


<b>FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY MANUAL</b>			
SHELF LIFE	REF #		QPM 007
	ISSUE #		3
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### Bulk Oils

Vegetable oils are derived from a variety of agricultural sources including cereals, seeds, fruits and pulses. The inherent stability of the oil (both crude and refined) is dependent upon a number of factors including, but not limited to, growing and harvesting conditions, processing, handling and storage.

Refined edible vegetable oils are considered microbiologically safe due to the fact that they are virtually moisture free and the water activity is such that it will not support the growth of pathogenic micro-organisms. On this basis, traditional methods of determining shelf life, using microbiology do not apply.

The production of fully refined and deodorised vegetable oils involves at the final stage of processing, high temperature (>200°C) vacuum distillation. This is operated as a critical control point for the removal of undesirable chemical contaminants that may be present and also removes products of oxidation and volatile compounds that impart unpleasant odours and flavours. The shelf life of product is therefore defined as the period of time during which the quality of the product will remain acceptable. This is normally determined by organoleptic assessment (odour and taste) and the level of primary oxidation products present in the oil (as measured by Peroxide Value), against agreed specified limits.

The rate at which the quality of an oil will deteriorate and the point at which the quality becomes unacceptable is dependent on a number of factors including (but not limited to), method of storage, temperature, availability of oxygen and customers quality requirements.

As New Britain Oils has no control over the above factors outside of its own facility, we cannot give any firm guarantee as to the shelf-life of our products.


We do however offer advice and guidance to our customers in relation to optimum storage conditions and controlling the rate of degradation.

Although oxidised vegetable oils have unpleasant odours and flavours, the breakdown products of the oxidation process do not pose a known health risk to consumers and are not restricted by current legislation.

### Packed Fats and Margarines

Packed products all have best before dates noted on the packaging; the duration of the noted shelf life of these products is in line with industry standards.

Shelf life testing will be undertaken periodically to confirm the stated shelf life for each product and this information will be kept by the QA Technologists or Technical Manager.

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The raw materials for the Packed Products, excluding fats, water and salt, but including packaging materials will be stored in the Raw Materials Warehouse. This warehouse is maintained to be suitable for the storage of these materials and they are supplied in their own packaging to prevent any contamination.