

**AMALGAMATION OF THE NEW ZEALAND FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY
AND THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY**

Communication from New Zealand

The following communication, received on 14 March 2011, is being circulated at the request of the Delegation of New Zealand.

1. The New Zealand Government announced on 25 March 2010 that the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) would be amalgamated.
2. On 1 July 2010 the agencies became one legal department called the "Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry". NZFSA became the "Food Safety" branch of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry at that time.
3. The reasons for the amalgamation were both general and specific:
 - (a) **general** in the sense that Ministers have been focused on the fact that New Zealand has about 35 core government departments, whereas the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development median is about 15; and
 - (b) **specific** in the sense that the drivers of the amalgamation related to the extensive cross-overs in the work of the two agencies - especially in the fields of trade policy, bilateral trade negotiations, export market access and conditions of access, standard setting, risk analysis and export certification.
4. The amalgamation provided an opportunity to create a more efficient, single integrated organisation to strengthen the integrity and performance of the biological value chain, its contribution to New Zealand's economy, environment and social wellbeing, and interface with both domestic and international stakeholders.
5. On 1 February 2011, a new structure for MAF was introduced. The large functional groups such as food safety and biosecurity have been re-organised into common platforms for policy, science and risk analysis; standard setting; verification and compliance; enforcement and response functions.
6. The integration of these functions into common platforms will ensure New Zealand's systems for science and risk-based sanitary and phytosanitary measures for imports and exports will be strengthened, and ensure that the assessments for imports and exports are equally robust. The integration will also ensure that, over time, as systems are aligned and improved, when interested/affected parties approach New Zealand on an issue that relates to both food safety and

biosecurity, they will be talking to one agency operating with one strong science and risk-based system.

7. On 10 March 2011, the New Zealand Government announced that the Ministry of Fisheries would be merged into the "new" Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. This is scheduled to take place by 1 February 2012. Note that the biosecurity and food safety functions for fish are already managed within MAF.

8. SPS technical experts working with officials from what was NZFSA or MAFBNZ should continue to work with the key contact points they had previously. The brands of MAF, NZFSA and MAF Biosecurity New Zealand are continuing until full re-branding work is undertaken.

9. Those persons/organisations working with, or interested in the new agency that may have any concerns or questions should in the first instance consult the MAF website (<http://www.maf.govt.nz>).
