

submissions

From: submissions
Subject: Hopefully this sends correctly this time..(Extended revised version) Dangerous food product that needs to be investigated and recalled. (Quorn meat free and soy free products containing a mould derivative that is toxic to some.)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 7 January 2016 1:38 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Hopefully this sends correctly this time..(Extended revised version) Dangerous food product that needs to be investigated and recalled. (Quorn meat free and soy free products containing a mould derivative that is toxic to some.)

[REDACTED]

To whom this may concern,

I am writing this to inform you of what happened to me on the 5/1/16 and how Quorn products may cause some people to become ill and even die. I became so ill that I nearly called an ambulance but was so disoriented that I became unable to do such and nearly passed out. This happened to me on three other occasions and I just put it the first time down to maybe food poisoning but because the other people that ate it did not get ill, I thought I had had a bad reaction to something else that day, never did I think to check the package for the products very hard to find warning.. I even suspected in one episode that it may be the anti-depressants I am on and the two glasses of white wine I consumed with dinner. There needs to be a stronger warning on these products in case the frail and infirm or young children have an allergic reaction to this product. In my opinion it needs to be removed from supermarket shelves and freezers for immediate investigation. These products are very dangerous for the percentage of people that do have an adverse reaction, as is stated on the back of the product packaging. If I had of been better informed with a warning on the front of package, I would never have taken the risk. I am a very strict vegetarian and never in my life have I ever been allergic to any food, so of course I never suspected it could be this product and believe me I wish it did not happen because I really enjoyed eating it until I became violently ill and worked out the hard way that I was one of those people who have an adverse reaction, so don't at all suspect that I am someone trying to ruin this product or prevent people from becoming vegetarian and substituting it for meat, I just want a better warning or the product to be recalled and will now seek legal advice about what avenues are open to me in court. If my medication did this to me I would want to know. Drug companies are made to list all adverse reactions, so why on earth are they able to get away with not doing so.. Be very assured I will continue complaining and getting the word out to the media and everyone on Facebook and have now made contact with ACA and 60 minutes that this product is dangerous to those who are allergic to its ingredients.. It is not enough to just say this product may cause adverse reactions on the back of the pack, no doubt to cover them for legal reasons, it should have a list of the adverse reactions and side effects because one day this will put someone who is weaker than me in hospital or worse kill someone in Australia, and from what I have researched on the internet it already has done so in the other countries it is sold in. I vomited each time until I was physically wrenching for over an hour and a half and then had to sit on the toilet with the worst diarrhea that I have ever experienced while also holding a bucket to vomit...that in my mind is not just a bit of an adverse reaction and considering the company has obviously had complaints enough to make some vague warning on the back, it is clear they know all too well about exactly what reactions I am talking about. Also I have since researched this on the internet and if you put Quorn products vomiting into a google search you will find that it has killed 3 people to date and made thousands of innocent people very ill and some were hospitalized. I made a complaint on the Quorn Facebook page as well as contacted the distributor Simplot to have them try and hide my original Facebook posts and then Simplot simply told me that that these were known risks and that it was a safe product. I think it is not widely known that these products can cause serious allergic reaction and possible death and no where on the packaging does it state the serious nature of the potential of the mould based products risks. Please I implore you as the Minister for health to look into my claims and the many claims of thousands of other consumers before it takes a life here in Australia. It killed an 11 year old boy in America in 2013, Miles Bengco (see link attached) and it will certainly happen here if not already even if it was not traced back to this product being the cause. The lady from Simplot told me that peanuts and dairy are sensitive to some but they are not banned, but I told her that unlike them, this product is not widely known as dangerous to some who may have an allergic reaction the mould it is made out of. I have never been allergic to blue cheese or mould based penicillin so how was I to ever know that I would react in this way and I only saw the statement about its adverse affects after the fourth time. Even if I had of seen a red sign warning on the front it would not have stopped me because I am not known to have ever had a reaction to blue cheese like mould that it claims to be similar to, so that would not have prevented my getting ill. How on earth did this product get approval to be placed in Australian supermarkets when it is well documented that this product has recorded cases of people becoming dangerously ill way back in the late nineties. To date 2000 recorded complaints about this product have been collected and three deaths and if any product was found to cause this it would at the very least be recalled and then labelled accordingly. I am still experiencing the effects of this toxic mould product and all day have been unable to eat and now have continuing aches and pain

in my joints. I will be contacting my local member and the opposition shadow health minister along with other parties and trust that you will take this matter seriously and investigate my claims and the many claims of other unsuspecting consumers in this country. This Product and its many years of negative health affects should have never been allowed to be sold in Australia and should be pulled from shelves immediately until further testing and investigation into its toxicity is undertaken. I will be seeking legal advice tomorrow over this issue and seeking to understand how any government or its agencies could allow its people to be placed in danger like this without due warning or testing and research before deeming it safe for consumption. Even one death is one too many and even if %1 of our population goes through what I went through it is a percentage that is unacceptable. Below is an excerpt from one of the articles I found and it is disturbing to say the least.

"It must be noted that Quorn products are made not from mushrooms, but from a fungus (think Candida), which may put some people off. Also, the Latin name for the fungus used to make Quorn products is *fusarium venenatum* – and the word *venenatum* means "venomous" or "poisonous", which also doesn't inspire much confidence.

Admittedly the above considerations are somewhat subjective, but there are some legitimate concerns regarding the safety and desirability of ingesting *fusarium venenatum*.

In a controlled clinical study, conducted by the company that developed Quorn, 10 percent of the 200 test subjects who ate Quorn products suffered from stomach ache, nausea or vomiting, compared to five percent of 100 subjects of a control group.

Enter the Centre for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) is a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit watchdog and consumer advocacy group that advocates safer and more healthful foods.

The group has been logging complaints about Quorn foods since 2001 and has received reports from people with complaints about allergic reactions, [hives](#), breathing difficulties, nausea, projectile vomiting and even [anaphylactic shock](#)."

And I would like to know how the food standards board here in Australia deemed this a non-traditional food and not a novel food when clearly it is need of further testing for its toxicity.. Clearly this was overlooked to get it into a position of not have to be rigorously tested for toxic agents that have made many ill around the world. See below excerpts from the proposed changes to the code on what is deemed a novel food in need of investigation. In no way should this food product with its history of ill effects have ever been accepted as safe,

Supporting document 2

Assessment of Risks and Safety Data Requirements for New Foods – Proposal P1024
Revision of the Regulation of Nutritive Substances & Novel Foods

2.1 Evidence for Establishing Microbiological Safety of Eligible Foods

To be eligible for inclusion on the proposed list of eligible microorganisms, the taxonomic unit to be assessed needs to be established and be based on valid nomenclature and taxonomy. Any changes in nomenclature and taxonomy over time would be taken into consideration and any reclassification should be considered when assessing the evidence.

To satisfy the requirements of Eligible Food Criterion 1, a food business would need to be able to demonstrate that a microorganism that they intend to add to food is unambiguously identifiable, belongs to an eligible taxonomic group listed in the Code and is cultured to maintain genetic stability. It is proposed that novel strains of an eligible microorganism will not require further risk assessments if any minimum requirements or qualifications are met. For example, a minimum requirement may be an absence of toxigenic activity or absence of acquired antimicrobial resistance genes.

FSANZ considers that individual strains belonging to a taxonomic unit not listed as an eligible food in the Code may be low risk but this cannot be ascertained from the existing knowledge of the taxonomic unit to which it belongs. Consequently, novel strains of microorganisms not listed in the Code could only reach the market after a full risk assessment is completed by FSANZ to determine their safety

2.2 Evidence for Establishing the Toxicological Safety of Eligible Foods

All whole foods meet the EFC, not just those traditionally part of the Australian/New Zealand diet, provided that they are not novel fungi, novel algae, or in the list of prohibited plants and fungi in Standard 1.4.4 of the Code. However, it is not reasonable to assume that all poisons that may be found in plants or animals are already known, particularly those which may exert a chronic or carcinogenic effect. Therefore some 'history of safe use' must be built into the EFC for whole foods that are not already part of the traditional Australian/New Zealand diet. Foods are currently considered to be 'non-traditional' if there is a lack of history of safe consumption in Australia or New Zealand, but the term 'a history of human consumption' is used in the standard, and 'non-traditional' is not defined in the Code.

It is likely to be necessary to specify a date for the identification of foods that are a traditional part of the diet in Australia and New Zealand, so that all foods present in the diet prior to that date are considered traditional and are therefore eligible for marketing without a safety assessment. This eligibility should also extend to macronutrients extracted from those traditional foods, even if the extraction method postdates the traditional food date. For example, milk proteins extracted by a new method would still be considered to be a traditional part of the Australian and New Zealand diet because whole milk and dairy products are traditional parts of the Australian and New Zealand diet. For safety reasons, this eligibility should apply only to macronutrients.

For the safety of consumers, FSANZ considers that it is essential that the manufacturer or importer compiles and retains a dossier of appropriate data to justify the claim that there is a history of human consumption, although not necessarily a history of human consumption in Australia or New Zealand.

Health Canada, which administers the Food and Drugs Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. F-27) has addressed the question of what data requirements should be required to support a history of traditional use of a food in other countries. Health Canada's data requirements provide a good indication of the data requirements that might reasonably be expected to support a claim of 'history of safe use'.

Adoption of data requirements equivalent to those specified by Health Canada would mean that a substance would be considered

to have a history of safe use as a food if it has been an ongoing part of the diet for at least three generations in a large, genetically diverse human population where it has been used in ways and at levels that are similar to those expected or intended in Australia and New Zealand. A history covering three generations is considered the minimum to cover all potential toxicities including those affecting germ cells.

The following information would be needed to support a claim that a product has a history of safe use:

- Historical evidence indicating ongoing, frequent consumption by a cross-section of the population where it has been used over several (at least three) generations. This evidence may be derived from various sources including, but not limited to, scientific publications and patents, non-scientific publications and books, cookbooks, books on the history of food culture, and/or affidavits from two or more independent, reputable authorities that include well-documented accounts of the way the food is used and how they know it has the history it does. Limited usage or short term exposure would not be adequate to demonstrate a history of safe use.

A declaration of any possible adverse effects linked to the food documented in its country of origin and/or a country where there is a high degree of consumption.

3.1.1 Principles for Establishing Microbiological Safety

The exclusion of a particular microorganism from the eligible food list does not necessarily imply risk associated with its use. Individual strains may be safe but this cannot be ascertained from the existing knowledge of the taxonomic unit to which it belongs. In the case of microbiological risk, the microbial agent is itself the potential hazard and exposure may result in an acute or chronic adverse health effect. Examples include infections causing severe systemic disease, gastrointestinal illness, hepatitis, reactive arthritis, or tooth decay. Microbial ingredients may pose a risk of pathogenicity in consumers through infection or inappropriate colonisation after consumption, or via the production of toxins or other metabolites in the food matrix or at the site of infection or colonisation. In the case of bacteria, risk may also be associated with the carriage of mobile genetic elements containing antimicrobial resistance and/or virulence genes.

The aim of this part of the assessment is to establish that a microbe that does not satisfy the requirements of being listed as an eligible food does not cause an adverse health effect or does not carry genetic elements that could confer antimicrobial resistance (AMR) or virulence determinants to other microbes. In establishing the safety of a microbial ingredient, the overarching principles are that the microorganism to be assessed must be unambiguously identifiable and sufficient data and information exists to demonstrate safety.

Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code - Standard 1.5.1 - Novel Foods
- F2013C00142

1 Definitions

In this Standard –

non-traditional food means –

- (a) a food that does not have a history of human consumption in Australia or New Zealand; or
- (b) a substance derived from a food, where that substance does not have a history of human consumption in Australia or New Zealand other than as a component of that food; or
- (c) any other substance, where that substance, or the source from which it is derived, does not have a history of human consumption as a food in Australia or New Zealand.

novel food means a non-traditional food and the food requires an assessment of the public health and safety considerations having regard to -

- (a) the potential for adverse effects in humans; or
- (b) the composition or structure of the food; or
- (c) the process by which the food has been prepared; or

- (d) the source from which it is derived; or
- (e) patterns and levels of consumption of the food; or
- (f) any other relevant matters.

(I THINK MOST PEOPLE WOULD AGREE THAT QUORN PRODUCTS ARE A NOVEL FOOD NOT A NON-TRADITIONAL OWING TO THE DOCUMENTED ADVERSE EFFECTS IT HAS HAD IN HUMANS BEFORE IT WAS ALLOWED INTO THIS COUNTRY. IT DID HAVE THE POTENTIAL FOR ADVERSE EFFECTS IN HUMANS IN AUSTRALIA AND NZ BEFORE ENTERING OUR MARKET PLACE AND THIS FACT IS STATED ON THE BACK OF THE PACKAGING.)

The Latin name for the fungus used to make Quorn products is *fusarium venenatum* – and the word *venenatum* means “venomous” or “poisonous” and should definitely be placed on the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code - Standard 1.4.4 - Prohibited and Restricted Plants and Fungi

- F2015C00969

Yours Sincerely, Robyn Whittaker.

<http://www.health24.com/Medical/Allergy/Allergy-triggers/Quorn-products-can-fungus-be-good-for-you-20140826>
<http://www.cspinet.org/new/201503251.html>
<https://www.cspinet.org/quorn/victims.html>
<http://www.cspinet.org/new/200208151.html>
<http://www.care2.com/greenliving/the-fake-meat-making-people-sick.html>
<http://www.unleashed.org.au/community/forum/topic.php?t=8206>
<http://www.consumeraffairs.com/news04/2010/09/food-allergy-danger-seen-in-quorn-fungus-foods.html>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cjpN4FGFhM>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/federal-eye/wp/2015/03/25/parents-lawsuit-says-quorn-mold-based-food-product-killed-their-11-year-old-son/>

<http://cspinet.org/new/pdf/quorndeathsweden.pdf>

Email sent using Optus Webmail