British Frozen Food Federation

T&L *update* 47

April 2008

C o n t e n t s

Food Additives and Hyperactivity

At its meeting held on 10 April, the FSA Board discussed a paper on Food Additives and Hyperactivity. The FSA document (reference FSA 08/04/04) is available from the FSA website at http://tinyurl.com/68jlmk
[Annexes 1 and 5 to the main document are available separately, from the same web address].

The Board discussion can be viewed as a video on demand from http://tinyurl.com/6qwhr4, or downloaded as a podcast from http://tinyurl.com/57zr3k

The paper provided an update for the FSA Board following its previous discussions in September 2007 on the study from Southampton University on the possible effects of certain food colours and a preservative on children's behaviour. The European Food Safety Authority had recently published its opinion on the Southampton study on 14 March 2008 [detail below].

> [The Southampton study had examined the effects of two mixes:
> Mix A - Tartrazine (E102), Ponceau 4R (E124), Sunset Yellow FCF (E110), Carmoisine (E122) and sodium benzoate
> Mix B - Sunset Yellow FCF (E110), Carmoisine (E122), Quinoline Yellow (E104), Allura Red AC (E129) and sodium benzoate]

The FSA Board was asked to:

- agree advice to Ministers regarding the future use of the preservative sodium benzoate and the artificial colours used in the Southampton study in food and drink.
- agree updated advice to parents regarding food colours and hyperactivity in children

The FSA Executive had developed five options for consideration by the Board, ranging upwards from 'do nothing'. The Executive's preferred option was 'Option 5' – the phasing out of the six colours in food and drink in the EU over a specific period.

- Option 1 - Do nothing
- Option 2 – Point of sale notice of which colours are present in loose foods
- Option 3 - Removing colours from foods/drinks aimed primarily at, or consumed extensively by, children.
- Option 4 – Restricting the use of colours in the EU to certain limited food categories/products where there are no colouring alternatives.
- Option 5 – Phasing out the use of colours in food and drink in the EU over a specific period. Voluntary action by 2009 in the UK

The FSA said that the basis for preferring Option 5 was:

- the Southampton study is a scientific study of the highest quality;
- an accumulating body of evidence that there is an association between the consumption of certain food colours and children's behaviour;
- all food additives must be safe for use in order to be approved. The available evidence now leaves uncertainty as to whether that safety can be confidently asserted;
- the technological function of colours in food is about conferring a consumer choice benefit rather than a safety benefit; and
- a significant part of the UK food industry is already moving away from the use of artificial food colours in responding to consumer demand.

  Note that there was no specific recommendation to the Board regarding sodium benzoate.

The FSA Board agreed to advise UK Ministers that there should be voluntary action by manufacturers in the UK to remove these colours by 2009. In addition, there should be action to phase them out in food and drink in the European Union (EU) over a specified period.

The Board further requested that advice to parents is simplified and strengthened as much as possible, and the Agency update its advice in the light of the Board's discussion.

The Board also decided that advice to Ministers and consumers should focus on the colours used in the study, as the primary function of sodium benzoate is as a preservative.

The FSA has stressed that the Board decision does not mean that there is an immediate ban on the use of the six colours in food and drink products.

> "The FSA is recommending to UK Ministers that industry takes voluntary action to remove these colours by 2009 and is pressing for action at EU level."
>
> "Once the FSA has given its advice, UK Ministers will discuss this with other Government departments. These discussions will inform the UK's negotiating position in Europe on this issue."

Press reports since the FSA Board decision was taken suggest that early action at the EU level is unlikely

> "Officially, all the Commission says is that it will "assess the outcome of the discussion to see whether further action needs to be taken." But privately, Commission officials say there is little chance of action for several months, if at all."
>
> Source: Reuters

EFSA opinion on food additives and child behaviour

EFSA has completed its assessment of the recent UK study on the effect of two mixtures of certain food colours and the preservative sodium benzoate on children's behaviour. The study, commissioned by the UK Food Standards Agency and published last year by researchers at Southampton University suggested a link between these mixtures and hyperactivity in children.

> [The two mixes evaluated by the Southampton researchers were:
> Mix A - Tartrazine (E102), Ponceau 4R (E124), Sunset Yellow FCF (E110), Carmoisine (E122) and sodium benzoate
> Mix B - Sunset Yellow FCF (E110), Carmoisine (E122), Quinoline Yellow (E104), Allura Red AC (E129) and sodium benzoate]

EFSA's AFC Panel (Panel on Food Additives, Flavourings, Processing Aids and Materials in Contact with Food), with the help of experts in behaviour, child psychiatry, allergy and statistics, concluded that the study provided limited evidence that the mixtures of additives tested had a small effect on the activity and attention of some children. However, the effects observed were not consistent for the two age groups and for the two mixtures used in the study.

Considering the overall weight of evidence and in view of the considerable uncertainties, such as the lack of consistency and relative weakness of the effect and the absence of information on the clinical significance of the behavioural changes observed, the Panel concluded that the findings of the Southampton study could not be used as a basis for altering the ADI (Acceptable Daily Intake) of the respective food colours or sodium benzoate.

The EFSA press release reported that 'among the limitations of the study, was the inability to pinpoint which additives may have been responsible for the effects observed in the children given that mixtures and not individual additives were tested.'

The Panel evaluated the Southampton study against the background of previous studies, going back to the 1970s, on the effect of food additives on behaviour and acknowledged that it is the largest study carried out on a suggested link between food additives and hyperactivity in the general population. The Panel noted that the majority of the previous studies used children described as hyperactive and these were therefore not representative of the general population.

The AFC Panel is currently re-evaluating the safety of all food colours authorised in the European Union on a case-by-case basis and the colours used in the Southampton study are included in EFSA's review. Opinions on some of the colours concerned, such as Allura Red, are expected to be adopted by the end of the year.

The EFSA assessment was prepared at the request of the European Commission who will now consider the AFC opinion.

The full text of the AFC opinion is available from EFSA website at http://tinyurl.com/59kszw This webpage also provides a link to a five-page summary report and to an additional statistical report

Use of Lycopene as a food colour

EFSA has published a Scientific Opinion from its AFC Panel (on Food Additives, Flavourings, Processing Aids and Materials in Contact with Food) on the use of lycopene as a food colour.

Lycopene is a member of the carotenoid family and occurs naturally in tomatoes (including tomato products, such as ketchups and tomato purees), vegetables and other fruits such as watermelon, pink grapefruit, and papaya. Lycopene is also authorised for use as a food colour (E 160d) and can be added to food and drink products, such as non-alcoholic flavoured drinks, fruit preserves, confectionary, sauces, jams and jellies.

There have been a number of questions put to EFSA regarding lycopene, and this opinion is not just the output from the systematic re-evaluation exercise of all authorised food additives that is currently underway.

The AFC Panel has also been asked to evaluate the safety in use of lycopene from Blakeslea trispora as a food colour (ref EFSA-Q-2007-001), and to deliver an opinion on the safety in use of synthetic lycopene as a food colour in certain specified food categories (ref EFSA-Q-2007-081).

The Panel therefore decided to make a global safety assessment of lycopene from all sources.

The general re-evaluation programme for all additives did not identify lycopene as one of the twelve colours for initial review but it was included in the second list of eight products which, 'on request from the European Commission', could be treated with priority.

However, the report from the Nordic Council of Ministers (Food additives in Europe 2000 - Status of safety assessments of food additives presently permitted in the EU) gave lycopene a priority rating of 4 on a 5-point scale ("priority for re-evaluation").

Previous assessments of lycopene and its consumption in the EU had only taken into account exposure to lycopene purposely added to food and did not include naturally occurring lycopene in food, such as that found in tomatoes and other fruits and vegetables.

The AFC Panel established an Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) for lycopene of 0.5 mg per kilogram of body weight per day from all sources. For the majority of consumers, intakes of lycopene from all sources were within the ADI of 0.5 mg per kilo of bodyweight per

day. However, the Panel noted that in some cases, the ADI may be exceeded by high consumers of foods containing lycopene in certain groups of the population, such as pre-school and school children.

The Panel concluded that the use of lycopene as a food colour adds significantly to the overall intake of lycopene. Non-alcoholic flavoured drinks are the largest potential source of lycopene in all population groups, contributing up to 66% of all lycopene intake in male adults and more than 90% in pre-school children.

Full details of the AFC Panel opinion are available from the EFSA website at http://tinyurl.com/5gwdgu

Readers should also be aware that under the Novel Foods Regulation, EFSA's NDA Panel (on dietetic products, nutrition and allergies) is carrying out an evaluation of new proposed food uses of lycopene. Two opinions on lycopene oleoresin from tomatoes and synthetic lycopene as novel foods are likely to be adopted by the NDA Panel in Spring 2008.

FSA approach to sustainable development in policy making

The Food Standards Agency has published a consultation paper on its (draft) approach to sustainable development in policy making, which it says 'interprets and refines the Government's sustainable development principles in the light of the Agency's statutory remit'. It further notes that application of the approach will be fundamental in further embedding sustainability within the Agency's policy making.

The deadline for responses is 3 June 2008. Full details are available from the FSA website at http://tinyurl.com/6jv2ou.

The FSA identifies the key features of its draft approach as:

- working within its statutory remit whilst recognising the importance of all aspects of sustainable development
- assessing the sustainability of new and amending policies on a case by case basis
- ensuring its primary objectives of food safety and nutrition are achieved whilst maximising positive impacts in all areas of sustainable development
- taking responsibility for minimising significant negative impacts of its policies
- recognising the need to work in partnership with other Government departments and others to deliver sustainable policies

EFSA Concise European Food Consumption Database

As a first step towards the harmonisation of food consumption data in Europe, EFSA has launched the **Concise European Food Consumption Database** on its website. It is the first database compiling food consumption data available in a majority of European countries, to support exposure assessment.

EFSA notes that exposure assessment is a key part of the risk assessment process. The quality of available data - both on food consumption and on occurrence levels - can have a major impact on the outcome of risk assessment. Food consumption data from dietary surveys are available in a majority of European countries. However, data obtained at national level often cannot be compared directly due to different survey methodologies, food categorisation systems, etc. To overcome this, EFSA has developed the "Concise European Food Consumption Database".

The concise database gathers data on average daily consumption of foods per person sourced from the Member States. It comprises 15 broad categories (e.g. milk and dairy-based products) and 21 subcategories (e.g. cheese). The intention of the concise database is to provide a valuable first screening tool to EFSA, its Scientific Panels, and potentially to other scientists in Member States, to help carry out preliminary exposure assessments. It will serve as a starting point for EFSA to develop a more comprehensive database with information on more refined food categories and specific population groups (e.g. children).

The database has been set up with the involvement of the EFSA Expert group on food consumption data, a network currently composed of members representing EU and neighbouring countries. The group co-ordinated the collection and formatting of national data and transfer to EFSA. It is also responsible for discussing the requirements for the future comprehensive database.

National summary statistics are available for 16 European countries, including UK and Ireland. UK data is based on the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (reference period 2000-2001), with data for Ireland from the North/South Ireland Food Consumption Survey (reference period 1997 – 1999).

Summary statistics across all countries are also available in two Excel tables:

Full details (including the Guidance Document for the use of the Concise Database in Exposure Assessment) are available from the EFSA website at the following address: http://tinyurl.com/66c5yz

Third Country Establishment Lists

Readers should be aware that the internet location for lists of approved establishments for importing products of animal origin into the EU has changed.

They are now to be found on the DG SANCO website at http://tinyurl.com/6b4zzn
[the web address in full is http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/biosafety/establishments/third_country/index_en.htm]

This gives links to:

- Third Country Establishments list per sector at http://tinyurl.com/5snpbk
- Third Country Establishments list per country at http://tinyurl.com/6knyn7

Establishment lists by sector are

- Section XIII: Treated stomachs, bladders and intestines
- Section VIII: Fishery products
- Section XIV: Gelatine
- Section III: Meat of farmed game
- Section VII: Live bivalve molluscs
- Section V: Minced meat, meat preparations and mechanically separated meat (MSM)
- Section IX: Raw milk and dairy products
- Section II: Meat from poultry and lagomorphs
- Section I: Meat of domestic ungulates
- Section VI: Meat products
- Section IV: Wild game meat

Each listing is available as before as a pdf document, but the format has changed. Only one date is now given ('Validity date from …'), whereas previously there were two dates – 'Date of publication' and 'In force from', (with a gap of two weeks). The new 'validity date' seems to correspond to the previous 'date of publication'. Also, there is no longer any highlighting of the most recent changes.

Guidance on nutrition and health claims made on foods

The Food Standards Agency has published two finalised guidance documents on European regulations:

- Guidance to compliance with European Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods
- Guidance on European Regulation (EC) No 1925/2006 on the addition of vitamins and minerals and certain other substances to foods

Draft guidance documents were originally issued for consultation in March 2007

Nutrition and health claims

The FSA says that the guidance on nutrition and health claims aims to help food business operators who wish to make claims identify what they must do to comply with European Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006. It also explains how new claims will be authorised.

The guidance is intended to give as clear an interpretation of the regulation as possible in the absence of case law. The guidance refers to other relevant guidance, in particular the European Commission guide to interpretation and the European Food Safety Authority guide for applicants on the submission of health claims for an authorisation of a health claim.

The FSA guidance document can be found on the FSA website at http://tinyurl.com/69odxs

The European Commission guide to interpretation was published in January of this year and can be found on the DG SANCO website at http://tinyurl.com/5qucgn

Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods can be downloaded directly from the Eur-Lex website as http://tinyurl.com/ywpjmg

European Regulation 1924/2006 was published in corrected form in the Official Journal on 18 January 2007 (L12/3). The Regulation is directly applicable in all Member States and comes into force progressively (from 1 July 2007), with an extended series of start dates and transition periods.

UK implementing legislation (for enforcement powers etc) is in place separately for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, with a common coming-into-force date of 1 October 2007 for all four sets of regulations.

The FSA guidance runs to more than 80 pages, with detailed sections as below. Table 1 in the guidance provides summary details of key dates and requirements, and Table 2 of transitional periods and key dates. Both tables are reproduced below.

- Section 1 – Introduction and Summary
- Section 2 – Scope
- Section 3 – How To Make A Claim
- Section 4 – How To Make A Nutrition Claim
- Section 5 – Health Claims
- Section 6 – Future Control of Nutrition and Health Claims
- Section 7 – When Do I Need To Comply With The Regulation?

- Section 8 – Enforcement and Compliance
- Section 9 – Questions and Answers
- Appendix I – Associated Legislation and Guidance
- Appendix II – Sources Of Information
- Appendix III – Glossary
- Appendix IV – UK Legislation Controlling Claims
- Appendix V – Flow Chart Showing Process Of Authorisation Of Health Claims Based On New Or Emerging Science
- Appendix VI – Flow Chart Showing Process Of Authorisation For Disease Risk Reduction Claims and Claims Referring To Children's Development and Health
- Appendix VIII – Interested Parties List (for future information and updates)

Addition of vitamins and minerals and of certain other substances to food

The FSA says that this guidance aims to help food business operators who wish to fortify, or otherwise add vitamins and minerals and other substances to food, identify what they must do to comply with European Regulation (EC) No 1925/2006.

The guidance should give a clear explanation of the regulation, including what it controls, what 'other substances' are, and what businesses must do if they to add vitamins and minerals and other substances to food in future.

The guidance can be found on the FSA website at http://tinyurl.com/57sdyq

FSA Guidance to compliance with European Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods

Table 1 – Key dates and requirements

Date	Requirements
1st July 2007 However, products placed on the market or labelled prior to 1st July 2007, which do not meet these requirements can continue to be marketed until their expiry date, but not later than 31st July 2009.	• Nutrition claims included in the Annex can only be made on products that comply with the specified conditions of use. • Nutrition labelling must be provided (with limited exceptions) if a nutrition or health claim is made. • Claims must not be made on alcoholic beverages (with limited exceptions for reduced energy and alcohol content claims). • Health claims which suggest that health could be affected by not consuming the food cannot be made on food. • Health claims which make reference to the rate or amount of weight loss cannot be made on food. • Health claims which make reference to recommendations of individual doctors or health professionals cannot be made on food.
19th January 2008	• Health claims referring to psychological and behavioural functions, slimming or weight control or a reduction in the sense of hunger or an increase in the sense of satiety or to a reduction of the available energy from the diet cannot be made on food unless the claim was in use before 19th January 2007 and an application for authorisation has been submitted. • Claims referring to children's development and health cannot be made on food unless the claim was in use before 19th January 2007 and an application for authorisation has been submitted.
19 January 2010	• Only nutrition claims included in the Annex can be used on food.
Date of adoption in the Community Register of the list of health claims: the latest this can be is 31st January 2010	• Only health claims included in the Community Register or awaiting authorisation can be used on food. • Health claims referring to general, non-specific benefits of the nutrient to overall good health, such as 'good for you" must be accompanied by an authorised health claim. • Health claims must be accompanied by additional labelling requirements, such as a statement indicating the importance of a varied and balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle.
At the latest 19th January 2011	• Products must comply with the nutrient profile to make nutrition and health claims. The nutrient profile will be adopted by 19 January 2009.
19th January 2022	• Trade marks and brand names that could be construed as a claim must be accompanied by an authorised health or nutrition claim.

FSA Guidance to compliance with European Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods		
Table 2 – Summary of transitional periods and key dates		
Date	**Requirements**	**Article Reference**
1st July 2007 However, products placed on the market or labelled prior to 1st July 2007, with claims which do not meet these requirements can continue to be marketed until their expiry date, but not later than 31st July 2009.	• Nutrition claims included in the annex can only be made on products that comply with the specified conditions of use. This includes claims made in any form of commercial communication to the final consumer. • Only nutrition claims included in the annex, or in use in a Member State before 1st January 2006, can be made on food. • Reduced and increased claims must comply with the conditions of use specified in the annex and in Article 9. See Section 4.4 for details. • Nutrition labelling must be provided if a nutrition or health claim is made. For health claims this must consist of group 1 and 2 nutrition labelling. If the claim relates to a nutrient or other substance not included in the nutrition labelling, it must be stated, together with the amount present, in the same field of vision as the nutrition labelling. This does not apply to non-prepackaged foodstuffs put up for sale to the final consumer or to mass caterers and foods packed at the point of sale at the request of the purchaser or pre-packed with a view to immediate sale. • Claims must not be made on alcoholic beverages containing more than 1.2% by volume of alcohol, with limited exceptions for reduced energy and alcohol content claims (see Section 3.2). • Health claims which suggest that health could be affected by not consuming the food can not be made on food. • Health claims which make reference to the rate or amount of weight loss can not be made on food. • Health claims which make reference to recommendations of individual doctors or health professionals can not be made on food. • Disease risk reduction can not be made (this was also the case prior to the 1st July 2007) unless the claim has been authorised. • Health claims referring to psychological and behavioural functions, slimming or weight control or a reduction in the sense of hunger or an increase in the sense of satiety or to a reduction of the available energy from the diet can only be made, if they were in used, in compliance with national provisions, before 19th January 2007.	28(1)
19th January 2008 Applications for authorisation of certain health claims to trigger the transition period.	• Health claims referring to psychological and behavioural functions, slimming or weight control or a reduction in the sense of hunger or an increase in the sense of satiety or to a reduction of the available energy from the diet can not be made on food unless they were used in compliance with national conditions before 19th January 2007 and an application for authorisation has been submitted. Inclusion in the UK list of health claims is sufficient to fulfil this requirement. • Claims referring to children's development and health can not be made on food unless the claim was in use before 19th January 2007 and an application for authorisation has been submitted.	28(6)
Date of adoption of the Community Register of health claims, at the latest 31st January 2010	• Only health claims included in the Community Register of authorised health claims, or claims submitted for authorisation and awaiting a decision, can be made on food. • Health claims referring to general, non-specific benefits of the nutrient to overall good health, such as 'good for you" must be accompanied by an authorised health claim. • Health claims must be accompanied by additional labelling requirements, such as a statement indicating the importance of a varied and balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle. See Section 6.3 for details.	20 (Community Register) 28(5) 28(6) 10(3) 10(2)
19th January 2010	• Only nutrition claims included in the annex can be used on food and only on products that meet with the specific conditions of use.	28(3)

Two years following adoption of the nutrient profiles. At the latest 19th January 2011	• Products must comply with the nutrient profile in order to make nutrition or health claims. Nutrient profiles will be adopted by 19th January 2009. Full details of these controls can be found in Section 6.2.	28(1)
19th January 2022	• Trade marks and brand names that could be construed as a claim must be accompanied by an authorised health or nutrition claim. This only applies to trade marks or brand names in use before 1st January 2005. This applies to the use of the trade mark or brand name and not any other claims made on the product.	28(2)

The Food Safety Act 1990: a Guide for Food Businesses

The Food Standards Agency is consulting on a revised set of guidance notes for businesses on the Food Safety Act 1990. The deadline for comments is 11 July. Full details are available from the FSA website at http://tinyurl.com/6oos5p. The Agency expects to publish the final version of the guidance later on this year. There are separate consultations for England and Wales, and for Scotland. A separate guide will shortly be sent to stakeholders in Northern Ireland on the Food Safety (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.

The new guide is intended to provides advice for food businesses on the requirements of the Food Safety Act 1990 and updates the previous version – 'The Food Safety Act 1990 and You', which was originally issued by MAFF.

The 59-page draft guide is set out under the following headings:

- The Food Safety Act 1990
- The main offences
- Enforcing the Act
- Dealing with an unsatisfactory business
- Prohibition orders, emergency prohibition notices and emergency control orders
- Legal proceedings
- Other general food safety legislation

The new draft guide takes into account amendments made to the Food Safety Act by the Food Safety Act 1990 (Amendment) Regulations 2004 and the General Food Regulations 2004 to allow for the requirements of the European General Food Law Regulation (EC) 178/2002, and also amendments in the light of the Food Hygiene Regulations 2006.

The FSA says that it would particularly welcome views on:

- the content and form of the guidance
- the layout of the guidance
- the clarity of the guidance
- whether any more simplified guidance is needed for small businesses or for particular business sectors and, if so, what form that guidance should take

It believes that there should be no cost implications from the new guide, which gives guidance on the law and not on best practice; accordingly, no impact assessment has been issued.

Background: The FSA notes that the Food Safety Act 1990 is an important Act in Great Britain, which updated previous law on food safety and consumer protection. A separate but similar law applies in Northern Ireland.

The previous guide 'The Food Safety Act 1990 and You', covering both these pieces of legislation was first published in 1990, along with two sectoral guides for farmers and growers, and for caterers and their employees. A revised version was issued in 1996 (reprinted in 1997 and 1998), without the sectoral guides. Copies of this previous Guidance can be downloaded from http://tinyurl.com/5sdgjv

The FSA says that the new guide should be read in parallel with its Guidance Notes on Regulation (EC) 178/2002, issued in July 2007 ('Guidance Notes for Food Business Operators on Food Safety, Traceability, Product Withdrawal and Recall: A guide to compliance with Articles 14, 16, 18 and 19 of General Food Law Regulation (EC) 178/2002') – which are available from http://tinyurl.com/3dyogy

European Regulation (EC) 178/2002 (General Food Law Regulation) introduced new directly applicable requirements in 2005 for food businesses, intended to improve food safety throughout the European Union. As a result, there was a need to introduce new enforcement powers and penalties in relation to these new requirements, some which were similar to the existing provisions in the Food Safety Act 1990. The Food Safety Act 1990 (Amendment) Regulations 2004 therefore made amendments to the Food Safety Act 1990 to avoid any duplication or conflict with the new requirements.

The new guide takes account of the amendments made to the Act by this European legislation, but does not cover food hygiene, which, following recent changes, is now governed by separate legislation and supporting guidance.

Revised LACORS guidance on "signpost" nutritional information

On 27 July 2007 LACORS issued guidance entitled "**LACORS Guidance on Nutrition Labelling Rules and the Position of Guideline Daily Amounts (GDA) Labelling**". This indicated that LACORS considered that such front of pack nutrition signposting statements constituted nutrition claims, and that as a consequence, prescribed nutrition labelling must be provided as appropriate in addition to any front of pack labelling

LACORS now notes that the FSA has advised that the EC will shortly propose amendments to the nutrition labelling directive and that **the EC agrees with the FSA that these statements should not be considered to be nutrition claims**.

In the light of this clarification LACORS says that it is happy to support the EC/FSA line and **the guidance issued on 27 July 2007 should be considered to be revoked**.

For the LACORS statement, go to http://tinyurl.com/5l94kl

Nutrition labelling tolerances

LACORS published guidance entitled '**Working Guidance on Tolerances to be Applied to Nutrition Labelling Declarations**' in May 2003. In December 2005 LACORS started a review of the guidance, with a request for comments to be submitted by 28 February 2006. LACORS was looking for comments in a number of areas:

- are particular tolerances too generous and can they be reduced;
- are there particular tolerances which are too tight and which need to be increased; ·
- are there food groups or categories which require there own specific tolerances; and
- are there issues which are not addressed by the current guidance.

No revised guidance has been issued since the consultation and LACORS has now stated in a letter to the Food Standards Agency that it is to cease work on this revision exercise.

Full details are available from the LACORS website at www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/ContentDetails.aspx?id=19111

The FSA has informed LACORS that as part of the wider work on the EC Food Information Regulation and the consequent re-working of the EC nutrition labelling rules directive, **the EC has indicated that it will be producing guidance on tolerances**.

LACORS has therefore concluded that it would not be appropriate to continue to progress its work as this could conflict with future EC work. Further, UK input to the EC guidance should be via the FSA and LACORS has therefore provided to the FSA the latest version of the its draft guidance document, together with the comments received from a number of UK trade associations. LACORS says that it is content for the FSA to use this material as it sees fit and remains available to provide technical input.

The original 2003 LACORS guidance remains in place, and is available on the LACORS website, although not freely accessible. Federation members can contact Ian Farley at Grantham if they wish to obtain a copy.

Communicating during a food incident

The Food Standards Agency has reissued its guidance regarding food incidents – '**Principles for preventing and responding to food incidents - a guidance document produced by the FSA's Taskforce on Incidents**'.

This now incorporates an expanded Annex G, titled '**Communicating during an Incident – a draft Protocol**'. This runs to seven pages, compared to a single page for the previous Annex G ('Guidelines for Risk Communication').

Although the new Annex G is offered as a 'draft' protocol, there is no request for comments or feedback.

The Agency says: "The adoption of this communications protocol doesn't mean that there is a rigid code that the Agency will impose during a food incident – each one is different and brings with it its own particular pressures, issues and challenges – but the protocol does set a framework for communication and outlines the sort of factors we will take into account when handling incidents."

Full details are available from the FSA website at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2008/apr/protocol

The draft protocol includes sections as follows:

- Introduction
- FSA Commitment
- Food Alerts
- Decision on when to Issue a Press Release / Issue a Food Alert / Publish a Web Statement
- Web Statements / Press Releases
- Language
- FSA Consistency Across The Nations
- Working with Europe
- Agency linking to Company Websites
- Sharing of Q&As
- Naming

- Information for Local Authorities
- Contacts at the FSA

There are other changes in the reissued guidance, but they seem relatively minor. They include:

- Module 2 is clearly identified as **Industry** Incident Response.
- Module 3 (FSA Incident Response) has its first section 3.1 – Core Process split to include a new section 3.2 – Major Food Contamination Issues. There is some limited new text included here, and the statement regarding a **Scoping Group** has been strengthened –
  the previous text "it may also be appropriate to convene a Scoping Group, whose objectives are:" has been replaced by "the Scoping Group can be convened at the suggestion of any stakeholder The Scoping Group will:"
- The detailed guidance provided by the Trading Standards Institute at Annex H no longer includes the previous decision tree chart ('Guidance for Local Authorities on storage of goods during testing, and recycling or disposal of rejected material')
- Annex B (Agency Guidance on EU Regulation 178/2002) previously included in full the draft guidance that the FSA had issued for consultation. Finalised guidance on 178/2002 has been issued and Annex B now includes a description of that guidance with a weblink to access the full text.

Finally, readers might wish to revisit the section from Module 2 (Industry Incident Response) on Trade Association Responsibilities (Section 2.2.6, page Module 2-9)

"The role of trade associations is to work closely with its members, other trade bodies in the supply chain, the Agency and local authorities in the effective and efficient handling of food safety incidents. This may include having systems and procedures in place such as:

- 24/7 contact details for member companies
- Principal points of contact for members, the Agency and media (including out of hours)
- An internal incident management team

The extent to which trade associations are involved in a food incident will depend on its nature, scale and complexity. In general, the action taken by trade associations may include:

- Reminding members of their legal obligation to notify the Agency and their local authority about affected products
- Obtaining expert advice from the Agency on the potential risk to consumers
- Communicating information/action to members in a timely manner
- Seeking additional information or clarification on aspects that are unclear
- Liaising with other trade associations at a UK, EU and international level
- Collecting and collating information, where possible, from members for submission to the Agency where this is necessary over and above companies legal requirements
- Collating issues/concerns from members for submission to the Agency
- Organising meetings with members and others as appropriate
- Preparing position statements and Q and As
- Handling generic (non-company specific) media enquiries on behalf of members
- Assisting the Agency and members with risk communication activities
- Contributing to the post-incident review and lessons learnt

Trade associations represent the interests of their membership and will seek to promote co-operation with interested parties in the event of an incident.

Those companies who are not affiliated to a trade association, should take steps to ensure that they are fully aware of how advice and support can be gained to assist them in dealing with an incident. Direct dialogue with local government agencies, and where necessary with the police, should be undertaken to ensure their legal obligations are met and that any risk to the consumer is minimised."

This is unchanged from the previous version of the guidance.

Hampton Implementation Reviews – Food Standards Agency

In November 2006, the Chancellor of the Exchequer invited the National Audit Office and the Better Regulation Executive to develop a process of external review to assess how much progress regulators had made in implementing the principles set out in the Hampton report.

The purpose of the review process is to promote more effective and efficient regulatory activity, demonstrating where the recommendations of Hampton (and Macrory) have been successfully implemented, and where there is still work to do.

The reviews are also intended to help regulators:

- increase openness and transparency
- highlight areas for development

- spread good practice to other regulators.

Another aim is to improve the perception of regulators among those being regulated, and so encourage better cooperation.

Five major national regulators were assessed between August and December 2007:

- Health and Safety Executive
- Food Standards Agency
- Financial Services Authority
- Environment Agency
- Office of Fair Trading

Other national regulators will be formally reviewed in due course.

The reviews are carried out using a guide developed by the Better Regulation Executive and the National Audit Office, which includes assessment criteria and examples of evidence that should be evaluated.

The methodology included in the guide may also be useful for informal self-assessment, and contains guidance on good practice, which regulators can adopt of their own accord.

Reports on each of the five organisations have now been published. Extracts from the FSA report, under the headings 'Summary and conclusions' and 'Issues for follow up', are included below.

Further information as well as copies of each of the five reports can be found on the BERR website at http://tinyurl.com/3xtmsd. The reports are also available from the National Audit Office website at http://tinyurl.com/6eecw2

Background: Philip Hampton's report **'Reducing administrative burdens: effective inspection and enforcement'**, published in 2005, is described as one of the cornerstones of the Government's better regulation agenda.

> "The principles of effective inspection and enforcement set out in the report, putting risk assessment at the heart of regulatory activity, are designed to encourage a modern regulatory system which properly balances protection and prosperity."

The Hampton report is available from the Treasury website at the following address http://tinyurl.com/7xj6r

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Extract from 'Effective inspection and enforcement: implementing the Hampton vision in the Food Standards Agency'

Summary and conclusions

This review is one of a series of reviews of regulatory bodies focusing on the assessment of regulatory performance against the Hampton principles and Macrory characteristics of effective inspection and enforcement. It was carried out by a team drawn from the Better Regulation Executive, the National Audit Office (NAO), the Health & Safety Executive and the Better Regulation Commission supported by staff from the Better Regulation Executive and NAO (see Appendix 1 for review team membership).

The Hampton report, published in 2005, is one of the cornerstones of the Government's better regulation agenda and regulators have been working since to embed his principles in their approach to regulation. This review process is designed to identify where a regulator is on the road to full implementation and the issues each needs to address to become Hampton-compliant.

The review team concluded that, in many respects, the Food Standards Agency regulates in accordance with the Hampton principles and Macrory characteristics. The review team rated it highly on adopting innovative alternatives to classic regulation and on having an evidence based culture. Many positive initiatives are being taken forward in FSA, such as improving its risk assessment system. Areas to develop further include developing more of a strategic partnership with local authorities and providing better advice and guidance to small businesses. Overall, the FSA is continuing to improve, in terms of its performance against better regulation principles, from a strong base.

What we found

- **FSA adopts innovative approaches as alternatives to 'traditional' regulation and enforcement** – The FSA has taken forward several initiatives that use non legislative approaches to influence consumer demand or make use of existing market incentives. This includes the campaign to reduce salt intake, front of pack labelling and reliance on accreditation schemes such as 'Red Tractor'.
- **FSA has embedded in its culture an evidence-based approach to its work and its science is generally well respected both in the UK and the EU**. Such evidence is made public and is easily accessible.
- **FSA generally uses its evidence to develop a risk-based approach to regulation**. Whilst this approach is embedded in more recent initiatives it is less evident in one inspectorate which it runs directly – the Meat Hygiene Service. Following a recent independent review of the Meat Hygiene Service, the Agency is endeavouring to address these issues.

- **FSA is effective at negotiating at the European level** – The FSA is technically very good at negotiating on individual dossiers. It could increase its influence further by building on its successes in order to develop a more strategic approach to its engagement with Europe. The Agency reported that it will be seeking to do this through the development of its new EU and International Strategy.
- **FSA is a transparent and accountable organisation** – it ensures its decisions are transparent. Its board meetings are open to the public, filmed and can be viewed on its website. The openness increases pressure on staff to present thorough, evidence-based papers for consideration by the Board. Transparency is a key strength of the FSA.
- **The relationship between the FSA and enforcement staff in local authorities is improving** – however staff in local authorities had mixed views of the FSA. The FSA should seek to communicate its priorities to local authorities more clearly and seek to engage with them more as partners rather than agents. The work of FSA's regional teams appeared to be successful and popular amongst local authority staff and may be an appropriate vehicle for improving leadership and direction.

Issues for follow-up

The following [table] sets out the key issues that the review team believes the FSA needs to address to meet the Hampton criteria more fully, measured against some of the symptoms we were looking for to provide evidence of Hampton compliance.

Engagement with businesses

The review team felt that the FSA needs to better understand the needs of business. Within the organisation, there appear to be few examples of staff visiting or shadowing business or of staff who have worked in business. The FSA could improve its understanding of business – either through more visits to business, secondments, or research. A better understanding of business should help the FSA to achieve its objectives.

The FSA has a clear statutory role to "protect public health from the risks which may arise from the consumption of food and otherwise to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food". The review team felt that the FSA has taken this further and in some circumstances presents itself more as "championing" the consumer interest as distinct from "protecting" those interests. In order to implement its duty, the Agency has a clear role in influencing industry. However, this pro-consumer stance, we believe, can complicate the Agency's engagement with and understanding of business. The FSA needs to develop an overarching strategy for dealing with business, which sets out more clearly how the FSA will seek to engage with and influence business, including Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), on a more consistent basis.

It is a huge strength that the objectives of the industry and of the Agency are presently aligned around healthy eating but the FSA should have a more considered and nuanced strategy for maintaining that alignment. It also needs to be seen to represent all its stakeholders in EU negotiations.

Providing tailored advice and guidance

Beyond "Safer Food, Better Business" which is itself an excellent initiative, the FSA does not have a strategic, effective and business-focused mechanism for providing advice to business, particularly SMEs. The FSA's regulatory base is vast (around 600,000 diverse businesses and 150,000 primary production businesses) and Safer Food, Better Business (whose focus is to give advice to small food business operators) is not enough to cover the scale of that challenge. The FSA should make more use of advice and guidance as a regulatory tool where it has the power to do so.

Written advice is of a good standard and is available on the website. However, little is known about the extent to which businesses use this guidance. Businesses asking for advice will frequently be referred to their local authority enforcement officers. Furthermore, the FSA frequently looks to LACORS (the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services)3 and others to produce written guidance for business.

There is also a lack of clarity within the FSA on how it should handle queries from businesses. The FSA should seek to understand more about how businesses access advice and how best to target advice and guidance on food regulation to business.

Risk-based inspection

The approach taken by the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) is not currently risk-based. The FSA has realised the MHS is not Hampton-like and its inspection regime is not risk-based. The review team welcomes the Board's response to the recommendations set out in the recent Tierney report, commissioned by the FSA and has seen evidence that the reforms proposed will be effective in achieving more of a risk-based system.

The FSA and MHS should continue to implement the recommendations in the Tierney Report where they fall within domestic legislation, and consider how best to take forward those recommendations that require changes to regulations. The FSA should continue to monitor progress in delivering the recommendations of the Tierney report.

Providing strategic direction to local authorities

The FSA has developed a good working relationship with local authorities and the co-ordinating bodies LACORS and the Association of Port Health Authorities (APHA). However, the review team felt that the FSA could provide greater strategic direction, in terms of the priorities for food law regulation.

There is currently little clear link between specific issues that the FSA is dealing with and its work with Local Authorities, for example the FSA's target to reduce food borne illnesses and the rising figures reported for listeria by local authorities. The FSA does not generally help steer local authority inspectors to focus their enforcement actions in a way that delivers the FSA's goals in relation to Food Hygiene and Food Standards.

Local Authorities are keen to establish a more effective approach to partnership working with the FSA. The FSA's initiative to set up regional teams has shown promise and has been well received by local authorities. We believe there are real opportunities to improve efficiency and impact in this way.

Progress on the Changes to Local Authority Enforcement project (CLAE)

The FSA has embarked on a project to change the way local authorities administer and enforce food law and make the guidance to enforcement officers more risk based and less dependent on the number of inspections.

The new Local Authority Code of Practice should recognise the use of a range of interventions by enforcement officers, beyond traditional inspection. The FSA should ensure that the new Code of Practice and the new monitoring approach encourages enforcement officers to focus on highest risk issues and to work towards the achievement of the FSA's strategic priorities.

The new Code of Practice must do more to help enforcement officers to share best practice.

Food Labelling Guidance Leaflet

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) has published a new guidance leaflet for the food industry to provide clarity on the legal requirements for the labelling of food. The FSAI says that it will be of particular interest to food manufacturers, importers and wholesalers. The guidance leaflet is available in ten languages, reflecting the multicultural nature of the Irish food industry. **'General Labelling of Pre-Packaged Food'** can be found on the FSAI website at www.fsai.ie/publications/index.asp#leaflets, and is available in English, Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional), Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Ukranian, and Urdu

The 12-page guidance leaflet covers the requirements arising from existing EU legislation, and the associated national legislation:

At European level

- Council Directive 2000/13/EC (referred to as the General Labelling Directive) on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs and its amendments
- Commission Directive 2001/101/EC (and its amendment, 2002/86/EC) introducing the new definition of meat
- Commission Directive 2003/89/EC (amended by 2005/26/EC and 2006/142/EC and corrected by 2005/63/EC) introducing the mandatory labelling of allergens

and a number of related Directives including:

- Commission Directive 87/250/EEC (indication of alcoholic strength on alcoholic beverages)
- Commission Directive 94/54/EC (and its amendments 96/21/EC and 2004/77/EC) (mandatory indication of packaging gases, sweeteners, extract from liquorice plant)
- Directive 1999/10/EC (provision of derogation regarding QUID labelling)
- Directive 2002/67/EC (declaration of quinine and caffeine)
- Directive 2006/107/EC (quick frozen foodstuff).

The guidance provides a good coverage of general labelling requirements, but readers should be aware that it does not set out to cover all aspects of labelling. For example, specific requirements regarding fish labelling, or for GM ingredients are not covered.

Although produced for food businesses in Ireland, this guidance leaflet will prove to be of wider interest and value to businesses throughout the UK

Proposal for a new regulation on novel foods

On 14 January the European Commission published a proposal to revise the EU's Novel Foods Regulation with a view to simplifying the regulatory process thereby reducing the administrative burden and improving the competitiveness of the European food industry.

The Food Standards Agency has started a consultation process with stakeholders to obtain views on the new proposal.

The deadline for comments is 20 June but earlier responses would be welcome as discussions are ongoing in Brussels.

Details of the consultation (for England) can be found at http://tinyurl.com/6ba8kp

The Commission proposal (which will be subject to the full EU co-decision procedure) can be found on the Europa website at http://tinyurl.com/3xus42

- COM(2007)872: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on novel foods and amending Regulation (EC) No xxx/xxxx

The current regulation on novel foods has been in force since 1997 and applies to foods and food ingredients that do not have a significant history of consumption in the European Community before May 1997. The regulation includes a requirement for a review of its operation after 5 years in order to identify possible improvements. In practice, the review has been delayed to take account of other significant developments in EC food law, particularly:

(a) the adoption of a new regulation on general food law (regulation 178/2002) which provides an overall framework for food legislation and established the European Food Safety Authority; and

(b) new legislation on genetically modified food and feed (regulation 1829/2003), which removed GM foods from the scope of the novel foods regulation.

In developing its proposal, the European Commission has consulted with a range of stakeholders through various activities undertaken during 2002-2007. The proposal is accompanied by a formal Impact Assessment, which is based on responses to a public EU-wide consultation (details available from the web address above).

These consultations identified a number of areas for improvement in the existing regulation and the Commission has identified the following objectives for its proposal:

- to avoid the delays that are associated with the current authorisation procedure for novel foods;
- to remove any unjustified barriers to the introduction of traditional foods from non-EU countries that have a history of safe food use in those countries;
- to avoid unnecessary duplication due to the current requirements for different manufacturers to submit applications for the same product;
- to remove the overlap with other EC food law, which current leads to unnecessary duplication in assessments and authorisations
- to update the legal text in order to improve its clarity and to bring it in line with developments in EC food law.

The Commission proposal sets out to meet these objectives by introducing the following major changes:

- centralising the authorisation procedure for novel foods. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) will carry out the safety assessment on the novel food.
  The current system requires one Member State to carry out an initial assessment which is then sent to all other Member States for comment – a process that takes a significant period of time, particularly as most dossiers are later referred to EFSA for advice on outstanding concerns raised by the Member States. Once EFSA's opinion is available there is a further delay while the Commission prepares a formal authorisation decision which is voted on by Member States. The centralised process is intended to be more efficient and to result in a streamlined authorisation procedure.
- introducing a simplified safety assessment system for traditional food from third countries. This will enable traditional foods to gain an authorisation relatively quickly if applicant companies are able to demonstrate a history of safe use outside the EU. At present foods that are widely consumed elsewhere in the world have to undergo the same lengthy procedures as completely innovative products.
- clarifying the definition of a novel food, including new technologies with an impact on food. This will ensure that that technologies not previously used in the food chain will require a premarket safety evaluation. The current provisions have, on occasions, been found to be ambiguous in this regard. The proposal aims to provide a clearer definition and is not intended to apply to a wider range of products than at present.
- updating the scope of the regulation in relation to parallel legislation on specific categories of foods. Developments in EC legislation since 1997 have resulted in parallel authorisation procedures being established for ingredients in certain categories of food such as food supplements and medical foods. As a result, a new ingredient can require multiple authorisations before it can be placed on the market. The proposal aims to minimise the overlaps with other legislation.
- introducing the possibility of data protection. Under the new proposal, applicants who have invested in new data to demonstrate the suitability of their product can seek a limited (5-year) period of data protection. If authorisation is granted, it would give the applicant the sole right to market the product during this period, using these safety data. Other operators could also apply for authorisation but they would have to provide their own safety data.

Use of food assurance scheme guidance

In 2003 the Food Standards Agency published Guidance for Food Assurance Schemes, intended to

- provide advice for schemes on best practice; and
- help consumers by promoting best practice amongst assurance schemes.

The Agency has now published a report looking at all the main UK food assurance schemes to see whether they are following the 2003 guidance

The FSA says that the report shows that the schemes reviewed have made significant and welcome progress in adopting its guidance, but more remains to be done in future years.

Full information, including the 2003 guidance and the new report, is available from the FSA website at http://tinyurl.com/495t3u

Guidance and Regulatory Advice on Import Legislation (GRAIL) database

The GRAIL database (Guidance and Regulatory Advice on Import Legislation) has been under development by the Food Standards Agency for a number of years. The searchable database covers up-to-date imported food legislation and guidance on those products for which the Food Standards Agency has lead responsibility. These are the **import of products of non-animal origin and of fish and fishery products from non-EU countries**.

The database has been developed primarily as a tool for enforcement authorities. The FSA says that it expects that it will be mainly used by local authority enforcement officers to support the effective enforcement of controls on imported food products that enter the UK from non-EU countries.

However use of the database is open to all and it should prove to be a valuable resource for trade interests with relevant import activities.

The database can for example be used to search for current import conditions for a specified combination of product, country of origin, and contaminant. In the search results, summary guidance is displayed, with links to legislation and full guidance.

The system includes a comprehensive 'A-Z' list food law enforcement contacts, details of new content, a news section and links to useful websites.

More information is available from the FSA website at http://tinyurl.com/5jxrhc. The GRAIL database can also be accessed from this webpage, or directly from https://grail.foodapps.co.uk/grail/general/home.aspx

Information is also available in OVS Note 08/25, available from http://tinyurl.com/4k3mj

Background: In 2003, the Step Change project aimed to improve the co-ordination and delivery of local authority inspection of food at ports whilst benefiting legitimate trade. An exercise reviewing the existing IT systems and associated documentation identified the need for an efficient means of searching for legislation and guidance about food import controls. This would speed-up procedures on checking imported food for compliance as many ports still maintained paper-based records.

In 2004, the Agency piloted GRAIL with 30 authorities responsible for the major ports in the UK. The comments received during the pilot exercise have led to the new Internet-based version

Mercury in fish and fishery products

The EU's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO) has published an updated "Information Note" concerning "Methyl mercury in fish and fishery products"

This is available from the Europa website at http://tinyurl.com/5bkmuo

> "This note provides an analysis of the current situation, particularly in view of the impossibility to fully address the issue by setting stricter maximum levels for mercury in fish. It should be used to raise the awareness of all national authorities, institutions, associations, etc which have a responsibility in public health or which provide safety information to consumers."

Consultation on the draft Marine Bill

The Draft Marine Bill was published on 3 April 2008. Defra is seeking views on the proposals set out in the draft Bill, and input to the supporting Impact Assessment.

Defra identifies the key issues covered as:

- the creation of the Marine Management Organisation (MMO);
- planning in the marine area;
- licensing activities in the marine area;
- marine nature conservation;
- managing marine fisheries;
- reform of inland and migratory fisheries;
- modernisation and streamlining of enforcement powers;
- administrative penalties scheme for domestic fisheries offences; and
- access to coastal land.

The deadline for responses is 26 June 2008.

Readers should note that the draft Bill document (containing the policy document, Impact Assessment, explanatory notes and draft Bill itself) runs to 686 pages.

Full details are available from the Defra website at www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/marinebill/

Import conditions for poultry and poultry products

DG SANCO has published a four page 'factsheet' on EU import conditions for poultry and poultry products.

This can be found on the Europa website at http://tinyurl.com/5pd7q4

Similar documents for fresh meat and meat products (2005) and for seafood and other fishery products (updated October 2007) are available from the same webpage

Recycled plastics for food contact use

Commission Regulation (EC) No 282/2008 on recycled plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with foods was published in the Official Journal on 28 March (L86/9). Copies can be downloaded as http://tinyurl.com/639ec4

Recycled plastics in food contact have been covered by the general requirements on food contact materials laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004. Member States have adopted different national measures for recycled plastics. Some Member States prohibit the use of recycled plastic in food contact, some have established an authorisation procedure, others have issued recommendations and there's also a group of EU countries that does not have any national rules in place.

The new Regulation sets conditions under which the manufacturers of food contact materials can use recycled plastics. It seeks to create a clear centralised authorisation system, which will allow a unified approach for authorisation of food contact materials throughout the EU.

EFSA will be responsible for carrying out the risk assessment on processes used for recycling of plastic intended for food contact, while the Commission will manage the dossiers of each applicant. Individual recycling processes are based on specific know-how and technology, and the regulation therefore provides for individual authorisations of each process. The authorisation holders are responsible for the process being implemented in all recycling premises according to the authorisation that has been granted.

Member States are responsible for the control of the recycling premises in their territory.

Transitional measures will apply while the authorisation procedures are established. EFSA will publish guidelines for the safety assessment of a recycling process, following which applications can be submitted. EFSA will assess the each application and issue a formal opinion, with the Commission then submitting its draft decision (granting or refusing authorisation of the recycling process) to the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health.

Further information is available from the Europa website at http://tinyurl.com/5vl4g3

Note: TinyURLs™ are used are used in this newsletter to replace some long web addresses. This will help readers in obtaining further information from the websites concerned.

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