

Issues brief: LPA and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)

May 2019

Fast facts

- Australia has an effective, robust food regulation system in place to ensure the safety of our food.
- To date no maximum residue limits have been set for PFAS.
- Currently no action is required by producers regarding PFAS through the LPA program or on NVDs.

Issue

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as “PFAS”, are a group of manufactured chemicals that have been used since the 1950s in a range of common household products and specialty applications, including in the manufacture of non-stick cookware; fabric, furniture and carpet stain protection; food packaging; industrial processes; and in some fire-fighting foams.

The release of PFAS into the environment has become a concern globally because these chemicals do not break down easily by any natural process, so they can persist in humans, animals and the environment. The use of perfluorooctane sulfonate, perfluorooctanoic acid and perfluorohexane sulfonate – three well-known PFAS – is being reduced in Australia.

Because of historical use of PFAS, investigations are being conducted at some sites in Australia, to assess the nature, extent and risk of PFAS contamination. Some producers have expressed concern that their proximity to these sites could impede their ability to meet the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) requirements or accurately complete the LPA National Vendor Declaration (NVD).

SAFEMEAT has considered this issue and agreed that currently no action is required by producers regarding PFAS to meet LPA program requirements or when completing NVDs.

Background

Australia has an effective, robust food regulation system in place to ensure the safety of our food. Maximum Limits (MLs) for contaminants in the environment are set where food safety regulators consider action is required to manage exposure through food. As there are no regulated MLs for PFAS in any foods in Australia or overseas, there are currently no restrictions on domestic or international trade in agricultural or aquaculture products.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has developed precautionary and non-regulatory PFAS ‘trigger points’¹ for some foods including some livestock products. If PFAS detected in analysed food exceed the trigger points, further investigation may be required by public health and/or food regulatory agencies. These trigger points relate to people in, or predominantly consuming produce from, the investigation zones. For these individuals their overall exposure in the long term may exceed the Tolerable Daily Intakes for these chemicals.

For the general population, it is considered extremely unlikely that consumption of a specific food group over a period would all be from a PFAS contaminated area.¹ Dietary advice has been issued to local farmers in PFAS investigation areas who may eat their own produce, encouraging them to consume produce from multiple sources to reduce their overall exposure.



Issues brief: LPA and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)

May 2019

LPA & NVD Requirements

SAFEMEAT has agreed that at this stage, there is no requirement for producers to declare exposure to PFAS when completing LPA NVDs. This situation will be reassessed if FSANZ determines a ML is required or there is a need to support market access. It is the producer's responsibility to ensure that if a ML is set for PFAS, the property risk assessment map and risk assessment table is updated.

SAFEMEAT formed a Working Group and agreed on a Terms of Reference and Management Plan, which will be invoked if considered necessary based on any findings by expert panels or recommendations from Australian food and health authorities that there is a risk to human health from meat or dairy products originating from PFAS investigation areas. The Working Group continues to monitor this issue.

About SAFEMEAT

SAFEMEAT is a partnership between the red meat and livestock industry and state and federal governments of Australia. This partnership ensures that Australian red meat and livestock products achieve the highest standards of safety and hygiene from the farm to the consumer. SAFEMEAT initiates research and development, develops communication linkages, monitors the status of Australia's red meat products, reviews standards and examines emerging issues that could have an impact on the industry in the future.

About the Integrity Systems Company

A wholly owned subsidiary of Meat & Livestock Australia, the Integrity Systems Company (ISC) is responsible for delivering the red meat industry's on-farm assurance and through-chain traceability programs. These are the LPA program, the NVD and the NLIS which together make up Australia's red meat integrity system.

Further information

More information about PFAS can be accessed from pfas.gov.au and health.gov.au/pfas.

For more information about LPA and NVDs go to www.mla.com.au/lpa

¹[health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/2200FE086D480353CA2580C900817CDC/\\$File/Dietary-Exposure-Assesment.pdf](http://health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/2200FE086D480353CA2580C900817CDC/$File/Dietary-Exposure-Assesment.pdf)

