Science Strategy

Dairy Food Safety Victoria's (DFSV) vision is local and global confidence in the safety of Victoria's dairy food. The objective of the Science Strategy 2020-2025 is to describe how we provides high quality, evidence-based advice and information to support delivery of the organisational objectives of the DFSV Corporate Plan 2020-2025.

DFSV and its environment

The dairy industry exists within an ever-changing environment requiring an agile, informed and responsive regulator. New and emerging products and processing technologies can present new risks and challenges. A contemporary, dynamic and adaptable approach will enable us to respond appropriately to shifting risks and needs. Our science plays an important role in informing the response and developing the capabilities to address these risks.

Our stakeholders

- DFSV licensees
- DFSV Board and staff, especially Food Safety Managers
- State food regulatory agencies particularly the dairy regulators
- Victorian Government (e.g. the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, the Department of Health and Human Services)
- Department of Agriculture Water and Environment and export listed dairy establishments throughout Australia (AMRA)
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand
- Dairy Australia
- United Dairy Farmers Victoria
- Research and academic organisations
- Service providers (e.g. laboratories, consultants)

Guiding Principles

The following principles govern the delivery of science within DFSV:

- The use of science will be consistent with our values of collaboration, openness, respect, responsibility and accountability
- We will understand current and emerging risks through shared use of data and information
- We will target surveillance programs to focus efforts in high risk areas
- We will analyse data to support behaviour change and strengthen food safety culture
- We will invest in our people and technology for future capabilities
- Scientific outputs are linked to regulatory outcomes or improved regulatory practice

Our science pillars

DFSV's science supports our strategic objectives through 5 main workstreams:

Guidance

Provide consistent best practice guidance both internally and externally. **Collaborative regulator**

Surveillance

Undertake investigative surveillance programs addressing current and emerging risks to generate tailored, evidence-based information to assist industry to optimise processes and culture to improve risk management. **Proactive regulator**

Data

Develop and enhance the use, analysis and interpretation of industry food safety verification data and culture metrics obtained through Dairy RegTech. This will enable a rapid and proactive identification of risk and response, resulting in strengthened food safety systems and increased engagement with external holders. **Progressive and proactive regulator**

Inform decision making and risk assessment
Generate reliable and accurate data, observations and information to inform decision making and assessment of risk to ensure decisions are based on sound scientific concepts. **Informed regulator**

Risk and hazard analysis (Horizon scanning and engagement)
Ensure the agency understands emerging and novel food safety and regulatory risks and challenges (horizon scanning). **Agile and responsive regulator**

The priorities and activities within these workstreams are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 - Workstreams and initiatives

	We will:	Initiatives	Measures	Relationship to DFSV Corporate plan 2020-2025
Guidance	Provide best practice guidance both internally and externally	Review, develop and maintain the suite of guidance materials to provide industry with the current, best practice information Provide guidance to industry via an advice line Review learning network forums to ensure they provide value to our licensees. Promote active, industry driven engagement in the development and updating of skills and knowledge of food safety and food safety culture. Utilise these forums to encourage networking and the sharing of food safety information amongst industry participants. Provide technical support to the C & E team and build capacity within the Science team to broaden skill set within the wider CETS function and enable a whole of team approach to assessment of food safety programs and issues. Engage with licensees through learning networks, seminars and licensee visits to promote and sustain constructive relationships. Actively engage with newly licensed manufacturers to discuss the information and resources we provide, and establish relationships	- Guideline documents are reviewed within a period of 3 years - Qualitative responses from learning network feedback surveys - Licensee survey responses	- Provide information and training to support an effective regulatory system
Surveillance	Undertake investigative surveillance programs addressing current and emerging risks to generate tailored, evidence-based feedback to assist industry to optimise processes and culture to improve risk management.	Co-ordinate the AMRA program to facilitate market access and to verify control of Agvet chemicals and other contaminants within Australia's dairy industry Design and undertake surveillance programs designed to address the highest risks to the dairy industry and inform best practice guidance on culture, and implementation and maintenance of best practice Support national food regulation priorities, particularly those around reducing foodborne illness and maintaining a strong, robust and agile food regulation system.	- AMRA survey completed each year - Design and deliver programs. Report findings and recommendations to industry via learning network or other delivery methods	- Use our systems to maintain trust in the safety of dairy products to export markets - Deliver a surveillance and testing program that reflects current and emerging risks

Data	Develop and enhance the use, analysis and interpretation of industry food safety verification data and culture metrics obtained through Dairy RegTech. This will enable a rapid and proactive identification of risk and response, resulting in strengthened food safety systems and increased stakeholder engagement.	Develop methods of analysis to better use industry food safety verification data to optimise audit efficiency and effectiveness (RegTech data). Maintain an approach of continuous improvement to develop the food safety data analytics component of RegTech to increase the amount and complexity of data collected and analysed, with a view to obtaining more advanced insights Support the C & E team in interpretation and application of this data Interpret culture assessment data to gain insights and identify trends in food safety culture. Develop capabilities in assessing and interpreting food safety culture maturity of licensees to guide improvements.	- Data analysis informs audit activities – qualitative feedback from FSMs - Development and maintenance of data analytics framework - Evaluation and continuous improvement of data analytics methods and outputs	- Develop systems to better use data, resources and technology to deliver services - Implement Dairy RegTech
Inform decision making and risk assessment	Generate reliable and accurate data, observations and information to inform decision making and assessment of risk to ensure decisions are based on sound scientific concepts.	Participate in food incident management activities Assess the adequacy of industry food safety risk assessments Participate in internal and external food response plan and emergency preparedness activities Collaborate with manufacturers implementing new or novel processes to ensure that risks are addressed and food safety is assured (e.g. raw milk cheese, HPP)	- As required	- Review our effectiveness to respond to major food incidents

| Risk and hazards awareness (Horizon scanning and engagement) | Ensure the agency understands emerging and novel food safety and regulatory risks and challenges (horizon scanning). | Develop effective horizon scanning methodology to keep abreast of emerging trends and technologies so that we are ready to respond

Be aware of, and respond to, the business innovations that are likely to emerge

Monitor activities of and/or engage with regulatory bodies (e.g. Codex[1] and FSANZ), industry bodies (e.g. Dairy Australia) the Surveillance, Evidence and Analysis Working Group[2] and others

Monitor the development of food standard proposals and applications and engage with FSANZ where appropriate

Collaborate with Victorian, interstate, Commonwealth and New Zealand regulators to ensure consistency in food safety standards and regulation

Monitor and provide input into CODEX activities to ensure that we are up to date with the direction of the international standards and that our information and advice is consistent with that at the international level | - Effective horizon scanning process in place and periodic reporting to agency and board | - Collaborate with our Victorian food regulatory partners to influence national outcomes that support our strategic direction

- Collaborate nationally to share ideas and best practices for regulatory delivery

- Enhance our ability to identify emerging issues and anticipate problems

- Increase engagement and partnerships domestically and globally to strengthen our evidence base |

[1] Codex standards ensure that food is safe and can be traded. The 188 Codex members have negotiated science based recommendations in all areas related to food safety and quality.

[2] The Surveillance, Evidence and Analysis Working Group reports to the Implementation Sub-committee for Food Regulation.