using NZFS Verification Services, as some key export markets will only accept government-provided verification.

Under the Food Act 2014, Territorial Authorities have been given exclusive Verifier rights for some food business within their region which together cover many food businesses. This decision was made for practical reasons and to ensure the implementation of the new domestic food regime was as smooth as possible. However, this has precluded other independent Verifiers from being able to offer verification services to this group of businesses and will remain the case while this provision is retained.

6.2 The Industry's capacity and capability to fulfil its roles

The Model attributes the Industry Operator with responsibility for developing and implementing risk-based management plans. Experience has shown that Industry Operators' ability to assume this responsibility can vary. For example, small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may find the responsibility more onerous than it is for larger operators with greater resources. SMEs may have limited managerial and technical resources and less relevant experience upon which to formulate and effectively operate risk-based management plans. The cost of developing a plan may also be proportionally greater for smaller businesses with limited resources.

During its years in operation as the Regulator, NZFS has responded to this challenge by developing measures to help all Industry Operators meet their obligations and to minimise compliance costs wherever practicable.

6.3 An expanded role for the Regulator

To ensure the Model works effectively and as equitably as possible among Industry Operators, the role of Regulator has had to evolve and expand since the Model's introduction.

NZFS, as the Regulator, continues to play a key role in assisting Industry Operators to develop and implement risk-based management measures, including through the development and provision of guidance tools such as templates for risk-based management plans and industry codes of practice.

NZFS also continues to play a role in enhancing the service delivery of Third-Party Verifiers through ongoing monitoring and audit activities and capability calibration and enhancement programmes.

7 Conclusion

Despite implementation challenges, which require ongoing stewardship and considered attention, the New Zealand Regulatory Model is embedded in relevant Acts and remains appropriate as a core policy development and implementation tool for the New Zealand Food Safety System and other non-food safety systems lead by NZFS, such as phytosanitary, seeds and organics.

The Food Safety System, is a comprehensive system administered by NZFS within MPI, including the RMF and the Model. The system places responsibility for food safety with producers by requiring a risk-based approach. Despite the focus on Industry Operator responsibility, all components must work optimally together to deliver on the system's objectives.

MPI and NZFS lead, steward, operationally manage and monitor the Food Safety System to ensure it remains responsive and adaptable and evolves to meet future challenges. MPI and NZFS maintain these important oversight functions through organisational leadership and management systems, processes and targeted monitoring programmes and activities.

Industry Operators are best placed to ensure compliance with the risk-based measures they have put in place. This approach also enables the Operator to implement specific controls that are best suited to ensure the safety of the foods it produces.

The risk and outcomes-based approaches NZFS take with its Food Safety System allows the Industry Operator, where appropriate, to take a more flexible approach to achieving compliance, which rewards innovation and can reduce costs. Empowering the Industry Operator with knowledge of its individual processing risks and requiring self-management ultimately delivers higher levels of reassurance for consumers.

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8 Glossary

Assurance: refers to the measures, systems and processes put in place by food producers, processors, and regulatory authorities to provide confidence in safety and suitability.

Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex): holds an established set of international standards and related texts for consumer health protection and international trade.

Compliance and enforcement: under Codex, compliance and enforcement refers to the range of controls, procedures or other interventions undertaken by a competent authority or a third party on its behalf when monitoring or verifying Industry Operator compliance with official requirements including, but not limited to, instigating any corrective measures to achieve compliance.

Fit for purpose: means that regulatory system are well designed, understood, operated and outputs (including food), is safe and suitable for its intended use.

New Zealand Food Safety System (National Food Control System): refers to the people, organisations, businesses, regulatory controls and tools, infrastructure, and wider components that collectively work together within New Zealand to deliver food safety, suitability, and related assurances.

Regulatory official assurances (certificates): refers to a formal or official statement from one competent authority (Government agency) to another, normally about a product, shipment, or process. It is a government-to-government guarantee that certain commitments have been met. The most common official assurance are in the form of sanitary and phytosanitary certificates.

Risk assessment: is a science-based process consisting of hazard identification, characterisation, exposure assessment and risk characterisation.

Risk communication: Risk communication is the process of making all concerned parties aware of the risk and control measures in place.

Risk Management Framework approach: is used across the food chain to guide the development of system controls through providing a systematic framework approach to assessing and managing risk.

Risk management: is the process of weighing risk management options in the light of the results of risk assessments and selecting and implementing appropriate controls and related standards.

Risk-based management plan: is the process evaluating available food control options in consultation with interested stakeholders and then implementing regulatory standards or other risk-management measures and activities as appropriate.

Safe food and suitable food: 'Safe food' won't make people sick; 'suitable food' meets compositional, labelling and identification requirements and is in the right condition for its intended use.

New Zealand Regulatory Model: is a core policy structure that sets out a hierarchy of accountabilities, roles and responsibilities for the key participants operating within the Food Safety System.

Territorial Authorities: means a territorial authority within the meaning of the Local Government Act 2002 defined as a local government body responsible for governing and providing services to a specific geographical area known as districts.

Verifier: The Verifier ensures that the standards and provisions of the relevant legislation and requirements of the administrative programmes and expectations of the Regulator are upheld, and that the overall controls for food safety are operating as required.