

STEC and HACCP seminars for exporters to the USA

Full project title

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Project description

The USA is a major market for Australian meat, particularly manufacturing beef. The Food Safety and Inspection Service of the US Department of Agriculture (FSIS) administers detailed rules on meat safety and have exacting standards both for product and process. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) in Australia certify product for export to the USA.

The purpose of this project was to provide the opportunity for senior DAFF officers to address export establishment personnel to ensure a fuller understanding of control of manufacturing beef exports and Australia's control program for the Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC), and implementation of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) systems at processing establishments.

The objectives were to increase the knowledge and understanding of export establishment personnel to ensure that systems complying with agreements between DAFF and FSIS concerning the STEC in manufacturing beef were maintained and that HACCP system development and operation were operating as expected by FSIS.

Project content

Seminars were conducted in four states (Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth) with presentations from four senior DAFF officers and an industry consultant. The topics of Australia's control program for the Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC), and implementation of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) systems at processing establishments were covered in detail. Participants were invited to complete an action plan to consider changes to their systems, and an on-line evaluation of the seminar.

Project outcome

Seminars were held in four states in February 2025 attended by over 100 people representing 53 processing establishments and cold stores.

Data collected through an on-line survey indicated that more than half of beef and smallstock processors attending the seminars agreed that they had learned more about STEC and HACCP at the seminars and committed to taking action to modify their HACCP systems. More than half of beef processors committed to take action to modify their approach to STEC management.

Benefit for industry

Providing information to processor participants increased their understanding of how the export trade is negotiated between governments and their part in ensuring that agreements were complied with. As this information and understanding spreads more widely through the export processors, it will be easier to demonstrate compliance with the Australian system when rare rejections occur at the Port-of-Entry and during audits by importing countries.

Useful resources

Videos of the presentations, copies of presentation slides, and the Question and Answer document are available from AMPC.

