



Knowing what's in your food



Know

What do you need to know?

- The Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code) contains rules you may need to meet:
- The Code is found here:
<http://www.foodstandards.govt.nz/code>
- The Code includes rules about:
 - which foods or ingredients are allergens,
 - which additives, preservatives and processing aids can be (or must be) used with particular foods,
 - ingredients that can't be used in food – or need to be approved before they are used,
 - composition rules that only apply to some foods, (e.g. sugar, honey etc.)
- You can check the Code or ask your consultant, verifier or registration authority for more information.

Why is knowing what's in your food is important?



Horticulture (growing): Agricultural compounds like herbicides, pesticides, fungicides and fertilisers can leave residues on food that can cause illness.

You should always check and follow label instructions when using these products.





Know

Only use them on the plants they are approved for and harvest plants after any withholding periods specified.



There are rules about the maximum residue limits that are permitted on horticultural produce sold for human consumption here:

<http://www.mpi.govt.nz/document-vault/11329>

You don't have to test your crops to prove the limits are met – but random sampling and testing of produce is carried out by MPI, and sometimes your customers will also do testing.

If your product doesn't meet the limits, you have to be able to show that you took all steps necessary to ensure your product would meet the rules.



Sugar: If you are using processing aids, additives (e.g. colours), or preservatives you need to ensure they are food grade and that the Code allows them to be used. You also need to know whether these, or any other ingredients you use (e.g. to make syrups) are, or contain, allergens (see below).

- Even if you are only selling food made and packaged by others, it's your responsibility to check that the food is labelled correctly. This guide will help know what you should check for: <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/document-vault/2965>
- You must be able to tell customers whether a food contains each individual allergen if they ask. For packaged foods this information must be on packaging.



K

Know

- You need to know what's in your food if you are growing produce, making foods with more than one ingredient or selling manufacturer packaged foods, so you know what ingredients and allergens they contain.
- If you think a food isn't labelled correctly, especially if it probably has an allergen that isn't listed (e.g. a muffin doesn't list wheat flour or gluten) – check with your supplier before selling it.



Allergen Info: There are 11 common food allergens you must know about. These are sulphites, cereals containing gluten (e.g. wheat), shellfish, eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, soybeans, sesame seeds, tree nuts and lupin.



Food allergies can result in life-threatening reactions that can occur within minutes of eating the food. Know which foods you sell that can cause allergic reactions and make sure the allergens are included on the label.

D

Do

What do you need to do?



Horticulture: Ensure agricultural compound residues in crops do not exceed maximum residue levels requirements.



Sugar: Keep details of the ingredients you use (e.g. write down and follow your recipes so you know what ingredients and allergens they contain).



Makers of hot drinks and businesses who sell packaged ice-cream: You must

D

Do

know, and be able to tell your customers what's in their food so they can make informed choices. This can be anything from knowing the ingredients of the hot chocolate or marshmallows to knowing what is in the packaged cookies or ice creams you sell. This is especially important for people with food allergies.

S

Show

What do you need to show?



Horticulture: Show your verifier how you know which agricultural compounds have been applied to crops, and how you know the maximum residue levels are not exceeded.



Sugar / Hot drinks / Ice cream: Show your verifier how you know what is in the ingredients you use and foods you sell. Your verifier might ask you or your staff to tell them which foods contain allergens.