

T&L *UPDATE* 67

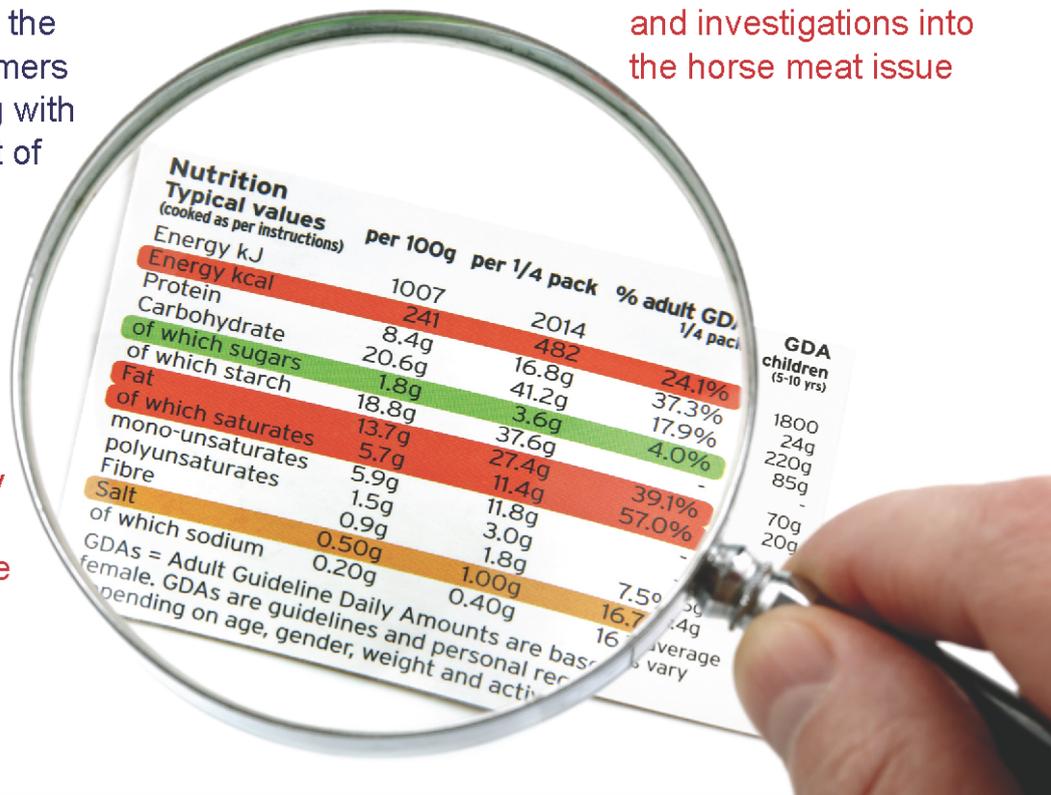
JULY 2013

In our new look T&L Update we have introduced different sections covering a range of Technical and Legislative topics so that you can find articles and news more easily.

The Department of Health has issued guidance on how to comply with the new Food Information to Consumers (FIC) Labelling Regulation along with guidance on their voluntary front of pack nutrition labelling scheme

Find out about the Additives Regulations that have just come into force and PARNUTS Regulation that has just been published as well as the Grocery Code Adjudicator Act that gives powers to the new Grocery Code Adjudicator.

Find all the recent news and investigations into the horse meat issue



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Note: TinyURLs™ are used in this newsletter to replace some long web addresses.

For more about TinyURL™ ('Making long URLs usable'), visit <http://tinyurl.com/>. TinyURL was created as a free service to make posting long URLs easier, and is a trademark of Gilby Productions

Preferential Rates for BFFF Members on DNA Testing at Leatherhead

BFFF are working closely with Leatherhead who can offer BFFF Members preferential rates on PCR testing for horse DNA. Please quote BFFF when making your enquiry – contact details are at the bottom of the page. Leatherhead will be extending their suite of testing to other species and are keen to know what your testing requirements are so that they can prioritise these for validation. Just let the Leatherhead team know when you speak to them or drop me a line at BFFF – Sudakin@bfff.co.uk



Horse Speciation PCR

M. Patel PhD, M. Scott MPhil, A. Knight PhD and B. Lake DSc – Leatherhead Food Research

Summary

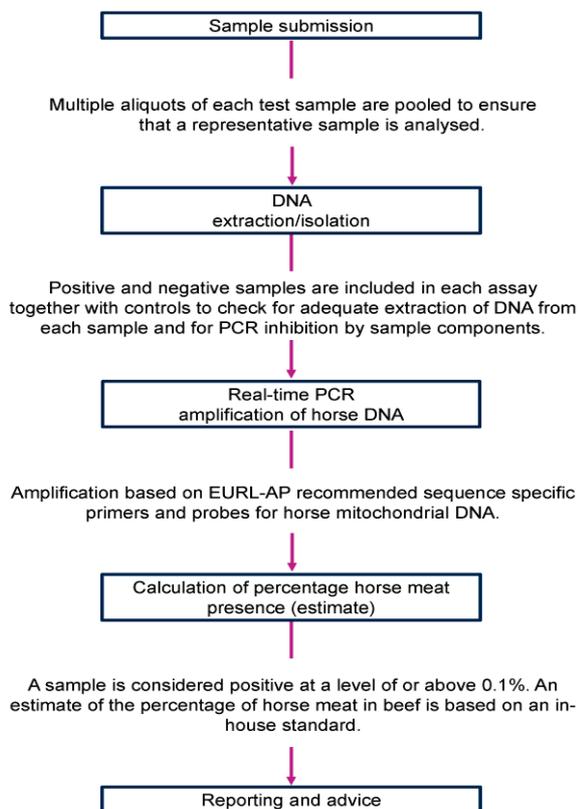
Food adulteration has always been an industry concern and is gaining interest once again as an economic and emerging food safety risk, especially when considering the global and complex nature of the food supply chain. In the light of horse meat being discovered in several beef products, food adulteration has recently focussed the attention of consumers, the media and the food industry on the ethical, regulatory and food safety implications of foods, especially those containing meat.

The economic burden of food adulteration has recently been estimated to cost the food industry a staggering £8 billion a year. This cost to the food industry may not be surprising, as it has been reported that food adulteration cases have risen globally by nearly 60% over the past two years.

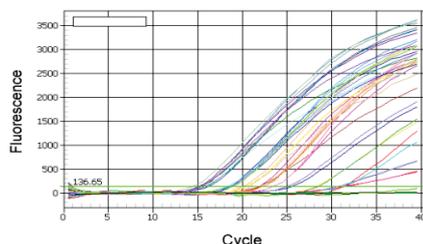
Leatherhead Food Research has developed a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assay to detect the presence of horse DNA as a contaminant of fresh meat or of uncooked processed food products such as beef burgers. Using the European Union Reference Laboratory for Animal Proteins' (EURL-AP) recommended specific primers and probes, an assay has been developed with a limit of detection of around 0.01%. Furthermore, an estimate of the percentage of horse meat present in the sample can be provided.

Approach – DNA testing (Molecular PCR)

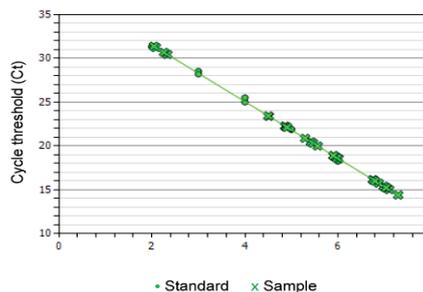
Flow diagram describing the procedure for horse meat identification in beef/meat.



Horse real-time PCR amplification/cycle data using fluorescent dye



Quantification – In-house standard used to estimate percentage horse present in beef/meat



ELISA speciation testing

Leatherhead Food Research also offers an ELISA assay for detecting the presence of horse in fresh meat and in uncooked and cooked food products. If required, both the PCR and ELISA assays can be used to provide a robust confirmation of the presence of horse meat in food samples.

ELISA-based speciation assays are also available here at Leatherhead for beef, chicken, sheep and pork in fresh and cooked meat.

For more information on microbial identification and consultancy services please contact **Dr Mitesh Patel**, Senior Research Scientist
 T +44 (0)1372 822317, E mpatel@leatherheadfood.com

ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS**European Commission Update Hygiene Regulation Guidance**

The European Commission published on 28 May 2013 a revised guidance document on the implementation of certain provisions of Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs. The revised guidance incorporates a number of changes including provisions on sprout production

To access this guidance and also current guidance on Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004 on the hygiene requirements for product of animal origin go to: <http://tinyurl.com/qrzus>

Guide to the Ordinary Legislative Procedure

The European Commission bookshop have made available a free guide: Guide to the ordinary legislative procedure. The guide is available to download or can be sent free as a paper copy. In the guide you can find answers to:

- How does the procedure work? What are the deadlines?
- What role does the Presidency or Council General Secretariat play in this process?
- What are the legal bases?

The e-book is available in 22 languages.

To download or order go to: <http://tinyurl.com/q9a8u94>

RASFF 2012 Annual Report Published

The Commission has recently published the 2012 annual report on Europe's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF). The report has revealed that in 2012 almost 50% of notifications related to food and feed rejections at EU borders due to the risk they posed to food safety.

Launched more than 30 years ago, RASFF is an IT tool that facilitates the cross-border flow of information between national food safety authorities.

Tonio Borg, EU Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, said: "RASFF is now an indispensable tool to respond to, and mitigate, food safety situations in the EU," he also went on to announce "the Commission envisages to extend the scope of RASFF to the fight against food fraud".

The report can be downloaded from: <http://tinyurl.com/p2s8sdo>

Commission Guidance on Pesticide Residues in Fish

The Commission has published a new working document on the nature of pesticide residues in fish.

Uptake of pesticides by fish, with consequential occurrence of residues in fish products, can occur following ingestion of feed containing a pesticide residue.

The guidance should only be used in connection with residues in fish feed and does not apply to the direct treatment of water bodies or spray drift/run-off/drainage after treatment along water bodies. The possible resulting fish exposure is not within the scope of the guidance.

The guidance document is applicable as from 1 January 2014 for all active substances for which an application for approval and all plant protection products for which an application for authorisation is required.

DG SANCO has also published Guidance document on criteria for the inclusion of active substances into Annex IV of Regulation (EC) N°396/2005 which gives procedural guidance on maximum residue levels.

Both of the new documents can be accessed through: <http://tinyurl.com/mfhnqj6>

Commission Agrees New Guidance on Meat Preparations and Meat Products

Following the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health SCoFAH meeting on 17 June BFFF have received the feedback from FSA on negotiations that have been ongoing for some time to clarify the definitions and distinctions between meat preparations and meat products.

The guidance agreed will be included in the next version of the Commission's guidance on hygiene Regulation 853/2004, but it is unclear when that might be.

On speaking to FSA – they have said that the hygiene Regulation 853/2004 has not changed and Food business Operators in considering the guidance should also consider whether these products would currently be considered as “Meat Products” or “Meat Preparations”

The draft has not been published so I cannot provide a link to the document, however I do have a copy. Please contact me if you would like me to send it to you. Sudakin@bfff.co.uk

Commission Publishes Regulatory Proposal on a “Safer Food Package”

The European Commission has published proposals to change the current legislation governing all official controls in food and agriculture businesses. As well as reviewing the current food and feed regulation 882/2004, the new proposal includes the official control framework for animal and plant health, plant reproductive material and a late addition of Commission Expenditure on controls in the agri-food chain. The proposed plans will potentially affect all organisations involved in the production, manufacture, supply and regulation of food, feed, live animals, plants and plant reproductive material. **In summary: All Food Businesses.**

You can access the proposal through the link below; the most far reaching proposal in the dossier is to make it mandatory for National Authorities to charge food businesses for all official controls, including all inspections, enforcement, certification and even training and travel expenses. The Commission want to ensure that controls are maintained and sustainable during times when some member states can't afford it; essentially by transferring the full cost to food businesses. Micro businesses will be exempt from charging except when enforcement action is taken against them.

Other elements in the proposal are the requirements for member states (MS) to consider food fraud as part of their national control plans; strengthening administrative cooperation between MS when there are food issues, the setting up of a food fraud unit and provision that penalties for food fraud must be “dissuasive”.

For the press release accompanying the proposal go to: <http://tinyurl.com/oprzdy4>

A Summary and the communication document from Commission to Parliament can be downloaded from the new Commission webpage, which can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/bwqnyv3>

The dossier will now follow the ordinary legislative procedure involving both the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. Indications are that discussions will begin in June and agreement could take two years as it is so large and complex. The transition period is likely to be quite lengthy also possibly 3 years.

ANALYTICAL, METROLOGY, FOOD SAFETY & ZOOSES**EU to Ban 3-acetyl-2, 5-demethylthiophene Flavouring**

European Commission and European Union Member States have decided, following the publication of an opinion by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), that the flavouring substance 3-acetyl-2,5-dimethylthiophene should be banned.

EFSA published a scientific opinion and press release on 16 May that said: 'The flavouring substance 3-acetyl-2,5-dimethylthiophene is genotoxic (that is, it can damage DNA, the genetic material of cells) and therefore represents a safety concern for human health. Genotoxic substances should not be intentionally added to the food chain.'

While EFSA did not undertake an exposure assessment, it stated in its press release that 'the possible risk to consumers who may have been exposed to this substance in food is expected to be very small'. The substance 3-Acetyl-2,5-dimethylthiophene is used to give food a burnt nutty flavour. It is produced by a small number of manufacturers and its overall use is low (total annual use in the EU is reported to be 2.3kg). The Food Standards Agency has been informed that the UK food industry uses only a small amount of this substance and is already reformulating foods that contain 3-acetyl-2,5-dimethylthiophene.

The decision to remove this substance from the list of approved flavourings was supported by all member states and will now be subject to scrutiny by the European Parliament and Council. It is expected to be adopted by the European Commission and come into force in early July. The EFSA press release on 3-Acetyl-2,5-dimethylthiophene can be found at the link : <http://tinyurl.com/pfaxbel>

EFSA Report Links Hepatitis Outbreak with Frozen Berries

Since 1 January 2013, 15 laboratory-confirmed cases of Hepatitis (HAV) infection have been reported in Germany, the Netherlands and Poland. All cases had travelled to the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano in northern Italy during the exposure period. During the same period, Italy experienced an increase in cases of HAV infection both in the province of Trento and at national level.

Preliminary epidemiological and environmental investigations indicate mixed frozen berries as the most likely vehicle of infection for this outbreak. A large number of cases reported consumption of berries prior to disease onset. In addition, HAV was isolated from a pack of mixed frozen berries at the residence of one case. RNA sequencing and interviews of patients is being carried out to confirm the hypothesis of mixed frozen berries as the vehicle of infection.

According to the available information, it is likely that additional cases will be identified and reported.

Another two HAV-related outbreaks are simultaneously under investigation in four Nordic countries and in travellers returning from Egypt. At present, there is no evidence of links between these outbreaks.

FSA have provided guidance on sourcing for processors, if you would like a copy please contact Sudakin@bfff.co.uk

FSA Reminder on Food Safe Handling of Curry Leaves

The Food Standards Agency is reminding those who eat or use fresh curry leaves in their dishes, to ensure that the leaves are washed thoroughly before use. Cooking provides further assurance that these leaves are safe to eat.

The use of uncooked fresh curry leaves, which were contaminated with several different bacteria including salmonella, was the cause of a food poisoning outbreak which affected more than 400 people at the Street Spice festival in Newcastle. Further information on the recent Newcastle City Council and Public Health England investigation into this incident can be found on the PHE website. See 'External sites' links. For full information go to: <http://tinyurl.com/q9b7up4>

TB Reactor Beef in the Food Supply Chain

There has been recent media coverage questioning the practise that allows meat from TB Reactor cows to enter the food supply chain for human consumption.

If as a result of routine inspection on farms TB reactor cattle are identified, they are segregated and scheduled for immediate slaughter. There are a limited number of slaughter houses approved for the slaughter of TB reactor cattle and they are subject to close control and inspection. TB affected cattle are processed at the end of the normal days activity and subject to a heightened veterinary inspection; this includes a thorough examination of all the major lymph nodes, and organs especially the lungs and trachea.

If more than one site is confirmed as having TB lesions- usually the lungs and peritoneum, the carcass is rejected and destroyed. If only one area with a lesion is identified then the area is cut away and the rest of the carcass passed as fit.

This has been the arrangement for TB reactors for many years and supported by research carried out by the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF)

The main routes for the transmission of TB is through drinking infected and unpasteurised milk and aerosol droplets and faeces through prolonged contact with an infected animal. The bacteria are very easily destroyed by heat so thorough cooking of meat will help eliminate the risk even further.

FSA have released a statement on the TB risk from meat, defending their controls: <http://tinyurl.com/nqfpvxo>

EFSA Report on *L. monocytogenes* in RTE Foods

EFSA have published a report on *Listeria monocytogenes* in Ready to Eat Foods. The Scientific Report concerned the analysis of a baseline survey on the prevalence of *Listeria monocytogenes* in certain ready-to-eat foods in the EU, 2010-2011 Part A: *Listeria monocytogenes* prevalence estimates.

The aim of the survey was to estimate the European Union prevalence level of *Listeria monocytogenes* in certain ready-to-eat foods at retail.

The report found that prevalence of *Listeria monocytogenes* across the entire European Union in fish samples was found to be 10.4 % at the time of sampling and at the end of shelf-life was 10.3 %, while for meat and cheese samples at the end of shelf-life these prevalences were 2.07 % and 0.47 %, respectively. The European Union level proportion of samples with a *Listeria monocytogenes* count exceeding the level of 100 cfu/g at the end of shelf-life was 1.7 %, 0.43 % and 0.06 % for fish, meat and cheese samples, respectively, while for fish at the time of sampling it was 1 %. To access the full report go to: <http://tinyurl.com/l5b2wva>

ANIMAL WELFARE

FSA Welcomes Modernisation of Pig Inspection System

European member states have voted for new legislation to modernise the inspection system in pig slaughterhouses. The new rules are aimed at modernising pig meat inspection, carried out by National Authorities, and were endorsed by experts meeting in the Standing Committee for the Food Chain and Animal Health. The new rules are based on an opinion of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and introduce a more risk-based approach to pig meat inspection; enhance controls on diseases such as *Salmonella* and *Trichinella* and amends classical post-mortem inspection procedures.

The rules reflect the new risks identified in the EFSA opinion and re-orientate meat inspection to address these risks in order to maintain the highest level of consumer protection, without compromising animal health and welfare objectives and without increasing costs associated with these inspections.

Measures agreed include:

- strengthened salmonella controls in pig slaughterhouses
- reduced trichinella testing where other controls are in place
- reduced carcass handling to minimise cross-contamination

The new legislation is expected to come into force in June 2014. The FSA will now work with the meat industry to implement the new requirements. New legislative proposals on poultry, sheep and cattle meat inspection are also planned and are likely to be published within the next year. For more information: <http://tinyurl.com/ojyv8q>

Schmallenberg Virus Report

Following a request from the European Commission for EFSA to continue to collect data and provide updates of the epidemiological situation on Schmallenberg virus (SBV) in the EU, EFSA have analysed further data and updated the previously published report on the analysis of the epidemiological data and preliminary impact assessment. The analysis gives an overview of the SBV situation (reporting period from 1 August 2011 till 30 April 2013) together with an update of newly affected herds.

Most countries in Europe have reported SBV cases. It can be seen that in winter 2012 and spring 2013 the area where cases were reported has expanded. In the north the area in the United Kingdom has extended to Scotland, and in the Scandinavia mainland regions of Norway, Finland and Sweden are now affected. SBV has also spread to new regions in the east of Europe: Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia.

The report can be downloaded from the EFSA website through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/lqwhrkx>

EFSA Launches Consultation on Evaluation Criteria for Stunning Methods

EFSA has launched a public consultation on draft guidance on criteria to evaluate studies on the effectiveness of stunning methods. This document defines the assessment process and the criteria that will be applied to studies on alternative stunning methods. All stakeholders and interested parties are invited to comment on the document through an online public consultation that runs until **8 September 2013** to find out more and respond go to: <http://tinyurl.com/nawa7ak>

Welfare of Animals at Slaughter Consultation Outcome

Defra has published a summary of the 446 responses received as a result of the consultation they ran to gather views on proposals to implement Council Regulation (EC) 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing, in England, which comes into effect from 1 January 2013. Defra was seeking views on proposed measures to implement:

- the legal obligations in Regulation 1099/2009;
- national rules to maintain existing welfare standards where these are higher than those in Regulation 1099/2009;
- transitional measures;
- criminal and administrative sanctions and penalties for breaches of Regulation 1099/2009 and stricter national rules.

For more information go to: <http://tinyurl.com/dxg5zah>

Defra Consult on Reform of Animal Welfare Codes

Defra have launched a consultation on a proposal to move from statutory farm animal welfare codes to guidance that is drafted collaboratively but led by the relevant livestock industry.

The objective of this proposal is to ensure that guidance on how keepers comply with farm animal welfare legislation is up to date, reflecting the latest scientific and veterinary knowledge whilst being presented in the most relevant way for farmers.

Defra is seeking views on reforming the farm animal welfare codes because existing Defra farm animal welfare codes, are statutory and thus any changes require the provision of Parliamentary time and legislative preparation.

All are now out-of-date, with many over 20 years old and some not including significant legislative changes that have occurred since.

You can download the consultation documents and respond online through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/kj28fjt>
Responses are invited by 8 August

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

Seafish Launches Interactive Seafood Certification Guide

Seafish has launched a new web-based resource called '*A Guide to Seafood Standards*' to provide information and an online tool to compare and contrast the different certification standards which apply to fish and shellfish supplied in the UK.

Paul Williams, chief executive of Seafish said: "As the seafood industry has increased its emphasis on responsible sourcing, many more suppliers are using certification schemes to underline quality and ethical practice. This focus on improvement is great news both for consumers and for our industry, but the proliferation of different schemes can also sometimes be confusing. That's why we set out to create a new web resource to put all the information on the different standards in one place, so that users could better compare their features and benefits."

The Guide to Seafood Standards provides detailed information on all the certification schemes currently relevant to seafood, many of which also appear on product labelling and menus. It incorporates an interactive tool which describes how each standard is applied and the criteria used to measure factors such as food safety, environment, animal and social welfare. To access the new resource: <http://tinyurl.com/mkwbfry>

IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Increased Checks for High Risk Food Imports

New "high risk" food imports have been added to the list of products of non-animal origin under Regulation (EC) No 669/2009 that will be subject to increased levels of scrutiny at EU designated ports of entry.

Safeguard controls on certain 'high-risk' feed and food are listed in Annex I of Regulation (EC) No. 669/2009, as amended. The latest amendments are Regulation (EU) No 1235/2012 and Regulation (EU) 270/2013 (which applies from 1 April 2013).

Since 25 January 2010 imports of certain feed and food of non-animal origin, from certain non-EU countries, that are considered to be 'high-risk' can only enter the UK through specific ports and airports approved as designated points of entry (DPEs) where official controls will be carried out. A 'high-risk' product is feed or food that is either a known, or an emerging, risk to public health. This may be due to the presence of contaminants and/or undesirable substances such as aflatoxins, *Salmonella* or pesticides.

New additions to the list include fresh, chilled and frozen peppers, courgettes and tomatoes originating from Turkey at risk of the presence of pesticides methomyl and oxamyl and fresh chilled and frozen yard long beans, brassicas and aubergines from Thailand at risk of containing organo-phosphorus pesticide residues

A list of the 'high-risk' products, country of origin and the frequency of checks can be found at Annex I of Commission Regulation (EC) 669/2009 at: <http://tinyurl.com/l564x5n>

Changes to the Generalised System of Preferences

The European Commission's DG Trade has recently published details on the upcoming changes to the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP). The note lists 87 countries that are no longer in the scheme and those countries who are classified as low to lower middle income countries by the world bank who still qualify for GSP but at a reduced level. The changes are due to be implemented from 1 January 2014 and will remain in place for 3 years.

Among the changes is the classification of Thailand as a low to lower middle income country that puts them on the path to graduation out of the scheme. From 1 January 2014 CN code 16: preparations of meat and fish from Thailand will **No Longer** be subject to preferential tariffs and will attract the full tariff amount. This is because these are areas where Thailand is no longer seen to require assistance to support trade. Thailand entered into formal trade talks with the EU in March 2013 and with the intent to enter into a bilateral trade agreement to replace GSP.

More information on Tariffs and a full list of the commodities from GSP countries that are exempted from the preferential tariffs can be found on the DG Trade website: <http://tinyurl.com/osn28bx>. The withdrawal of the preferential tariffs will have an obvious impact on importers and processors of those commodities.

BIS contacts for further information on the Generalised Scheme of Preferences are:

Brendan McMullan [B-McMullan@dfid.gov.uk] tel 020 7215 2223

and Camilla Bowen [C-Bowen@dfid.gov.uk] tel 020 7215 3345.

Import and Exporter Businesses Targeted by Fraudsters

The Food Standards Agency is warning potential food importers, and potential exporters to the UK, to be on their guard following recent reports of bogus emails from someone claiming to be the FSA Director of Legal Services. These emails aim to deceive businesses into paying to obtain certificates or authorisations before their food products can be brought into the UK. **This is a scam.** The FSA does not issue such import certificates or authorisations.

Will Creswell, Head of Incidents and Official Controls Policy, said: 'The FSA takes all food fraud-related activity extremely seriously. We do not issue import certificates or authorisation, and we certainly do not email businesses asking them to pay for such documents. Whoever is sending these scam emails is not from the FSA. We're monitoring the situation and urge businesses to be on their guard.'

If you have received such an email, please forward it onto the FSA Food Fraud team at foodfraud@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk or call the Food Fraud team on 020 7276 8527.

BIP Manual Published

On 1 July Defra published guidance on Border Inspection Post (BIP) checks on products of animal origin from third countries, including both EU and national rules. Defra states that the document is intended as a guide only and specific provisions should be checked in the relevant legislation, which can be found in the Compendium of Veterinary Checks. Official Veterinary Surgeons (OVS) information notes will notify Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) of major changes in guidance and instructions going forward and any OVS notes issued after the date of issue take precedence over the manual. Download the manual from the Defra website: <http://tinyurl.com/kuqvodx>

INCIDENTS AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT**New Food Defence Tools for Business**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has released a new tool to help bolster the food industry's defence measures against an act of intentional food contamination. The Food Defence Plan Builder is a comprehensive, easy-to-use software program designed to help owners and operators of food facilities—ranging from primary production and manufacturing to retail and transportation—develop customized plans to minimize the risk of intentional contamination at their individual food facilities. Following the recent horse meat scandal many food businesses are looking more closely at fraudulent threats to their business.

The Food Defence Plan Builder is FDA's latest effort to help owners and operators of food facilities take appropriate action to defend the food supply. In the years following the September 11, 2001 attacks, the FDA released a number of food defence tools and resources to aid the U.S. food industry, federal partners, state and local regulators, and the international community in protecting the food supply against biological, chemical and radiological attack. To download the software tool for free go to: <http://tinyurl.com/l8kaool>

EU Food-Borne Disease Exercise

Exercise Aristaeus was commissioned by the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers of the European Commission (EAHC) and conducted by Public Health England (PHE) as a table top exercise to build on the lessons learnt from the E.coli O104:H4 outbreak in 2011.

The main purpose of the exercise was to bring together public health, food safety and communication specialists in one forum. This provided Member States, European Agencies and other interested organisations with an opportunity to review existing plans and arrangements for the management of a food-borne outbreak, to improve and reinforce preparedness and gain an understanding of respective roles in outbreak management.

Twenty-seven Member States were represented along with other third countries and NGO's. Two of the main findings included a need for greater collaboration between public health and food safety authorities at both the EU and Member State level, and clearer definition of the functions and responsibilities of DG SANCO and the involved EU agencies (ECDC, EFSA and WHO Europe) For the full report go to <http://tinyurl.com/o87twue>

FSA Publishes Annual Report of Incidents

The Food Standards Agency has published its latest Annual Report of Food Incidents. The report highlights the wide range of incidents managed by the Food Standards Agency during 2012. Last year, a total of 1,604 food and environmental contamination incidents in the UK were reported to and investigated by the FSA. This figure was 110 down on 2011 but higher than in many previous years. The three largest contributors to these incidents were microbiological contamination (20%), environmental contamination (15%) and natural chemical contamination (13%).

The number of allergen-related incidents appears to have risen by more than half since 2010. Statistics suggest, however, that legislative changes relating to gluten may have been a major contributory factor. The full report can be downloaded from the FSA website: <http://tinyurl.com/mbfwyfg>

LABELLING AND FOOD LAW

Department of Health Front of Pack Nutrition Guidance

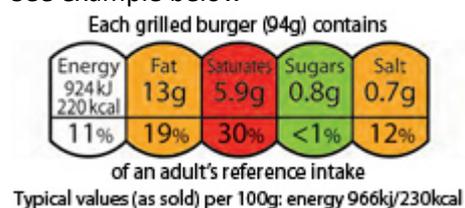
The Department of Health, the Food Standards Agency and the Devolved Administrations have launched the expected guidance on Front of Pack Nutrition Labelling.

The guidance is designed to support the development of front of pack nutrition labels that are compliant with the UK Health Ministers' Recommendation on the use of colour coding and percentage reference intakes as an additional form of expression and with FIC - EU Regulation No. 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers: Article 35.

The guidance was developed by the Department of Health, the Food Standards Agency, and devolved administrations in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales in collaboration with the British Retail Consortium. The new label, incorporates colour-coding: red, amber and green, and 'percentage reference intakes', previously guideline daily amounts (GDA's)

Although the presentation of the FoP information remains voluntary, if information is given it must be in this format to comply with FIC from December 2014.

See example below



More information and the new guidelines are available at: <http://tinyurl.com/knvhnmo>

The Department of Health have also launched two new Food Network Responsibility Deal pledges to coincide with the new voluntary guidance:

- F.7 (a) "We will adopt and implement the UK Governments' 2013 recommended Front of Pack Nutrition Labelling Scheme"
- F.7 (b) "We will promote, and explain to consumers how to use the UK Governments' 2013 recommended Front of Pack Nutrition Labelling Scheme."

Any companies or NGOs wishing to sign up to the pledges can find them at: <https://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/>

Food Information to Consumers - Guidance on Nutrition Labelling

The Department of Health has also published technical guidance on the articles of EU FIC – The food information to consumers Regulation 1169/2011, relating to nutrition labelling.

Where nutrition labelling is given on a voluntary basis it must comply with the EU FIC requirements by December 2014 and all pre-packed food, unless specifically exempted must bear nutrition indications by December 2016.

The technical guidance can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/pehxp07>

NUTRITION, ADDITIVES AND HEALTH**New Additives Regulation Applicable 1 June 2013**

A new EU list of approved additives applied from 1 June 2013. The list contains only food additives which have been approved by the European Food Safety Authority EFSA following scientific evaluation.

The additives are now listed in a clear way, according to the category of food to which they may be added. In order to ensure that their use continues to be safe, an extensive re-evaluation programme by the European Food Safety Authority of the approved food additives is on-going. For more information

<http://tinyurl.com/cg9mx47> and a summary go to: <http://tinyurl.com/nxcc2tz>

Experts Agree Food Taxes Alone are Not Effective for Cutting Obesity

Food and drinks taxes still haven't been proved to be an effective way of combating obesity in Europe. However, the taxes, introduced by many European governments, could have a part to play, but only as part of a holistic approach, experts say.

While taxes on alcohol and cigarettes have been commonplace for many years, taxes on specific unhealthy foods and drinks aimed at combating obesity have only recently been introduced by some governments. For example the Danish levy on saturated fat, which the government abolished one year after its adoption due to an increase in cross-border trade and loss of jobs. Another example comes from Finland where extra taxes on candies, chocolate, cocoa-based products, ice cream and ice lollies have been in place since 2011. A separate tax on soft drinks was increased and widened to also include other categories of beverages.

In September 2011, Hungary raised a tax on a series of unhealthy products such as certain soft drinks, energy drinks, pre-packed sweetened products, salty snacks and condiments. At the same time, the health minister of Ireland, James Reilly, announced that he was considering introducing a tax on sugar-sweetened drinks. In France, a tax on all beverages with added sugar or with artificial sweeteners was introduced in 2012.

At a panel debate in Brussels, organised by the European Policy Centre, participants disagreed as to how effective food and drinks taxes are. However they all acknowledged that these taxes alone cannot be the only means to tackle obesity and that a more holistic approach was needed. For more information go to:

<http://tinyurl.com/mnens7b>

Food Network - Public Health Responsibility Deal Update

The Department of Health (DoH) has finalised the wording on its latest new pledge on **Saturated Fat** and has published the associated package of information. The Department are seeking early signatories to the pledge ahead of its launch in the Autumn

Pledge wording

"Recognising the role of over-consumption of saturated fat in the risk of premature avoidable mortality from cardiovascular and coronary heart disease, and public health recommendations to reduce saturated fat consumption (to less than 11% of food energy for everyone over 5yrs of age, compared to current levels of 12.7%): We will support and enable people to consume less saturated fat through actions such as product/menu reformulation, reviewing portion sizes, education and information and incentivising consumers to choose healthier options. We will monitor and report on our actions on an annual basis. Progress in reducing people's saturated fat intakes will be measured via the National Diet and Nutrition Survey."

The contact at DoH is Nicole Redhead (nicole.redhead@dh.gsi.gov.uk Tel: 020 7972 3026. If you are interested in becoming an early signatory they are asking for an indication of intentions by the 19th July

The DoH are at the early stages of developing a **Responsibility Deal Pledge on Marketing, Promotion and Advertising of foods.**

In order to develop a view of what good looks like and what businesses consider to be poor practice DoH are seeking information on best practice/current company guidelines that cover any of the above areas, especially in relation to children. The information is requested by the end of July and they are targeting publication of an agreed pledge in December this year.

Alette Addison is the contact at DoH for this pledge and you are invited to discuss / meet with her to go through any aspect in more detail: Alette.addison@dh.gsi.gov.uk – 0207 972 1371.

DoH Seeks information on Potassium-based Salt Replacements

The Department of Health (DoH) is currently considering the risks and benefits around the use of potassium-based salt replacers. Both the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition and the Committee on Toxicology have been asked for their advice and DoH are working with Public Health England and the Food Standards Agency to evaluate their current position.

DoH have written to BFFF as they are also seeking information from industry. Specifically, they are looking for information on:

- the types of potassium-containing ingredients (e.g. KCl, potassium bicarbonate etc.) that in principle industry may wish to use in the future;
- the food categories industry might want to use these substances in;
- the proposed/potential levels of usage (e.g.% substitutions, absolute increased potassium levels in products);
- any development work that may have been conducted.

The information would be welcome even if it is not precise. The Department are also seeking any information about whether potassium-based replacements are being used in products available in other countries, ie which products these are and at what levels. They have warned that without further industry information they would need to consider a 'worst case scenario' in the modelling work.

DoH are looking for any information to be sent to them by 12 July. Information and queries should be addressed to: Liz Tydeman at the Department of Health: elizabeth.tydeman@dh.gsi.gov.uk Tel: 0207 972 3367.

New PARNUTS Regulation Published

A new Regulation on food for particular nutritional uses has been published in the official journal of the European Union and will replace the PARNUTS Directive 2009/39/EC

The new Regulation:

REGULATION (EU) No 609/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 12 June 2013 on food intended for infants and young children, food for special medical purposes, and total diet replacement for weight control and repealing Council Directive 92/52/EEC, Commission Directives 96/8/EC, 1999/21/EC, 2006/125/EC and 2006/141/EC, Directive 2009/39/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Regulations (EC) No 41/2009 and (EC) No 953/2009

establishes compositional and information requirements for the following categories of food:

- infant formula and follow-on formula;
- processed cereal-based food and baby food;
- food for special medical purposes;

- total diet replacement for weight control.

It also establishes a Union list of substances that may be added to the categories above.

The majority of the provisions of the new Regulation apply from 20 July 2016 and food that is compliant with Directive 2009/39/EC may continue to be marketed until stocks of such food are exhausted. To access the new Regulation go to: <http://tinyurl.com/pzmy4oz>

E500 Sodium Carbonate in Fishery Products

At the beginning of June, here at the BFFF Offices we were inundated with a number of member queries concerning whether E500 sodium carbonates – including sodium bicarbonate would be permitted after June 1 in fishery products.

From 1 June the requirements of Regulation 1129/2011 on food additives will apply. Regulation 1129/2011 provides the detail of which additives are approved, in what quantities, in different categories of food. The Regulation provides the information in the form of an annex, (Annex II) to Regulation 1333/2008 that established the EU list of approved food additives. Any products lawfully placed on the market before 1 July 2013 can continue to be sold until their durability date.

Fishery products are identified as product category 09 in the 1129 Regulation (Page 107). I queried interpretation of the Regulation with Glynis Griffiths, who is responsible for the Regulation within the Food Standards Agency and who is coordinating guidance on the Regulation.

Glynis has categorically confirmed that E500 is not permitted in unprocessed fishery products but IS permitted in processed fishery products:

- No additives, including the group I additive E500 are allowed in unprocessed fish, except for those additives (inc group IV) listed in 09.1.1 under the conditions listed and only in the products specified. As E500 was not previously allowed in this category this is no change to the current rules.
- All Group I additives, including E500 are permitted in 09.2 processed fish and fishery products including molluscs and crustaceans, up to the maximum levels specified in part C of the regulation. Again this represents no change from the previous requirements.

A definition of “unprocessed” is included in Reg 1333 (Art 3 P2. d)

‘unprocessed food’ shall mean a food which has not undergone any treatment resulting in a substantial change in the original state of the food, for which purpose the following in particular are not regarded as resulting in substantial change: dividing, parting, severing, boning, mincing, skinning, paring, peeling, grinding, cutting, cleaning, trimming, deep-freezing, freezing, chilling, milling, husking, packing or unpacking;

Glynis also highlighted the most recent Commission amendments to the Annex as permitted additive requirements are constantly changing. The latest changes relate to new restrictions on certain colours in fishery products which will apply from 1 June 2013 also. Here is link to the relevant legislation (Regulation 232/2012): <http://tinyurl.com/o7jhnac>

In category 0.9.2 (processed fish etc), E 110 and E 124 will be permitted only in salmon substitutes based on *Theragra chalcogramma* and *Pollachius virens* at a maximum level of 200 mg/kg. These are Group III colours which are currently permitted in surimi and similar products and salmon substitutes at a max level of 500 mg/kg.

In category 09.3 (fish roe), permitted levels of E 104, E 110, and E 124 (all Group III colours) will be reduced from a maximum level of 300 mg/kg to 200 mg/kg.

PROCESSING AND RETAIL**Guidance on Good Practice for Whitefish Processors**

A new industry guide to good hygiene practice for whitefish processors is available to order from The Stationery Office (TSO). Produced by the Grimsby Fish Merchants Association, on behalf of industry, the guide aims to help processors to comply with food safety and hygiene law. The guide is recognised by the Food Standards Agency.

The guide provides advice on achieving best practice concerning the quality of fish purchased and its maintenance during processing, packaging and dispatch. In addition, it covers the requirements applicable to the processing of white fish, including filleting, smoking and freezing. The guide sets out the means by which the white fish processor can comply with Regulation (EC) No. 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs, and Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004 laying down specific rules for food of animal origin.

The use of the guide is voluntary. There is no legal requirement for food businesses to follow the advice contained in it. Businesses may demonstrate compliance with the hygiene legislation in other ways. However, where a food business operator is following the guidance in a recognised industry guide, such as this one, the enforcement authority must take this into account when assessing compliance with the legislation.

The guide costs £10 and can be purchased from: <http://tinyurl.com/kuhr6fd>

Grocery Code Adjudicators Act Passes into Law

The Groceries Supply Code of Practice has been around since 2010 and was produced as a result of the Competition Commission's investigation of the groceries market which it undertook between May 2006 and April 2008. At the time the Competition Commission found an adverse effect on competition due to a number of market features including supply chain practices that were detrimental to suppliers.

In January 2013 Christine Tacon was appointed as the Grocery Code Adjudicator Designate, the appointment being subject to the Groceries Code Adjudicator Bill receiving Royal Assent, this Bill enables and empowers the role of the Adjudicator to:

- Enforce the Groceries Supply Code of Practice
- Arbitrate in disputes between the ten largest supermarkets with an annual turnover of £1bn and their direct suppliers
- Investigate confidential complaints from direct and indirect suppliers, whether in the UK or overseas, and from third parties, to end the 'climate of fear'
- Hold to account retailers who break the rules by 'naming and shaming' or fining supermarkets.

The Groceries Code Adjudicator Bill was given Royal Assent on 25 April this year,

To download the new Act go to: <http://tinyurl.com/qj5x4rv>

REFRIGERATION**F Gas Review**

The European ENVI Committee voted recently to accept the Commission Proposal to phase out F Gas usage in refrigeration systems but alarmingly they also voted to include a number of amendments that take it much further. A press report on the vote can be found through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/q93wo5d>

The ENVI report will now represent the position of the European Parliament when negotiating on the proposal with the Council of Ministers (Member States), The Council is expected to adopt its position before the Summer break in August. Following Council adopting its position there will begin a negotiation process that will continue throughout the Autumn. Agreement could possibly be reached before end 2013.

Download the Commission proposal at: <http://tinyurl.com/peup5wd> and the ENVI Committee position from: <http://tinyurl.com/oezrncq>

REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT AND OFFICIAL CONTROLS**Food Standards Agency eNews**

The latest issue of FSA e-News, is now available online.

Key topics covered include the latest developments in the Agency; details of the Food Safety Week campaign, which ran from 10-16 June; the latest on the horse meat incident; developments around nutrition in Scotland as well as a round-up on the projects that the Agency in Scotland is working on with the Scottish Government. Other topics covered in the newsletter range from a new print-friendly format for Safer food, better business packs and your guide to the latest Agency research.

To access the latest and previous issues go to: <http://tinyurl.com/kq4kjzl>

FSA Publish Fact Sheets for Trading Standards Officers

Trading standards officers throughout the country can now download eight FSA factsheets containing basic advice on how enforcement officers and the FSA can work together to achieve shared food-safety goals.

The factsheets, which can be found at the link below, were created for distribution at the Trading Standards Institute (TSI) national conference, held in Brighton in June.

Six factsheets provide key message on:

- Food standards
- Food standards enforcement
- Food allergen labelling
- Animal feed
- Food fraud
- Imported food

Two factsheets also provide information on FSA-funded training courses 2013 – 14 and FSA regional and devolved administration key contacts. The factsheets can be found on the FSA website through this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/l9ud8yu>

CRD Consult Pesticide Residue Monitoring Programme

The Chemicals Regulation Directorate (CRD) are seeking comments from those who have an interest in the Pesticide Residues Monitoring in Food programme on their proposal for the 2014 pesticide residue monitoring programme.

The CRD programme of pesticide residue monitoring mainly concerns plants and farmed animals for which legal pesticide minimum residue limits (MRLs) exist; however they also include other categories for which no MRL's are established for monitoring purposes – such as seafish and shellfish.

Comments are requested by 3 July, for more details go to: <http://tinyurl.com/klrdlwq>

Draft Consumer Rights Bill Published

The first draft of the Consumer Rights Bill has been published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). The Bill consolidates seven current sets of legislation previously covering consumer rights.

In headline terms, the Bill:

- Consolidates the standards that goods and services must meet.
- Consolidates and aligns the inconsistent remedies available to consumers.

- Clarifies repair, replacement and rejection rights available for consumers.
- Introduces a new clause regarding goods offered with a guarantee. The Bill sets out the provisions which that guarantee must include.
- Sets a new time limit of 30 days for customers to reject substandard goods and receive a full refund.
- Sets out the extent to which businesses may reduce the level of refund given to the customer to take into account the use/enjoyment of rejected goods.
- Includes a new provision for services, so that any information about the trade or service becomes binding.
- Introduces a new category of rights and remedies for digital content.
- Clarifies the role of and extends the indicative list of terms which may be regarded as unfair.
- Consolidates the investigatory and enforcement powers whilst implementing stronger safeguards for businesses. It also introduces new remedies which enforcers can seek through the civil courts.
- Finally, it establishes the CAT as the major venue for competition actions in the UK.

Businesses are being encouraged to actively participate in an on-going consultation process. To find out more go to <http://tinyurl.com/lcz8wbq>

Bond Dickinson will be producing a full detailed briefing note on the draft Bill and accompanying documents. If you would like to receive a copy please contact nicky.loadsman@bonddickinson.com

Red Tape Challenge – Animal Feed Legislation

Comments are being sought on animal feed legislation, which is now being considered under the Government's Red Tape Challenge (RTC).

The Government launched the RTC in April 2011, to allow businesses, enforcement bodies and members of the public to have their say on how the overall burden of legislation can be reduced. All regulations in the UK are being considered, with the regulations affecting one specific sector or industry published every few weeks.

Animal feed legislation is open for comment on the RTC website from Wednesday 17 July to 3 September. This gives people the opportunity to comment on which regulations are working and which could be improved; which regulations should be kept, which should not, and which should be simplified.

The regulations include:

- Animal Feed (England) Regulations 2010
- Feed (Hygiene and Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2005
- Feed (Sampling and Analysis and Specified Undesirable Substances (England) Regulations 2010
- Genetically Modified Animal Feed (England) Regulations 2004
- Animal By-Products (Identification) Regulations 1995

To find out more and add your comments go to: <http://tinyurl.com/ndu7txa>

"Horsegate"

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published its first 1/4ly update on Industry testing results on processed beef products for contamination with horsemeat. The results, which were collated by Campden BRI show that three beef products contained horse DNA at or above the 1% threshold. None tested positive for phenylbutazone (bute). In the three months since the previous report a further 19,050 analytical results have been submitted, taking the total number of reported tests up to 24,480

The three products that tested positive for horsemeat, had previously been reported in March.

FSA have also reported on the Local Authority testing programme. The FSA's local authority testing programme ran in three phases, between January and March 2013, with 514 samples taken for testing by 51 local authorities. These samples, which covered a range of beef products, were tested for undeclared horse. Phases 1 and 2 also tested for the presence of undeclared pork. This latest report, shows that more than 98% of products were negative for horse DNA or, where tested, for pig DNA at the level of 1%.

More information can be found on the FSA website: <http://tinyurl.com/owbszt2>

This is the first set of results that the FSA have published that were collated via a third party 'clearing house' service which is being provided by Campden BRI. They are encouraging businesses who continue to test to continue to submit their results through the following mailbox: FSADataShare@campdenbri.co.uk and expect to report again in September. The main focus continues to be on horsemeat but testing results for other species is also being encouraged.

As a result of "Horsegate" the Government through Defra have also announced that they will be carrying out a review into the integrity and assurance of food supply networks. The review, to be headed up by **Professor Chris Elliot** has been set up to advise the government on issues which impact upon consumer confidence in the authenticity of food products, including any systemic failures in food supply networks and systems of oversight with implications for food safety and public health; and to make recommendations. An interim report is expected in the Autumn. To find out more go to the Defra website: <http://tinyurl.com/jvkmcuq>

The FSA also commissioned a review to look at how they responded to the Horse meat crisis, Professor Pat Troops report highlighted four key points to consider:

- The need for improved intelligence sharing and analysis across the sector
- The need for the FSA to strengthen its Major Incident Plan
- Improved clarity of the role of Government departments in large complex incidents
- A review of the FSA's powers and the use of framework agreements and codes of conduct

More information can be found on the FSA: <http://tinyurl.com/nsdhvma>

Not to be missed out the Environment Food and Rural Affairs Parliamentary Committee have also carried out a review on which they too have reported to find out more go to: <http://tinyurl.com/pffxepz>

High Court Judgement Rules Overcharging on Meat Controls by FSA

The Food Standards Agency may apply to the Court of Appeal following the recent ruling in the High Court that they had overcharged the meat industry.

Mr Justice Singh this week refused the Food Standards Agency (FSA) application to appeal his decision in the High Court on the grounds that he regarded "the issues as clearly to be determined in favour of the claimant".

The original case was brought by the Association of Independent Meat Suppliers to challenge the legality of FSA bills, totalling in the region of £1m, for meat industry underpayments based on the EU minima charging levels - the minimum rate per animal that EU member states have to collect to pay for meat inspection at abattoirs.

See more at: <http://tinyurl.com/q3oxnhj> and read the full judgement at: <http://tinyurl.com/ownh277>

Judicial Review Judgement on DSM

Following the issues in 2012 with Mechanically Separated Meat (MSM) and De-sinewed Meat (DSM); resulting in the moratorium on MSM production from Ruminant bones and the reclassification of poultry and porcine DSM as MSM. Newby Foods made an application for judicial review on the legality of the moratorium action taken by the Food Standards Agency (FSA)

Mr. Justice Edwards-Stuart presided over the hearing which took place 22nd & 23rd May 2013 and 20th June 2013 and in concluding was unable to reach a definitive Judgment as in respect to certain key questions there needs to be clarity on certain rulings of the European Commission. Consequently these questions have been referred for a preliminary ruling to the Court of Justice of the European Union.

In the Judgment findings from expert witnesses suggest that low pressure DSM has a structure that bears no resemblance to MSM and more closely resembles that of minced meat. The key question seems to centre on the *“loss or modification of the muscle fibre structure”* and particularly the degree that is required in order for meat to be considered MSM. The Commission suggests that this is ANY loss or modification of the muscle fibre structure, though this is slightly ridiculous as even residue that is removed by hand would have some loss of structure. The FSA have welcomed the referral to the European Court and the judgment can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/pr4rz83>

The FVO have recently published the audit report on their inspection of the MSM controls in France. The audit is critical of permitted labelling practises. The final report is in English, but unfortunately the response from the French National Authorities is in French. Download the report from the FVO website: <http://tinyurl.com/npdbxeq>

Guide to Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has published a Guide to Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 which obtained Royal Assent on 25 April 2013 after completing its passage through Parliament. You will find the

A policy document has been produced to help readers to understand what the Act entails and this is accompanied by a guide. The Act aims to cut the costs of doing business in Britain, boosting consumer and business confidence and helping the private sector to create jobs. Amongst a number of provisions the Act will: set the purpose of the UK Green Investment Bank; improve the employment tribunal system; create a new Competition and Markets Authority and simplify regulation. It is envisaged that small, medium and micro businesses will benefit, in particular from the lower costs involved in settling disputes and from the Red Tape Challenge measures. For more information and to download the documents go to: <http://tinyurl.com/o6u5cwj>

FSA Propose Changes to the Food Law Code of Practice

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has launched a consultation to seek the views of stakeholders on proposed changes to the Food Law Code of Practice. The consultation runs until 17 September 2013. The Food Law Code of Practice provides statutory guidance to local authorities on the way in which they should carry out official controls at food businesses and enforce food law.

The proposed changes include: updating and clarifying the risk descriptors used to assign risk scores to food businesses in order to improve the consistency by officers in risk scoring; improving the effectiveness of enforcement by redistributing the minimum inspection frequency of a number of businesses ensuring more focus on non compliant businesses and streamlining enforcement by enabling the transfer of enforcement powers to a single enforcement body in a small group of food businesses where joint enforcement currently takes place.

A similar consultation on the Feed Law Code of Practice is planned for the autumn of 2013. To find out more go to: <http://tinyurl.com/ky5hy4x>

RESEARCH**Leatherhead Opens New “Pathogen” Pilot Plant**

Leatherhead has opened “DirtyLab” – a new facility for pathogen challenge testing. Leatherhead’s Food Safety Day, held on 23 May 2013, saw the official opening of its Pathogen Pilot Plant, otherwise known as DirtyLab. This new facility, with category II containment capabilities, allows Leatherhead to deliberately contaminate both conventional and new food products with pathogens in order to investigate the fate of such micro-organisms under selected processing conditions.

Dr Wayne Morley, Head of Food Safety, Leatherhead Food Research, says: “DirtyLab aims to support and expand our existing capabilities for challenge testing by providing an environment that directly replicates a food production area, but without introducing risks to the commercial production of food. It is an excellent facility for Members and clients to further ensure the safety of their products.”

DirtyLab can be used to validate the effectiveness of methods, processes and equipment against known micro-organisms. The manufacturing process can be challenged, as well as the microbiological status in the final product. On the opposing side of food production, the cleaning and disinfection process for specific equipment can also be validated. For food itself, products can be produced and stored in controlled temperatures and humidity conditions over the product shelf-life. DirtyLab also facilitates the verification of processing methods, preservatives and different packaging technologies on a pilot plant scale.

For more information use this link to the Leatherhead website: <http://tinyurl.com/oot63km>

Physical Activity Indicators More Effective than Calorie Labelling Alone

New research has shown that highlighting how much exercise would be needed to burn off the calories in restaurant meals rather than just displaying the calorie content could be more persuasive in encouraging diners to make more informed healthy choices. The Study entitled: Simplifying Health Choices: a qualitative study of a physical activity based nutrition label format; looks at the relative merits of “energy balance” labels and can be accessed through this link: <http://www.nutritionj.com/content/pdf/1475-2891-12-72.pdf>

Eurostat Reports Wide Food Price Variation Amongst EU27

The Latest Eurostat report reveals wide variation in the price of food across different Member States. The price levels of food ranged from 61% of the EU27 average in Poland to 143% in Denmark in 2012. In 2012, the price level of a comparable basket of food and non-alcoholic beverages was more than twice as high in the most expensive EU27 Member State than in the cheapest one. Denmark had the highest price level for food and non-alcoholic beverages in the EU27 in 2012, at 143% of the EU27 average, followed by Sweden (124%), Austria (120%), Finland (119%), Ireland (118%) and Luxembourg (116%). The lowest price levels were observed in Poland (61%), Romania (67%), Bulgaria (68%) and Lithuania (77%). The data comes from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. The results refer to the survey on food, beverage and tobacco prices carried out in 2012 in the 37 participating countries. The UK sits slightly above average at 104%. The survey covered a total of approximately 500 comparable products. For more information go to: <http://tinyurl.com/mykpob>

FSA Publishes Food Safety Consumer Attitudes Survey

The Food Standards Agency has published its sixth biannual public attitudes tracker for May. As in previous waves of the tracker, which has been surveyed in its current form since 2010, the top two food safety issues of concern for respondents were food hygiene when eating out (40%) and food poisoning such as salmonella and E.coli

(30%). When asked about wider food issues, respondents were most concerned about food prices (59%); the amount of salt in food (47%) and food waste (44%).

Concern about food safety in UK restaurants, pubs, cafes and takeaways (52%) has remained largely unchanged across the time series. However, concern about food safety in UK shops and supermarkets (52%) increased in this wave, compared to all previous waves which varied from 44-46%. More information, including a PDF of the full report is available on the FSA website: <http://tinyurl.com/orhuc4u>

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Defra Smarter Environmental Regulation Review

Defra have published the outcome of the Smarter Environmental Regulation Review which was started in July 2012. *The Smarter Environmental Regulation Review: Phase 1 report - guidance and information obligations* summarises a review of existing environmental guidance and reporting obligations. Download the report from: <http://tinyurl.com/mlojymj>

Phase 1 of the Review concluded that, whilst it is important to support regulation, guidance and information, the obligations are more costly and complex than they need to be. Defra will now be starting work with environmental regulators (for example, the Environment Agency and Natural England) and other Government Departments on reforms to make it easier, quicker and clearer to understand what environmental rules apply and simpler to report essential environmental data.

Over the next year they want to make it cheaper for businesses and others to comply with regulations and achieve strong environmental standards. Defra are also seeking feedback on 20 areas of environmental protection where business think that environmental guidance can be improved and to find out what businesses need to help comply with environmental rules and regulations. For more information go to: <http://tinyurl.com/l35obwx>

MP's Launch Food Security Report

MPs on the International Development Committee have published a report on Global Food Security and are calling for concerted action to curb food wastage in the UK and to encourage consumers to eat less grain fed meat. The report also warns of the impact of Biofuels on food security and calls for both the UK and EU to take action on current biofuel usage targets.

The report recommends a number of measures that could have a significant impact on global food security and directly benefit UK consumers, these include urging the Government to launch a national consumer campaign to reduce domestic food waste and set national targets for UK food production and retail sectors, with clear sanctions for companies that fail to meet these targets.

The report goes on to say that UK consumers should reduce how often they eat meat and nationally we should place a stronger focus on more sustainable extensive systems of meat production such as pasture-fed cattle, rather than on highly intensive grain-fed livestock units.

With respect to biofuels, MPs acknowledge that agriculturally-produced biofuels are having a major detrimental impact on global food security by driving higher and more volatile food prices. They confirm that EU targets requiring 10 per cent of transport energy to be drawn from renewable sources by 2020 are likely to cause dramatic food price increases. Responding to this, the Committee calls on the UK government to revise its domestic Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) to specifically exclude agriculturally-produced biofuels and calls on the UK ministers to push for similar reform of the EU target.

To download the report and find out more about the work of the International Development Committee go to:

<http://tinyurl.com/kdjfjuc>

EIU Global Food Security Index

One of the conclusions of the latest update from the Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU) Global Food Security Index is that food security is set to improve and food prices are dropping.

The index measures the risks and factors that drive food security, including: Affordability, Availability, Quality and Safety across 105 countries globally. Each quarter, the Index is adjusted to reflect the impact of global food price fluctuations on each country's food security. According to the latest report personal income globally rose faster than food prices in the first quarter of 2013, boosting food security and pointing to continued improvements later in the year,

Significantly, the price of foods purchased most often by the food insecure—cereals or staple crops—dropped by 2.4% during the quarter, according to the FAO index, and the EIU's outlook is for further declines in 2013, which should improve food affordability.

To access the index including analysis by country go to: <http://tinyurl.com/8srkz4c>

Consumer Research Confirms Food Waste Opportunities for Caterers

WRAP consumer research has confirmed that pubs, hotels, restaurants and QSR could save around £722 million a year by preventing food waste, which currently averages 4.8kg per diner, two thirds of which is avoidable. The research, launched at the Unilever Food Solutions sponsored WRAP event "United Against Waste" shows that the areas providing significant opportunity for the sector to save money and reduce waste are by offering greater choices, different portion sizes and meeting customer expectations. Around 53% of respondents would like to see more choice and 44% stated large portions were actually off putting. The most wasted food is often the side dishes of chips, vegetables and salad, so businesses can save money by asking whether these are actually wanted or by making them smaller.

By taking some simple steps indicated through the research there are significant opportunities for food service businesses to:

- Reduce food waste
- Save money
- Give customers what they want
- Reduce their environmental impact

The research also demonstrates changes to consumers top sustainability priorities when eating out – 2009 research put food waste 12th on the list whilst in 2013 it has shot up to joint 1st place with health and nutrition and followed by local sourcing.

At the event it was suggested that food waste arising out of home is 5x that generated from in home dining.

To help support caterers WRAP has produced an on-line resource pack for the hospitality and food service sector which gives a summary of the research and practical solutions.

At the launch event WRAP confirmed that industry is already taking action with over 150 companies signed up to WRAP's Hospitality and Food Service Agreement. It is a voluntary agreement to cut food and associated packaging waste by 5% and increase recycling to 70%, BFFF is signed up as a supporter.

More help is also available with the launch today of Unilever's industry-first mobile app – 'Wise up on Waste' - to help chefs and caterers identify and reduce avoidable food waste.

The research, resource pack and more information is available on the WRAP website: <http://tinyurl.com/kqe78c9>

MMO Reports Dramatic Reduction in Fish Discards

Discards – where fish are thrown away at sea – have been virtually eliminated in some species by fishermen taking part in current trials, according to the latest catch quota report from the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). The report, shows discards of important stocks such as sole, cod, plaice, megrim and anglerfish have

been drastically reduced in the trials carried out by the MMO through 2012 with North Sea and West Channel fishermen.

The MMO is operating the trials on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as part of the UK's initiative to tackle the problem of discarding fish – where fish are thrown away at sea if they are too small or there is no quota left for a particular species. The trials encourage fishermen to fish more selectively and land all of what they catch.

Seven vessels took part in the trials in the South West along with twelve in the North Sea. The boats were not permitted to discard any of the species in the trials, including those below the minimum size. They had to land all of the fish of these species that they caught so they all counted against their quota. Data from onboard monitoring equipment, including CCTV cameras, was used to check the conditions of the trial were adhered to. Read the full details at Catch Quota Trial 2012: Final Report: <http://tinyurl.com/kqz5qq7>

Soil Quality Legislation on the Horizon

Negotiators representing the EU's three institutions have voted to support the 7th Environment Action programme (EAP) that includes a call to consider legislation governing soil quality throughout Europe. The deal for the post-2013 EAP, a basket of environmental initiatives including pledges to improve energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and protect water resources and biodiversity. Though the agreement falls short of a binding legislative commitment, the EAP opens the door to a EU wide Soil Quality Directive.

The EAP offers a framework for action rather than legal obligations and still faces a final vote in the Parliament. The [sixth Environmental Action Programme](#) (6th EAP), adopted in 2001, has given rise to some of the EU's most controversial pieces of legislation, including the REACH regulation on curbing toxic chemicals, tough rules on pesticides and air pollution, as well as the Emissions Trading System (ETS), which for the first time put a price on carbon dioxide pollution from big industries. For more information follow the link to the Euractive news report: <http://tinyurl.com/kyy2bo5> go to the Commission webpage <http://tinyurl.com/mjlz3yc>

TECHNOLOGY AND NOVEL FOODS

Supermarkets Break Policies on GM Free Feed

Three U.K. supermarkets admitted publicly that it was impossible to guarantee that the feed fed to the poultry and fresh meat they sell did not contain genetically modified (GM) soya meal.

Tesco, the U.K.'s No. 1 and one of the world's biggest supermarkets, had always guaranteed that its own-label fresh and frozen poultry and eggs were only fed non-GM feed. However, Tesco group technical director, Tim Smith, said the company was dropping this pledge saying that there is not enough non-GM feed available – 80 percent of the world's supply is now modified, according to Smith.

For some time, U.K. poultry and egg suppliers had been telling retailers that it was increasingly difficult for them to guarantee that the feed they used was entirely GM free.

On the same day that Tesco made its statement, the Co-operative Food Group said it had been working with suppliers to maintain non-GM feed “for as long as practically possible, but this position is now becoming untenable. Our own-brand chicken and turkey supplier has informed us that they are no longer able to guarantee that the animal feed they are using is non-GM, so we are no longer able to guarantee to you that these animals have not been fed a non-GM diet.

Marks and Spencer was the third supermarket to say that it had “written to our suppliers to tell them that we will no longer stipulate the use of non-GM feed in our fresh meat supply chain.”

Asda and Morrisons [two of the U.K.'s top four supermarket chains] already allow GM feed for poultry products, and our suppliers also work with other U.K. retailers.”

The moves leaves fish as one of the very few remaining protein sources for which the supermarkets still specify a GM free diet. The read the full article in seafood.source follow this link: <http://tinyurl.com/oalwhg8>

Owen Paterson Invites GM Business to UK

Giving a keynote speech at Rothamsted Research in Harpenden, Hertfordshire, Mr Paterson said the UK was the natural home for scientific research and that the Government would work with companies to overcome any barriers to setting up GM business here.

Mr Paterson said that since 1996 there has been a 100-fold increase in the use of GM. Last year, GM crops were grown by 17.3 million farmers in 28 countries on 170 million hectares. That's 12 per cent of global arable land – an area around 7 times the size of the United Kingdom. At the moment Europe is missing out. Less than 0.1% of global GM cultivation occurred in the EU; while the rest of the world is ploughing ahead and reaping the benefits of new technologies.

Whilst consumer concerns were acknowledged, the potential agricultural and environmental benefits it has the potential to protect or increase crop yields. It can also combat the damaging effects of unpredictable weather and disease on crops. It has the potential to reduce fertiliser and chemical use, improve the efficiency of agricultural production and reduce post-harvest losses. If we use cultivated land more efficiently, we could free up space for biodiversity, nature and wilderness. Research undertaken by a team at Rockefeller University has found that over the course of the next 50 years new technology, combined with improved agricultural practices across the world, could release an area 2.5 times the size of France from cultivation.

For the full speech go to: <http://tinyurl.com/lvdwzlo> you may also be interested in Greenpeace comment <http://tinyurl.com/m2h9kus> and Friends of the Earth comment: <http://tinyurl.com/l9tzngc>

Information Items

Additional items with links that you may find of interest:

1. European Commission Evidence to the UK Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee on the horsemeat scandal <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmenvfru/uc141-ii/uc14101.htmcc>
2. Food Standards Agency consultation on the approval of establishments producing and processing certain fats and oils, and the testing of fats and oils of vegetable and marine origin for dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs: http://www.food.gov.uk/news-updates/consultations/consultations-scotland/2013/fatsoils-consult-scot#.UbXSJ_mG3K0
3. Parliamentary Under Secretary for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Richard Benyon MP statement on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy of 17 June: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2013/june/statement-on-common-fisheries-policy/>
4. House of Commons Oral Evidence Taken by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee on Food contamination relating to the horsemeat issues. Evidence taken Tuesday 11 June 2013 from Mr David Heath AND Mr Andrew Rhodes: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmenvfru/uc141-iii/uc14101.htm>
5. Free to download guide on financial control for senior managers in food manufacturing businesses http://www.foodmanufacture.co.uk/smartlead/view/792266/9?utm_source=Newsletter_Alerte&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Newsletter%2BAlerte&c=oLbLqJ5u%2BuPfKkvqPbYuE4qyB29ceLsg
6. Scottish Government consultation on a strategy to tackle and prevent litter and flytipping <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/07/6925>
7. Better Training for Safer Food: EU Initiative Annual Report 2012: http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/documents/food/BTSFannualreport2012_en.pdf
8. Food Law code of practise, Northern Ireland Review: http://www.food.gov.uk/news-updates/consultations/consultations-northern-ireland/2013/foodlaw-ni#.UdbVB_mG3K0

9. Remade PARNUTS Regulations REGULATION (EU) No 609/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 12 June 2013 on food intended for infants and young children, food for special medical purposes, and total diet replacement for weight control and repealing Council Directive 92/52/EEC, Commission Directives 96/8/EC, 1999/21/EC, 2006/125/EC and 2006/141/EC, Directive 2009/39/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Regulations (EC) No 41/2009 and (EC) No 953/2009: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:181:0035:0056:EN:PDF>
10. Labour party food policy review: Feeding the Nation: creating a resilient, growing food industry http://www.yourbritain.org.uk/uploads/editor/files/Feeding_the_nation.pdf
11. Friends of the Earth Timothy Searchinger paper – ‘Understanding the Biofuel Trade-offs between Indirect land use change (ILUC), Hunger and Poverty’
http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/press_releases/searchinger_paper_foee_briefing_understanding_biofuel_trade-offs_july2013.pdf
12. EU List of approved animal feed additives was updated on 17 July, Version 165 is available here:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/animalnutrition/feedadditives/registeradditives_en.htm

Members of the British Frozen Food Federation requiring further information about any item in this newsletter should contact Su Dakin, Technical Manager
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