

Aiming for world's best practice



AFCCC chair,
Mark Mitchell.

PEAK COLD CHAIN body, the Australian Food Cold Chain Council (AFCCC), is currently rewriting standards and developing a code of practice to improve the cold chain.

AFCCC chair, Mark Mitchell, said the council is aiming for world's best practice.

Mitchell described Australia's cold chain as a unique beast as it has to cover long distances with small populations under very hot conditions.

"It is also very competitive and dynamic," he said.

Mitchell was speaking at CCN Live 2021 which was sponsored by Refrigerants Australia.

He said the goal is to make the cold chain more compliant and that means getting the right processes in place which is the hardest part.

"We need to start by recognising that the cold chain is basically a Quality Management System (QMS)," he said.

"There are control points for food handling and storage. When there is a handover or change of custody the QMS needs to recognise these control points.

"A compliant cold chain verifies the temperatures at each step. If this is done its job done.

"Cold chain practitioners must verify

QMS and have a process in place to do this. There is stacks of technology out there to do this - it just needs to be utilised properly," Mitchell said.

"Technology has been out there for years. Web portals are sophisticated now, there is plenty of data we just need to use it."

Mitchell said other issues that are important include packing, stacking and wrapping.

"Airflow is crucial. You could have the best refrigerated system in the world but bad processes. You need both to be working successfully," he said.

"WE NEED TO RECOGNISE THE COLD CHAIN IS BASICALLY A QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM."

"As an industry we are working on codes of practice, rewriting some of the standards to develop a Cold Food Code.

"Another issue is the need for basic training to be in place like how to use a thermometer, that's one of the fundamentals."

Mitchell also referred to a good resource developed by the Department of Agriculture in partnership with Refrigerants Australia to help with the basics.

