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New Zealand Food Safety Authority Strategy for Involving Māori in Food Safety and Consumer Protection Issues

"A Shared Vision"

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NZFSA - Te Pou Oranga Kai O Aotearoa

April 2007

Introduction

This Strategy was developed in recognition that in a number of areas, considerable interaction between NZFSA and Māori was occurring and that a 'drawing together' of these elements into a cohesive 'whole' would be beneficial. Not only would this ensure consistency in approach, but it would also provide a broader perspective on the relationship and identify areas where the relationship could be deepened.

In addition, closer working relationships with other government agencies would be facilitated by a clearer articulation of NZFSA's Strategy in relation to Māori as a specific group of food service providers where they operate, and consumers. NZFSA's particular relationship with Food Standards Australia New Zealand in both its standards development work and its efforts to involve Māori also warranted consideration. The direction both agencies were taking to engage Māori appeared to be converging, thereby offering the opportunity to join together in progressing engagement.

Foundation

NZFSA is committed to this Strategy which provides the overarching framework for engagement with Māori concerning food safety and suitability issues.

NZFSA's Strategy sets out to apply the following principles

- **Partnership:** refers to the ongoing relationship between NZFSA and Māori to work in a partnership relationship to enhance Māori health as this relates to food. For this Strategy, NZFSA and Māori share the responsibility to promote greater awareness of food issues through provider training and consumer education,

- **Participation:** the Strategy provides for NZFSA and Māori to consult on food safety and suitability issues relevant to specific Māori situations;
- **Protection:** the Strategy recognises that this implies the adoption of proactive approaches and the pursuit of opportunities for the enhancement of Māori involvement concerning food safety and suitability issues, particularly those food issues that will promote consumer health and safety and that will minimise food borne illness amongst Māori consumers.

Background

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 (see Appendix A) 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 marae is a place that encompasses all things Māori to its fullest capacity, whereby, whānau, hapū and iwi have a vested interest as gatherers, caterers, providers, consumers and cooks that food is safe and suitable.

There is opportunity for NZFSA in consultation with marae rūnanga, ¹kaumātua, whānau, hapū and iwi to work together strategically to promote greater awareness of food safety and suitability issues to:

- Raise the level of awareness concerning food safety and the risks of food-borne illness
- Raise awareness of food standards in relation to their development (especially those standards impacting singularly on Māori), application and promotion (such as additives, nutrition information labels etc)
- Highlight the need to focus on consumer and food education/training policies for Māori
- Maintain the sanctity of 'kai' from a tikanga Māori perspective.

There may also be an opportunity for NZFSA to work with other government agencies to complement initiatives in pursuit of wider government objectives such as 'healthy eating - healthy action' ('oranga kai – oranga pumau') objectives to reduce obesity and nutritionally based health problems. Relevant agencies include Te Puni Kokiri, Ministry for the Environment, Ministry of Health, Public Health Units (PHU's) and local government. Separately, there is opportunity for FSANZ and NZFSA to remove duplication and come together on issues relevant to protecting Māori consumers.

Interaction with marae committees, trusts and incorporations, kaumātua, whānau, hapū and iwi can lead to direct input into NZFSA's work on its food programme, specifically in relation to consumer and food education in a tikanga Māori context.

NZFSA's Outcomes and Māori

To achieve its mission of protecting consumers and enhancing New Zealand's position as a trusted supplier of food, NZFSA has three major strategic goals:

1. A food regulatory programme that protects and promotes consumer health
2. A food regulatory programme that supports New Zealand's economic growth and prosperity

3. New Zealand's international trade in food and food related products maintained and enhanced.

Under each of these three major strategic goals are intermediate outcomes that are intended to deliver on the goals. NZFSA's strategic approach to engagement with Māori is described in relation to the pertinent intermediate outcomes that deliver on NZFSA's strategic goals.

A food regulatory programme that protects and promotes consumer health:

1. Safe and Suitable Food for New Zealanders

Food safety issues

Māori have a vested interest at the marae level in food safety issues. Consequently, developing and maintaining relationships with Māori provides an opportunity to better engage on food safety issues at the marae. The marae is a place for Māori to meet and hold hui, often consisting of large gatherings of people at various times of the year.

These hui require the gathering, handling, preparation, cooking, storing and distributing of vast quantities of food to manaaki/care for visitors to the marae. Working with Māori at the marae level also provides an opportunity to complement and parallel one of the Ministry of Health's key objectives of 'Healthy Eating – Healthy Action' ('Oranga Kai – Oranga Pumau'). Doing so will enable messages to be readily understood, maximise their uptake, and be most efficient at influencing behaviours that will improve food safety and food generally on marae.

Food suitability issues

Consumer information available through the labelling provisions of food standards are potentially more valuable to Māori than to many other groups in New Zealand because the public health gains are potentially more significant for Māori. This is because Māori are more at risk of food related diseases such as obesity, heart disease and diabetes.

Food safety and suitability on and off the marae

Developing relationships with Māori can be achieved in a number of ways. The focus at the marae level will result in input into wider food safety and suitability issues and the development and implementation of food safety and suitability standards at the national level. Different approaches may be needed regarding transfer of information, knowledge and communication between NZFSA and Māori especially to reach those off the marae. These will be developed on a case-by-case basis.

From a policy and joint food standards perspective, the opportunity to have access to a Māori contact group (Māori experts) that NZFSA can call on to discuss, disseminate and offer possible solutions on food safety and suitability related issues confronting Māori would be valuable. Such a Group could be convened on a needs basis but contact with such a Group could be ongoing to ensure their familiarity with food issues and developments.

Interface with Ministry of Health

NZFSA is not funded to undertake generic nutrition or health promotion activities. However, there may be opportunities in the future, through contact with marae, to work with the Ministry of Health to complement the promotion of the Ministry's 'Healthy Eating – Healthy Action' – ('Oranga Kai – Oranga Pumau') plan where this is directly linked to the food safety and suitability of the food supply. This would mean incorporating nutritional objectives with food safety and suitability information and communications.

Interface with FSANZ

FSANZ has a Māori Reference Group, the Kahui Kounga Kai², to consult with Māori on issues relating to food labelling and composition (these cover aspects of safety and suitability). The Kahui has implemented hui with Māori, in which NZFSA staff have participated. An opportunity exists for considering duplication of the work of this group and NZFSA's in a wider range of activities necessary for NZFSA to deliver on its strategic goals and to fulfil its responsibilities in food administration, particularly in relation to Māori. There is the opportunity for all food related matters to be coordinated by NZFSA in order to meet both NZFSA and FSANZ needs.

Benefits from NZFSA operating as a single coordinating agency on food and food related matters are:

- Removing any duplication on access to expertise and use of resources in networking with Māori on all food safety and suitability issues;
- Broadening the opportunities that every hui with Māori offers to package information, streamline delivery and expand the context of consultation while reducing hui as far as necessary;
- Increasing communications networks generally with Māori; and
- Efficiency gains on costs and administration of hui and other developments in increasing contact with Māori.

Delivery

NZFSA has the opportunity to effect the development and delivery of food safety and suitability communications, discussions and messages with and for Māori by ensuring the PHU contracts have an explicit provision in this area. Local Authorities may also play a major role.

Measurables

- Relationships and networks with Māori developed and maintained;
- Māori interests and input sought in relation to safety and suitability policies and standards where relevant through a range of appropriate mechanisms;
- Marae-specific Codes of Practice or Food Control Plans implemented on marae as appropriate;
- Reduction in food borne illnesses on marae;
- Education and training programmes available and attended.

Resourcing

Identifying within the baseline resource to:

- Establish networks with Māori at the appropriate level including marae;
- Better enable consultation with Māori on relevant food related policies, standards and consumer protection issues.

Building capacity

Retaining a person with key competencies and skills in tikanga Māori issues appointed to assist in:

- Relationship building with Māori as a key consumer group in their own right;
- Arranging workshops, wānanga and hui with Māori and other agencies including FSANZ (as appropriate) on NZFSA, Māori food safety issues, and food standards issues through FSANZ;
- Providing linkages across government agencies on Māori issues relating to food safety and healthy eating; and
- Establishing and maintaining a network and a database of Māori contacts.

Objectives	Deliverables
Focus on food safety issues initially in the area of gathering of non-commercial wild food, safe food handling, safe food preparation, cooking food correctly, processing of safe food and serving on the marae.	Voluntary 'code of practice' for safe food handling, gathering, storing, preparing, cooking and processing on the marae developed.
Implementation of the Code of Practice on marae.	Education and training policies for marae and for Māori generally.
Activities complementary to the Ministry of Health's HeHa strategy to deliver health and nutrition messages to Māori	Establishing and maintaining a network and a database of Māori contacts

Interaction by NZFSA with Māori, especially with marae rūnanga, trusts, incorporations, kaumātua, whānau, hapū and iwi, can lead to improved consultation and more meaningful input into NZFSA work on consumer education and policy and into FSANZ on standards development.

It could usefully:

- Highlight areas of concern or support covering Māori needs
- Enable Māori to influence decision-making as it affects their health and safety
- Improve knowledge about NZFSA and FSANZ and raise NZFSA's (and FSANZ's) profile among Māoridom
- Build strong links with Māori communities, local health providers, PHU's, ITO's, Te Puni Kokiri, Ministry of Health, Ministry for the Environment, FSANZ and NZQA
- Improve the marae's uptake of other food safety messages developed by NZFSA – e.g. Non-Commercial Wild Food proposals for Māori and consumer education projects

Inclusion of Māori input will strengthen the relationship of NZFSA with Māori on a kanohi ki te kanohi (eye to eye; face to face) basis. Similarly, it would continue to strengthen the relationship of FSANZ with Māori.

NZFSA's communications with Māori

Communication between Māori, sector groups and NZFSA and FSANZ will raise the level of knowledge about each others roles, functions and responsibilities and in particular the mission and vision of NZFSA's mandate as it relates to consumer protection and food policy.

Contact with Māori media networks and processes will be needed for the sharing and dissemination of information between Māori and NZFSA.

NZFSA needs to know which Māori to consult and engage with on NZFSA related issues as well as knowledge on which Māori media to target for specific Māori audiences. NZFSA also needs to understand how Māori consultation processes operate.

There is also a need to examine the manner in which information and data is disseminated specifically to a Māori audience.

Māori input into NZFSA (and FSANZ) work

A wānanga³ is a place where the mana of a hui remains where it belongs i.e. the marae. It is also a gathering point where NZFSA, FSANZ, government agencies, health providers, food safety training providers and other community groups, can share information and inform each other on food safety issues.

Wananga can be used to enable NZFSA:

- To capitalise on the opportunities a wānanga can provide to discuss and share information on food safety and suitability issues;
- And Māori to communicate and feed back information on food related issues; and
- To identify key Māori groups and stakeholders.

Communications strategy

The NZFSA communications strategy will need to ensure it includes:

- Development of a contacts database on Māori and sector groups in food
- Understanding of Māori consultation processes and expectations. Hui with Māori can be diverse and the needs of those being consulted may be different from other groups;
- Liaison with communications teams in other agencies; and
- Revisiting PHU contracts with regards to HPO commitments.

Other opportunities for communications include:

- Māori radio stations;
- Māori television (Māori news, eg Te Karere, Te Kaea Māori TV etc);
- Iwi websites;
- FOMA websites etc;
- Māori rūnanga panui; and
- Kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face); (Kumara vine: the transfer of information through internal Māori networks).

Capability

NZFSA needs to incorporate Māori processes of communication into the communications strategy. To do this, the NZFSA communications strategy will need to incorporate policies that promote and enhance food safety and suitability education and training for Māori.

There are a number of specific newspapers, journals, periodicals and magazines that target Māori audiences, e.g. Mana News, Pukaea, etc. NZFSA's communication team can utilise these to promote food safety and suitability messages in a Māori context and NZFSA Policy and FSANZ can use these to engender consultation as necessary.

Relevant NZFSA staff will benefit from training in tikanga Māori processes by:

- increasing the level of awareness and understanding of Māori processes; and
- enabling staff to input Māori issues into their work as appropriate.

Measurables

- relationships and networks with Māori developed and maintained;
- staff with specific skills and expertise developed;
- implementation of an NZFSA Māori food safety and suitability strategy and work plan
- communications strategy revised to include and reflect consumer education needs.

Resourcing

Identifying within the baseline resource to:

- Establish networks with Māori at the appropriate level including marae;
- Better enable consultation with Māori on food related consumer protection issues, policy and food standards issues.

Building capacity

Retaining the person with key competencies and skills in tikanga Māori issues appointed to assist in:

- Relationship building with Māori as a key consumer group in their own right;
- Arranging workshops, reference groups, wānanga and hui with Māori and other agencies (as appropriate)
- Providing linkages across government agencies on Māori issues relating to food standards, safety and healthy eating; and
- Managing the establishment and maintenance of a network and a database of Māori contacts.

Objectives	Deliverables
Develop and maintain relationships with Māori on food issues generally.	Networks established directly and in conjunction with other government and non-government agencies as appropriate.
Develop a consultation process with Māori and	

NZFSA to enable appropriate input into NZFSA work and FSANZ standards development.	Increased Māori input into development of codes of practice and risk communication materials aimed at consumer education, and Australia-New Zealand standards developed by FSANZ.
Develop a communications strategy with Māori aimed at improving food safety and complementing the Ministry of Health 'healthy eating – healthy action oranga kai – oranga pumau' as a component of the NZFSA communication strategy	<p>Increased knowledge of Māori media networks, contacts and processes to capture Māori attention to specific issues relevant to Māori</p> <p>Increased awareness amongst relevant NZFSA staff of tikanga that encompass Māori issues related to food safety and food generally.</p>

A food regulatory programme that supports New Zealand's economic growth and prosperity:

2. A Business Environment for Food and Related Sectors that Supports Innovation, Enterprise and High Performance

Māori Food Businesses

Māori have a long history of involvement in food businesses from pre-Treaty of Waitangi times. They continue that involvement today and are involved in all areas and all levels from production through product development, processing, transporting and retail to export. Māori have major farming and fishing interests and major tourism interests. In these areas, their needs and expectations are the same as other New Zealanders in food businesses and will be dealt with as such.

Food safety and suitability in marae-based Māori businesses

A focus at marae level business is likely to result in a different dimension to the food safety and suitability issues considered. Different approaches may be needed regarding transfer of information, knowledge and communication between NZFSA and Māori in these areas.

Interface with other agencies on Māori food businesses

There are a number of agencies with interests/liason/networks with Māori food businesses that could prove useful / beneficial to connect with. These include Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry, Fisheries, Economic Development, Foreign Affairs and Trade and Te Puni Kokiri.

Delivery

NZFSA has the opportunity to effect the development and delivery of food safety and suitability communications, discussions and messages with and for Māori business by linking with other networks and processes in other agencies as appropriate.

Measurables

- Relationships and networks with Māori business developed and maintained;
- Māori business interests and input sought in relation to safety and suitability policies and standards as necessary;

Resourcing

Identifying within the baseline resource to:

- Employ a suitable person to assist in establishing networks with Māori at the appropriate level including marae;
- Better enable consultation with Māori on food related issues.

Building capacity

Retaining the person with key competencies and skills in tikanga Māori issues appointed to assist in:

- Relationship building with Māori as a key stakeholder in their own right;
- Arranging workshops, wānanga and hui with Māori and other agencies (as appropriate) on NZFSA, Māori food safety issues, food standards issues and FSANZ;
- Providing linkages across government agencies on Māori issues relating to food standards, safety and healthy eating; and
- Establishing and maintaining a network and a database of Māori business contacts.

Objectives	Deliverables
Focus on marae-based Māori business needs. Activities complementary to those of other government agencies	Establishing and maintaining a network and a database of Māori business contacts.

Maintained and enhanced New Zealand's international trade in food and food related products:

3. Market access for New Zealand's animal and plant products is maintained and enhanced

and

4. New Zealand's reputation for consistent and principled application of international trade rules is maintained and enhanced

Food Export Business

As with business generally in New Zealand, a proportion of Māori food business interests involve exports. The Māori farming and fishing interests in particular have significant export linkages. As with outcome 2, (other than marae-based businesses) needs and expectations of Māori exporters are the same as other New Zealanders in export food businesses.

APPENDIX A

Terminology

Principle of Partnership - between Māori and Pakeha reflected in the Treaty of Waitangi as a developing social contract, provides a basis for both the Crown and Tangata Whenua to focus on achieving equity in health and education for Māori, through equal sharing opportunities,

resources, decision-making and linking and networking with all concerned groups. In this context it entails working together with whānau, hapū, iwi; marae based providers; other community based providers; ITO's; government agencies such as TPK, PHU's, M.O.E, M.o.H, NZQA to develop strategies for Māori health gain and appropriate health services

Principle of Participation - in a spirit of mutual respect and responsibility, as reflected in the partnership perspective of the Treaty of Waitangi, emphasises the need for continuing consultation and negotiation in the recognition of and action on Māori concepts of health in political, social and economic areas. This entails involving tangata whenua at all levels of the sector in decision-making, planning, development and delivery of health promotion, trade, information, consultation and communication strategies that include all stakeholders

Principle of Protection - is grounded in the Treaty of Waitangi promise to Māori of the same rights and privileges of British subjects, provides for the recognition of tino rangatiratanga and of things Māori, which require the need for Health Services for Māori by Māori, working to ensure Māori have at least the same level of health as non-Māori, safeguarding Māori cultural concepts, values and practices

Consumption of Kai

In Māoridom consumption of kai is not only about the amount of food there is, it is about hospitality, caring, tolerance, sensitivity and respect. This, for tangata whenua is about manaaki (blessings), about tapu (sacredness), about whānaungatanga (sharing) and about mana (prestige) of the people. In the past, tangata whenua were very aware of how important it was to adhere to the rituals and protocols for gathering, preparing, cooking, storing and distributing kai on a marae. Personal hygiene and the sanctity of food, which encompassed the protocols of tikanga was paramount. Cleanliness was critical.

Tikanga: Māori customs and processes; tikanga is an issue of principles; values and spirituality; the dynamics of carrying out protocols correctly so as not transgress the tapu and mana of anyone in a given context.

Tangata Whenua have always maintained traditional values of food safety and food preparation practices, which emphasised a number of effective control points, pertaining to tikanga Māori protocols. The knowledge and history of traditional food sources, food safety and personal hygiene practices were placed and vested with nga kaitiaki (guardians - certain people within the whānau, hapū or lwi designated to maintain the sanctity of kai) on behalf of the lwi for its survival. The ability to judge the seasons, Māori were able to gather food and shellfish in season. For example, it is said, "when the Pohutukawa trees are flowering, the kina are fat." To add to this, whenever a hui was held at a marae, only enough kai was gathered for the purpose of that particular hui. To safeguard and to control seafood stocks from being over fished, this practice was stringently observed by Mana Whenua (local lwi), especially, when gathering kaimoana. On another level, by gathering just enough food for a hui alleviated the problem of having too much leftover food. Māori from a very early age were taught only to take enough to feed one's whānau. As different types of food would only be in season at certain periods of the year, this allowed time for food resources to replenish. Another practice that helped to ensure seafood resources were maintained was the ritual of giving the first fish, kina, paua etc of a catch back to the sea. The significance of this ritual held spiritual connotations for Māori as well as conservation aspects. Spiritually it was a way of giving thanks to Tangaroa, the god of the sea. From a conservationist perspective, it ensured that breeding stock and gravid fish were not taken. There were also protocols in place to monitor the control of waste from shellfish, e.g. pipi, mussel, kina, and fish were never shelled, prepared or eaten in gathering areas or on the beach. This practice was prohibited. As far as human waste was concerned, all traditional food gathering areas, the sea, shellfish beds, rivers, lakes, were regarded as tapu. When a marae was built, areas for preparing, storing and human waste were allocated away from food gathering grounds. This reduced the possibility of contamination from human waste and refuse etc.

¹Rūnanga: board, council, committee

²Kahui Kounga Kai: Working Group; Quality Control Group

³Wānanga: a gathering of experts; a place of learning; a seminar or workshop

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