

AIFST Convention 2005

Presentation Abstract

Title: AFGC Industry Allergen Forum -
Issues, Opportunities & the Way Forward

Fiona J Fleming
George Weston Foods Limited, Sydney, Australia
Email: fiona.fleming@gwf.com.au

ABSTRACT

True food allergies affect a relatively small percentage of people nationwide. However, managing the risks associated with the presence of allergens in ingredients and products is one of the major challenges currently facing food manufacturers at all levels of the supply chain.

In March 2004, the AFGC (Australian Food and Grocery Council) Allergen Forum was established by industry member companies to address a range of issues associated with allergen management. Industry consultation, including a major workshop in February 2004, has allowed the Forum to prioritise its initial activities to the following projects:

- Benchmarking;
- Testing and Limits of Detection ;
- Risk assessment;
- Uniform supplier questionnaire;
- Labelling; and
- AFGC Allergen Guide - review and update.

Project teams have been established for each of the projects and comprise a range of stakeholders from industry, regulators, consumers and researchers.

Most project teams have been in place for around 12 months, meeting on a regular basis. As would be expected, a number of issues have been encountered and opportunities identified.

A key project in the Allergen Forum's portfolio has come to fruition with the establishment of the Food Safety Centre Allergen Bureau, which was officially launched on April 6th this year. The Allergen Bureau is administered by the Australian Food Safety Centre of Excellence and is funded via subscription to the Centre's Allergen Syndicate. The Bureau provides a point of contact for members for current allergen related information. The bureau website can be found at www.allergenbureau.net

This presentation will provide an introduction to the Allergen Bureau, an update on the progress of the remaining projects, and an outline of planned Allergen Forum activities and outcomes for 2005.