

T&L *UPDATE*

In this summer edition we have a lots of information in the Food Safety section. The FSA have been busy and published a number of key pieces of guidance and reports: including the updated E coli 0157 guidance; technical guidance on the provision of allergen information to consumers – for both pre-packed and non pre-packed foods; and of course, no reporting on food safety would be complete without the bug of the moment – Campylobacter.

We have introduced a new section to the T&L on Integrity and Food Authenticity in which we hope to provide you with up to date information on where to access good information for your supply chain risk assessments.

Many Members have been concerned about meeting the deadline of 13 December this year to change all of the packaging and labels affected by the new Food Information Regulation.

Sometime ago BFFF wrote a paper explaining the issues and made a request for Trading Standards to recognise business efforts to comply and take a proportionate approach to enforcement if the changes were not quite complete by the deadline.

We are delighted that after much discussion the letter has become the basis for advice adopted by ACTSO (the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers) and has been circulated as guidance to Local Authorities. Find the advice published inside.



All reasonable care is taken in the preparation of this newsletter, but no liability is accepted for any loss or damage caused to any person, company or organisation relying on any statement or omission in the contents



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PRIMARY AUTHORITY

MEMBER BENEFIT Primary Authority Scheme



BFFF is delighted to be able to offer Primary Authority Schemes exclusively for members

Introducing Primary Authority

BFFF can now offer agreed industry advice for members under the Primary Authority Scheme. The advice is 'assured' which means it is legally backed. If the advice is followed, another Local Authority cannot ask you to do anything different.

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

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

BFFF have also launched a Fire Safety Primary Authority Scheme in partnership with Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue. This innovative scheme allows members to join to receive industry level advice on all aspects of Fire Safety, but also have a dedicated fire safety contact to provide bespoke advice to businesses. The fire scheme has flexible membership options.

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

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i>Fair Trading</i> | <i>Fire Safety</i> |
| <i>Food Safety</i> | <i>Food Standards (Labelling & Composition)</i> |
| <i>Health and Safety</i> | <i>Weights and Measures</i> |

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
Fair Trading



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Health and Safety
Fire Safety

Version 3 Issued: July 2014

Planned Review: July 2015



Food Information to Consumers (FIC)*

FAQ: Where you have a pre-packed branded product, it is clear that the responsibility for the consumer information lies with that brand owner. However who is responsible when the brand owner is not a food business operator and the FBO is producing under license – an example would be “Disney” biscuits or even “Bisto” yorkshire puddings?

ADVICE

Article 8 (1) makes it clear that the business under whose name the food is marketed (the brand owner) is responsible for the information provided to consumers, and furthermore in Article 9 Para 1(h) that the name and address of said business should appear on the packaging or label.

The key consideration when determining the business which is responsible for the food information would be with regard to who is the primary specifier of the mandatory food information. This would also be the business who verifies that the food information provided is correct.

In almost all situations this would be the same as the name of the brand owner under whose name the foodstuff is marketed; regardless of the manufacturing business. Examples would include retail own label or product produced under contract for large food business e.g. Heinz® or Coca Cola®. In this instance strict guidelines are given by the brand owner and they would take steps to verify that their standards have been met.

However in a situation where a food is marketed under a brand that may not be a food business or in any case has no input into the food information – either specification or verification, the responsibility for the food information rests elsewhere. For example Bisto® Yorkshire puddings when Bisto® is the brand but the brand owner of Bisto® has no input into the food information that appears on the packaging. The brand owner is merely licensing use of its brand and possibly providing a key ingredient or component of the food.

The detailed responsibility for the food information would be demonstrated through some form of contract between the “brand owner” and the food business – who could be a producer, wholesale business or retailer.

In this circumstance the business which is specifying and verifying the food information is the responsible business whose name and business address must appear on the label. Wording is typically “Manufactured under license by Xx Foods”

Enforcement will be guided by the name and business address appearing on the packaging or label. For product manufactured under license, if the name and address of the brand appears, then they will be held the responsible business. If the name and address appearing on the pack is that of the manufacturer, then they take responsibility for the food information provided.

*REGULATION (EU) NO 1169/2011 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL OF 25 OCTOBER 2011 ON THE PROVISION OF FOOD INFORMATION TO CONSUMERS



British Frozen Food Federation Primary Authority Partnership
Assured advice issued by Cambridge County Council under the Primary Authority
partnership co-ordinated by the British Frozen Food Federation;
having legal backing for participating members.



Version 4 Issued: July 2014

Planned Review: July 2015



Food Information to Consumers (FIC)*

FAQ: What information is required to be labelled on the outer case of pre-packed products?

ADVICE

Where pre-packed foods ready for sale to the consumer, are marketed at a prior stage such as to a wholesaler or retailer or they are intended for supply to a caterer for preparation, processing or splitting up, the labelling requirements of Article 8, paragraph 7 apply.

A number of units of such pre-packed product would generally be packed (as a multipack) into a larger outer case or a 'prepackage'

Article 8, paragraph 7 indicates that the mandatory food information specified in Article 9 and 10 must be supplied to the retailer, wholesale customer or caterer and that this can be provided in several ways.

The mandatory information can be printed on the outercase or prepackage, or be on an attached label; alternatively the full mandatory particulars can be provided in a specification or in commercial documents, as long as these can be guaranteed to accompany the food or be supplied in advance of delivery.

It is important that such information can be guaranteed as accurate for each delivery consignment, therefore unless controls are in place that can guarantee a specification or commercial document remains current, labelling of the prepackaging may be the most appropriate approach.

If full mandatory information is not provided on the outer case label, e.g. it has been provided in advance through a specification or is provided in a commercial document with the delivery, as a minimum the following information must be provided on the outer case:

- The name of the food
- The date of minimum durability or the 'use by' date
- Any special storage conditions and or conditions of use
- The name or business name and address of the food business operator responsible for the food information (or the importer if the Food Business Operator is not based in the EU) – this is the business responsible for specifying and validating the food information – usually the brand owner

*REGULATION (EU) NO 1169/2011 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL OF 25 OCTOBER 2011 ON THE PROVISION OF FOOD INFORMATION TO CONSUMERS

Version Issued: July 2014

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The use of the Designation 'formed' to Accompany the
Name of the Food
In Compliance with EU FIC* Annex VI, Part A, Point 7

ADVICE

The Issue

Labelling to indicate that a meat product, meat preparation or fishery product is formed is required in circumstances where a consumer might be misled into believing that they are purchasing a product which is made from a single piece of meat or fish when, in fact, they are not.

Annex VI, Part A, Point 7.

Meat products, meat preparations and fishery products which may give the impression that they are made of a whole piece of meat or fish, but actually consist of different pieces combined together by other ingredients, including food additives and food enzymes or by other means, shall bear the following indication: in English: 'formed meat' and 'formed fish'.

There is also a requirement to provide information to ensure that consumers are able to know the true nature of the food and are able to distinguish it from other foods with which they could confuse it (Art 17, Para 2.). Therefore in some circumstances, the labelling of a product as 'formed fish' or 'formed meat' may not be appropriate to sufficiently inform the consumer of the true nature of the food that they are buying. This is particularly true when making the distinction between products that are made from distinct pieces of meat or fish and products made from minced, chopped or comminuted meat or fish.

The intent of this provision in EU FIC was to indicate, as part of the name of the food, that it is made or 'formed' from **pieces** of meat or fish and not more finely chopped or comminuted pieces. This guidance therefore serves to give advice on where and how the term 'formed' should and should not be used and where alternative terms will be more appropriate to allow the consumer to make the distinction between products of different quality.

When the term 'formed' is required

The requirement to indicate formed meat or fish in the name of the food *applies only in the case of meat products, meat preparations and fishery products as defined which appear to be made from one piece of meat or fish but are not*. This would apply both to products that appear to be a whole piece of meat such as a chicken breast fillet or whole fish fillet and to the products thereof, such as slices that appear to be taken from a whole single piece meat e.g. sliced ham shoulder. Where the designation of formed is required, there is no flexibility around the use of this word.

The need to label with 'formed' is only required for products that give the impression that they are made from a single piece of meat or fish. The product includes the entirety of the food stuff, its packaging and the labelling on it or affixed to it.

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When the term 'formed' is not required

Indications that make it clear that the product is made from more than one piece of meat or fish which therefore ensure that the consumer is not misled into believing that it is made from one piece of meat or fish. Such indication could include the shape and appearance of the product or indications appearing as part of the packaging or labelling, as long as they are sufficiently clear and prominent to ensure that the consumer cannot be misled. Therefore a fish finger sawn from a block of fillets would not require the designation 'formed' by virtue of its shape, whereas a portion again cut from a frozen block of fillets then moulded into the form of a fillet and breaded would require the designation of 'formed'.

A further example would be Wholetail or Whole Scampi, which is made from up to three whole scampi tails. However if this name is qualified in accordance the Code of Practice on the Declaration of Fish Content In Fish Products of March 1998 with a statement to the effect: *made from more than one scampi or made from up to 3 whole scampi tails*, it no longer gives the impression that it is made from a single piece and the use of 'formed' would no longer be required. In this example the use of the word 'formed' would not be helpful to enable the consumer to distinguish the Wholetail Scampi described above from 'formed scampi' that is made from pieces of scampi tail.

The products to which the provision applies are meat preparations, meat products and fishery products as defined in Annex I of Hygiene Regulation 853/2004. It would not apply to composite products where meat products, meat preparations or fishery products are used as ingredients. This would include the ham used on pizzas or chicken used in a meat pie. However it would still be necessary to use the appropriate designation for the ingredient in the ingredients list.

How to use the word 'formed'

The Regulation, in English, specifies 'formed meat' and 'formed fish'; however where the food business operator prefers to state the species more specifically the word meat and fish can be replaced with the meat species or commercial name in the case of the fish e.g. 'formed chicken' or 'formed cod' in order to provide the consumer with more specific, detailed and useful information.

The word 'formed' can be used as part of a descriptive phrase that represents the name of the food. It is not necessary for the words 'formed' and 'meat' or 'fish' (pork or cod) to be next to each other in the name.

Existing Advice - BMMA Code of Practice

In determining the appropriate designation for meat products, existing advice can provide useful direction. The BMMA Code of Practice on the Labelling of 'Re-formed' Cured Meat Products (1985) defines three categories of meat preparation as:

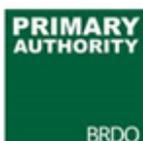
- Category 1 - the natural product, either on or off the bone;
- Category 2 - products which have undergone different combinations of process according to the practices of the manufacturer and the requirements of the specification, but which will generally include tumbling or massaging, the selection and combinations (re-arranging) of muscles from more than one leg (in the case of ham) to form an artefact having the appearance of a cut, joint, slice or portion of meat; *(see note) and;
- Category 3 - the "re-arranged" product as in category 2 with the addition of finely comminuted meat and/or meat emulsion.

Category 2 products are consistent with the requirement to label with the formed designation.

Category 3 would be described as re-formed or chopped and shaped.

*Note: The UKAFFP 1978 "Code of Practise for the Labelling of certain Quick Frozen Meat Products made from or containing substantial quantities of Reformed Meat" identifies "chopped and shaped" as an alternative description for chopped / comminuted category 3 products.

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Examples to Assist Understanding	
Fish/Meat Product	Formed Label Requirement
a) Cod fishcakes	No label - shape alone excludes it.
b) Cod Fillet Fish Finger	No label - shape alone excludes it.
c) A breaded fish portion made from a sawn portion of fish from a block, pressure formed in a mould into the shape of a fillet	Label required - state as 'formed fish'.
d) A breaded fish portion made by hand-laying 3 – 4 pieces of fish fillet together in a mould the shape of a fillet and freezing.	Label required – state as 'formed fish'.
e) A circular shape presentation of raw salmon made by rolling two whole fillets together and then slicing across.	No label <i>if</i> presentation is culinary or aesthetic and does not deceive the consumer. In the unlikely event that the effect was to present the product as a salmon steak then labelling would be required as 'formed salmon'
f) A breaded flat fish product (e.g. plaice, lemon sole) made by filleting a flat fish and laying the top and bottom fillets back together and then freezing together.	No label <i>if</i> the intention was to present the product as a fish that had been headed, gutted, deboned and breaded. The 'reassembly' of the fish would not be material, even if the two fillets came from different fish.
g) What about the same scenario above (f) but where 3 or 4 fillets are stacked together (can sometimes be done if fish are small, or to create a chunkier product).	Label required – state as formed eg. 'formed plaice' or 'formed lemon sole'.
h) Breaded goujons made from flat fish i.e. scenario in row (f), but then these frozen paired top and bottom fillets are sliced across the cross section into goujons.	Label required – state as formed. A goujon is usually thought of as a small strip of fish or chicken, coated in breadcrumbs and deep-fried. The name would distinguish the product from a fish finger and would imply a strip from a single fillet. In this example the expectation would not be fulfilled and therefore labelling with the designation 'formed fish' would be required.
i) Seafood sticks	Best described as chopped and shaped fish portions (or similar to suit product), 'formed fish' would not be appropriate as it is made from minced fish not pieces
j) Salmon en Croute, salmon core cut from 7.5kg block made up of pieces of salmon fillet	Label required – state as 'formed salmon'
k) Chicken Burger	No label – shape alone excludes it.
l) Chicken Grill - Chicken Breast shaped formed from pieces of chicken – breast and thigh	Label required – state as 'formed chicken'.
m) Chicken Grill – Chicken Breast shaped product formed from 100% Chicken Breast	Labelling required – state as 'formed chicken breast'. Good practice would indicate that an indication of the degree of comminution (chopped, chunks of) would be appropriate.

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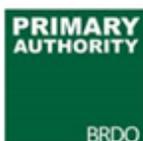
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Examples to Assist Understanding Continued...

Fish/Meat Product	Formed Label Requirement
n) Sliced ham from a joint formed from pieces of ham.	Label required – state as 'formed ham'.
o) Formed ham on a Pizza	No label required, Pizza is a composite product, the ham is an ingredient
p) Single Whole Tail Scampi	Only one tail is used in the scampi, name accurately describes product, not formed
q) Wholetail or Whole Scampi	Descriptions for products where a maximum of three wholetails are placed beside or on top of each other before coating – the name should include phrase to the effect of: 'made from more than one scampi' formed is not required
r) Formed Scampi	Product made from a combination of whole and pieces of scampi or pieces of scampi, label as 'formed scampi'
s) Reformed Scampi	Any inclusion of minced scampi should be restricted to products described as 'minced reformed scampi'. The name of the ingredients list should be 'minced scampi'

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ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

INDUSTRY PRIORITIES UNDER ITALIAN PRESIDENCY

FoodDrinkEurope has published a brochure outlining the food and drink industry's priorities under the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which runs until 31 December 2014.

Some of the priorities outlined in the brochure include:

- Encouraging the development and implementation of an integrated EU Industrial Policy for food and drink;
- Ensuring that the food and drink industry is duly consulted during the implementation discussions about the new EU labelling rules, in particular with regard to those implementing measures which have a direct impact on food and drink manufacturing;
- Driving forward discussions on the proposed Novel Food Regulation, while making sure that this new proposal takes into consideration those elements where consensus in a previous draft has already been reached;
- Supporting a more cohesive approach to safeguarding the sustainability of food systems for future generations.

The FoodDrinkEurope brochure is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/m8vc3dh>

RASFF ANNUAL REPORT 2013

The European Commission has published the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) Annual Report 2013.

In 2013 there were 3,205 original notifications, of which 596 were classified as an alert, 442 as information for follow-up, 705 as information for attention and 1,462 as border rejection notifications.

The overall number of notifications transmitted through RASFF in 2013 compared to 2012 decreased by 9%.

Some of the most notable issues were food-borne outbreaks due to the presence of hepatitis A virus found in berry mixes and strawberries, adverse reactions caused by food supplements with potentially dangerous ingredients, shigatoxin-producing E.coli (STEC) in meat and pesticides residues on plant products. Of the 3,205 original notifications transmitted in RASFF in 2013, the vast majority (2,710, 84.6%) concerned food, 272 concerned feed (8.5%) and 223 concerned food contact materials (6.9%).

The Commission is developing a food fraud IT system, inspired by RASFF, that will underpin the work of the recently created EU Food Fraud Network.

The RASFF Annual Report can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/p2hfzaj>

RASFF ANNUAL REPORT 2013 - INFOGRAPHIC

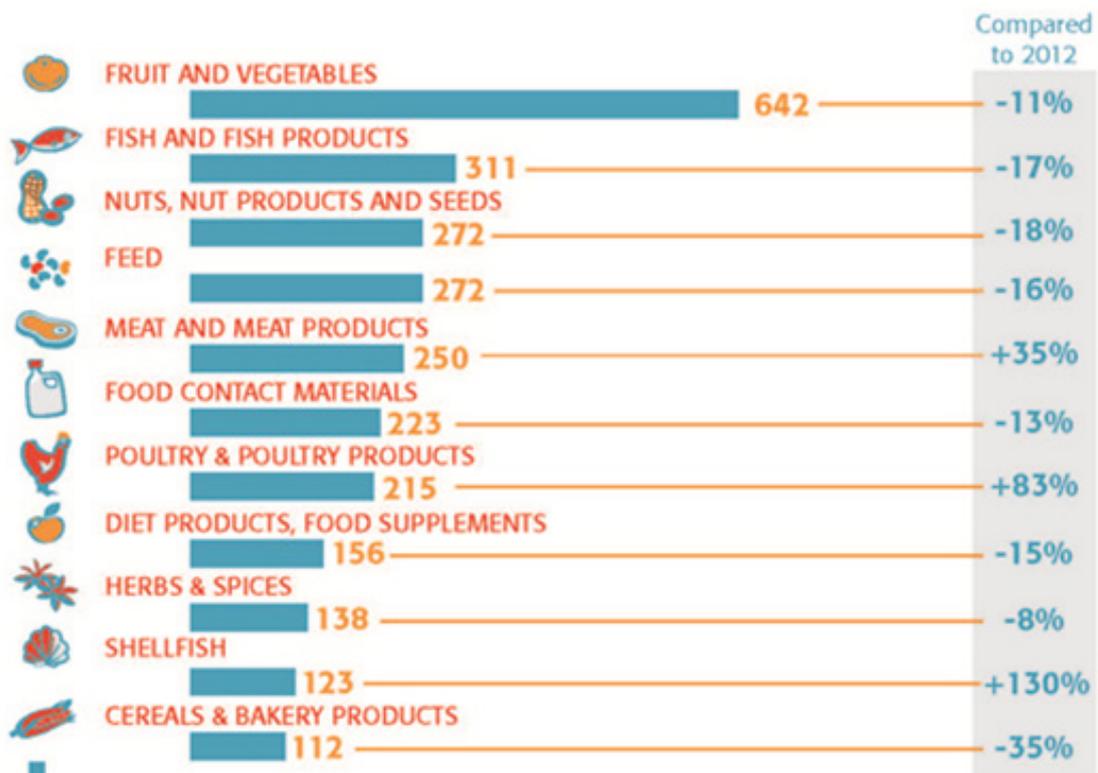


RAPID ALERT SYSTEM FOR FOOD AND FEED (RASFF)
Annual Report 2013



3137 Number of notifications transmitted through the RASFF
-9% compared to 2012

NOTIFICATIONS BY PRODUCT CATEGORY



NOTIFICATIONS BY HAZARD



EUROPEAN COMMISSION 'CIRCULAR ECONOMY PACKAGE'

On 2 July the European Commission published a Regulatory proposal that reviews the EU Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC, the Landfill Directive 1999/31/EC and the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive 94/62/EC. The publication forms part of the Commission's 'circular economy' package. This strategy includes non-legislative targets to reduce food waste by 30% by 2025.

Alongside this the Commission is also thinking of overhauling date-marking on food products to tackle food waste as indicated in its leaked draft Communication on Sustainable Food Systems. The debate around "best before" and "use by" dates has been lively in the last few months and both MEPs and Commission officials have argued that they were confusing consumers and contributing to food waste. In consequence the Commission is preparing another legislative proposal to address these issues, which will be published soon.

The Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/paupnl4>

EUROPEAN COMMISSION PUBLISHES STUDY ON EU SCHOOL FOOD POLICIES

As part of the European Commission's efforts to help reduce childhood obesity, the Commission's in-house science service, the Joint Research Centre (JRC), has published a report on school food policies in Europe.

The report shows that European countries acknowledge the important contribution of school food to children's health, development and performance at school. All the countries studied (28 European Member States + Norway and Switzerland) have guidelines for school food, although these vary considerably. National measures aimed at promoting healthy diets in schools range from voluntary guidelines, for example for menus and portion sizes, to complete bans, including on marketing, of vending machines and sugar-sweetened drinks.

To access the study follow this link: <http://tinyurl.com/okgxb7s>

NORWAY NOTIFIES COMMISSION OF PLAN TO ADOPT KEYHOLE LABELLING SYMBOL

The European Commission has published a notification of a draft national Regulation for Norway, who want to adopt a keyhole labelling symbol.

The Keyhole is a voluntary label which highlights the nutritional quality of foodstuffs belonging to certain food groups listed in Annex 2 to the Regulation. The nutritional criteria relate to the content of fat, saturates, sugars, salt and dietary fibre content in the foodstuffs. The Keyhole symbol is being used commonly in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. The scientific basis for the criteria is The Nordic Nutritional Recommendations. Product groups and criteria reflect the Nordic Nutritional Recommendations and the dietary habits of the individual participating countries.

General provisions on the use of the Keyhole label are given in the Regulation. There is no requirement for registration or payment of fees to be able to use the symbol. Food businesses that use the Keyhole symbol in the marketing of foodstuffs shall ensure that this use complies with the provisions of the Regulation. Controls to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Regulation are carried out by the Authorities.

More information on the notification can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/l36w9ob>

ANALYTICAL, METROLOGY, FOOD SAFETY & ZOOSES

NEW GUIDES ON MICRO TESTING PUBLISHED

As part of its role to assist Local Authorities Public to help them to protect the public's health and to develop the public health system, Public Health England (PHE) has published 3 new guides on micro testing:

- Detection and Enumeration of Campylobacter Species – available here: <http://tinyurl.com/op4z4kb>;
- Detection of Salmonella Species – available here: <http://tinyurl.com/n8vrtkw>; and
- Detection and Enumeration of Bacteria in Swabs and other Environmental Samples – available here: <http://tinyurl.com/ltn46g8>

PHE have also outlined their 2014/15 priorities, which are:

- to protect the public's health from infectious diseases and other hazards to health
- to improve the public's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities
- to improve population health through sustainable health and care services
- to build the capability and capacity of the public health system
- to develop their own capacity and capability to provide professional, scientific and delivery expertise to our partners

To find out more about PHE, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/oqfzltv>

NEW SAFE SMOKED FISH WEB TOOL LAUNCHED

All UK businesses producing smoked fish now have access to a free web tool, which can help them make their food safer for consumers.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) in Scotland have developed the web tool so businesses, primarily smoked fish producers, can assess the effectiveness of their current processes and reduce the risk of contamination by *Listeria monocytogenes*.

The web tool asks the user a series of questions to establish whether they are following best practice, or whether a different approach is recommended. The assessment can be completed anonymously; however, businesses are encouraged to register so they may complete the assessment annually and compare results with previous years – allowing them to see how they've made their products safer.

The tool can be accessed on the FSA website through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/leewu6l>

FSA WARNING ON WASHING RAW CHICKEN

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is urging consumers to stop washing raw chicken to reduce the risk of contracting Campylobacter following the publication of new figures showing that 44% of people always wash chicken before cooking. The call came at the start of this year's Food Safety Week.

The survey commissioned by the FSA found that levels of awareness of Campylobacter are well below that of other forms of food poisoning. More than 90% of the public have heard of Salmonella and E.coli, whereas only 28% of people know about Campylobacter.

The FSA Press Release, with a Campylobacter awareness sheet is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/lkdt66b>

FSA REPORT ON THE INCIDENCE OF CAMPYLOBACTER IN RETAIL CHICKEN

The Food Standards Agency has published the first set of quarterly results from their latest survey of Campylobacter on fresh shop-bought chickens (Frozen chicken is excluded from the study). The results show 59% of birds tested positive for the presence of Campylobacter. In 4% of samples campylobacter was identified on the outside of the packaging.

The results are consistent with previous studies carried out by FSA into the prevalence of campylobacter, which have also shown around two thirds of raw chilled poultry carries the bug. A previous (2009) survey identified that frozen chicken had around 14% incidence.

The 12-month study, running from February 2014 to February 2015, is looking at the prevalence and levels of Campylobacter contamination on fresh whole chilled chickens and their packaging (frozen chicken is excluded). The survey will test 4000 samples of whole chickens bought from UK retail outlets and smaller independent stores and butchers.

Tackling Campylobacter in poultry is a high priority for the FSA who have been criticised recently for deciding at the July open board meeting NOT to publish the results relating to specifically named Retailers and Producers.

In September 2013 the FSA considered that their existing strategy was not having a sufficient impact on the proportion of fresh chicken contaminated with Campylobacter. Consequently the FSA agreed a refreshed strategy, that included recommendations for business and caterers:

- Retail to indicate products that present a lower risk to consumers ie frozen, and encourage consumers to make lower risk choices.
- Catering to recognise that frozen poultry is lower risk and promote its use.

Amongst a range of interventions, FSA undertake to:

- Educate the consumer on the effectiveness of freezing as a control measure

The results be accessed on line: <http://tinyurl.com/omh7n67>

GUIDE TO CAMPYLOBACTER – INFOGRAPHIC

Your quick guide to campylobacter



Campylobacter (pronounced *cam-pie-lo-bac-tor*) is a spiral-shaped bacterium that is the most common cause of food poisoning in the UK. You can't see it, smell it or even taste it on food, but if you get food poisoning from campylobacter, you won't forget it. The most common cause of campylobacter poisoning is chicken and other poultry that's not cooked or handled properly.

Campylobacter facts

More than **280,000** cases of campylobacter poisoning in the UK every year.*



The amount of chicken sold in the UK that was contaminated with campylobacter, between May 2007 and Sept 2008.**

Up to **4 in 5** cases of campylobacter poisoning in the UK and other EU countries come from contaminated poultry.***

Campylobacter is estimated to cause more than **100 deaths a year** and costs the UK economy **c.£900 million**.

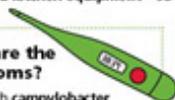
How is campylobacter spread?

In the kitchen, two of the most common ways are through cross-contamination and undercooked chicken. Cross-contamination is when harmful bacteria spreads from one surface to another. Washing raw chicken can spread bacteria onto hands, work surfaces, clothing and kitchen equipment – so don't do it!



What are the symptoms?

People with campylobacter poisoning can get severe diarrhoea, abdominal pain, fever and sometimes vomiting. It can sometimes take up to 10 days to get better. It can also lead to irritable bowel syndrome, reactive arthritis and Guillain-Barré syndrome (this is a serious condition of the nervous system). At its worst, it can kill.



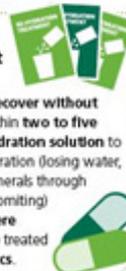
Who can get it?

Anyone who is exposed to the bacteria can get ill from it, but young children, under the age of five and those over 60 are at a greater risk.



What treatment is there?

Most people recover without treatment within two to five days. A re-hydration solution to combat dehydration (losing water, sugars and minerals through diarrhoea or vomiting) can help. Severe infections are treated with antibiotics.



How can you avoid it?

Don't wash raw chicken

You don't need to wash raw chicken before cooking it. Washing chicken can spread germs around the kitchen by splashing them onto other surfaces and utensils.



Practise good kitchen hygiene

Thoroughly wash and clean all utensils, chopping boards and surfaces used to prepare raw chicken. Do remember to also wash your hands with soap and warm water after handling raw chicken to prevent cross-contamination.



Store raw chicken correctly

Cover raw chicken and store at the bottom of the fridge so juices cannot drip on to other foods and contaminate them.



Cook chicken thoroughly

Make sure you cook your chicken thoroughly to kill any bacteria present, including campylobacter. Chicken must be steaming hot all the way through before serving, with no pink meat. Juices must run clear.



For more information, visit: food.gov.uk/chicken
 Let's keep connected at [food.gov.uk/facebook](https://www.facebook.com/foodgov)
 Join our conversation @foodgov using #PlayingChicken
 Watch us on [food.gov.uk/youtube](https://www.youtube.com/foodgov)

Sources: * FSA estimates. ** FSA survey of chicken on sale in the UK (2007-2008). *** European Food Safety Authority scientific opinion (adopted 2009) <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/vetdoc/col01437.htm>

FSA SURVEY ON SETTING ALLERGEN THRESHOLDS

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have conducted a survey so that they can understand better the type of allergen advisory labelling present on pre-packed processed foods sold in the UK. It also aims to quantify the level of allergens present in the food as a result of cross-contamination and establish whether the type of advisory labelling used relates to the level of allergen present.

The FSA expect that the results of this survey will help to inform the development allergen management thresholds (known as action levels). It is envisaged that action levels will be used by the food industry as well as by regulatory and enforcement bodies to inform decisions about allergen management, and enable the appropriate use of allergen advisory statements, such as 'not suitable for those with X allergy' on pre-packed foods. Furthermore, it is anticipated that action levels will help food businesses make evidence-based decisions on the use of factual statements about whether or not a food is suitable for consumption by someone with a food allergy.

The study runs until October 2014.

More information is available on the FSA website through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/lqvg5w7>

WHITE PAPER ON ALLERGEN MANAGEMENT

The SGS have published a useful white paper 'Allergen Management as a part of a Safe Global Food Supply Chain'.

The purpose of this white paper is to provide an overview on current thinking within the food industry for how best to manage allergen risk in the supply chain. The aim is to promote an understanding of the key principles of allergen risk management and best practice allergen management guidelines.

The paper is aimed equally at those organisations with established allergen control and management plans as well as those considering development and implementation of allergen risk protocols. The paper is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/mtm8alq>

FSA TECHNICAL GUIDANCE ON THE PROVISION OF ALLERGEN INFORMATION TO CONSUMERS

Following a recent short public consultation the FSA has published technical guidance to help businesses comply with new rules on allergen labelling and information, which take effect later this year as part of the Food information to consumers regulation (EU FIC) changes. The guidance is particularly aimed at small and medium-sized (SME) businesses.

The objective of the FSA guidance is to provide detailed interpretation of the EU FIC's allergen requirements and, where appropriate, examples of best practice. It intends to help food businesses to comply with the changes and develop understanding in practically applying the new requirements. The guidance covers the requirements for both pre-packed and non pre-packed food as it is provided to consumers.

The guidance, which can be found at the link below, will be reviewed in July 2016.

Other related items, including useful leaflets on the new allergen rules for non pre-packed foods and pre-packed foods, can also be found via this link: <http://tinyurl.com/qf5yf84>

SME FOOD ALLERGEN LABELLING – INFOGRAPHIC

14 Allergens

Coming to a food label near you



The way allergens are labelled on prepacked foods is changing because of new regulations. The Food Information Regulation, which comes into force in December 2014, introduces a requirement that food businesses must provide information about the allergenic ingredients used in any food they sell or provide.

There are 14 major allergens which need to be mentioned (either on a label or through provided information such as menus) when they are used as ingredients in a food. Here are the allergens, and some examples of where they can be found:



1

Celery

This includes celery stalks, leaves, seeds and the root called celeriac. You can find celery in celery salt, salads, some meat products, soups and stock cubes.



2

Cereals containing gluten

Wheat (such as spelt and Khorasan wheat/Kamut), rye, barley and oats is often found in foods containing flour, such as some types of baking powder, batter, breadcrumbs, bread, cakes, couscous, meat products, pasta, pastry, sauces, soups and fried foods which are dusted with flour.



3

Crustaceans

Crabs, lobster, prawns and scampi are crustaceans. Shrimp paste, often used in Thai and south-east Asian curries or salads, is an ingredient to look out for.



4

Eggs

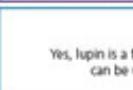
Eggs are often found in cakes, some meat products, mayonnaise, mousses, pasta, quiche, sauces and pastries or foods brushed or glazed with egg.



5

Fish

You will find this in some fish sauces, pizzas, relishes, salad dressings, stock cubes and Worcestershire sauce.



6

Lupin

Yes, lupin is a flower, but it's also found in flour! Lupin flour and seeds can be used in some types of bread, pastries and even in pasta.



7

Milk

Milk is a common ingredient in butter, cheese, cream, milk powders and yoghurt. It can also be found in foods brushed or glazed with milk, and in powdered soups and sauces.



8

Molluscs

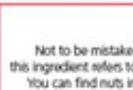
These include mussels, land snails, squid and whelks, but can also be commonly found in oyster sauce or as an ingredient in fish stews.



9

Mustard

Liquid mustard, mustard powder and mustard seeds fall into this category. This ingredient can also be found in breads, curries, marinades, meat products, salad dressings, sauces and soups.



10

Nuts

Not to be mistaken with peanuts (which are actually a legume and grow underground), this ingredient refers to nuts which grow on trees, like cashew nuts, almonds and hazelnuts. You can find nuts in breads, biscuits, crackers, desserts, nut powders (often used in Asian curries), stir-fried dishes, ice cream, marzipan (almond paste), nut oils and sauces.



11

Peanuts

Peanuts are actually a legume and grow underground, which is why it's sometimes called a groundnut. Peanuts are often used as an ingredient in biscuits, cakes, curries, desserts, sauces (such as satay sauce), as well as in groundnut oil and peanut flour.



12

Sesame seeds

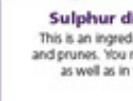
These seeds can often be found in bread (sprinkled on hamburger buns for example), breadsticks, houmous, sesame oil and tahini. They are sometimes toasted and used in salads.



13

Soya

Often found in bean curd, edamame beans, miso paste, textured soya protein, soya flour or tofu, soya is a staple ingredient in oriental food. It can also be found in desserts, ice cream, meat products, sauces and vegetarian products.



14

Sulphur dioxide (sometimes known as sulphites)

This is an ingredient often used in dried fruit such as raisins, dried apricots and prunes. You might also find it in meat products, soft drinks, vegetables as well as in wine and beer. If you have asthma, you have a higher risk of developing a reaction to sulphur dioxide.

For more information, visit: food.gov.uk/allergy or nhs.uk/conditions/allergies
 Sign up to our allergy alerts on food.gov.uk/email, or follow #AllergyAlert on Twitter and Facebook
 Let's keep connected at food.gov.uk/facebook
 Join our conversation @ food.gov.uk/twitter
 Watch us on food.gov.uk/youtube

REVISED E COLI 0157 GUIDANCE

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published the latest update on control of E.coli O157 cross-contamination guidance which has been revised and updated to take into account the results of research carried out by Campden BRI into the effectiveness of disinfecting complex equipment, and also stakeholder views.

The aim of the guidance is to assist businesses in the management of E.coli risks in the preparation of foods for consumers. The guidance is aimed at all types of businesses that handle both raw foods (that can be a source of E. coli O157) and ready-to-eat foods, including manufacturers and processors; retailers, caterers and carers. It applies across the whole of the UK and also serves to provide guidance to Local Authorities.

More information and the guidance is available on the FSA website through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/nfue3ps>

EFSA OPINION ON MEAT STORAGE TIME

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Panel on Biological Hazards has published a scientific opinion on the time and temperature conditions for the production of minced meat. The investigation, requested by the Commission had two objectives: (1) to assess the impact of the storage time of fresh meat intended for the production of minced meat on the risk linked to the microbiological growth of potentially harmful microorganisms; and (2) to recommend, if appropriate, in relation to such risk, maximum times of storage of fresh meat intended for the production of minced meat

Regulation (EC) 853/2004 requires that carcasses are immediately chilled after post-mortem inspection to ensure that the temperature throughout the meat is not more than 7 °C in the case of meat and not more than 3 °C for offal. Minced meat must be prepared from animals other than poultry within no more than 6 days after slaughter with the exception of boned, vacuum-packed beef and veal, for which minced meat may be prepared up to 15 days post slaughter. Poultry meat must be chilled to not more than 4 °C as soon as possible after post-mortem inspection and the maximum storage time between slaughter and the production of minced meat must be no more than 3 days.

The opinion investigates the possibility of extending the duration between slaughter and minced meat preparation without increasing the growth of potentially harmful bacteria; Target pathogens selected for the study were Salmonella spp., verocytotoxigenic Escherichia coli (VTEC), Listeria monocytogenes and Yersinia enterocolitica.

The opinion finds that different time and temperature combinations can be used without increasing the growth of pathogens. This is positive news for meat processors as different approaches may be permitted in the future.

The opinion is the second part of the opinion requested by the Commission, Part one was published in April and concerned pathogen growth during transportation

To access both parts of the opinion go to the EFSA website through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/lyljpwj>

EFSA OPINION ON SELL BY AND USE BY ON EGGS

At the request of the European Commission, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have investigated whether extending the storage time of eggs at home, at retail or in catering would increase Salmonella food poisoning risks. In their most recent scientific opinion EFSA experts focussed on the risk to consumers posed by Salmonella Enteritidis, the bacteria responsible for causing the highest number of egg-borne outbreaks in EU.

The team looked at the consequences of extending the sell-by date and best-before date for eggs eaten on their own or as ingredients in foods. The panel concluded that extending the life did increase Salmonella food poisoning risks.

If the sell-by date for household consumption is extended from 21 to 28 days for eggs, the risk of infections increases by 40% for uncooked and 50% for slightly cooked eggs respectively. In the worst case scenario, where the sell-by date is 42 days and the best-before date is 70 days, the risk is around three times higher than currently for both uncooked and slightly cooked eggs.

The results are similar for eggs used in catering establishments, which are usually collected directly from wholesalers, by-passing retail.

To access the full opinion go to: <http://tinyurl.com/pjzme8x>

EFSA UPDATE ON EUROPEAN SALMONELLA STANLEY OUTBREAK

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has issued three updates on the outbreak of Food borne Salmonella Stanley thought to be associated with Raw Turkey.

Between 1 August 2011 and 31 January 2013, 710 cases of non-travel-related Salmonella Stanley infections were identified in 10 EU Member States. Epidemiological and microbiological information gathered through a public health, food and veterinary investigation strongly suggested that a contamination in the turkey production chain was the source of the outbreak. Since January 2014, new cases, clusters and epidemics of S. Stanley have been reported in four Member States, all potentially linked to the previous S. Stanley outbreak in 2011–2012. All cases shared the same outbreak strain. The recent cases and changes in the epidemiology of S. Stanley in the EU suggest that the 2011–2012 outbreak strain is still present on the European food market. Therefore, new sporadic cases and outbreaks of S. Stanley are expected, and other European countries may get involved.

EFSA recommend that risks in the turkey supply chain are very closely controlled and monitored to prevent S. Stanley infecting turkey meat and if necessary, similar steps should be taken in the broiler production chain.

To find out more and download the third update, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/o68nax3>

FSA PUBLISH UK FOOD POISONING FIGURES

New research has been published by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) that gives the most detailed picture yet of how many people suffer from food poisoning in the UK every year and how much food poisoning can be attributed to different foods.

The study found that:

- There are more than 500,000 cases of food poisoning a year from known pathogens. This figure would more than double if it included food poisoning cases from unknown pathogens.
- Campylobacter was the most common foodborne pathogen, with about 280,000 cases every year.
- The next most common pathogen was Clostridium perfringens with 80,000 cases, and norovirus was third with an estimated 74,000 cases.
- Salmonella is the pathogen that causes the most hospital admissions – about 2,500 each year.
- Poultry meat was the food linked to the most cases of food poisoning, with an estimated 244,000 cases every year.
- After poultry, produce including vegetables, fruit, nuts and seeds, caused the second highest number of cases of illness (an estimated 48,000 cases), while beef and lamb were third (an estimated 43,000 cases).

Find the report and further information on the FSA website: <http://tinyurl.com/olrdxef>

REVIEW OF NATIONAL MEASUREMENTS OFFICE

The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) have reviewed the National Measurements Office (NMO) regarding the future shape of the Agency.

The review was split into three areas, covering;

- Enforcement;
- Scientific Metrology; and
- Legal Metrology (including regulation policy and certification services)

It was acknowledged that NMO's enforcement capability was well respected by customers within BIS, other government departments, and indeed within the EU. The recommendation of the review is that Enforcement activities should continue to be delivered at a national level through NMO, as a BIS body.

It was also suggested that NMO enforcement could be promoted more widely across Whitehall to see if there are further opportunities for growth, to make the most of the centre of expertise that has been developed on the Teddington site.

To see more of the recommendations stemming from the NMO review, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/p2cfv7m>

ANIMAL WELFARE

EFSA OPINION ON WATER BATH STUNNING EQUIPMENT

The European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA's) Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) has published a Scientific Opinion on electrical requirements for poultry water bath stunning equipment different from those laid down in Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing.

The methodology and the data reported do not provide conclusive evidence that the combination of the proposed electrical frequency and current induced unconsciousness without exposing the chickens to avoidable pain and suffering. Further, some chickens did not remain unconscious for a sufficient time to prevent avoidable pain and suffering during slaughter.

The EFSA Scientific Opinion is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/ngr9sle>

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

GFSI POSITION PAPER ON FOOD FRAUD

The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) has release a position paper on food fraud mitigation.

We heard some time ago that the GFSI board had decided to include the mitigation of food fraud into the GFSI benchmark standard and they have now confirmed that it will be included in the next full revision of the GFSI Guidance Document 7th Edition which is planned for release in early 2016.

Within the new guidance the additional requirements and food fraud definition is intended to ensure a focus on food safety, rather than other factors such as commercial gain. The requirements specify that companies perform a food fraud vulnerability assessment and should have a food fraud vulnerability control plan in place to mitigate the identified vulnerabilities. This is aligned with the changes that BRC have made in version 7 of their Global Food Standard

The position paper is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/p47c7vk>

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY FOR BUSINESSES

To help improve businesses' food safety capability, Food Standards Agency are looking to join up with the UK's innovation agency, the Technology Strategy Board, to co-fund Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) through the agency's agri-food supply chain targeted competition. The competition is now open. Farmers through to retail businesses can apply.

A KTP is a partnership between a business, an academic institution (or knowledge base partner) and a recently qualified person, known as the associate. The aim is to help transfer knowledge and embed new capability within the business.

The scope of this targeted KTP competition includes three high level challenges:

- Innovating to benefit consumer health, wellbeing and choice
- Improving productivity, resource efficiency and resilience in the supply chain
- Assuring safety and security across the supply chain

For more information go to: <http://tinyurl.com/nflo8tz>

CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS AND FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

MIGRATION RISK OF PAA'S FROM FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

Some substances in the group of primary aromatic amines (PAAs) are carcinogenic; which, can for example, occur as contaminants in colour pigments. They can pose a health risk in colour-printed paper napkins and bakery bags as well as other food contact materials if they migrate into food. The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has assessed whether the current limit values for the migration of these substances into food provide adequate protection.

Following inquiries, the BfR was requested by the German Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection to state an opinion on the toxicological assessment of the migration of PAAs from food contact materials made from paper.

The paper concludes that it is appropriate to review the migration limits on these compounds and that migration limits should be set as low as technically possible. The full BfR opinion is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/l2nstcn>

EFSA CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT OPINION ON ACRYLAMIDE

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain (CONTAM) recently launched a consultation on its draft scientific opinion on acrylamide in food. This document includes an assessment of the dietary exposure to acrylamide, an evaluation of the toxicological hazards and a characterisation of the risks to human health.

The CONTAM Panel evaluated 43,419 analytical results from 11 categories of food since 2010. Acrylamide was found at the highest levels in 'coffee and coffee substitutes', 'potato crisps and snacks' and 'potato fried products'. EFSA has confirmed previous evaluations that, based on animal studies, acrylamide in food potentially increases the risk of developing cancer for consumers in all age groups.

To view the Consultation follow this link: <http://tinyurl.com/md9338g>. The deadline for final adoption of the opinion is June 2015.

EFSA OPINION SUPPORTS THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF FISH AND SEAFOOD PRODUCTS

Following a request from the European Commission to address the risks and benefits as regards fish/seafood consumption related to relevant beneficial substances (e.g. nutrients such as n-3 LCPUFA) and the contaminant methylmercury, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies (NDA) was asked to deliver a Scientific Opinion on health benefits of seafood consumption in relation to health risks associated with exposure to methylmercury.

On 14 July EFSA delivered its opinion which states that the consumption of one to two servings of fish or seafood a week has health benefits, such as the prevention of cardiovascular diseases, despite the presence of the contaminant methylmercury. In particular, the Opinion says that seafood is a “source of energy and protein with high biological value and contributes to the intake of essential nutrients”, without distinguishing which fishes or sea foods are healthier.

Moreover, the Panel recommends higher consumption of fish and seafood during pregnancy, as it is associated with better neurodevelopment in children.

In this Opinion, the term seafood denotes vertebrate and invertebrate aquatic animals whether of marine or freshwater origin, whether farmed or wild, except aquatic mammals (e.g. whales and dolphins), aquatic reptiles (e.g. turtles and crocodiles), echinoderms (e.g. sea urchins and starfish), and jellyfish, and does not include aquatic plants.

Access the opinion through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/ok94a25>

EFSA OPINION ON POLYACRYLIC ACID IN PEACH PADS

The European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA's) CEF Panel (Panel on Food Contact Materials, Enzymes, Flavourings and Processing aids) published a Scientific Opinion on the safety assessment of the active substance, polyacrylic acid, sodium salt crosslinked, for use in active food contact materials intended to be used as a liquid absorber in the packaging of fresh or frozen foods such as meat, poultry, and seafood as well as fresh fruits and vegetables.

The Panel concluded that use of the substance does not raise a safety concern when used in absorbent pads in the packaging of fresh or frozen foods. The absorbent pads must be used only under conditions in which the absorption capacity of the active substance is not exceeded and direct contact with food is excluded.

The Scientific report is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/kuhxa5o>

IMPORTS, EXPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

CHINA'S NATIONAL STANDARD TRANSLATED

The National Standard of the People's Republic of China GB/Z21702—2008, 'Code on Quality and Safety Control of Fishery Products for Export' has been translated. The English version can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/qdpsxpI>

This standard specifies the general principles of quality and safety control of fishery products for export and requirements on raw materials and ingredients, processing enterprises and plants, employees and production management, processing controls, packaging, storage and transportation, product traceability and recall, and the code of hygienic practice for processing of major exports of fishery products.

This standard is applicable to quality and safety control of fishery products for export, exclusive of eel and any derivative products.

BIS PUBLICATION ON TRANSATLANTIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) have produced a leaflet providing information on topics of public concern and addressing common misconceptions about the negotiations.

The leaflet, titled 'Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership: Separating Myth from Fact', is part of a series of leaflets from the UK Government, and is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/qfwzxhu>

'YELLOW CARDS' FOR THE PHILIPPINES AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The European Commission has warned the Philippines and Papua New Guinea that they risk being identified as countries it considers non-cooperative in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. This is a consequence of these two countries not doing enough, in the eyes of the Commission, to fight IUU fishing. The Commission mentions their lack of a system of sanctions to deter IUU activities and a reluctance to address deficiencies in monitoring fisheries.

Although the decision does not affect trade, the countries are required to improve within six months or face sanctions similar to the ones currently applied to Guinea, Belize and Cambodia.

Eight other countries – Fiji, Panama, Sri Lanka, Togo and Vanuatu in 2012 and Ghana, Curaçao and South Korea in 2013 – received formal warnings. The Commission is satisfied that most of these countries have made significant progress in the fight against IUU fishing.

European Commission press release: <http://tinyurl.com/q9tou8c>

Further information from the Commission: <http://tinyurl.com/ksw52jx>

Commission Decisions notifying the Philippines and Papua New Guinea: <http://tinyurl.com/mh5sh7a>

EU-THAILAND TRADE TALKS SUSPENDED

At a European Foreign Affairs Council meeting held on 23 June 2014, Europe decided to reduce joint activities with Thailand until democratic institutions are reinstated. According to the European Council: "Official visits to and from Thailand have been suspended; the EU and its Member States will not sign the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Thailand, until a democratically elected government is in place. Other agreements will, as appropriate, be affected."

European Council conclusions can be seen here: <http://tinyurl.com/ljcykzf>

UNFAIR PRACTICES IN THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

The European Commission has published a press release adopting a communication encouraging Member States to look for ways to improve protection of small food producers and retailers against the unfair practices of their sometimes much stronger trading partners; the press release is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/or64feg>

Whilst differences in bargaining powers are common and legitimate in commercial relationships, these imbalances can in some cases lead to unfair trading practices, which include avoiding or refusing to put essential commercial terms in writing, retroactive unilateral changes in the cost or price of products or services, transfer of unjustified or disproportionate risk to a contracting party, deliberately disrupting a delivery or reception schedule to obtain unjustified advantages or unilaterally terminating a commercial relationship without notice, or subject to an unreasonably short notice period and without an objectively justified reason.

The Commission also published a press release of Frequently Asked Questions in conjunction with the Communication; which is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/opjvvh>

INCIDENTS AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

SALMONELLA AND NOROVIRUS RISK FROM CHINESE STRAWBERRIES

Strawberries from China will be subject to stiffer checks for norovirus at EU borders, following an alert about contaminated produce from the EU's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF).

The European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA's) panel on Biological Hazards (BIOHAZ) has released 'Scientific Opinion on the risk posed by pathogens in food of non-animal origin- part 2 (Salmonella and Norovirus in berries)' which states that norovirus in frozen strawberries and raspberries is an emerging public health risk. It was not known whether the contamination occurred on farms or during processing. However, BIOHAZ identified the risk of increased rainfall as a potential source, as sewage enters irrigation water sources for fields of berries.

Risk factors for berry contamination by Salmonella and Norovirus were considered in the context of the whole food chain. Available estimates of the prevalence of these pathogens in berries were evaluated together with mitigation options relating to prevention of contamination and the relevance of microbiological criteria. It was concluded that each farm environment represents a unique combination of risk factors that can influence occurrence and persistence of pathogens in berry production. Appropriate implementation of food safety management systems including Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), should be primary objectives of berry producers.

A copy of the scientific opinion is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/lk7lrhp>

INTEGRITY AND FOOD AUTHENTICITY

FAKE FOOD OPERATION

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the Intellectual Property Office and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) published a Press Release concerning a coordinated operation against international counterfeiting gangs.

An operation against international counterfeiting gangs has resulted in nearly 100 arrests and the seizure of fake food and drink.

Operation Opson, jointly run by Interpol and Europol, began in 2011 to tackle the criminal production and sale of counterfeit 'protected food name' products. More than 1,200 tonnes of fake or sub-standard food and nearly 430,000 litres of counterfeit drinks were seized.

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

FOOD FRAUD INVOLVING DEEP FROZEN FISH - FURTHER Q&AS

Further questions have been put to the European Commission on food fraud involving deep-frozen fish. The supplementary questions are:

- What does that standardised method to determine added water entail?
- What is the timeframe for developing the method for detecting added water in fishery products?
- Are rules being developed to combat such food fraud?
- Are they being developed along similar lines to the existing rules for chicken fillets?

Mt Borg replied that the Commission is working to develop a method in accordance with 882/2004 based on a water/protein ratio.

The questions and full answers can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/lvgageu>

COMMONS SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT ON FOOD SECURITY

The House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (ERA) published on 1 July 2014 a report on 'Food Security'. This Report is the first of two on food security in the UK. In the second Report, due to be published later this year, the focus will be on consumption, affordability and access to food and food waste.

This Report addresses the UK food system, challenge of climate change, sustainability and sustainable intensification, supply chain resilience, harnessing technology and GM food.

The report calls for:

- Supermarkets to shorten supply chains to reduce threats of disruption;
- UK farmers to extend seasonal production of fresh fruit and vegetables in coordination with the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board, and local and central Government;
- Government to reduce dependence on imported soybean for animal feed, as increased demand for protein from emerging economies threatens current supply lines; and
- Government to produce a detailed emissions reduction plan for the UK agricultural sector.

The Committee states that the Government must lead a public debate to counter food safety fears among consumers about GM foods and must also ensure a more evidence-based approach to EU licensing of GM crops.

The 'Food Security' report is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/nqh6gqo>

COMBATTING MANUKA HONEY FRAUD

Manuka honey is known for its antiviral and antibacterial properties, and jars can cost in excess of £30. Recently Minerva Scientific carried out an investigation for The Grocer magazine which looked at randomly selected manuka honeys.

Dr David Hoyland, commercial director at Minerva Scientific - one of Europe's leading independent honey testing labs, has said manuka honey bought by British consumers could in fact be watered down with kanuka honey. Dr Hoyland said manuka honey sold in the UK could contain kanuka honey because scientists cannot differentiate between pollen from manuka and its close relative kanuka under the microscope.

In carrying out the work Minerva conducted two different tests on seven samples - one for Non-Peroxide Activity (NPA) and one for Total Activity (TA). Non-Peroxide Activity is the measurement for the antibacterial qualities of manuka honey. All honeys can be 'active' but this differs from the manuka honey's special NPA.

Some of the products tested referred to activity which could potentially be confusing as consumers do not know the difference between TA and NPA.

According to the Food Standards Agency, there is no legal definition of the 'activity' or 'total activity' of manuka honey. The FSA and other agencies have been working closely with the New Zealand Authorities and welcome new guidelines developed by the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries. The guidance provides some definition of marketing terms for Manuka honey and gives clarity on what constitutes counterfeit product.

Read the Telegraph article on the Minerva report here: <http://tinyurl.com/ly7g2yq>

Find out more and find links to access the New Zealand Guidance here: <http://tinyurl.com/k7weyck>

FRESH MELAMINE SCANDAL IN CHINA

Chinese police have seized almost 12 tonnes of yoghurt candy tainted with melamine, according to reports from the Chinese state media. Melamine is an industrial chemical that was used to boost the apparent protein content of milk in a China scandal in 2008 in which six infants died and thousands were made ill.

Police in the southern province of Guangdong made the discovery during a sweep of food producers and have detained the manager of the factory that produced it, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

See more at: <http://tinyurl.com/p55x9uw>

LAUNCH OF THE INSTITUTE OF FOOD SAFETY, INTEGRITY AND PROTECTION

IFSIP Launch to Focus on Food Integrity The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) formally launched its new membership organisation the Institute of Food Safety, Integrity & Protection (IFSIP) at the House of Commons on 24 June 2014. IFSIP is a food safety specialist membership organisation for the public good supported and run by the CIEH under its charitable objectives.

At the launch event, Head of IFSIP, Jenny Morris, MBE, said the IFSIP advisory board had decided initially to concentrate on the skills needed to tackle food fraud.

Professor Chris Elliott, will Chair the IFSIP Advisory Board, talked about the importance of IFSIP as a collaborative body of food professionals, in the current challenging environment.

'Never have I thought in my professional career that there is a greater need and opportunity to develop partnerships between those four million people who work in the food industry, partnerships between the people who work for regulatory authorities in government to come together to work even harder to ensure that the food supply system for every citizen on these islands is safe wholesome and authentic,' he said.

A full IFSIP website will be available in the autumn when the member areas will become "live". At that time there will be new content for members only. To find out more and register an interest in becoming a member of IFSIP go to: <http://tinyurl.com/nsqjnxj>

VIETNAM WARNED ABOUT ANTIBIOTIC RESIDUES IN SHRIMP

Vietnam's National Agro-Forestry-Fisheries Quality Assurance Department (Nafiqad) has said it has received warnings from the EU and Japan about the antibiotic oxytetracycline. Both the EU and Japan have noted an increased incidence of non-compliant levels of oxytetracycline in seafood products originating in Vietnam.

The Japanese authorities are now testing 100% of consignments for oxytetracycline. The Vietnamese authorities have said that the EU expects the situation to improve; if not, the EU will consider more stringent measures on imports from Vietnam that might include a temporary suspension of imports.

Contact: i_bartolo@seafish.co.uk

INTERNATIONAL FOOD SAFETY VIOLATIONS 2013

Food Sentry has published an analysis of International Food Safety Violations for 2013.

Food Sentry is a global food source monitoring company that, as one of its services, gathers, supplements, and analyses data on food safety incidents from governments and laboratories around the world. Food Sentry compiles this data to populate a large and quickly growing database of verified food safety incidents. This information is available to researchers, government and industry in support of ongoing efforts to improve visibility and transparency into food supply issues. Food Sentry also uses it to advise consumers of

food risks in the [Food Risk Rating Guide](#).

Although there has been increasing global focus on cleaning up the food supply in all countries, it is clear that much remains to be done. Food Sentry will explore the most frequent violators in much more detail in subsequent reports, identifying which foods were most likely to be contaminated, and with what, as well as looking at some of the possible causes for the problems we identify in each of the countries. The next report will look at India, a primary source for many foods routinely used by consumers.

More information is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/qct5vhz>



LABELLING AND FOOD LAW

ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF TRADING STANDARDS OFFICERS (ACTSO)– ENFORCEMENT OF EU FIC

In my role as Vice Chair of the Business Expert Group (BExG) for Labelling and Standards and the work I do in providing advice to BFFF Members, I was acutely aware of the issues and challenges businesses were facing as they prepared for the changes to food labelling being introduced in the Food Information to Consumers Regulation. So with the BFFF Technical and Legislative Expert Group I wrote a letter outlining the issues and concerns and submitted it to the Enforcement Focus Group via BExG.

With some minor changes ACTSO have adopted the letter as an opinion giving guidance to Trading Standards Officers. It recommends that business efforts to comply with the new Regulation should be recognised and that a proportionate approach to enforcement should be taken if the process is not totally complete.

There are a number of reasons that might explain why businesses are not ready and this opinion is not intended to provide protection for those businesses who are not actively working towards full compliance by the deadline of 13 December 2014. The opinion is published on the following pages:

Number: 3/14



Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers

Guidance for officers when businesses seek advice about the use, after 13th December 2014, of food labels which do not comply with the above Regulation

Background

The new labelling regulation entered into force on 14 November 2011 with the majority of labelling provisions, with the exception of mandatory nutrition labelling and compositional standards for minced meat, becoming mandatory by 13 December 2014. The European Commission provided for a three year transition period to allow food businesses the opportunity to change the food information provided to consumers, as part of the normal packaging redesign cycle; especially to minimise economic burdens on small and medium sized food businesses.

The Issues

1. Whilst responsible food businesses scheduled to change labels utilising the full transition period, uncertainty and lack of clarity in terms of the interpretation of many parts of the new regulation, including clarity on mince and date of freezing has had a significant stalling effect in revising labels for some businesses.
2. Despite the considerable efforts made, the delay in achieving clarity has effectively shortened the transition period; and, whilst some official guidance is now available there are still areas of the new regulation that remain unclear. UK Regulators have provided as much clarity as they can, however many questions still remain unanswered.

Some of these questions may be answered in an updated Question and Answer document anticipated from the European Commission in early 2014, but resolving the interpretive issues between Member States is likely to be an ongoing activity.

3. Given that the Regulation will require changes to every single food label in Europe, there is growing concern that there will be insufficient capacity within the sector to meet the tasks in the time remaining. The tasks include redefining, redesigning, producing and providing consumer information in accordance with the new requirements. The issue is exacerbated as many small and medium sized food business operators are only now able to start to implement the changes.

4. Food businesses have been compelled to begin the process of label redesign with the absence of a complete understanding of the requirements and implications; changes they have made on the basis of the best knowledge available to the business at the time.

5. Food Businesses that have already made the changes, in good faith, may have to change their labels again if interpretation changes, this then may be outside of the design cycle in order to meet the December 2014 deadline.

6. Some food businesses may further delay making the changes, whilst awaiting clarity both from regulators and their customers and may be unable to complete them by the December 2014 deadline.

7. Some food businesses may have unused packaging that might have to be disposed of, generating waste and economic hardship.

Guidance for officers

Whilst each individual situation must be judged on its own merits and presuming there are no implications for food safety, it would seem reasonable for enforcement colleagues to adopt a proportionate and pragmatic approach when dealing with a food business's approach to the label change.

Considerations should include:-

- The documented steps that the business has taken to comply with the requirements of the Regulations before the end of the transition period. This could include advice sought from their local authority, trade association or other source
- The business's efforts and demonstrable commitment e.g. through a timetable of work, to make the changes that they practically and justifiably can.
- Understanding of particular issues that the business may have had; constraints on time for phasing out and introducing packaging; and the typical design cycle for a business to change its packaging
- The complexity of the product range and / or customer base and the potentially conflicting requirements that may arise from them.
- For food businesses trading across internal borders conflicting guidance across member states, product categories and their customer base may also exacerbate the issues faced
- Recognition of the role of Primary Authority where businesses have such a relationship, including reference to inspection and plans and supplementary information available on the BRDO Primary Authority Website . Where the relationship exists, the Home Authority should be contacted and any advice given considered.

- An appreciation that the shelf life of canned, ambient and frozen foods is relatively long and such products will continue to be marketed entirely legitimately for a considerable time after December 2014, with packaging and labelling not compliant with the new Regulations.
- Where analytical sampling takes place to verify compositional standards e.g. minced meat, that the normal distribution of the population and the consequential statistical tolerances and are taken in account.
- The quantity of non-compliant labels that the company has in stock and the typical packaging stock holding for the business.
- The nature of the infringement, it may be appropriate for minor non-compliances, which are not misleading to the consumer and have no impact on consumer food safety, to be corrected during the next design cycle
- The economic and administrative burden on the business and realistic timeframes to make the new changes

Colleagues are encouraged to adopt a pragmatic approach provided a company can demonstrate it has taken action to update the labelling without undue delay, and has taken sensible steps such as keeping stocks of labels/packaging or products to minimum economically viable levels and to consider any other relevant factors.

Such an approach would not be appropriate if there is no, or little, evidence of attempts being made to achieve compliance within the transition period

Food Standards and Labelling Focus Group

The group has its origins in the former LGR Food Labelling and Standards groups. Membership includes representatives from the regional food enforcement groups, TSi and CIEH as well as policy officers, as observers, from the Food Standards Agency, Department of Health and DEFRA. The group's purpose is to help co-ordinate regulation of food standards and labelling by providing technical and policy support to Local Authorities and other organisations by providing specialist advice. Meeting at least twice a year the group's main form of communication is through the Knowledge Hub

Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers

The Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO) is the single membership organisation representing Heads of Trading Standards and regulatory services from councils across England and Wales. ACTSO supported by the Trading Standards Institute is focussed exclusively on providing a comprehensive co-ordinated leadership forum at the national level whilst assisting members to lead their services both locally and regionally. ACTSO is happy to support and endorse the work of the Food Standards and Labelling Focus Group.

Disclaimer

Legislation may change over time and the advice given is based on the information available at the time the guidance was produced. It is not necessarily comprehensive and is subject to revision in the light of further information. Only the courts can interpret statutory legislation with any authority. This advice is not intended to be a definitive guide to, nor substitute for, the relevant law. Independent legal advice should be sought where appropriate.

First Published: June 2014

ELECTRONIC IDENTIFICATION OF BOVINE ANIMALS AND LABELLING OF BEEF

Regulation (EU) No 653/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 amending Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 as regards electronic identification of bovine animals and labelling of beef was published in the Official Journal of the EU, L189/33, 27/6/2014.

The Regulation broadens the scope of means of identification in Regulation 1760/2000 to enable the use of electronic identifiers as an official means of identification and from 18 July 2019 Member States must ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to provide for the identification of animals on the basis of an electronic identifier.

In addition, from 13 December 2014, the specific rules in Regulation 1760/2000 on the voluntary labelling system are deleted and are replaced by general rules requiring that such information must comply with horizontal labelling and in particular Regulation 1169/2011. The Commission is also to adopt delegated acts concerning definitions and requirements applicable to terms or categories of terms that may be used on labels of prepacked fresh and frozen beef and veal.

The Regulation also:

- Amends the definition of 'animal';
- Includes a time period for the means of identification;
- Provides for identification of animals from third countries;
- Makes amendments to the definition of 'beef' and 'labelling'

This Regulation entered into force on 17 July 2014. The Official Journal L189/33 is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/nmflblp>

FIR REGULATIONS – SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES PUBLISHED

Defra has published a summary of the responses it received to its 2012/13 consultation on implementation of the EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation on 16 July 2014.

Defra received 108 responses to this consultation: 63 from organisations and 45 from members of the public. The document also sets out the decisions taken on the approaches to national measures, derogations and enforcement. With the exception of the approach to enforcement, which differs in different parts of the UK, all decisions have been made collectively in the UK. Access the summary through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/o2bj4dy>

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTATION REPORT ON ORGANIC PRODUCTION AND LABELLING

To accompany the Regulatory proposal to update the Organic Production and Labelling Regulation (EC) 834/2007 published in March 2014 The European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) has produced an Implementation Appraisal to provide a succinct overview of material available on the implementation, application and effectiveness of Regulation (EC) 834/2007 adopted by the Council of the European Union on 28 June 2007.

The briefing seeks to provide an initial analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the European Commission's Impact Assessment (IA) accompanying its proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on organic production and labelling of organic products (COM (2014) 180), which was adopted on 24 March 2014. It does not attempt to deal with the substance of the proposal but is a useful information and background note.

The Regulatory proposal can be found through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/oas99k6>

EPRS Appraisal: <http://tinyurl.com/lmzqug5> and briefing note can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/qhz2m8d>

NUTRITION, ADDITIVES AND HEALTH

PHE ON SUGAR REDUCTION

Public Health England have published a discussion paper outlining the steps Public Health England (PHE) will take to help people reduce their sugar intake. The document acknowledges that currently all population groups exceed current UK recommendations on sugar consumption and outlines how PHE will prepare evidence and advice for government on how to reduce sugar intakes.

Advice given to government will be informed by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) report on carbohydrates and health when it is finalised in 2014 and 2015.

'Sugar reduction: responding to the challenge' includes key actions PHE will take now and in the future to help reduce sugar intakes and can be downloaded through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/lbcw4dl>

REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL FOOD REGULATIONS 2014

Updated requirements for nutrition standards of food provided in schools has been published. The School Food Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014 No. 1603) are now published and enter into force on 1 January 2015. The Regulations, which apply in relation to England, revoke and replace The Education (Nutritional Standards and Requirements for School Food) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

The new Regulations follow the 2013 School Food Review and set out nutritional standards that food and drink provided to children at maintained schools are required to meet. They are designed to create a clearer, simpler set of food-based standards for school food than that in the 2007 Regulations.

Access the new Regulation through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/pb6lstq>

COMMISSION STUDY ON FOOD TAXES

A study 'food taxes and their impact on competitiveness in the agri-food sector' commissioned by the Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission to the ECSIP consortium led by Ecorys Netherlands, in the framework of the activities of the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply chain. Has concluded that taxes on high sugar, salt and fat products such as soft drinks, sweet and salty foodstuffs do induce a reduction of the consumption of the taxed products, but the exact impact on the competitiveness of the European agri-food sector needs to be further assessed.

The study concludes that food taxes in general achieve a reduction in the consumption of the taxed products and as a result, consumers may instead purchase similar non-taxed or less heavily taxed items. It also shows that consumers may simply buy cheaper brands of the taxed products, thus potentially not lowering their consumption of the ingredient the tax aims to target (i.e. salt, sugar or fat). Equally, consumers may be able to buy other products with similar levels of sugar, salt or fat to those that are taxed.

To find out more go to: <http://tinyurl.com/lue8qy6>

ACCEPTABLE DAILY INTAKE LEVEL FOR SUNSET YELLOW COLOURING QUADRUPLED

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has established an Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) of 4 mg/kg bw/day for the food colour Sunset Yellow. Experts have concluded that estimates of consumer exposure are well below this new ADI for all age groups.

In 2009 EFSA had re-evaluated the safety of Sunset Yellow and, based on the available scientific data, set a temporary ADI of 1 mg/kg body weight and recommended that further tests be conducted. In the light of new data submitted to EFSA, the ADI has now been raised.

Sunset Yellow (E 110) is a food colour currently authorised under Commission Regulation 1333/2008. To download the EFSA report, go to the EFSA website via this link: <http://tinyurl.com/ksex3fq>

SACN CARBOHYDRATES AND HEALTH REPORT

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) has published a draft report on Carbohydrates and Health for consultation and for scientific comment.

Dietary carbohydrates and their role in health were last considered by the Committee on

Medical Aspects of Food and Nutrition Policy (COMA, the predecessor of Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition) in the following reports: Sugars and Human Disease (COMA, 1989), Dietary Reference Values for Food Energy and Nutrients for the United Kingdom (COMA, 1991) and Nutritional Aspects of Cardiovascular Disease (COMA, 1991; COMA, 1994). Considerable evidence has emerged since these reports were published, so in 2008 the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) was requested by the Food Standards Agency and the Department of Health to provide clarification of the relationship between dietary carbohydrate and health and make public health recommendations.

You can access the main report using this link: <http://tinyurl.com/kvt2ckw> and respond to the consultation by emailing your comments to: sacn@phe.gov.uk. The consultation is open from 26 June to 1 September 2014.

Once the consultation is closed, the SACN Carbohydrates Working Group will consider all scientific comments received. A further draft of the report and a table of consultation responses with actions taken will then be discussed and agreed by the SACN main committee at its next meeting on 5 November.

CASH SALT IN SALADS SURVEY

Huge amounts of salt continue to be added to many restaurant, café and supermarket salads, according to a new survey by Consensus Action on Salt & Health (CASH). This is despite calls in 2010 to lower salt in salads, as certain restaurateurs and food manufacturers continue to sneak in large amounts of unnecessary salt when it comes to serving up their 'healthier' dishes and raising the nation's blood pressure.

CASH surveyed 650 ready-to-eat salads available for purchase from supermarkets, restaurants, cafés and fast food restaurants and found nearly three quarters (77% - 511 products) to contain more salt than a packet of crisps (0.5g/portion).

The full survey data is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/nywp8wh>

FOUR YEAR ACTION PLAN ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

The Scottish Government has published a revised action plan to tackle antimicrobial resistance, building on the significant progress that has been made to date in addressing the issue in Scotland.

The Scottish Management of Antimicrobial Resistance Action Plan 2014-18, (ScotMARAP2), confirms that many of the actions relating to antimicrobial use in humans laid out in the UK Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy, published by the Department of Health in 2013, are already in place in Scotland.

The revised plan for 2014-18 lists a number of actions for health services in Scotland to take forward as more issues around antimicrobial resistance come to the fore.

The key measures include:

- Developing the Infection Intelligence Platform (IIP) that will allow a range of information and analysis on antimicrobial treatment, resistance and patient outcomes to be shared;
- Providing advanced national and local surveillance of antimicrobial use and resistance, to monitor how antibiotics are used and how resistance to them is developing;
- Issuing national guidance on treatment of common infections and advice on which antibiotics to use in order to preserve their effectiveness and minimise harm from healthcare associated infection; and
- Developing education initiatives for healthcare staff and the public to increase awareness of when and how antibiotics should be used.

The ScotMARAP2 document is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/nvowzwa>

PROCESSING AND RETAIL

MANUFACTURING: STATISTICS AND POLICY

The manufacturing industry employs around 2.6 million people in the UK and, in 1012, accounted for 10% or £139 billion of national economic output. The food sector remains the largest contributor accounting for 15% of total output.

Manufacturing has underperformed the services sector for many years. Output in the sector declined particularly sharply during the 2008/09 recession, and after a short period of growth it declined again in early of 2012. 2013 has seen relatively strong recovery.

More than 70% of business research and development goes into the manufacturing sector, and goods produced in the sector account for nearly half of all UK exports.

The Government included advanced manufacturing in the first stage of its Growth Review. The Plan for Growth published alongside the budget in March 2011 stated that the sector would benefit from a range of measures including bringing forward the launch of an “enhanced” Manufacturing Advisory Service and the extension of the University Technical Colleges programme.

The full report is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/ndm88kc>

ADVERTISING: PRICE AND PROMOTIONS

The Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) has published an article on pricing and promotional activity in the sector. It states that 84% of retailers identified this type of activity as their number one focus area, with 67% of suppliers also identifying this as a priority.

The article also looks at drivers for shopper store choices, price matching and the balance between price and quality.

The article can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/onapky3>

UPDATE ON REVIEW OF AUDITING IN FSA APPROVED MEAT ESTABLISHMENTS

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) system of audit in approved meat plants (slaughterhouses, cutting plants and game handling establishments) has largely been in place since 2006. A strategic UK review of audit arrangements has been underway to ensure that they most effectively protect consumers, with the FSA working in collaboration with industry stakeholders to come up with proposals on who should carry out the audit function, whether audits should be on an unannounced or announced basis, the frequency and nature of audits, and the description of audit outcomes.

The FSA Board were presented with a board paper proposing changes to audit arrangements has been published and approved. The paper provides an update and the next steps following the public consultation and the FSA response to concerns on structure. The new Audits will take place from August 2014 and the revised system will be reviewed in 6 months' time

The board paper is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/om5eo3e>

GROCERIES CODE ADJUDICATOR'S FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

The Groceries Code Adjudicator's first annual report has recently been published along with several associated presentations.

The inaugural Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA) conference took place in June. Over 200 people attended to hear from the Adjudicator and a range of other speakers, discussing their experiences of the first year with the new regulator.

The annual report is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/pey2q6x> and the plenary presentations can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/m92lpl6>

REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT AND OFFICIAL CONTROLS

FSA ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

The UK Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published their Annual Report for 2013/14. The report says that the horse meat incident dominated last year and they are continuing to learn lessons.

The agency oversaw more than 50,000 local authority and industry tests for horse in meat products in the UK, with less than 1% of products sampled containing horse meat DNA at levels of 1% or above. The agency also handled more than 1,555 incidents separate from horse meat.

The FSA key focus areas include:

Food Authenticity Focus - While retaining focus on food safety, FSA said it is addressing consumer detriment that results from food fraud. Funding was increased to support ports and local authority sampling to help target a greater range of food authenticity issues.

Campylobacter Focus – Human cases of campylobacteriosis to end December 2013 are 11% lower than in the same period of 2012; while this change is encouraging, the FSA say that it is too soon to say whether it is a trend or a random variation in reporting. A Campylobacter risk management programme has been developed to reduce levels in chicken. The programme included projects targeted at all stages of the food chain.

Listeria Limits – Listeriosis remains the number one cause of death due to foodborne disease in the UK. The FSA is working with hospitals/care settings and the food manufacturing industry to promote a national agreement on a critical limit for *L. monocytogenes* in chilled ready-to-eat foods supplied to hospitals and other care settings. Outcomes from a consultation are expected in the autumn of 2014.

E.coli Guidance – Another area of focus is improving E.coli 0157 control of cross-contamination guidance. The FSA said it was aware of concerns on the practical application of the E.coli 0157 guidance, especially for small businesses, and undertook a review to make it more accessible. It involved industry, local authority stakeholders and results from independent research and will be published this year.

The 'FSA Annual Reports and Accounts 2013/14' is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/kg717e1>

NEW SCHEME RECOGNISES COMPLIANT FEED BUSINESSES

The Food Standards Agency (FSA), in collaboration with the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), has finalised agreements that further extend earned recognition to the animal feed sector. This will reduce the number of inspections for certain feed businesses, based on risk.

The revised Feed Law Code of Practice (England), which was published in May, includes the new

measures that recognise feed businesses that can demonstrate a good history of compliance or are compliant members of an approved industry assurance scheme. This means these businesses will qualify for a reduced frequency of inspection.

This change is intended to help reduce the burden of inspections on feed businesses, and ensure that inspections are focused more on high-risk areas of the sector.

The Feed Law Code of Practice is awaiting approval in Wales, and in Northern Ireland, guidance will be developed for DARD. A new code for Scotland will be developed in conjunction with the new Scottish food body.

To further apply earned recognition to the farming sector, the FSA has partnered with Red Tractor to approve these schemes in England and Wales:

- Beef and Lamb Scheme
- Dairy Scheme
- Crops and Sugar Beet Scheme
- Pigs and Poultry Schemes

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

FUNDING FOR FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published a letter written to all local authority Heads of Service for Environmental Health in England, launching a programme of grant funding for local authorities in England to help increase the visibility of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).

The funding is for local authorities to carry out short face-to-face visits to 3, 4 and 5 rated businesses not currently displaying a sticker in a place visible from outside, to deliver some key messages about the benefits of displaying and to issue new stickers, with funding available for projects taking place before the end of December 2014.

A copy of the letter is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/mhonakm>

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF FOODS STUDY PUBLISHED

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published the results of a study to look at the origin of foods claiming to be from the UK and Ireland. The study did not identify any cases of food on sale with misleading country of origin claims.

The study which used a screening technique known as stable isotope ratio analysis (SIRA) followed up with investigating traceability documentation. It examined 96 food samples (beef, pork, lamb, apple juice, tomatoes and honey) claimed to be from the UK, or from the Republic of Ireland. Samples were taken from mid-December 2013 to early January 2014.

The samples were mostly taken from retail or wholesale outlets, although four samples of raw beef burgers were obtained from caterers. The samples were not fully representative of the market, but, within the limitations of a small study, provided a reasonable spread across retailers and across the four countries of the UK. Samples were taken from both top end food ranges and economy ranges.

For food law authorities it is very valuable to have a screening test that can help target investigation. SIRA has been shown to have real potential. For some foods it is already a realistic possibility for enforcement authorities to use SIRA screening, although for others some further development would be beneficial.

The report is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/lk69mm6>

FOOD STANDARDS MULTI ANNUAL NATIONAL CONTROL PLAN

The Multi Annual National Control Plan (MANCP) details the roles and responsibilities of the different authorities and organisations involved in the monitoring compliance with, and enforcement of, feed and food law, animal health and welfare rules and plant health requirements in the UK.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the four agriculture/rural affairs departments have recently updated the MANCP for the UK. The MANCP has been updated as at May 2014 and covers the period up to March 2015.

The MANCP is a requirement of Regulation (EC) 882/2004 on official controls. Its purpose is to ensure that effective control systems are in place for monitoring and enforcing feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules and plant health law.

It is a European requirement that all member states have a national control plan. The plan provides the basis of assessments of the performance of the UK's national control systems by the European Commission's inspection services.

The plan and annual reports can be accessed via the FSA website through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/oo9elug>

CONSUMER RIGHTS BILL

The UK Parliamentary Office announced that the remaining stages of the Consumer Rights Bill were to be debated in the House of Commons on 16 June 2014. The Consumer Rights Bill sets out a framework that consolidates in one place key consumer rights covering contracts for goods, services and digital content, and the law relating to unfair terms in consumer contracts.

The Bill is in three parts:

- Consumer contracts for goods, digital content and services;
- Unfair terms; and
- Miscellaneous and general , including investigatory powers, amendment of the Weights and Measures (Packaged Goods) Regulations 2006

The proposed changes to the Weights and Measures (Packaged Goods) Regulations would provide an automatic exemption from keeping records of checks for packers of bread which is sold unwrapped or in open packs.

For more information, got: <http://tinyurl.com/pbcp4ra>

FOOD LAW GUIDE UPDATED

The Food Law Guide covers legislation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and is republished every three months. References to Scottish legislation have been removed because the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Scotland has published its own food and feed law guide. This will also be reviewed and updated every three months.

The guide contains a table that lists all current food legislation, with details of associated EU legislation and links to any FSA guidance where this exists. Since the FSA's change of remit earlier in 2010, food standards work in England has moved to Defra, and nutrition and dietary health work for England has moved to the Department of Health and for Wales to the Welsh Assembly Government.

For legislation where responsibility for the English statutory instrument has moved out of the FSA, the new lead department is indicated in red, and gives details and links to the equivalent legislation in the other UK countries. The information in the guidance column is not a link to guidance for these English statutory instruments; it is a link to the appropriate lead department's website. You will need to contact them to obtain the latest guidance on the legislation.

The FSA Food Law Guide is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/q6tz4j4>

THE VRC 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

The Veterinary Residues Committee (VRC) has published its report for 2013. The report gives an overview of the Committee's main activities, including summaries of the results of the surveillance schemes it oversees, and sets out the main issues and areas of activity in which it expects to be involved in 2014.

The VRC concluded that overall the surveillance results demonstrated that, when used correctly, veterinary medicinal products did not result in residues of human health concern in 2013 and that consumers can continue to have confidence in purchasing UK produced foodstuffs of animal origin.

In the smaller non-statutory programme which tests imported food, ten non-compliant results were found out of 600 samples which were collected and used for 1,629 analyses (1.6%).

The full report can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/ojkh2ow>

DEFRA GUIDANCE ON DEROGATIONS FROM ANIMAL BY-PRODUCT CONTROLS

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has published guidance on Derogations from the Animal By-Product controls under Regulation (EC) 1069/2009 and Commission Regulation (EU) 142/2011.

EU Regulation 1069/2009 and Commission Regulation 142/2011 set down controls on the safe use and disposal of animal-by products to safeguard public and animal health but allow exemptions in certain circumstances. The derogation document details the authorisations as to which exemptions may be used in England and any conditions that operators need to follow.

The Defra guidance is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/ncggjij>

DEFRA ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14 PUBLISHED

Defra has published its annual report and accounts for 2013 to 2014. The report gives an overview of activities during this period, outlines new strategy and progress against strategic objectives and looks forward to future goals. Since the Red Tape Challenge was launched, Defra has reviewed over 1,200 regulations, improving 428 regulations and removing 350 obsolete regulations.

The Report discusses amongst other items the Elliott Report, the Agri-Tech Strategy and the plant health risk register. The reports and accounts are available here: <http://tinyurl.com/pv49ra8>

RESEARCH

FSA 'UNDERSTANDING DOMESTIC FOOD SAFETY PRACTICES' REPORT

The FSA have published a report publishing more detailed data analysis exploring domestic food safety practices using previously collected FSA Waves 1 and 2 Food and You data.

Food Standards Agency (FSA) data indicates that socio-demographic variables such as age, gender and ethnicity are associated with reported food safety practices of consumers, but socio-economic variables such as income, education and housing tenure, are not.

Food and You is a random probability survey comprising about 3,000 interviews across the UK at each wave. The survey is designed to explore reported behaviours, attitudes, and knowledge surrounding food safety issues, and nutrition in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and is an important vehicle for measuring progress against the FSA's strategy.

The 'Understanding domestic food safety practices' report can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/kvdc68g>

PUBLIC ATTITUDES TRACKER RESULTS PUBLISHED

The results from the Food Standards Agency's (FSA's) Biannual Public Attitudes Tracker for May 2014 have been published.

The top three food safety issues of total concern for respondents were food hygiene when eating out (36%), food poisoning (28%) and the use of additives in food products (28%). The top wider food issues of total concern were food prices (51%), the amount of sugar in food (48%), and the amount of salt in food (47%).

Fieldwork for this issue took place in May 2014 and a representative sample of 2,483 adults in the UK was interviewed via the TNS consumer face-to-face omnibus survey. This is the eighth issue of the biannual tracker, which started in November 2010.

The 'Biannual Public Attitudes Tracker: Wave 8 – May 2014' is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/pydzh8o>

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

SUSTAIN REPORT ON CHANGES NEEDED FOR FARMING, FOOD AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Sustain have produced a report titled 'Square Meal'. It lays out why we need a new recipe for farming, wildlife, food and public health. The report has been published by The Food Research Collaboration, the RSPB, Friends of the Earth, the National Trust, the Food Ethics Council, Sustain, the Wildlife Trusts, the Soil Association, Eating Better and Compassion in World Farming.

The Square Meal Report focuses on four key connected areas:

- Improving Health: Getting a grip on the growing issue of obesity.
- Good food for all: With increasing food prices on 913,138 occasions in the year to the end of March 2014, people in the UK were provided with three days emergency food by the Trussell Trust alone.
- Sustainable farming: 75% of the protein fed to livestock in the EU is imported and 25% of UK farmers live in poverty
- Enhancing nature: In less than 50 years we have lost over 44 million pairs of breeding birds.

To download the report go to: <http://tinyurl.com/o6p6fff>

EU ECOLABEL – GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

The EU Ecolabel logo on a product or service is intended to guarantee that it is less damaging to the environment because it has met strict environmental criteria agreed by every EU member state.

The EU Commission has published guidance for applicants who wish to use the label on their products. EU Ecolabel products must be environmentally friendly in order to qualify with the environmental criteria looking at every stage of a products lifecycle – from manufacturing through to use and disposal.

Applying for the EU Ecolabel is entirely voluntary but is intended to encouraging businesses to develop greener products and helping buyers and consumers to identify them.

Each EU member state appoints a Competent Body to take on the responsibility of developing, maintaining and delivering the EU Ecolabel, in the UK this is Defra who provide free help and advice for businesses who are interested: UK Ecolabel Delivery Tel: 01355 593930; Email: ecolabel@tuvnel.com

The full guide for applicants is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/mvmwz3a>

EFSA OPINION ON RECYCLING PROCESS “PHOENIX – LNOc”

EFSA's CEF Panel has published a Scientific Opinion on the safety assessment of the “Phoenix - LNOc” process used to recycle post-consumer PET into food contact materials (EU register number RECYC028).

The input to the process is hot caustic washed and dried PET flakes originating from collected post-consumer poly(ethylene terephthalate) (PET) bottles and containing no more than 5 % of PET from non-food consumer applications. The Panel concluded that the recycled PET obtained from this process is not of safety concern when used to manufacture articles intended for food contact material applications in compliance with the conditions as specified in the conclusion of the opinion.

The Scientific Opinion is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/mvdlug5>

CHARGING FOR SINGLE USE PLASTIC CARRIER BAGS

Defra and the Environment Agency have published the Waste Prevention Program for England, which sets out to help people and organisations make the most of opportunities to save money by reducing waste.

Following a consultation that ran between 25 November and 20 December 2013, one of the changes is that a 5p charge for single use plastic carrier bags will come into effect in October 2015. The aim is to reduce the use of these bags to help protect the environment.

The policy is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/boqmkvh> and to see the consultation responses, follow this link: <http://tinyurl.com/njls2wl>

WRAP FOOD WASTE REPORT

WRAP have published a report giving details about household food and drink waste including the detailed reasons about why it is thrown away, the size of individual instances of waste and the proportion of food left in packaging. It also provides details of which meal occasions are linked to the most waste and the percentage of purchases that are wasted.

Key findings:

- 2 million tonnes of household food is discarded because it is not ‘used in time’, half of which is thrown away whole or in unopened packaging, costing consumers around £2.4bn a year.
- In a third of cases, passing a date label triggered disposal, while foods judged by consumers to have ‘gone off’ before they could be eaten (mouldy, stale etc.) were responsible for most of the remaining 1.3 million tonnes. Significant progress has been made around clarifying date labels and storage guidance to keep food fresher for longer, under WRAP’s [Courtauld Commitment](#), but the level of waste clearly shows more needs to be done.
- Given that 90% of waste occurs in amounts more than 50g (3.8 million tonnes in total), there is a real opportunity to tackle a large volume of waste by finding new ways of helping people buy and use the amounts of food they need

14 Fresh products were selected for detailed reviewed, access the report through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/kl895sn>

BRC TO DEVELOP GUIDELINES ON ETHICAL PRACTICES

Recommendations on the steps that industry can take to help eradicate human rights abuses in the supply chain is to be produced by the British Retail Consortium (BRC).

The BRC will work with its members and produce a document later this year (2014) highlighting good practice after a request from Business Minister Jenny Willott. The publication will look to help companies address abuses such as forced labour and dangerous working conditions in their suppliers abroad. They will also include a framework of human rights reporting requirements, information on ethical auditing and the various accreditation schemes available. More information can be found through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/k46a8hh>

ENVIRONMENTAL OFFENCES: DEFINITIVE GUIDELINE

In accordance with section 120 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, the Sentencing Council has issued a definitive guideline on environmental offences. It applies to all individual offenders aged 18 and older and organisations that are sentenced on or after 1 July 2014, regardless of the date of the offence.

Section 125(1) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 provides that when sentencing offences committed after 6 April 2010:

“Every court –

(a) must, in sentencing an offender, follow any sentencing guideline which is relevant to the offender’s case, and

(b) must, in exercising any other function relating to the sentencing of offenders, follow any sentencing guidelines which are relevant to the exercise of the function, unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so.”

For the purposes of section 125(3)–(4) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, the guideline specifies offence ranges – the range of sentences appropriate for each type of offence. Within each offence, the Council has specified a number of categories which reflect varying degrees of seriousness. The offence range is split into category ranges – sentences appropriate for each level of seriousness. The Council has also identified a starting point within each category.

The ‘Environmental Offences: Definitive Guideline’ is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/profjsz>

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS TO AIR

Defra have published indicators of progress in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions whilst research is undertaken to improve the UK agricultural GHG inventory. The indicators of progress are available to view here: <http://tinyurl.com/mfs9taf>

Defra also issued the results of the farm practices survey into GHG mitigation practices which ran in England in February this year. Topics include nutrient management, anaerobic digestion, cattle and sheep feeding regimes. The results can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/nhfpu8k>

TECHNOLOGY AND NOVEL FOODS

AUTHORISATION OF UV-TREATED BAKER'S YEAST AUTHORISATION OF RAPESEED PROTEIN

Commission Implementing Decision 2014/424/EU of 1 July 2014 authorising the placing on the market of rapeseed protein as a novel food ingredient under Regulation (EC) No 258/97 of the European Parliament and of the Council has been published in the Official Journal of the EU, L196/27.

This Decision authorises the use of rapeseed protein as a novel food ingredient. Foodstuffs containing rapeseed protein must be labelled with a statement that the product containing 'rapeseed protein' as a food ingredient may cause allergic reaction to consumers who are allergic to mustard and products thereof.

The Official Journal is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/praqzn9>

**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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