

Comments from the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and the Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.

Due date of submission – 18 July 2019

The Victorian Departments of Health and Human Services and Jobs, Precincts and Regions (the departments) welcome the opportunity to respond to this application to amend the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code).

Application A1163 – Food irradiation definition of herbs and spices has been submitted by Sapro Australia seeking clarification of the meaning of the terms *herbs* and *spices* in Standard 1.5.3 – Irradiation of Food in order to ensure uniform interpretation and enforcement.

From the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) Call for Submissions, it is understood that:

- Food importers have experienced different interpretations of Standard 1.5.3 clause 4 resulting in some consignments being destroyed or re-exported.
- The Applicant is seeking to clarify the definition of herbs and spices in Standard 1.5.3 and Schedule 22 for the purposes of food irradiation and to ensure consistent interpretation and enforcement.
- There is no single Codex definition for herbs and spices that is consistent across all Codex standards, guidelines or Codes of Practice.
- The original intent of the definition in Standard 1.5.3 clause 4 and Schedule 22 was that where a herb or spice does not meet the commodity description, but in other respects is considered a herb or a spice, it may be irradiated. That is, the permission to irradiate was intended to apply to products that meet the commonly understood meaning of a herb or a spice, regardless of whether it is listed as a commodity in Schedule 22.
- The proposed amendment to Standard 1.5.3 clause 4 provides an inclusive definition of a herb and a spice to provide greater clarity.
- The proposed amendment to Standard 1.5.3 and Schedule 22 will not present any adverse health effects for consumers and the outcomes of the safety of irradiated herbs and spices considered in 2001 under Application A413 remain.
- This change will benefit trade, support business and may increase the range of herbs and spices available to consumers.

On the basis of the information above, the departments support the progression of Application A1163.