



**Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie
Deputy Leader of The Nationals
Minister for Regional Services
Minister for Sport
Minister for Local Government and Decentralisation
Senator for Victoria**

MEDIA RELEASE

18 September 2018

Media Statement – Strawberries

On 12 September 2018, Queensland Health and Queensland Police announced three incidents of needles being found in strawberries from one producer in Queensland. Subsequently, similar incidents have been reported in other states.

This contamination appears to be deliberate sabotage and is primarily a criminal investigation for state police. The Government commends the police for their work on this matter and urges all Australians to be vigilant for potential contaminants.

Implicated products have been removed from supermarkets.

Australia has a strong record on food safety. These incidents are rare and isolated in Australia's food safety history.

This is very disappointing news, particularly if there is criminal intent.

As the Federal Minister responsible for food policy, I am receiving updates regularly from Food Standards Australia New Zealand's CEO Mark Booth, Chief Medical Officer Brendan Murphy and Federal Department of Health officials.

FSANZ coordinates recalls of foods at the request of the home jurisdiction and is convening regular meetings with state officials to monitor the situation

Our system of checks and balances is working to provide up-to-date information on the matter to Government, agencies and the public.

While these isolated incidents are being investigated I encourage people to continue to support the Australian strawberry industry, which is valued at over half a billion dollars and employs thousands of Australians.

I urge people to exercise caution and cut up their fruit before consumption.

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Authorised by B McKenzie, The National Party, Bendigo VIC