



Food Intolerance Network

Coordinator: Sue Dengate

PO Box 718 Woolgoolga NSW 2456 phone 02 6654 9544 fax 02 6654 9566

email: sdengate@ozemail.com.au website: www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info

9 November 2004

Mr Graham Peachey
Chief Executive Officer
Food Standards Australia New Zealand
PO Box 7186
CANBERRA ACT 2601

SULPHITE CONTENT OF MINCED MEAT

When Sue and I met you in May this year we provided you with sulphite test results to that date as performed across Australia by members of the Food Intolerance Network.

I am now able to provide you with even more results, as attached. The results are cause for continuing concern: of 65 results returned in the last year, 28 (43%) contained sulphites at = or >200ppm. The legal limit is of course zero.

ACT 86% (of 7 samples, including equal highest in the survey at 640ppm),
NSW 22% (of 23 samples),
NT 33% (of 9 samples),
NZ 67% (of 6 samples),
QLD 50% (of 6 samples),
SA 100% (1 sample only),
TAS 0% (1 sample only),
VIC 0% (3 samples only),
WA 50% (of 6 samples).

While people are most likely to report positive rather than negative results to the Network, the illegal presence of these known causes of asthma is a real concern. I look forward to hearing what action regulatory agencies will take and to seeing lower results in the next year.

Yours truly

Dr Howard Dengate FAICD

* [Results not on web due to legal issues]

Office of the Chief Executive Officer

Dr Howard Dengate
Food Intolerance Network
PO Box 718
WOOLGOOLGA NSW 2456

Dear Dr Dengate *Howard*

Thank you for your letter and test results of 9 November 2004, regarding the sulphite content of mince meat. We appreciate the interest taken by you on behalf of the Food Intolerance Network regarding this issue.

As you correctly state, sulphite is not permitted in mince meat in the Food Standards Code (FSC) and its presence in mince meat would be a breach of the relevant State or Territory food legislation. Though you have not indicated your test method, or whether you have also provided this information to the relevant State and Territory's, there does appear to be a significant compliance issue in relation to sulphite in mince meat in most States and Territories.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) will provide this information to the relevant State and Territory Health Departments for possible investigation. State and Territory enforcement agencies do regularly conduct sampling, analysis and enforcement of the levels of additives, including sulphite, as permitted by the FSC.

You may also be interested to know that FSANZ has dedicated the 21st Australian Total Diet Study (ATDS) to monitor levels of key additives in the food supply. The ATDS represents the best estimate of actual consumption by Australians of food additives, including sulphites, that can be made with the available data. The results for the 21st ATDS will be published in 2005.

I hope this information has been useful to your organisation and if you have any further enquiries relating to the sulphite please contact Peter Wallner on (02) 6271 2607 or peter.wallner@foodstandards.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Graham Peachey
Chief Executive Officer
23 November 2004