

# **New Zealand Food Safety**

Haumaru Kai Aotearoa



## **A strategy for New Zealand Food Safety Consultation**

September 2019

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## Published by

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New Zealand Food Safety Discussion Paper No: 2019/07  
ISBN: 978-1-99-000806-1 (online)  
ISBN: 978-1-99-000807-8 (print)

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Ministry for Primary Industries, September 2019

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# STRATEGY ON A PAGE

## OUR VISION

**New Zealand food can be trusted by everyone, everywhere**

## THE OUTCOMES WE ARE FOCUSED ON

Māori have trust and confidence in the food safety system because we work in partnership

Consumers can be confident that food is safe and suitable, and they can make informed choices

Overseas governments have trust and confidence in our food safety system

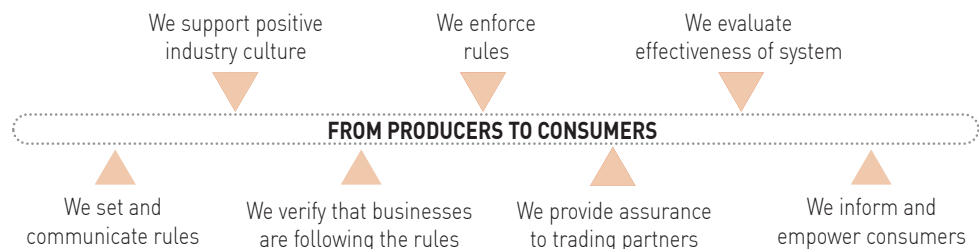
Producers have trust and confidence in the food safety system and the system supports their growth and innovation

We also contribute to broader social and economic outcomes, working with others to improve the lives of New Zealanders

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 01 We put consumers first
- 02 We listen and we engage
- 03 We are fair and proportionate
- 04 We are outcome driven
- 05 We make evidence based decisions
- 06 We are open and transparent
- 07 We build our people and our capability
- 08 We work with others and get the job done

## THE FUNCTIONS WE PERFORM



## OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

- 01 We will ensure New Zealand's world class food safety system remains robust in responding to future challenges.
- 02 We will proactively support consumers to feel confident making choices about food.
- 03 We will lead new thinking in international forums to expand our international influence.
- 04 We will be an intelligence-led business that proactively prepares for the future.

# FOREWORD

## Tēna koutou, tēna koutou, tēna koutou katoa

One of my top priorities is making sure that New Zealand Food Safety is focused on the future and is clear about how it will continue to meet the needs of New Zealanders and the millions of consumers around the world who buy New Zealand food. Safe and suitable food is not only necessary for our basic survival but across all cultures it is also a significant part of the way we connect with others.

Haumaru Kai Aotearoa wants through consultation and this strategy to engage with Māori, as tangata whenua and Treaty partners, and deepen our understanding of kaitiakitanga in relation to Aotearoa's food safety system. This will allow us to make sure we can provide a safe (Haumaru) way to produce food (kai) for New Zealanders and 40 million overseas consumers.

This strategy will give us a clear direction of travel to anticipate changes in our environment and how we need to amend rules, use technology, and fulfil customer demands. By looking forward we will be able to strike a good balance between delivering results today and acting on opportunities that will deliver results tomorrow.

Being clear about our strategic priorities will mean we can invest in mobilising and upskilling our people to focus on preparing for the biggest challenges and continuing to improve our systems and processes for the future.

Right now, world food safety systems are under pressure because consumers demand more and different types of food, overseas partners want to trade in different ways and in greater volumes, and global effects such as climate change, are impacting how food is produced. This strategy will allow us to keep consumers safe and healthy and retain the trust of our trading partners.

We need input from consumers, food businesses, our Treaty partners, the science community, marae and others to help us do this. We want to understand whether what we think is important reflects the challenges and opportunities you are thinking about. We need to jointly solve issues in the future with customers.



We will continue our discussions with all of these groups through consultation, and the work we do every day.

An important theme in the strategy is that our food safety system must be based on rigorous scientific evidence, and that we support others to be innovative and experiment with new ideas while managing risk. We will do this through operating differently, looking for new solutions to problems and developing new internal capabilities to be more efficient and effective.

I would really value your thoughts, ideas and suggestions on this document. New Zealand Food Safety is here for you, to uphold your trust in New Zealand's Food Safety System, and to help you navigate and understand the rules. We need your help so that we can make sure we are doing this as well as we can both today and tomorrow.

Ngā manaakitanga

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Bryan Wilson'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light background.

Bryan Wilson  
Deputy Director-General New Zealand Food Safety



# HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

## We want your views on our four priorities and the drivers for change.

This consultation document is not the full strategy. It is a condensed version of the strategy which you can find on the MPI Consultation website [www.mpi.govt.nz/NZFS-strategy](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/NZFS-strategy). The full version has much more detailed information should you want to read it.

### In this document you will find the following information:

- Our food safety system.
- The role New Zealand Food Safety plays within the system.
- The drivers for change – the reasons why we need to change and how we look at what is coming towards us.
- Our priorities which will drive the change needed over the next five years.

### Priorities at a glance:

- We will ensure New Zealand's world-class food safety system remains robust in responding to future challenges.
- We will proactively support consumers to feel confident making choices about food.
- We will lead new thinking in international forums to expand our international influence.
- We will be an intelligence-led business that proactively prepares for the future.

These priorities and our action plan will allow us to keep consumers safe and healthy, retain the trust of our trading partners and our food exports will continue to be sort after on the global food market.

### What next?

Consultation runs from 2-27 September 2019 and this is when we will be collecting your feedback. Your feedback will inform our next steps in the process of developing this strategy. The final strategy will be launched later this year at the Food Safety Summit.



# HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE DRAFT STRATEGY

Your feedback will help New Zealand Food Safety develop a strategy that will help it to maintain a robust food safety system that can be trusted by everyone, everywhere and help them focus on what is most important.

## We want to hear your views

We want to know what you think about our four priorities and the drivers for change. To make it easy we have developed some questions you can answer.

There are a number of ways you can learn more and provide your feedback

- Check out our FAQs
- Visit [www.mpi.govt.nz/NZFS-strategy](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/NZFS-strategy)
- The full version of the strategy
- The drivers for change infographic
- Building a Māori and Crown partnership
- Question and answers
- Or you can email [newzealandfoodsafetystrategy@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:newzealandfoodsafetystrategy@mpi.govt.nz) with a question

## Making your submission

Email your feedback to the New Zealand Food Safety Strategy by 5pm on 27 September 2019 to [newzealandfoodsafetystrategy@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:newzealandfoodsafetystrategy@mpi.govt.nz)

There is a template for your submission.

[www.mpi.govt.nz/NZFS-strategy](http://www.mpi.govt.nz/NZFS-strategy)

While we prefer email, you can post a written submission to:

### A strategy for New Zealand Food Safety

New Zealand Food Safety  
PO Box 2526  
Wellington 6140  
New Zealand.

## What to include

- The title of the consultation: A strategy for New Zealand Food Safety
- your name and title
- your organisation's name (if you are submitting on behalf of an organisation, and whether your submission represents the whole organisation or a section of it)
- your contact details (such as phone number, address, and email).

## Submissions are public information

Please note, that any submission you make becomes public information. People can ask for copies of submissions under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). The OIA says we have to make submissions available unless we have good reasons for withholding them. That is explained in sections 6 and 9 of the OIA.

Tell us if you think there are grounds to withhold specific information in your submission. Reasons might include that it's commercially sensitive or it's personal information. However, any decision MPI makes to withhold information can be reviewed by the Ombudsman, who may tell us to release it.

MPI may post all or parts of any written submission on its website. We'll consider that you have consented to its publication, unless clearly stated otherwise in your submission.



# THE FOOD SAFETY SYSTEM

Every day over 4.9 million New Zealanders use our food safety system - buying food to cook or eating out – it needs to be safe to consume and people need to know what they're eating. Our Kiwi culture is centred on growing, producing, preparing, sharing and consuming food. It is what brings us together, nourishes us, and sustains.

A further 40 million people around the world consume our food, and they also expect it to be safe and suitable. Our role is to ensure that the New Zealand food safety system delivers on these expectations and we maintain a robust system trusted by trading partners and underpinning our economy.

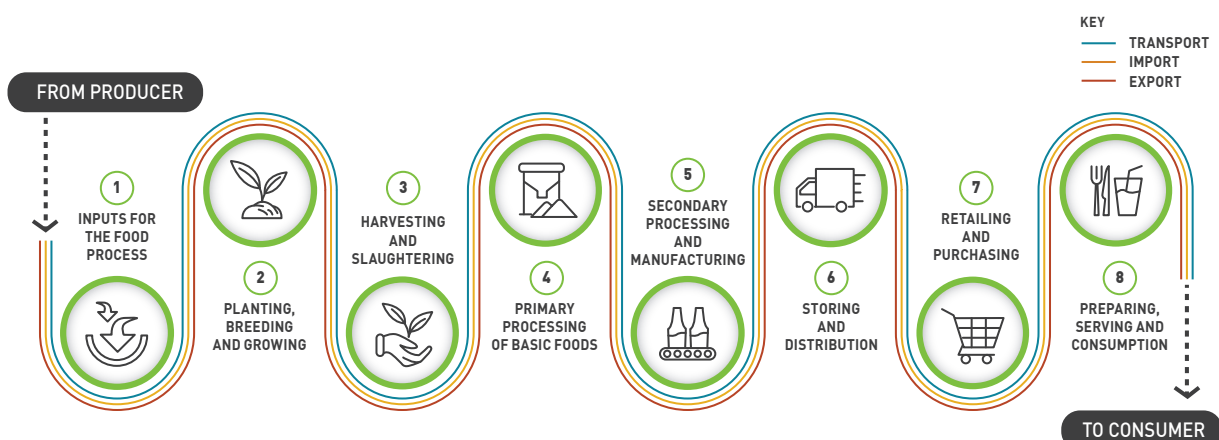
New Zealand cannot afford for its food safety system to fail. This system is based on a simple premise of systematically and scientifically identifying and managing food risks and having someone check that this is being done. Sounds simple but is incredibly complex when put into practice.

There as there are many different people, businesses, organisations and government agencies - local, national and international – contributing to this work. All of them contribute to broader social and economic outcomes of our country to improve the lives of New Zealanders, create sustainable production, our health and wellbeing and regional development. We need to ensure the food safety system supports these outcomes.

There are five main groups involved in our food safety system.

- **Consumers:** play an active role by taking care when handling and preparing food. We educate consumers on how to handle food the right way so they do not make themselves sick.
- **Māori:** have cultural and spiritual obligations to provide food at hui, on marae and in a variety of settings in order to maintain the dignity and mana of kaumātua (Māori elders), whānau, hapū and iwi. This requires knowledge of tikanga with regards to sustaining the sanctity of kai by continually promoting food safety and suitability, safe food handling and food hygiene practices, and the relationship of these with the nutritional objectives for marae.
- **The food industry:** produces food and follows food safety rules and standards. If they don't, we then step in. We work alongside industry to make sure the rules are practical and easy to follow.
- **Overseas governments:** rely on us to make sure there is accurate and clear information on the food they import from New Zealand. We work with 200 other countries to make international food standards that every country complies with.
- **Regulators and verifiers:** they set the rules, check businesses are following the rules and provide other support. This includes New Zealand Food Safety, along with local councils, third party verification agencies and laboratories.

## THE FOOD SYSTEM





# DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

Right now significant changes are happening across the global food safety system that affect everyone - the producer, the consumer and governments - and many of these changes are happening at speed.

The following diagram is a summary of the drivers of change that are affecting the food safety system.



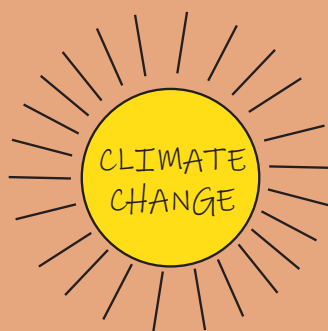
## Changes affecting the food safety system are driving the need for

### Right now these things are affecting the beginning of the food production process



Some examples include; pressure on natural resources, population increases and urban expansion.

There are developments in what is used to help grow food such as fertilisers, seeds and chemicals.

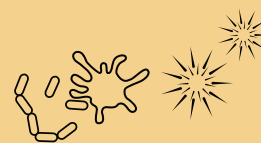


### How we process our food



Domestic and international consumers want different types of food and to know the food they buy is what it says it is.

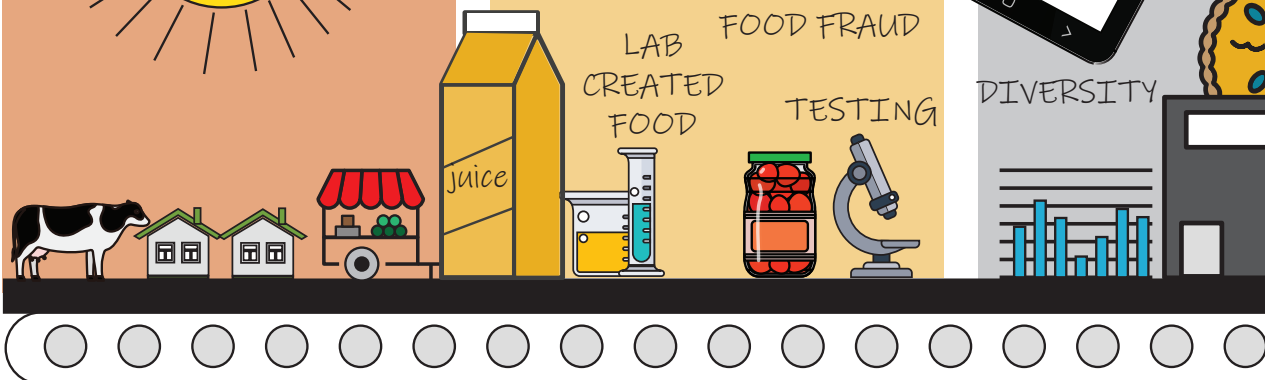
Developments in technology have led to new food being available, such as lab-grown and plant-based food. Technology is now used to trace where food has come from.



### How this affects the regulator

Getting to know consumers we will need to understand wants, needs and expectations and communicate in ways that meet them.

A world shortage of specific skills mean up skilling our workforce is important and that we take technology and data to protect the food safety system.







## Have your say on:

Significant change is happening across the global food safety system. It affects everyone – from the producer to the consumer.

1. These changes will affect how we produce food in New Zealand. Some of the impacts will be positive while others will be undesirable. How can New Zealand Food Safety work with industry and others to maximise or minimise these effects?

## us to adapt



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tect the food

### Consumers are driving changes



Health and nutrition are important to consumers and there is an increased awareness of allergies and exploring "food as medicine".

Changes in our population and travel mean people want to consume new food in different ways.

INNOVATION

LABELLING

100%  
VEGAN

HEALTH

GLUTEN FREE

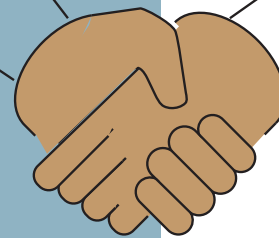
### A complex international trading environment



Other countries want to be certain our food is safe to eat and seek continued assurance it is. These same countries are also demanding international unity in food standards which needs to be understood in the New Zealand context.



INTERNATIONAL  
TRADE



# OUR PURPOSE AND ROLE

## Our purpose is to regulate the New Zealand Food Safety system. We want food to be safe to eat and is, what it says it is.

Regulation of the food safety system is critical to protecting the health and wellbeing of consumers here and overseas, and to guard the reputation of New Zealand food.

It is a complex system and we are constantly looking at the food safety risk of products being created and the potential for harm to consumers.

### What we do

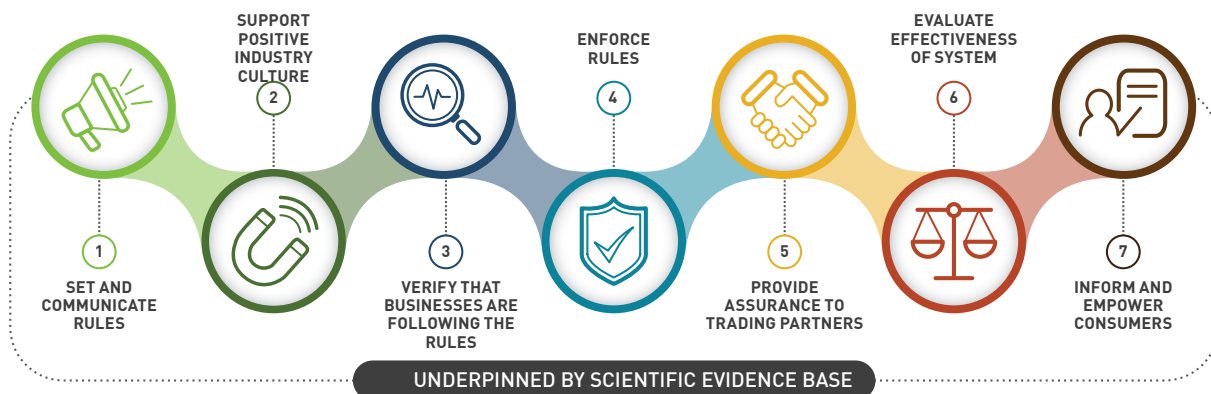
To keep food safe for consumers we use science to detect, measure and minimise risks. We work to provide confidence to consumers, overseas governments and industry that our rules are not random. Our outcomes have been designed to support what we do in the best way possible.

### Our outcomes

We are working to achieve:

- Māori have trust and confidence in the food safety system because we work in partnership.
- Consumers being confident food is safe and suitable and they can make informed choices.
- Overseas governments having trust and confidence in our food system.
- Producers have trust and confidence in the food safety system and it supports their growth and innovation.

### OUR FUNCTIONS ACROSS THE FOOD PROCESS



# PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

## Vision: New Zealand food can be trusted by everyone, everywhere

New Zealand must continue to be a leader in food safety systems and to maintain and build a system that produces food that is safe and suitable to eat. A future focused strategy will help New Zealand Food Safety to do this.

Right now, world food safety systems are under pressure because consumers demand more and different types of food, trading partners employ different safety systems and global effects, such as climate change, are impacting how we will produce food in New Zealand.

For New Zealand Food Safety to be able to address these challenges, seize opportunities as they arise, and perform its regulatory role more effectively, it needs a strategy which clearly identifies the direction of travel it must take.

There is also an increasing shortage of expert skills. Our workforce has changed and it is important we attract or access the talent we need to be an effective regulator. In particular, we will need to attract food science and technology specialists: of which there is a global shortage.

We have listened to consumers, industry and sector partners so we can understand what they need, want and expect from the food safety system. Together with our horizon scanning we have identified some emerging risks and opportunities the food safety system and New Zealand Food Safety need to address.

Our priorities to address these are:

- We will ensure New Zealand's world-class food system remains robust in responding to future challenges.
- We will proactively support consumers to feel confident making choices about food.
- We will lead new thinking in international forums to expand our international influence.
- We will be an intelligence led business that proactively prepares for the future.



## Have your say on:

2. Please choose what priorities New Zealand Food Safety should focus on over the next 5 years?
  - We will ensure New Zealand's world-class food safety system remains robust in responding to future challenges.
  - We will proactively support consumers to feel confident making choices about food.
  - We will lead new thinking in international forums to expand our international influence.
  - We will be an intelligence led business that proactively prepares for the future.
3. Do you have any alternative priorities that should be considered? Why?



## We will ensure New Zealand's world-class food system remains robust in responding to future challenges

### The way we grow, produce, buy and consume food is changing. We think that a robust food safety system is key to navigating these changes.

New Zealand consumers place a high level of trust in the food safety system and our export focussed businesses and our global trading partners rely on it. This trust and confidence takes a lot of effort to maintain.

To make sure it stays that way we will continually look at the current legislation, regulatory infrastructure and rules so they align with changes in the food safety environment. Our current rules are right for today but may not be right for tomorrow.

As food fraud becomes more prevalent, we will work with the food production producers to make sure they comply with the rules. The choices available to consumers and new and innovative production methods opens up huge opportunities and creates new risks: making it challenging to set tougher rules without stifling innovation.

Anyone making and selling food is a customer and we will support their responsible food businesses to flourish. Through our engagement we have heard that industry want more tailored support to help navigate rules more efficiently. We will focus on making sure everyone understands their role, remove barriers to compliance and support them to share and implement best practice.

Over the next five years, we will anticipate and prioritise:

- engaging with industry to identify rules and requirements that are overly difficult to comply with, or that inhibit innovation, and look for ways to address these issues without compromising safety;
- building a clear picture of the performance of the food safety system and what influences it so we can measure our own performance and target our effort towards the areas that will have the greatest impact;
- actively providing examples of food safety best practice and work with industry to enhance a culture of shared learning;
- ensuring the co-regulatory model with councils and interfaces with other departments are working as well as they can for all involved.



### Have your say on:

4. To continue to have a world-class food safety system, it needs to be agile and robust. What gaps should we be looking to close?

## We will proactively support consumers to feel confident making choices about food

### The system works best when consumers have the information they need to make informed food choices.

The type of food consumers want today has changed because our population is more diverse and more people are travelling to exotic locations. How food is cooked has changed and the rules reflect this.

We currently run campaigns targeting consumers around “Clean, Cook, Chill” but intend to do more to help consumers feel well informed. New food and new ways of cooking will mean we will need to provide additional information and advice consumers can understand which we have backed-up by scientific evidence. We want consumers to be confident about making decisions about food.

Safe and nutritious food is a key part of healthy living and poorly labelled, prepared or stored food can make people very sick. By working with food businesses we will be able to meet consumer demands about food information. Consumers have told us they want more information about food delivered in different ways so they can choose the right food for themselves and their family.

We are driving changes in food labelling so it is clear what it is made up of. However, there is still more we can do to proactively increase understanding of food-related risks.

Over the next five years we will do more to empower good choices about food by:

- exploring user-friendly approaches for communicating information about what is in consumers’ food to complement existing information on labels;
- ensuring consumers have access to factual and reliable information about food safety risks to enable them to make good decisions;
- ensuring there is a consumer-friendly digital presence for New Zealand Food Safety containing easy to understand information for consumers.



### Have your say on:

5. We think the system works best when consumers have the information they need to make informed food choices. As a consumer how do you want to receive information about food safety? Why? What other things are you interested in?

## We will lead new thinking in international forums to expand our international influence

### The trading environment is shifting. Our role in proactively shaping this environment will be more important than ever.

Increasingly complex and global supply chains, sophisticated 'food fraud' and climate change are putting pressure on how we produce and export our food. This is driven by disruptions to the trade system, changes in supply chains, new operating models and political changes around the world.

Our international trading partners are requesting more certainty and guarantees that our food products are safe, authentic and suitable. Under these conditions, the international rules and principles that support and enable trade are critical to get right.

New Zealand has an enviable reputation for providing confidence to our trading partners that our food exports are safe and meet agreed requirements. However, we cannot afford to be passive.

We are proposing to do more to influence global standards to maximise our nation's export potential and will continue to advocate for fair rules-based trade at international forums while building confidence in the safety of our exports. We also will continue to emphasise the importance of science based decision making in these forums.

Over the next five years New Zealand products will easily reach more places because we will focus on:

- promoting our science and regulatory expertise and building networks to support and enhance our international reputation;
- identifying ways New Zealand Food Safety can continue to actively participate in international food and science communities.



### Have your say on:

6. The trading environment is shifting and our role in shaping this helps to safeguard New Zealand's reputation and getting New Zealand food to overseas markets. What do you think we should do to protect and increase our influence overseas?



## We will be an intelligence led business that proactively prepares for the future

### Mā te tika o muri, ka tika a mua It is only through the efforts of those who work out the back, will the front flourish.

If we are going to deliver on our priorities we need to ensure we have the capability to do so.

The global food safety systems is under constant pressure, but by looking forward and having better foresight on emerging risks and opportunities, we will be able to respond quickly.

The ability to gain insight and intelligence will also help us understand what consumers and customers want, need and expect from our food safety system.

New foods and production methods have changed all aspects of food so that today consumers have a broad range of products to choose from. This broad range creates as many opportunities as new risks.

Fortunately, technology is helping food safety regulators and private companies to prevent food safety issues, detecting bacteria outbreaks, and food fraud. A credible system relies on decisions being well informed, therefore, gathering all the information together to create robust evidence and insights to inform those decisions is key.

Over the next five years we will grow and develop our intelligence capability and become more proactive by:

- establishing the technical capability and capacity to undertake long term horizon scanning
- developing an approach to prioritise and plan our long term work based on insights from our horizon scanning
- ensuring New Zealand Food Safety has access to the capability required to engage directly with consumers
- building our capability to engage in a culturally appropriate way with Māori consumers and business owners.



### Have your say on:

7. Food advances and innovations/technologies affect every part of the food supply chain. What do you think needs to be done to foster innovation while keeping food safe and suitable? Is there anything not in the strategy that we should be? Why?

Finally:

8. Is there anything not in the strategy that we should be? Why?





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New Zealand Government

Ministry for Primary Industries  
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