

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Busting food safety myths

The [Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture](#) (TIA) is busting food safety myths this week with a series of fact-and-fiction exposes about food as part of Australian Food Safety Week.

Australian Food Safety Week, which runs all this week, is an initiative of the [Food Safety Information Council](#) and aims to raise public awareness of food safety.

TIA Food Safety Centre Acting Leader, Associate Professor John Bowman, said many food myths were putting people at risk of food poisoning.

"We think of Australia as having safe food, but it is estimated that 4.1 million people in Australia get food poisoning each year," he said.

"Each year an estimated one million Australians have to visit a doctor with food poisoning, 32,000 people end up in hospital and 86 people die.

"But supermarkets and restaurants are not necessarily the source of food poisoning. Unsafe food handling practices within the home are often to blame."

Associate Professor Bowman said food safety myths were another reason people could get sick from eating contaminated food.

"The five-second rule, where people think they can pick up dropped food and eat it if it has been less than five seconds, is simply not true," he said.

"You also cannot trust your nose to determine if food is off. The bacteria that cause food poisoning often don't have any aroma.

"And thawing meat on the kitchen bench at room temperature is also not safe."

TIA microbiologists will be posting food safety myths on the TIA Facebook page throughout the week and inviting people to ask them food safety questions. Go to www.facebook.com/TasInAg/