



**Nestlé**

Nestlé Submission

Criteria for *Listeria monocytogenes* –  
Microbiological Limits for Foods

(P 1017)

16 November 2012

## **Nestlé Submission**

### **Proposal 1017 Criteria for *Listeria monocytogenes* - Microbiological Limits for Foods**

#### **Executive Summary**

This submission is made on behalf of Nestlé Australia Ltd and Nestlé New Zealand Ltd.

Nestlé welcomes the opportunity to provide comments in response to Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Proposal 1017 Criteria for *Listeria monocytogenes* - Microbiological Limits for Foods.

Nestlé considers that the review of *Listeria monocytogenes* microbiological limits in foods is timely, and necessary to keep up to date with the latest worldwide approaches in this area, and supports the review.

Nestlé supports Option 1 – to include limits in Standard 1.6.1 for *L. Monocytogenes* on the basis of whether the food is ready-to-eat and can or cannot support its growth

Nestlé considers that Option 1 reflects the most recent international consensus on this topic, and in addition, creates no trade barriers for products which are to be imported into, or exported from Australia and New Zealand.

## **Nestlé Submission**

### **Proposal 1017 Criteria for *Listeria monocytogenes* – Microbial Limits for Foods**

## **Response to Assessment Questions**

### **FSANZ welcomes information or comment on existing definitions for “ready-to-eat” and specific considerations that may need to be taken into account when applying criteria for *L. monocytogenes* to this category of foods**

Nestlé supports the CODEX definition of ‘ready to eat’, as ‘any food which is normally eaten in its raw state or any food handled, processed, mixed, cooked, or otherwise prepared into a form which is normally eaten without further listericidal steps’. Further, the definition in Std 3.2.2 should be consistent with this to eliminate confusion.

### **FSANZ welcomes information or comment on whether adequate guidance or tools are available for industry or enforcement agencies to validate whether a food can support the growth of *L. monocytogenes* or not.**

Nestlé considers that it would be beneficial for FSANZ to provide a guidance document illustrating lists of examples of the types of food that can support growth of *L. monocytogenes*.

The scientific literature shows considerable divergence on the conditions under which a food can support the growth of *L. monocytogenes*

This would mirror work carried out by the US FDA on the “Evaluation and Definition of Potentially Hazardous Foods”.  
(<http://www.fda.gov/Food/ScienceResearch/ResearchAreas/SafePracticesforFoodProcesses/ucm094141.htm>)

In addition, reference should be made within the standard, to the Codex Guidelines on the Application of General Principles of Food Hygiene on the Control of *Listeria monocytogenes* in Foods (CAC/GL 61-2007) and any subsequent revisions.  
In fact the adoption of the Codex document would also address the need to provide guidance on the conditions under which growth of *L. monocytogenes* will or will not occur in the food.

### **FSANZ welcomes comment on the need to specify methods of analysis in the Code or whether other mechanisms can be used in order to ensure consistent application of microbiological criteria.**

Nestlé considers that it is essential that the method of analysis, for *Listeria monocytogenes*, which is aligned with ISO standards, be specified in the Code.

It is equally important that other methods that provide equivalent sensitivity, reproducibility and reliability are specified if they have been appropriately validated (based on ISO16140).

The Food Standards Code currently prescribes methods according to standards AS/NZ 1766 and AS/NZS 4659 – It would be helpful if the International equivalents ISO11290-2 and ISO 16140 were included as equivalent standards.

**FSANZ welcomes comment on the role or need for regulatory limits in Standard 1.6.1 to ensure a safe food supply. Can reference criteria provide adequate support for enforcement agencies (and guidance to industry) to ensure food businesses produce safe and suitable food?**

The provision of limits for *L. monocytogenes* consistent with section 4 (Microbiological criteria for *L. monocytogenes* in Ready To Eat Food) is supported, and does not represent a change in the Food Standards Code for those foods in which growth of *L. monocytogenes* can occur.

The provision of limits for foods in which the growth of *Listeria monocytogenes* will not occur would present a consistent approach across industry and regulatory agencies, and avoids the uncertainty faced by many companies when operating in different jurisdictions. As indicated in the Codex document the establishment of a limit at the time of consumption presents a very low risk to consumers.