

T&L *UPDATE*

The European Commission has agreed mandatory country of origin labelling for the meat of sheep, goats, pigs and poultry. The new Regulation has now been published find the detail inside. No decisions yet on meat as an ingredient or guidance on voluntary origin labelling.

Thought that “MSM” or mechanically separated meat was a nightmare in the past. Find out about the guidance that the European Commission is proposing

Agents and Brokers face more routine audits from next year with a brand new certification standard from BRC just around the corner and an updated IFS standard recently launched. Find out about both in our Imports and Supply Chain section.

The UK Regulators are currently consulting on a number of proposals. Have your say on the draft UK Food Information to Consumers Guidance published by Defra; in the Food Standards Agencies consultation on the Official Controls review and the Balance of Competencies consultation for Regulations covering Agriculture and Fisheries.

Many members are now starting to seriously plan their implementation of the Food Information Regulations and are working on new label designs. In this edition of the Technical and Legislative update you can find out about the guidance that is now available to guide you through the process.

The Department of Health are working on post 2012 salt targets across a range of product sectors – find out how it could affect your products.



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ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS ON THE AGREED FISH CMO PROPOSAL

The European Council have published alongside the text adopted on 17 October, on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products (Fish CMO) a statement of the reasons for the Councils' decisions on the dossier. The recently agreed document between the European Parliament and the Council and the Council statement can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/pbc4dy2> and here <http://tinyurl.com/pl46hvs>

The European Commission has also given its view on the agreed CMO proposal. The Commission agree with the compromises although they expressed disappointment that 'date of catch' and 'date of harvest' are voluntary and that processed products were excluded from the requirements.

They did not approve of the addition of 'where appropriate' to the requirement to give a date of minimum durability (Article 35) and it will be interesting to see whether the changes they make to the final draft in preparation for the second reading will reflect this.

The full Commission Communication can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/p6arrv6> The second parliamentary reading is expected in early December.

A "RETAIL ACTION PLAN" EU PARLIAMENT REPORT

In early November, the Internal Market Committee (IMCO) of the European Parliament (IMCO) adopted unanimously the own-initiative [report](#), from MEP Cornelis de Jong (GUE/NGL, NL) entitled "A European Retail Action Plan for the benefit of all actors". The purpose of this report is to address unnecessary obstacles in the single market such as different packaging and labelling requirements, as well as differences in administrative practices. The report deals with several aspects of the retail sector like sustainability and unfair trading practices.

The report calls for state support for independent retailers and small shops. Furthermore, the report points out that supermarkets engage in price fight and put suppliers under significant pressure. The report argues that the voluntary supply chain initiative, <http://www.supplychaininitiative.eu/> signed up to by the major European Food Trade Organisations such as Euro Commerce and FoodDrinkEurope, should take up this issue. However if the initiative does not show results on the enforcement side then Cornelis pledges to draft a compromise amendment asking for more legislation concerning the issue of enforcement.

To download the report go to: <http://tinyurl.com/okd83wx>

EU SETS NEW LEVELS FOR ACRYLAMIDE INVESTIGATION

The EU has set new levels for acrylamide in foods, above which companies and governments should investigate ways to cut the potential carcinogen. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) officially recognised acrylamide as a potential carcinogen in 2005. It is present at high levels in starchy foods when they are toasted, grilled or baked through a process called the Maillard reaction.

Now, following feedback from industry on the levels found in different products, and on the basis of EFSA research, the Commission has updated the levels that should prompt investigation from industry and member states. The new levels replace those set out in 2011; these values were in the range of 100 to 1000 micrograms per kilogram. The updated recommendations range from 50 micrograms per kilogram for baby cereals and foods, up to 4 mg per kilogram for some coffee substitutes.

For more information, and the full list of recommendations, is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/next73o>

FVO AUDIT REPORTS ON MECHANICALLY SEPARATED MEAT

A total of 7 Food and Veterinary Office reports are now available on the audits of Member States controls on Mechanically Separated Meat. These cover: UK, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, France, Denmark and Germany. Several issues were found in the way that the different Members States were interpreting and enforcing the requirements of the Hygiene Regulation 853/2004 with respect to Mechanically Separated Meat.

Following an EFSA opinion earlier this year suggesting that technological advances mean that some low pressure MSM is indistinguishable from mince and a new category should be considered. The Commission is expected to clarify the requirements either through guidance (see below) or possibly regulation at some point in the future.

The reports are all available to download from the Commissions FVO page at this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/o8mmsue> (Enter the words Mechanically Separated Meat into the text search box to bring up the reports.)

COMMISSION DRAFT MSM GUIDANCE

The Commission have indicated at this time their preference not to Regulate to clarify the current position with regard to any distinction between MSM and De-sinewed meat DSM, but to produce guidance.

Draft guidance was provided to the stakeholder group during the FSA meeting. Note that it asserts that MSM can be produced by both high and low pressure systems but that meat produced under certain processing conditions is not MSM. The guidance does not propose to separately categorise low pressure MSM as DSM, a move that would be supported by France, Netherlands and Germany, as well as UK.

The draft guidance can be found on the BFFF website: <http://tinyurl.com/q7jk2uc>

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT OWN INITIATIVE REPORT ON FRAUD IN THE FOOD CHAIN

On 27 November the European Parliament's ENVI Committee voted on a draft report and associated amendments from MEP's on the food crisis, fraud in the food chain and the control thereof (2013/2091(INI)) The report by Dutch MEP Esther De Lange (EPP, NL) is in response to the horsemeat meat scandal earlier this year.

There are a number of important amendments of note, foremost is an amendment seeking to strengthen the monitoring and labelling of frozen foods, particularly meat and fish on a business to business basis as well as business to consumer basis.

The amendment reads:

Amendment 98:

'19a. Calls for greater awareness and improved monitoring of business-to-business and business-to-consumer labelling of frozen foods. Calls on the Commission to present a proposal on obligatory labelling of meat and fish that indicates whether the meat and fish has been frozen, how many times it has been frozen and for how long'

We can expect to see a consolidated report including all of the amends in due course; it is expected to be tabled for plenary vote by Parliament on 19 January and if adopted would constitute the position of the European Parliament and be sent to the European Commission. This is intended to apply more pressure on the Commission to adopt stricter rules either through a regulatory proposal or guidance.

To view the draft report go to: <http://tinyurl.com/nsteuox>

ANALYTICAL, METROLOGY, FOOD SAFETY & ZOOSES

KOSHER CHICKEN HAS THE HIGHEST FREQUENCY OF ANTIBIOTIC-RESISTANT E.COLI

Retail poultry products are known sources of antibiotic-resistant *Escherichia coli*, a major human health concern. A recent US study has been undertaken to see the occurrence of antibiotic-resistant E.coli on raw chicken. The research tested conventional, organic, kosher and raised without antibiotics (RWA) chicken.

Kosher chicken was found to have the highest frequency of antibiotic-resistant *E. coli*, nearly twice that of conventional products, a result that belies the historical roots of kosher as a means to ensure food safety. These results indicate that production methods influence the frequency of antibiotic-resistant *E. coli* on poultry products available to consumers. Future research to identify the specific practices that cause the high frequency of antibiotic-resistant *E. coli* in kosher chicken could promote efforts to reduce consumer exposure to this potential pathogen. To view the full research article, go to <http://tinyurl.com/plaj7b7>

MICROBIOLOGICAL CRITERIA - HISTAMINE IN FISHERY PRODUCTS

Commission Regulation (EU) No 1019/2013 of 23 October 2013 amending Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 as regards histamine in fishery products, was published in the Official Journal of the EU, L282/46 on 24/10/2013.

Due to the Codex Alimentarius Commission having fixed new recommended maximum levels of histamine in fish sauce produced by fermentation, that are different from the ones set out in Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005, a separate food safety criterion has been established for fish sauce produced by fermentation of fishery products in order to re-align the criterion with the new Codex Alimentarius standard and the EFSA opinion on risk based control of biogenic amine formation in fermented foods.

The new Regulation entered into force on 13 November 2013 and can be accessed through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/qhyzeny>

RESEARCH SHOWS LISTERIA RESISTANCE TO SOME DETERGENTS

Researchers at the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna have discovered that commonly used detergents comprising Quaternary Ammonium Compounds (QAC) such as benzylkonium chloride (BC) are becoming ineffective in killing *Listeria* in food processing plants.

The researchers found that 10 – 46% of *Listeria monocytogenes* isolated from foods and processing plants were BC tolerant due to an additional piece of DNA that had transposed itself onto the gram positive bacteria. To view the research article go to: <http://tinyurl.com/q47b82a>

MRSA ISOLATED ON A POULTRY FARM DURING ROUTINE SAMPLING

Defra recently reported that Livestock Associated Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) had been identified on a poultry farm in East Anglia. Although the farm was not identified it is thought to be a small mixed farm of turkeys and chicken predominantly supplying locally and at farm gate. The isolation has been downplayed by all governmental agencies as a public health risk and they are advising normal hygiene and cooking protocols as adequate controls. There is no suggestion that birds will not be allowed to be placed on the market or that any on the market will or have been withdrawn

The surveillance by the local authority was routine and not looking for the particular bacteria. Although Staphs are very common on meat, it is the first time this strain has been picked up through **official sampling**. FSA have reported it to try and proactively inform consumers and avoid a media scare at a sensitive time of year for the sector.

Find the Defra statement on Gov.uk link here: <http://tinyurl.com/oppno6l>

FIGHTING ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE – INFOGRAPHIC

In recent years, the overuse or misuse of antibiotics has been linked to the emergence and spread of micro-organisms which are resistant to them, rendering treatment ineffective and posing a serious risk to public health. EFSA have released this infographic to raise awareness of the issue. For more information on AMRs go to: <http://tinyurl.com/pxrj3y9>

EUROPE'S FIGHT AGAINST ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

WHAT IS ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (AMR)?

Antimicrobials?

Substances used to treat a wide variety of infectious diseases in humans and animals. They:

- kill micro-organisms
- stop micro-organisms from growing and multiplying

Example: antibiotics



Antimicrobial resistance?

The ability of micro-organisms to withstand antimicrobial treatments.

Example: MRSA (meticillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) commonly present on human skin and in mucous membranes



Why is resistance growing?

- Overuse of antibiotics
- Misuse of antibiotics
- Spread through various routes



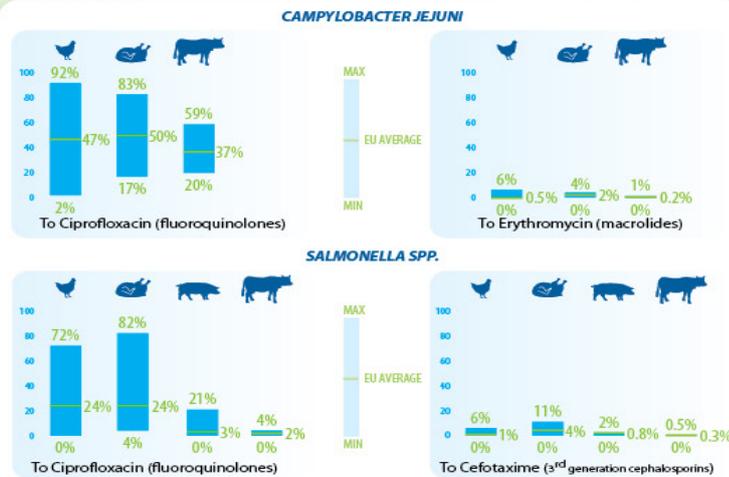
Effect of growing resistance?

- Treatment is rendered ineffective, which poses serious risk to public health

OVERVIEW ON RESISTANCE LEVELS IN ANIMALS AND HUMANS

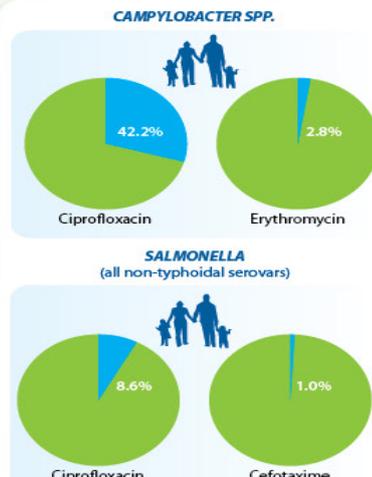
Based on the European Union Summary Report on antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic and indicator bacteria from humans, animals and food in 2010

Levels of AMR in animals to specific micro-organisms in Member States and EU



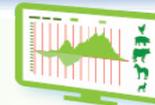
Interpretative criteria of resistance in humans and animals are different and generally result in higher levels in animals and food compared with humans.

Levels of AMR in humans to specific antibiotics in EU



Monitoring

is a prerequisite for understanding the development and spread of antimicrobial resistance



HOW DOES EFSA FIGHT AMR?

Scientific support & advice

EFSA provides independent scientific support and advice to risk managers on the possible emergence, spread and transfer to humans and animals of antimicrobial resistance through the food chain or from animals.

Through an integrated approach

EFSA involves a number of its Scientific Panels and Units, as it is a concern for the entire food chain.

Through close cooperation

- EFSA cooperates closely with other relevant EU agencies:
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), to harmonise monitoring of antimicrobial resistance to enable better comparison regarding the impact on human health.
 - European Medicines Agency (EMA), to analyse the relationship between antimicrobial use and the emergence of resistance.



EFSA is the keystone of EU risk assessment regarding food and feed safety. In close collaboration with national authorities and in open consultation with its stakeholders, EFSA provides independent scientific advice and clear communication on existing and emerging risks.



ANIMAL WELFARE

NEW HALAL ASSURANCE STANDARD CONSULTATION LAUNCHED

Eblex (The organisation for the English Beef & Sheep industry) has launched a draft proposal at its first Halal Forum in order to gauge what halal operators would seek from a halal assurance standard, which can be adopted by the entire sector.

The halal assurance scheme would require participants to meet various on-farm and abattoir welfare standards, before being approved. Eblex research showed there was strong support for a halal assurance scheme. Figures showed that, in terms of halal certification, 77% of consumers strongly thought it was important to have some sort of label on pre-packed meat, showing its halal certification.

The consultation is currently on going and no conclusions have yet been made. For more information, visit: <http://tinyurl.com/pdfmalq>

EGG COUNCIL LAUNCHES NEW LION MARK CODE OF PRACTICE

Version 7 of the British Egg Industry Council (BIEC) Lion Mark Code of Practice has been launched recently. It is claimed to be the most comprehensive yet for protecting the safety and security of British Eggs.

The new standard will help businesses to prevent food fraud and also tightens up controls on pests and rodents, antibiotics use, layer welfare standards and the use of certain disinfectants.

Find out more on the BIEC website through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/ntbl24a>

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION & TRAINING

REPORT FROM THE UK BUSINESS TASKFORCE ON REDUCING THE REGULATORY BURDEN

Recognising the regulatory challenges that businesses face, encumbered by problematic, poorly-understood and burdensome European rules. The government asked a business taskforce made up of UK business leaders to develop a set of recommendations for reform for the British and European governments as well as the EU institutions. The report calls on the European Commission to adopt a new 'common sense filter' for all new proposals – the **COMPETE** Principles and say that no new EU legislation should be brought forward which does not successfully pass through a filter that includes a competitiveness test; One-in, One-out; impact is measured; there proportionate rules, exemptions and lighter regimes, targets for burden reduction. In total the report makes 30 priority recommendations to address five kinds of barriers

- Barriers to starting a company and employing staff
- Barriers to expanding a business
- Barriers to trading across borders
- Barriers to innovation.
- Barriers to overall competitiveness

There are also reports from similar French, German, Italian and Spanish business taskforces. To download the reports go to: <http://tinyurl.com/lbkx5ud>

FOODDRINKEUROPE RESEARCH PROJECT ON EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS IN THE FOOD SECTOR

FoodDrinkEurope (FDE) in conjunction with European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions have published a major research project on employment and skills in the food and drink manufacturing sector.

- The study provides an up-to-date economic analysis of the structure and demographic composition of the FDMP sector and workforce.
- The report calls for targeted policy measures from the European Commission that will better connect the worlds of business and education, and exploit the potential of new technologies to drive up qualifications and foster innovation.
- The report also insists on the necessity to find more innovative approaches to recruitment and to encourage a culture of lifelong learning in the European Food sector.

The report can be accessed through the FDE site: <http://tinyurl.com/p9lpt9e>

FSA LAUNCHES SURVEY ON HOW BUSINESS GETS REGULATORY ADVICE

The FSA wants to know how UK food businesses find out about food regulation so that they can optimise guidance and develop their strategies for keeping businesses up to date.

The FSA are especially interested in knowing how micro food businesses (fewer than 10 full-time equivalent employees) find out about legislation and non-statutory guidance. To take part in the Survey: <http://tinyurl.com/njbee9a>

BUSINESS TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS, DOWNLOAD FOR FREE

Columbus food, sponsors of the Food Manufacturing Excellence Awards is offering 6 essential guides on practical advice given by global food industry professionals. The tips and advice is available to download free, and cover product recall, predicting demand, perishable items, supply chain, businesses processes and food safety.

To download the 6 guides go to: <http://tinyurl.com/ohkckmh>

CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS AND FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

NEW REGULATIONS ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOOD

New regulations on Contaminants in Food came into force at the end of October 2013. The Contaminants in Food (England) Regulations 2013 revoke the Contaminants in Food (England) Regulations 2010 and remake them with necessary amendments.

These amendments provide for the enforcement of Commission Regulation (EU) No. 610/2012, amending Commission Regulation (EC) No 124/2009 resulting from the unavoidable carry-over of these substances in non-targeted feed. The amendments also enforce Commission Regulation (EU) No 1258/2011.

The new Regulations revoke the Mineral Hydrocarbons in Food Regulations 1966 (purely national and not EU-derived), which are no longer required as EU General Food Law will apply if there are any consumer health concerns as regards their use as processing aids. The Regulations also revoke specific EU controls on mineral hydrocarbon, additives and contaminant residues, and revoke and remake the provisions of the Erucic Acid in Food Regulations 1977, as amended. This consolidates the changes in the 2013 Regulations into a single statutory instrument. The Contaminants in Food (England) 2013 Regulations can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/nbtjmtv>

EFSA SCIENTIFIC REPORT ON MINERAL OIL CONTAMINATION IN FOOD

Following a request from the European Commission, the EFSA Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain (CONTAM Panel) was asked to deliver a scientific opinion on mineral oil hydrocarbons (MOH) in Food. Mineral oil hydrocarbons occur in food both as a result of contamination and from various intentional uses in food production. In order to assess the need for possible regulatory measures as regards MOH in food, EFSA was requested to assess the risks related to their occurrence in food.

A significant source of dietary exposure to MOH may be contamination of food by the use of recycled paperboard as packaging material. It can be effectively prevented by the inclusion of functional barriers into the packaging assembly. Other measures may include increasing the recyclability of food packages by avoiding the use of materials and substances with MOH in the production of food packages.

In light of food packaging being a key source of MOH in food, the German Federal Government has proposed changes to their Food Commodities Regulation. Other member states are also in the process of producing new regulations for food contact materials and contaminants, ie. France is banning *Bisphenol A* from food.

As a result of different countries planning individual changes to regulations, that would be disruptive to trade across EU member states, we might expect to see a new regulatory proposal from the European Commission regarding food contact materials and contaminants at some point, possibly as early as next year.

The full EFSA document, 'Scientific Opinion on Mineral Oil Hydrocarbons in Food' can be found by following this link: <http://tinyurl.com/cvjfo36>

IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

AUTOMATIC LICENCE VERIFICATION SYSTEM TO SPEED UP ANIMAL IMPORTS

A cross-government project is underway which will see the existing ALV System (for horticultural/plant products) extended to cover the 3rd country imports that are controlled on TRACES (Trade Control and Expert system).

In extending the current scheme the change will automate the transmission of import control decisions to CHIEF speeding up clearances for imports of:

- Live animals
- Products of Animal Origin (POAO),
- Food Not of Animal Origin (FNAO)
- Illegal Unregulated & Unreported (IUU) catch certificates

With the introduction of the ALVS, process agents/importers:-

- will not have to fax copies of import documents to the National Clearance Hub (NCH) at Salford.
- will see customs clearance times reduced from over 2 hours to approximately 10-15 minutes.

To keep updated with the progress of the project, visit: <http://tinyurl.com/pgopuqz>

DOUBLE SALMONELLA AMOUNTS REPORTED IN SPICE IMPORTS

Current pathogen control measures in spices may not adequately protect public health, according to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The agency has completed a draft risk profile on pathogens and dirt in spices due to outbreaks caused by the consumption of Salmonella-contaminated spices in the US. 'Spice' means any dried aromatic vegetable substances in whole, broken, or ground form, except for substances which have been regarded as foods, whose significant function is seasoning and from which no portion of any volatile oil or other flavouring principle has been removed.

The draft risk profile is in response to a large outbreak of Salmonella Rissen infections and a larger outbreak of Salmonella Montevideo infections linked to products containing black and red pepper. It intends to provide information for risk managers to use in regulatory decision making related to the safety of spices in the food supply. The profile is part of a three-year study showing that spice shipments had double the Salmonella contamination compared to other imported foods. For more information, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/pj62cgk>

EU AND CANADA REACH POLITICAL AGREEMENT IN TRADE TALKS

The EU and Canada have concluded political negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which will reduce 99% of trade tariffs to zero. Both sides will now need to go through a complex process of ratification. Canada's provinces and national parliament need to give their agreement. The deal will also need to be approved by the European Parliament and individual EU Member States. The process is expected to take between 1 and 2 years. More information from the European Commission here: <http://tinyurl.com/prtnuff>

BRC AGENTS AND BROKERS STANDARD

BFFF have been contributing to the BRC's latest standard as a member of their working group and with the involvement of the BFFF Technical Committee and several members. The newest standard, due to be launched by BRC in the New Year covers the activities of Agents and Brokers.

If you would like to find out more please contact Sudakin@bff.co.uk

IFS LAUNCH VERSION 2 OF THE BROKER STANDARD

The IFS have recently launched the IFS Broker, v2 Standard which is now available on the IFS website as a free download in English language. (alternative languages will follow in the next few weeks).

After 3 years of implementation of IFS Broker, version 1, experience and recommendations of review have been made from the market.

The main changes made as part of the review:

- to exclude duplications,
- to check the requirements for understanding,
- to adapt the Standard to meet current legislation,
- to align audit protocol with the other IFS standards,
- to include a food defense check-list in the general audit checklist,
- to include all IFS doctrines,
- to improve understanding of audit protocol,
- to specify the applicability to the trading of packaging materials,
- to update the Standard in accordance with a new GFSI Document currently in development.

The new IFS Broker, version 2 will come into force from 1st of April 2014.

After this date, only IFS Broker, version 2 audits shall be performed and will be accepted.

Download the standard from the IFST website: <http://tinyurl.com/q9fapfx>

FOOD SAFETY RULES CHANGE FOR EXPORTS TO CHINA

Defra have recently issued Customs Information Note (CIN) no 2013/103 to inform exporters of food to the People's Republic of China that the food safety laws for such imports into China has changed. All exporters who send food products to China are advised to read the document detailing the changes to ensure their commodities comply with the amended requirements and they are aware of the implications of the changes.

Defra have published the document on their website: <http://tinyurl.com/q8fde7y> which helpfully compares the original and new requirements.

DEFRA CUSTOMS INFORMATION NOTE (13) 76 ON GSP

The new Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) arrangements will apply from 1 Jan 2014 following changes agreed in Oct 2012. GSP is a trade-based development tool designed to make it easier for developing countries to export their products to the EU by granting reduced tariffs for their goods when entering the EU market.

There will be just 87 beneficiaries of the new GSP scheme. This has been reduced from 176 beneficiaries under the previous Regulation which is intended to provide greater benefit for countries most in need.

49 least-developed countries will continue to receive duty-free access; 38 'low income' and 'lower middle income' countries, as classified by the World Bank, will receive tariff reductions (on 'sensitive' products) or zero tariffs (for 'non-sensitive') under the general arrangements; 33 Overseas countries and territories of the EU or other developed countries will no longer be eligible and a further 54 countries will remain eligible but will no longer benefit.

To access the full paper, which contains links to the regulation and further information go to: <http://tinyurl.com/qbh6mq8>

INCIDENTS AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

INVESTIGATORS HAVE FOUND & REMOVED 'IMPURE' OIL PRODUCTS FROM A FACTORY IN CHINA

False food labels on oil products from a factory in China have been seized following an investigation. The Chang Chi Foodstuff Company had been producing cooking oils, including peanut, chilli, and olive, under the brand name Tatung. The products did not contain any trace of the advertised ingredients.

The Changhua County Public Health Bureau (CCPHB) has accused the company of deceptive advertising, and putting different labels on the same line of products. To read more on this topic, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/nuelc9n>

HORSEMEAT DNA IDENTIFIED IN CANNED MEAT

The FSA have confirmed that routine testing by Lincolnshire County Council trading standards had detected horse DNA at a level between 1% and 5% in a batch of 320g cans described as 'Food Hall Sliced Beef in Rich Gravy'.

The FSA said the product had been manufactured in Romania in January 2013 and supplied to Home Bargains (TJ Morris Ltd) and Quality Save stores in the UK, but had now been withdrawn from sale.

It added that the meat had tested negative for the veterinary drug phenylbutazone, known as 'bute', but recommended that consumers return the product to where they bought it. "The affected batch has a 'best before' date of January 2016 and a batch code of 13.04.C," said the FSA statement.

This is the first time horse DNA has been found in beef products in the UK since 19 July, when meat pies manufactured in Latvia were found to contain horse DNA at a level of more than 1%. The last FSA report on industry testing of beef products, published in October, had no positive results for horse DNA at or above the 1% reporting threshold. - See more at: <http://tinyurl.com/gdvjknw> and on the FSA website here: <http://tinyurl.com/q53jhn7>

NAO REPORTS ON FOOD SAFETY AND AUTHENTICITY

A report by the National Audit Office (NAO) has found that, while arrangements for identifying and testing for risks to food safety are relatively mature and effective, similar arrangements for the authenticity of food are not. Government failed to identify the possibility of adulteration of beef products with horsemeat despite indications of heightened risk.

According to the report, a split in responsibilities for food policy between the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and two Whitehall departments in 2010 has led to confusion among stakeholders about the role of the FSA and Defra in responding to food authenticity incidents.

Among the NAO's recommendations is that some resource should be shifted from such activities as the inspection of slaughter houses to the checking of the manufacture of processed meat products and the long supply chains involved, but this will require European agreement.

For more information, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/k8nuysa>

NEW EU HEALTH SECURITY RULES COME INTO FORCE

On 22 October 2013, the EU Commission adopted a decision to improve preparedness across the EU and strengthen the capacity to coordinate response to health emergencies. This Decision entered into force on 6 November 2013. To download the decision go to: <http://tinyurl.com/nza2fma> The decision is accompanied by some frequently asked questions that you can access here: <http://tinyurl.com/pp5zfg>

The intent of the new legislation is to improve health security in the European Union; it will help Member States prepare for and protect the population against possible future pandemics and serious cross-border threats caused by communicable diseases, chemical, biological or environmental events.

The Decision provides four major benefits:

- The decision strengthens preparedness planning capacity
- Improves risk assessment and management of cross-border health threats
- Establish arrangements for the development and implementation of a joint procurement of medical countermeasures
- Improves the coordination of any response at EU level by providing a legal mandate to the Health Security Committee

LABELLING AND GENERAL FOOD LAW

PARLIAMENT PRESSURES COMMISSION FOR BETTER MEAT ORIGIN LABELLING

MEPs have sent a letter to Health Commissioner Tonio **Borg asking for better meat origin** labelling, where meat is used as an ingredient, such as in ready meals, sausages and burgers. The Commissions position still remains unclear. An early draft proposal was leaked and then hurriedly withdrawn.

The Commission is now not expected to publish a promised report laying out the direction to take the labelling of ready meals until the spring. It has assured member states and the Parliament that it would consult them before making changes to labelling regulations.

To read the interview with Tonio Borg, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/aoan3q7>

FOOD INFORMATION REGULATION – DRAFT NATIONAL GUIDANCE

Defra launched the first version of their national guidance for Regulation EU FIC 1169/2011 at the Business Food Labelling and Standards Expert Group.

They are seeking views on the guidance from Stakeholder Associations and their member companies, both on the content and on the scope / presentation of the information; they want it to be as useful as possible to food businesses so would really welcome specific feedback and suggestions.

Defra have advised that although the guidance is work in progress, businesses can use it with confidence to start changing their labels now. The guidance is available on the BFFF website: <http://tinyurl.com/q7jk2uc>

Defra intend to update the document in the New Year when they are expecting to have more clarity on issues such as country of origin on which key points are still to be determined by the European Commission or where national decisions are needed such as with regard to the National Mark for minced meat.

Comments are required before the end of January 2014 so that they can be reflected in the next version. You can send you comments direct to Defra at: labelling@defra.gsi.gov.uk or respond through BFFF no later than 29 January 2014 by emailing: sudakin@bfff.co.uk

FOOD INFORMATION REGULATION GUIDANCE AVAILABLE

We are now into the last year of the three year transition period for the majority of the new labelling rules that will change all food labels across Europe. EU Regulation No. 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers (EU FIC) was published and could be applied from 13 December 2011.

The new Regulations apply to all foods as sold to consumers and as supplied to caterers; there are information requirements for business to business transactions, for non pre-packed products, those packed for direct sale to the consumer and for those products sold remotely via the internet.

Different areas in the Regulation become mandatory at different times, with: the rules on the composition and labelling of minced meat applicable from 1 January 2014 and general labelling rules from 13 December 2014. The mandatory provision of nutrition information for most pre-packed foods applies 13 December 2016, but if you provide this on a voluntary basis it must comply with the new format from 13 December 2014.

Any product placed on the market before 13 December 2014 can continue to be sold until stocks are exhausted regardless of how long a time period this is, particularly welcome for frozen food which, because of its very nature lasts a long time.

Although there remains much to be clarified we are starting to see guidance that can be relied upon by businesses when making their changes:

- In early 2013 the European Commission published Q&A guidance on EU FIC and we are expecting this to be extended in early 2014: <http://tinyurl.com/aqhu79o>
- UK National Guidance has been published for comment – Defra have assured us that business can use it with confidence, find it on the BFFF website: <http://bfff.co.uk/technical/guidance/>
- FoodrinkEurope the European Umbrella Association for Food Producers recently published their own EU FIC guidance: <http://tinyurl.com/ppe4osx>
- In the UK the British Retail Consortium have published advice allergens labelling of pre-packed foods: <http://tinyurl.com/ohzrcqo>
- The Department of Health have published guidance on both the voluntary front of pack nutrition labelling scheme: <http://tinyurl.com/kld25bo> and mandatory nutrition labelling: <http://tinyurl.com/pehxp07>

BFFF have assisted Defra in the writing of the National guidance and we continue to work with our Primary Authority Partners in Cambridge to give participating members of our Primary Authority scheme advice on EU FIC that has regulatory backing. If you are interested in joining the scheme – the latest new benefit offered by BFFF to its member's, details can be found on our website <http://bfff.co.uk/members/primary-authority/>

ALLERGEN AND NUTRITION LABELLING GUIDANCE FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

With all food labels due to change before end December 2014 a new guidance booklet: "Food and Drink Labelling, a tool to encourage healthier eating" aims to support healthcare professionals (HCP) in understanding the changes so that they can play their role in helping the consumer understand and adapt to the changes too.

The guide developed with Registered Dietician and Head of Nutrition at www.Grub4Life.com, Nigel Denby, by the Food and Drink Federation explains the change from Guideline Daily Amounts to "Reference Intakes"; how nutritional information will be presented as well as the new requirements for indicating the presence of allergens.

In a recent FDF survey of healthcare professionals 98% of delegates agreed that food and drink labels can be a useful tool to encourage healthier eating. Of the practising HCPs polled, 64% responded that they always talk to patients about how to use labels to make healthier choices, with a further 34% doing so often or occasionally.

The new and free to download resource also offers tips for HCPs on the best ways of communicating this information to patients <http://tinyurl.com/qyix868>

BFFF PAPER ON THE DEFINITIONS OF FROZEN, DEFROSTED AND DATE OF FREEZING

After discussion in the BFFF Technical Committee and between BFFF, Les EGS (our French Frozen Food Association colleagues) and Graylings, BFFF have produced a paper with our jointly agreed definitions for frozen, defrosted and date of freezing, along with the associated supporting arguments.

The paper is in response to questions that have been raised by different Member States to the European Commission on the new Food Information to Consumers Regulation. Once the responses have been agreed with the National experts in the Commission working group, the “answers” will go into an updated Commission Q&A document on Regulation 1169/2011 on Food Information to Consumers EU FIC, expected to be published in the New Year

BFFF will circulate the paper widely including to Defra and to the French National competent authorities as well as other UK and European trade associations and umbrella associations in order to inform as far as possible the working group view.

The paper can be found on the BFFF website: <http://bfff.co.uk/technical/guidance/>

COMMISSION REPORT ON A DIRECT SALES LABELLING SCHEME

On 6 December the European Commission published a report exploring the case for a local farming and direct sales labelling scheme. The report points out the main features of local farming, short food supply chains and direct sales in the EU, and explores the possibilities of adopting a labelling scheme for these local food systems.

A working document accompanying the report examines the challenges faced by small-scale producers and short food supply chains in more detail. It also presents existing policy tools at EU level. The Commission calls on the European Parliament, the Council, Member States and regions to reflect on whether existing policy tools and measures are appropriate and provide adequate flexibility for this type of farming and sales. To find out more go to: <http://tinyurl.com/q7vq3vo>

COMMISSION AGREES IMPLEMENTING RULES FOR MANDATORY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING OF MEAT

New EU rules introducing origin or provenance labelling rules for fresh, chilled and frozen meat of pork, sheep, goat and poultry have been supported by a qualified majority of Member States in the Standing Committee on Food Chain and Animal Health. Under these rules, the labelling of the place of rearing and slaughter become compulsory for the meat of pigs, sheep, goats and poultry from 1 April 2015.

The new Regulation requires that there be a batch code that establishes a link between a pack of meat and the animal or flock it was obtained from.

Animals born, raised and slaughtered in the same Member State can be labelled with the terms “Origin: Member State (or third country)” while in other cases the rearing and slaughtering places will be indicated on the label. A detailed set of rules  [61 KB] adapted to each type of production is established in order to guarantee that the place of rearing is in fact where the animal spent a substantial part of its life.

The proposal has now been formally adopted and can be accessed through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/qhukclm>. To find out more go to the Commission website: <http://tinyurl.com/pwdrumv>

NUTRITION, ADDITIVES AND HEALTH

NEW FOOD ADDITIVES, FLAVOURINGS, ENZYMES AND EXTRACTION SOLVENTS REGULATIONS

New regulations on food additives, flavourings, enzymes and extraction solvents came into force at the end of October 2013 in England. Parallel legislation will be established in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The new regulations revoke and remake, in a single consolidated instrument, all 'food additive' type legislation. This is intended to help businesses and enforcement officers identify the relevant legislation in this area. There are no significant changes to existing rules in the new Regulations.

Additionally, the provisions of extraction solvents have been simplified and will now directly refer to the Annex of the European Directive on Extraction Solvents (available here: <http://tinyurl.com/okm53o2>).

The Food Additives, Flavourings, Enzymes and Extraction Solvents (England) Regulations 2013 can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/qho6sns>

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SALT TARGET REVISIONS

Work to review the 2012 salt targets, which cover 80 categories of food, commenced earlier this year. A series of documents outlining the work that has been done, which include suggestions for revisions to a considerable number of the 2012 targets, is now published. The new targets are set to be launched in Spring next year.

The new targets include changes such as, introducing new maximum targets or changing processing averages for some categories, and introducing sales weighted averages (SWA) for categories which currently only have a maximum target. Department of Health (DoH) have changed their approach to the targets in an effort to encourage more businesses to engage. It is not clear when they expect the new targets to be achieved.

Introducing a SWA to categories, which have previously only had a maximum target, aims to help to provide greater consistency and clarity across all categories. This approach is intended to provide companies with the ability to plan their sodium reduction efforts according to which products are most amenable to reformulation and/or those that will have the biggest impact on sodium reduction; whilst making sure that they get recognition for their efforts even when some products are not reformulated.

It can be difficult to reformulate all products to fall under a maximum target, especially if products contain a number of high sodium ingredients. In introducing a SWA, the DoH are hoping further progress can be made by companies where reaching the maximum target for some products is not technically possible.

Further details are available here: <http://tinyurl.com/nteqz9t> or to download documents across a range of food categories: <http://tinyurl.com/mfc9gll>

COT POSITION PAPER ON ASPARTAME STUDY PUBLISHED

The Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer products and the Environment (COT) has peer reviewed a double blind randomised crossover study of aspartame, commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The expert Committee concluded that 'the results presented did not indicate any need for action to protect the health of the public'. The study has been led by Hull York Medical School and the results were discussed in closed session at the COT meeting on 29 October 2013.

The research aimed to record any effects from eating a snack bar that may or may not have contained aspartame; an intense artificial sweetener (E951). The study recruited individuals who reported reactions after consuming aspartame, alongside a matched control group of individuals who normally consume foods containing aspartame without problems. The full COT position paper can be found via this link: <http://tinyurl.com/nvu973d>

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), as part of its systematic re-evaluation of all currently permitted food additives, published its first full risk assessment of aspartame in early December. The opinion also concludes that aspartame and its breakdown products are safe for general population (including infants, children and pregnant women). For the EFSA opinion go to <http://tinyurl.com/o3anday>

FSA UPDATE ON PRODUCTS WITHOUT HYPERACTIVITY ASSOCIATED COLOURS

The FSA has updated its list of product ranges that do not contain the six food colours associated with possible hyperactivity in young children, the Southampton Six.

The list includes companies that have product ranges that have never contained the six colours and companies that have reformulated their product ranges to remove the colours. The colours, identified by a Southampton University study financed by the Food Standards Agency, are:

- sunset yellow FCF (E110)
- quinoline yellow (E104)
- carmoisine (E122)
- allura red (E129)
- tartrazine (E102)
- ponceau 4R (E124)

The FSA is publicising the product ranges to encourage the food industry to participate in the voluntary ban which was agreed by ministers in November 2008. Any food manufacturer, retailer or caterer wishing to notify the FSA that their brands or products are free of these colours should email the details to Benedict Duncan, at: benedict.duncan@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

EFSA PUBLISHES REFERENCE VALUES FOR INTAKE OF VITAMIN C AND MANGANESE

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has set population reference intakes for vitamin C and adequate intakes for manganese as part of its on-going work on Dietary Reference Values (DRVs). At the request of the European Commission, EFSA is updating advice issued previously on DRVs, taking into account new scientific evidence and recent recommendations issued at national and international level.

DRVs comprise a set of reference values such as average requirements, population reference intakes, adequate intakes, lower threshold intakes and tolerable upper intake levels. Scientific advice on DRVs is an important basis for the policy decisions of the European Union in the field of nutrition.

For Vitamin C a Population Reference Intake (PRI) of 110 mg/day was derived for healthy men and a PRI of 95 mg/day of vitamin C was derived for healthy women. For children the recommendation ranges from 20 mg/day for 1 to 3-year-old children, to 100 and 90 mg/day for boys and girls aged 15-17 years, respectively.

The main contributors to the vitamin C intake of adults are fruits and vegetables and their juices, and potatoes. Data from dietary surveys show that average vitamin C intakes from food only in European countries range from 69 to 130 mg/day in men and from 65 to 138 mg/day in women.

As there is insufficient evidence available to derive an average requirement or a population reference intake for Manganese, an Adequate Intake (AI) has been proposed. An AI of 3 mg/day is proposed for adults, reflecting current average intakes. For infants aged from 7 to 11 months, an AI of 0.02–0.5 mg/day is proposed and the AI for children and adolescents is based on extrapolation from the adult AI referencing body weights of the respective age groups.

For the full opinions go to the EFSA website <http://tinyurl.com/pdfhobr>

EFSA CALLS FOR PHOSPHATES DATA TO ASSESS HEART RISK

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has said it will call for data from industry on the levels of phosphates found in food, in an effort to understand whether they pose a risk to heart health.

The European Commission asked EFSA to reassess the safety of phosphates as food additives, after researchers suggested excessive phosphate consumption could be damaging to health. In its assessment of the review, EFSA said that the data was insufficient to conclude that phosphate additives caused the observed health problems.

Intakes of phosphate-containing food additives are estimated to have doubled in the past 20 years. EFSA said there is a correlation between phosphate consumption and organ calcification in renal patients, and a correlation between high blood phosphate levels and cardiovascular disease in healthy people. EFSA's evaluation focusses on the potential heart risk posed by phosphates for the general population. Phosphates for use as food additives are due for EFSA re-evaluation by the end of 2018.

FDA DRAFT GUIDANCE ON ACRYLAMIDE

The US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has published draft Guidance for Industry on Acrylamide in Food. The draft Guidance covers potato-based foods, cereal-based foods, other foods and preparation as well as taking into consideration cooking instructions on packaged frozen french fries. It is intended to provide information to help growers, manufacturer's, and food service operators reduce acrylamide in certain foods, by suggesting a range of possible approaches. The draft Guidance is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/phd57e3>

FSA GUIDANCE TO ADDITIVES LEGISLATION COMPLIANCE

The Food Standards Agency has published a guide on the legal requirements of the revised EU legislation on food additives and related issues.

It provides information specifying what food business operators need to do to comply with the revised EU harmonised legislation on food additives (Regulation 1333/2008), which applied from 1 June 2013. FSA plans to review this guide in October 2014.

The guidance discusses a number of areas of the legislation including substances excluded from the scope of the legislation, maximum limits, the carry-over rule, 'colouring' foods, the structure of Annex II, differences between Annex II and the earlier controls, transitional provisions and nitrates and nitrites in meat products. The guidance can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/pdeoem4>

PROCESSING AND RETAIL

INSTITUTE OF GROCERY DISTRIBUTION FOOD SECURITY TOOLKIT

The IGD have developed and launched a new on line tool kit to help food businesses: farmers, manufacturers, distributors, retailers and identify risks, anticipate and prepare for possible disruptions to their supply routes and maintain deliveries to consumers.

There are 19 sections to the toolkit covering subjects as diverse as water availability, foodwaste, climate change, trade barriers, skills gaps, fraud, and animal diseases. Each of the 19 sections provides:

- An outline of a food security issue
- A view on the risks faced by companies
- A brief history of development to date (October 2013)
- Recommendations for companies on how to manage the risks
- Suggestions on what companies can do to act responsibly
- Sources for further reading

Find the resources on the IGD website: <http://tinyurl.com/pkbrslw>

FREE 'BENEFITS TO SEAFOOD PROCESSORS' REPORT

SeafoodSource.com has released a free report: 'Science Based Technology Brings Benefits to Seafood Processors'. The report gives information on "extending shelf-life, enhancing product quality and advancing food safety while maximizing profits".

This report is Vol.1 in the Sanitation and Food Safety Solutions Series. It is available to download here: <http://tinyurl.com/oqmcsqa>

EUROPEAN COMMISSION ADOPTS PROPOSALS TO REDUCE CARRIER BAG USAGE

On 4th November 2013, the Commission adopted a proposal for a Directive to reduce the consumption of lightweight plastic bags in the EU. The proposal amends the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (94/62/EC) with two main elements. First, Member States are required to adopt measures to reduce the consumption of plastic carrier bags with a thickness below 50 microns, as these are less frequently reused than thicker ones, and often end up as litter. Second, these measures may include the use of economic instruments, such as charges, national reduction targets, and marketing restrictions

The proposal would require Member States to reduce their use of lightweight plastic carrier bags. Member States can choose the measures they find most appropriate, including charges, national reduction targets or a ban under certain conditions. Lightweight plastic bags are often used only once, but can persist in the environment for hundreds of years, often as harmful microscopic particles that are known to be dangerous to marine life in particular.

More on the proposal and the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive can be found on the European Commission website: <http://tinyurl.com/oeommsu>

REFRIGERATION

EUROPEAN COMMISSION CONSULTATION ON ECO-DESIGN OF COMMERCIAL REFRIGERATION UNITS

Directive 2009/125/EC on Eco-design established a framework for EU Eco-design requirements for energy-related products with a significant potential for reduction of energy consumption. The implementation of such requirements would contribute to the 20% of energy savings targeted by the Commission in their 2020 Energy Efficiency Action Plan.

The Directive provides the setting of requirements which the energy-related products must fulfil in order to be placed on the European market and/or put into service. There is currently no EU legislation specifically dealing with the energy consumption of commercial refrigeration appliances and the European Commission have launched this consultation to assist them in developing their strategy in this area.

To download the latest information and consultation as well as all papers so far in the project go to: <http://tinyurl.com/nbzy746>

REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT AND OFFICIAL CONTROLS

BALANCE OF COMPETENCIES CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is consulting on the Balance of Competencies on Agriculture and Fisheries. The Balance of Competencies is an audit of what the EU does and how it affects the UK. In conducting the review, Government departments consult Parliament and its committees, business, the devolved administrations, and civil society to look in depth at how the EU's competences (the power to act in particular areas conferred on it by the EU Treaties) work in practice and whether on balance they support the UK or hinder it.

The Review is intended provide an informed and objective analysis of what EU membership means for the UK and our national interest. DEFRA are inviting you to provide objective evidence about the effect of EU competence in your area of expertise.

The Agriculture Call for Evidence outlines the scope of EU competence for the Common Agricultural Policy, plant health, plant reproductive materials and trade of agricultural products. It also examines forestry. To respond visit: <http://tinyurl.com/qdraqdh>

The Fisheries Call for Evidence outlines the scope of EU competence for the Common Fisheries Policy, fisheries management and aquaculture. To respond, visit: <http://tinyurl.com/ot4t9en>

LATEST EDITION OF FISHING FOCUS FROM DEFRA

Defra and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) have recently published their Fishing Focus e newsletter, which they publish to keep stakeholders informed about the current status of their work.

In this edition you will find information on the European Commission proposals for 2014 Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and quotas for those stocks in EU waters and for EU vessels in certain non-EU waters; the latest on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and the Common Marketing Regulation or Fish CMO and news on the response the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) received on the their first marine planning consultation.

Access the newsletter here: <http://tinyurl.com/p9he6m7>

DEFRA CONSULTATION ON ENFORCEMENT OF EU MARKETING STANDARDS FOR OLIVE OIL

Defra is seeking views on the proposed arrangements for the enforcement of EU marketing standards on olive oil which will apply from 2014. The proposed enforcement arrangements will include annual inspections of olive oil bottling establishments and annual conformity checks consisting of a chemical and taste analysis of olive oil samples collected from operators and the retail sector. The marketing standards are outlined in the EU regulations that are directly applicable and afford very little flexibility.

The areas that Defra have been focusing on are:

- Sampling regime;
- The specific details relating to the requirement for an entry and withdrawal register; and
- The maximum size of containers intended for the service industry.

An Impact Assessment is required to assess the costs of the proposed changes. This is based on the current EU legislation and will be updated based on comments received and legislative changes. The consultation ended in November 2013 and we are hoping to see some results published in the coming weeks.

For more information, and accompanying documents go to: <http://tinyurl.com/p6kf9oy>

FARMING TASK FORCE “EARNED RECOGNITION” IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Farming Regulation Task Force was set up in July 2010 to carry out an independent review on ways of reducing regulatory burdens on farmers and food processors. The Task Force reported its findings in the “MacDonald Report” to government in May 2011 making over 200 recommendations on how regulatory burdens could be reduced.

One of the key themes of the Farming Regulation Task Force report was the need for government to adopt an earned recognition approach to reduce the burden of inspections on farmers and food businesses. In response to the Task Force report, government accepted the principle of earned recognition and committed to identifying opportunities for applying earned recognition to existing inspection regimes.

Defra have now published have published an Earned Recognition Plan for the farming sector. This plan sets out what action we are taking to give farmers the opportunity to earn recognition, and therefore reduce the administrative burden of regulation on those who have a strong track record of reliability and adherence to standards. It also explains how farmers can already earn recognition. The plan can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/ntyzqe5>

FSA CONSULTATION ON OFFICIAL CONTROLS REGULATION 882/2004

The FSA has launched a consultation seeking stakeholder’s views on the European Commission’s proposed regulation on official controls, which would replace EU Regulation 882/2004.

The proposals aim to change the current official controls framework to ensure compliance with feed and food law, animal health and welfare, plant health, plant reproductive material and plant protection product rules. The official controls affected include all inspections, audits, and sampling and analysis.

The key proposal in the dossier is the mandatory requirement that member states levy charges to recover the full cost of the delivery of all official controls relating to food and feed. The Commission intent is that through such charging, controls on food safety and integrity in the EU can be assured as they are concerned for the sustainability and robustness of the controls in the current economic climate, particularly in some member states. The relevant initial impact assessment is included in the consultation.

The proposal will affect all businesses operating within the plant, animal and food sectors (the agri-food chain) and enforcement bodies carrying out official controls (competent authorities).

More about the consultation can be found on the FSA website: <http://tinyurl.com/oxprdah>

Responses are requested by 9 January 2014. You can send you comments direct to FSA at: hfin.davies@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk or through BFFF no later than 7 January 2014 by emailing: sudakin@bfff.co.uk

FSA SURVEILLANCE - SHELLFISH TRACEABILITY AND AUTHENTICITY AUDIT

The FSA wrote to enforcement officers on 22 November 2013 to advise that a traceability and authenticity audit programme will take place on a range of shellfish from November 2013 until March 2014, at selected Local Authorities (LAs) across England.

The audit will build upon the small scale traceability exercises conducted in England earlier this year and will focus on LA food law enforcement service arrangements for delivery of official controls on shellfish traceability and authenticity, focusing on live bi-valve molluscs.

The programme will also include checks on scallops and gastropods, where available. Traceability and labelling information on selected shellfish products will be used as the starting point to develop audit trails back to the place of origin in England and Wales.

To view the FSA and local authority correspondence, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/p67kd49>

NEWBY FOODS JUDICIAL REVIEW JUDGEMENTS

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

A number of judgements have been handed down in summary these conclude that:

- A full judgement on the original hearing has not been possible as the court referred questions around the definition of MSM to the European Commission for advice.
- Whilst awaiting Commission clarification, Newby then applied for interim relief and were granted leave to produce pork and poultry DSM and sell it as a meat preparation subject to compliance with specified raw material and microbiological testing requirements.
- The FSA is restrained from taking any enforcement action which would prevent Newby Foods from benefiting from the interim relief.
- Newby also applied to be able to sell 51 tonnes of Lamb DSM they have in quarantine and leave to produce further lamb DSM as pet food.

The Food Standards agency have applied to the High Court for an Order requiring Newby to sell their 51 tonnes of de-sinewed lamb meat to the FSA, rather than placing it on the wider market. Until this application is determined by the Court, the product will remain under FSA detention. Another hearing will take place in due course to determine this matter, but a date has not yet been fixed. The most recent judgement can be found: <http://tinyurl.com/qf2b5g9>

LOCAL AUTHORITY APPROVAL OF STAND ALONE COLD STORES

Back in September 2012 BFFF raised concerns to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) that some Local Authorities have moved to require that Wholesale Cold Stores handling meat products should apply for approval against hygiene Regulation 853/2004; even where, these cold stores have historically been registered against Regulation 852/2004 and their operations are limited to the storage and distribution of pre-packed meat products.

Over the year we have had several discussions with FSA on this and provided them with a position paper detailing our thoughts.

The FSA have recently circulated an interested party's paper which they intend will form the basis of revised guidance. The FSA conclude that although cold stores who handle (handling includes storage) frozen products of animal origin that are raw meat or processed or partly processed meat intended for use as an ingredient in other products will required to be "approved" this is not intended to require any additional compliance activity and should not represent an additional burden to business. BFFF do not agree with the FSA conclusion and will continue to engage with them.

Both the FSA and BFFF papers can be found on the BFFF website: <http://bfff.co.uk/technical/guidance/>

RESEARCH

TRAFFIC LIGHT FOOD LABELLING INCREASES CONSUMER AWARENESS OF HEALTHY CHOICES

A trial at a Massachusetts hospital cafeteria looked at the use of traffic light food labelling in determining the effect of labels on customers' awareness and purchase of healthy foods.

Red, yellow and green labels were used in the cafeteria and respondents who noticed labels during the trial reported that labels influenced their purchases and they were more likely to purchase healthier items.

Traffic light food labels prompted individuals to consider their health and to make healthier choices at point-of-purchase. To view the full report, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/ollac66>

PLASCARB PROJECT TO TRANSFORM WASTE INTO A SUSTAINABLE SOURCE

The European Commission has announced funding for three major research projects designed to promote innovation in the meat and livestock sector.

PlasCarb is one of these projects and is the 'innovative plasma based transformation of food waste into high value graphitic carbon and renewable hydrogen'. 140 million tonnes of food and plant waste produced annually in Europe. PlasCarb aims to transform this into a sustainable source of significant economic added value.

The Commission announced €3.78m funding for the project. PlasCarb hopes to extend beyond current Best Available Techniques (BAT) in the valorisation of food waste of anaerobic digestion (AD) in order to generate renewable energy. For more information, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/oajscjk>

MSC LAUNCHES FISHERIES SCIENCE RESEARCH LIBRARY

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) has launched an online fisheries science research library, *Science Series*, which will provide open access to the science that underpins the MSC standards.

The *MSC Science Series* will present research on issues relating to fishery resources, marine habitats, ecosystems and other key topics. The platform will serve as a knowledge sharing space, where stakeholders with an interest in sustainable fishing practices will be able to access the research for free.

The first volume explores the impacts of harvesting low trophic level species that form the basis of our marine ecosystems, as food and energy sources for other species. It also reviews global best practice on different ecosystem-based models and evaluates how different harvest strategies on low trophic level fisheries impact on target stocks, as well as the predators that depend on them. The library will be published bi-annually and the next volume is expected summer 2014.

The series is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/pnovt4c>

MINISTER ANNOUNCES £1.87M TO HELP UNDERSTAND FOOD SYSTEMS CHALLENGES

Science and Universities Minister David Willetts has announced £1.87M funding for research into food system challenges, such as food safety, food fraud, food crime and consumer trust. The announcement was made at the Global Food Security Parliamentary Event, where a refreshed strategy for bringing food security research funders together was unveiled.

The 'Understanding the food system' funding call is a joint initiative from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Food Standards Agency (FSA). More information can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/pzrdxej>

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

FSA PUBLISHES 11TH RADIOACTIVITY IN FOOD AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The 11th annual Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) report shows that the level of man-made radioactivity to which people in the UK are exposed remained below the European Union (EU) legal limit during 2012.

The report combines the FSA's monitoring results with those of the Environment Agency, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. It also combines the FSA's data on food with data on environmental sources of radioactivity to provide a comprehensive picture for people who live close to nuclear sites and eat locally produced food.

Following the Fukushima accident in 2011, food import controls from Japan were introduced. Monitoring at UK ports of UK ports of entry has shown little or no radioactivity in food. The report can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/pqascj>

WRAP FOOD AND DRINK WASTE 2012 REPORT PUBLISHED

New WRAP research has revealed a substantial reduction in the amount of household food and drink waste arising between 2007 and 2012. However, the research also highlights the scale of the opportunity remaining.

The research published by WRAP, the Economy & Resource Efficiency Experts, revealed that in 2007 a staggering amount of the food and drink brought into the home was being thrown away.

By cost, the largest food groups wasted were meat and fish (17%; £2.1 billion) and home-made and pre-prepared meals (17%; £2.1 billion).

WRAP is working on the full implications of the research, and we can expect to see a further report from them in Spring 2014.

Clearer labelling is identified as a key "opportunity" for improvement, as improving shelf life to give people longer to eat what they buy. The particular lack of waste reduction in meat and fish is identified as an opportunity to provide clearer freezing and defrosting guidance and in the provision of smaller pack sizes. This is where frozen food has a really great story to promote, we say buy frozen and you won't have to worry about any of this.

The full Household Food and Drink Waste report can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/q4unymq>

WRAP HOSPITALITY AND FOOD SERVICE FOOD AND DRINK WASTE 2012 REPORT PUBLISHED

An overview of waste in the Hospitality and Food Service sector has been released. In the report, WRAP asserts that 920,000 tonnes of food is wasted at outlets each year, and of that, 75% is avoidable. The opportunities that are open to the sector are highlighted. WRAP suggests that 21% of food waste in the hospitality sector is from spoilage, 45% is from preparation, and 34% is from consumer plates.

The WRAP report suggests that a 5% reduction in food waste across the hospitality and food service sector by the end of 2015 could potentially save business £250 million over the two years.

In June 2012, WRAP, supported by UK Governments, launched the voluntary Hospitality and Food Service Agreement. They are hoping that, with strong support from the sector, the financial and environmental benefits can be realised. BFFF are signed up as supporters to this agreement, if you would like to find out more information, contact Su Dakin by email at sudakin@bfff.co.uk

The Overview of Waste in the UK Hospitality and Food Service Sector report is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/qbqntmb>

MORE SUSTAINABLE FISHING PRACTICES WORTH €3.2BN

Extra revenues from more sustainable EU fish stocks could deliver additional catch worth €3.2 billion yearly and lead to the creation of 100,000 new jobs in the sector, according to a report by a sustainability think-tank.

The report '[Unknown Waters](http://tinyurl.com/ojg234x)', (accessible through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/ojg234x>)

by British think tank: New Economics, says the additional revenue could be generated provided governments triple the amount spent on collecting data on fish stocks and enforce rules to prevent over-fishing.

On 23 October the European Parliament's fisheries committee is set to vote on how to spend the €6.57 billion budget for the sector agreed by European ministers earlier this year. New Economics advises lawmakers to direct the funds towards data collection, control and enforcement to ensure that the EU's fish stocks recover enough to allow large-scale fishing.

Currently, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund allocates €51.4 million to data collection and €49.3 million for control and enforcement annually, about 1.5% of the value of landings.

"Tripling this amount to €302 million annually would be a small investment given the additional gains in jobs and food supplies. For every €1 invested in data collection, control and enforcement, there is a potential return of €10," the report says.

DEFRA GUIDANCE ON BUSINESS REPORTING OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Defra have issued a guide designed to help businesses measure and report their environmental impacts, including greenhouse gas emissions. Understanding and reporting these impacts can help identify ways of improving environmental performance and cutting costs.

Since 1 October 2013 the [Companies Act 2006 \(Strategic Report and Directors' Report\) Regulations 2013](#) has required all UK quoted companies to report on their greenhouse gas emissions as part of their annual Directors' Report. That requirement affects all UK incorporated companies listed on the main market of the London Stock Exchange, a European Economic Area market or whose shares are dealing on the New York Stock Exchange or NASDAQ. The government encourages all other companies to report similarly, although this remains voluntary.

To access the guidelines go to: <http://tinyurl.com/mtqwkvx>

TECHNOLOGY AND NOVEL FOODS

CITRUS FIBRE IMPROVES NUTRITIONAL QUALITY OF MEATBALLS

A recent study shows that including citrus fibre in ground beef products will retain the quality and taste of the meat whilst increasing nutritional quality.

Ayca Gedikoglu, a doctoral student studying food science in the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, and Andrew Clarke, associate professor of food science, recently completed the first test on a citrus meatball recipe, and presented their at the American Meat Science Association (AMSA) conference. The test consisted of three batches of meatballs, with varying percentages of the meat substituted with citrus powder, to see how much of the sweet and tangy powder could be added without adversely affecting the meatballs' texture and cooking characteristics.

The study showed that the citrus fibre increased the cooking yield of the meatball recipe whilst the texture, flavour and colour of the meatballs remained acceptable. The next step is to conduct a series of taste tests, and study the potential antioxidant benefits of using citrus fibre.

To find out more go to: <http://tinyurl.com/pnve34x>

EU COMMISSION RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF THIRD GM CROP FOR CULTIVATION IN EU

The European Commission has proposed that member state's governments approve only the third ever genetically modified crop for cultivation in Europe, but took steps to avert an expected backlash from France, Italy and other GMO opponents.

The proposal covers an insect-resistant maize developed jointly by DuPont and [Dow](#)Chemical; the maize variety is known as 1507, and is sold outside Europe under the Herculex brand name and has been modified to produce its own insecticide against the European corn borer. If approved, 1507 would end Monsanto's current monopoly in Europe's tiny market for GMO crops.

The Commission said it was "duty bound" to make the proposal after Europe's second-highest court in September censured the EU executive for lengthy delays in the approval process, first launched back in 2001.

EU governments now have three months to vote on the issue. With Britain, Spain and Sweden all expected to back the proposal, there may be little that opponents can do to prevent approval.

Seeking to head off criticism from anti-GMO governments and campaigners, the Commission called for the restart of stalled talks on draft EU rules to allow member states to decide individually whether to ban or restrict GMO cultivation; that enable countries to prevent farmers from growing GMO crops even if they had been approved for cultivation at EU level, provided they do not use environmental or health reasons to justify the restrictions.

Only two GMO crops are currently approved for cultivation in the European Union. Monsanto's insect-resistant maize - known as MON810 - is the only one grown commercially, and was sown on around 130,000 hectares in 2012, mostly in Spain.

That compares with about 100 GMO varieties approved elsewhere in the world, with global cultivation estimated to cover some 170 million hectares in 2012.

Read more at this link: <http://tinyurl.com/nzqa5zx>



MEMBER BENEFIT

Primary Authority Scheme

BFFF is delighted to be able to offer a new Benefit Scheme exclusively for members

The Scheme

BFFF can now offer agreed Industry advice for members under a new scheme called Primary Authority. The advice is 'assured' which means it is backed by law and cannot be challenged.

The scheme is free for members to join and will help support members to stay on the right side of regulation.

To take part Members can choose to sign up to any combination of the regulatory categories below:

- *Health and Safety*
- *Food Safety*
- *Food Standards (Labelling & Composition)*
- *Weights and Measures*

BFFF partners to deliver this service are the Environmental Health team in Wakefield and the Trading Standards team in Cambridgeshire. Both of these Local Authorities specialise in Primary Authority and have expertise in the frozen food industry.



Key benefits for signed up members include:

- Advice and guidance has Regulatory backing, if you follow it, you cannot be asked to do something different.
- Access to the advice of dedicated Environmental Health and Trading Standards Professionals who are experts in the Frozen Food Sector and know how enforcement works!
- It is free to join the scheme and the key benefits of assured advice and guidance with legal backing are also free. Support through any enforcement action or business specific queries do attract a modest 'at cost' charge.

If you have any queries about the scheme please contact:



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- Food Safety
- Food Standards (labelling & composition)
- Weights and Measures



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- Health and Safety

