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Safe Food Handling of Cold Smoked Salmon

Media reports have appeared over the past 24 hours regarding a general health warning about the importance of safe food handling following the reporting of three cases of Listeria (listeriosis) infections on the mainland of Australia (in Feb, May and June this year).

Health authorities have not issued a food recall.

The intention of the health advice from the Chief Medical Officer was to remind at-risk consumers of the potential health risks of a range of foods that have a higher risk of Listeria contamination not just smoked salmon – this includes cold meats, pre-packaged salads, soft cheese and pate, soft serve ice-cream and rockmelon.

The link to Tasmania is simply that the fish were grown here. There is no evidence that the contamination occurred here.

Listeria bacteria are widely distributed in the environment and can grow in food at refrigeration temperatures.

Listeria infection of healthy, non-pregnant people is very rare. Across Australia, this year, 27 cases of listeriosis have been recorded, with three being linked to consumption of smoked salmon.

Consumers should always be mindful of food safety, but can be confident that Huon smoked salmon is thoroughly monitored and regulated.

Huon cold smoked salmon products were recently tested by health authorities with no positive results for listeria recorded, nor was any breach of Australian food safety standards noted. In addition, an inspection of our processing facility at Parramatta Creek was undertaken by the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment and found no evidence of non-compliance with the Food Standards Code (See confirmation in Attachment A – statement from Tasmanian Chief Inspector of Primary Produce Safety).

Huon's Parramatta Creek processing facility first achieved British Retail Consortium AA rating in 2016 (an international certification standard for food safety) - the only seafood processing facility in Australia to achieve this rating which is a testament to our focus on food safety and continuous improvement (as is the fact that Huon has not had a product recall in the past 8 years).

Our factory is independently audited multiple times per year to comply with our certification requirements and to ensure excellence when it comes to food safety. Internal testing, on-site at the factory is undertaken every day by Huon.

The Australian Chief Medical Officer statement about the importance of safe food handling and preparation can be read here - www.health.gov.au/news/listeria-cases-among-at-risk-persons-are-a-timely-reminder-for-food-safety

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