

VITAL Review

Project Brief: Georgina Christensen

<p>Project description:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Voluntary Incidental Trace Allergen Labelling (VITAL) Procedure (as at 12 June 2007) and VITAL Grid and VITAL Decision Tree (as at 12 June 2007) • Revise VITAL tools (calculator, FAQs, worked examples) and other supporting information such as training documents in line with amendments to the VITAL process as a result of the review
<p>Project justification:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VITAL was launched in June 2007 and has been used by Australian and New Zealand food industry for approximately 18months. Several areas for improvement of the VITAL tool have been identified. A review of the science underpinning VITAL is also required to include any new scientific findings from recently published studies. • Periodic reviews of VITAL were specified in the original VITAL project scope • Implementation of VITAL has been mandated by leading retailers for suppliers of private-label processed foods. Other retailers are likely to request compliance with VITAL over the next 12 months. This has contributed to the adoption of VITAL in Australia, New Zealand and by some international food manufacturers. • The VITAL tool has attracted international interest and positive comments from consumer groups, manufacturers and regulators. • Due to the wide use and international interest in VITAL, it is important that VITAL be reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to be the best available tool for cross contact allergen risk management.
<p>Deliverables & Success Criteria:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated version of VITAL Procedure, VITAL decision tree, VITAL Grid & VITAL scientific explanatory notes • Updated VITAL tools (calculator, FAQs, Protein Residue Table, worked examples) • Communication to retailers, VITAL-users and other relevant stakeholders detailing major changes to VITAL • Completion of scientific review of the VITAL Grid including an article suitable for peer review and publishing in suitable journal

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<p>Key Issues</p>	<p>Below is a list of key issues which will be addressed in the VITAL review. This list is not exhaustive and VITAL users are welcome to suggest other areas issues that should be considered in the review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VITAL Tools • Definition of particulates and how to address in the context of VITAL • Labelling requirements for current Action Level 3 designation • Improve definition of the scope of VITAL <p>Calculator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of processing cross contact allergens in addition to those from previously run product (eg from people, airflow) • Improved method of recording cross contact from processing (eg option of having several pages to cover different processing equipment) • Security features such as password protection • Compatibility with other systems • Inclusion of particulates • Increased usability (eg ability to add more than 20 ingredients, material codes etc) <p>Scientific Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-cephalopod molluscs, sulphites, gluten vs non-gluten wheat proteins • Requirements for inclusion of emerging allergens and allergens of international significance • VITAL Grid 	
<p>Key Activities/ Milestones</p>	<p>Milestone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete project brief and scope with project team • Scientific review scope draft completed by consultant. • VITAL Review Group (VRG) provide feedback for scientific review scope • Scientific review scope complete and scientific review commences • VRG commence work on branding, sourcing IT consultant to work on calculator, procedure etc • Scientific Review completed • VITAL Review completed • Brief IT consultant on changes required for VITAL calculator • Summary of changes to VITAL, VITAL procedure and revised VITAL tools (calculator, procedure etc) to be posted on website for feedback. Stakeholders advised via e-alert email. • Closing date for receiving feedback on revised VITAL procedure and revised VITAL tools • Finalise VITAL procedure and VITAL tools and launch on website 	<p>By when</p> <p>Apr 09</p> <p>Jun 09</p> <p>Jun 09</p> <p>Jun 09</p> <p>Jun 09</p> <p>Aug 09</p> <p>Sep 09</p> <p>Sep 09</p> <p>Nov 09</p> <p>Jan 10</p> <p>Feb 10</p>

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<p>Key team members:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vital Review Group (VRG) Leader: Georgina Christensen (VITAL Co-ordinator) • VRG: Fiona Fleming (VITAL Committee Chair), Kirsten Grinter, Robin Sherlock, Katie Konakoff • Other VITAL committee members to give input as required • Scientific consultant: Simon Brooke-Taylor • Feedback also will be requested from AFGC, retailers (Woolworths, Coles, Metcash, ALDI) • Key stakeholders - FSANZ, Health Dept, Industry, Anaphylaxis Australia, Allergy NZ • Interested parties: ASCIA 	
<p>Resources requirements:</p>	<p>Budget (TOTAL \$14 500)</p> <p>\$3000 Scientific Consultant \$4000 IT Consultant \$2500 Website provider \$5000 VITAL Co-ordinator</p> <p>The Allergen Bureau is grateful for the substantial in-kind support we receive, in terms of contributed time, from all members of the VITAL Review Group and their employers.</p>	
<p>Risks:</p>	<p>What could go wrong:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frustration from industry if a new version of VITAL is released which contradicts results from previous VITAL assessments 	<p>We will minimise risk by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with industry during a 6-week period when the revised VITAL procedure and tools will be available via the website. • Publishing a document with details of how changes will affect previous VITAL assessments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding to complete the review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working closely on the budget with the Allergen Bureau secretariat
	<p>If we don't do the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VITAL will become out-dated. If this occurs, the food industry may be less confident to use it as a tool for assessing cross contact allergen risk. If VITAL is not used, and there is no other tool available then consistency in precautionary statements will be further reduced. This could lead to an erosion of confidence of food allergic consumers in the food industry and possibly to further recalls and/or adverse reactions in sensitive consumers. • If the scientific data that underpins the action levels is not kept updated by embracing current, peer-reviewed science there will be a potential loss of credibility 	
<p>Other Projects:</p>	<p>The Allergen Bureau and other organisations are working on projects which may impact on the VITAL Review and hence may stretch the timeline for the VITAL review. These projects include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labelling Review Survey (due for completion in mid 2009) • Analysis Team (ongoing) 	