

# T & L UPDATE

BFFF TECHNICAL AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2018 - ISSUE 96



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# CONTENTS

## ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

EFSA and JRC Renew Commitment to Work Together	5
EC Calls for Stronger Labelling Enforcement Action	5
ECJ Rules Crops from Mutagenesis are GMO	6

## ADDITIVES, CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS & FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

France to Take Lead in Glyphosate Evaluation	6
Damning Report on Fipronil Scare Published	7
Styrene Now Considered a Probable Carcinogen	7
Reports of Glyphosate Contamination of Organic Products	8
Guidance for Endocrine Disruptor Identification	8
Potential Toxicity of Titanium Dioxide Used as an Additive	8
Food Additive Re-evaluation Workshop Announced	9
Annual Report on Pesticide Residues in Food	9
EFSA Adds and Improves Chemical Hazards Database	9
Recommendations to Protect Infants From Pesticides	9
Latest Results on Pesticides Monitoring Programme	10
FSA Publish Latest Contaminants Update	10
EFSA Publish Pesticides Report for 2016	10

## ALLERGENS

Trendy Grain Poses Potential Rise in Severe Reactions	11
£750K Gluten-Free Research Fund Available	12
ASDA to Introduce Online Nutrition/Dietary Search Tool	12
Hygiene Expands into Gluten Intolerance Testing	12

## ANIMAL WELFARE

Nestle to Increase Poultry Welfare Standards	13
Nestle Co-Creates Global Coalition for Animal Welfare	13
Newcastle Disease in European Countries	13
Defra Issue Guidance for CCTV in Slaughterhouses	13
China Reports First Case of ASF in Pigs	14
Defra Publish Biological Security Strategy Policy Paper	14
Updates on Badger Control in 2017 for Bovine TB	14
Guidance on Preventing Fish or Shellfish Diseases	14

## ANIMAL WELFARE CONT.

Updated Guidance on Warble Fly	14
Defra Update Guidance for On-farm Welfare	14
Updates on Avian Influenza in Europe & UK	15
Norway Improves Animal Welfare During Transport	15

## BREXIT

CIEH Criticises Gov. Amidst Brexit Meat Inspector Shortage	15
AHDB Launches Brexit Review Calculator for Farmers	16
How Food Safety Risks Decisions will be Made Post Brexit	16
Draft Statutory Instruments Under EU Withdrawal Act 2018	16
Updated Guide on Intellectual Property and Brexit	16
Commission Communication on Preparing for Brexit	17

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION & TRAINING

Mergers and Acquisitions Drop in 2018	17
EC Launches ESMERA Robotics Project	18
Tesco Asked to Address Carrefour Supplier Concerns	18
Greenyard Listeria Recall Estimated to Reach €30M	19
Qadex Free Software for Developing Traceability Systems	19
Wales Embark on 5-Year Meat Production Programme	19

## FOOD SAFETY AND ZOOSES

PHE Report Claims WGS is Reducing Foodborne Illness	20
EU Multicountry Salmonella Outbreak Linked to Cucumber	20
FSA Annual Report and Accounts for 2017/2018	20
Norway Highlight Foods that Increase Listeriosis Risk	21
Public Attitudes Tracker Survey Results Published	21
Guidance Regarding Listeriosis from Frozen Vegetables	22
Consultation on Changes to Health & Identification Marks	22
Guidance on How to Assess Safety of Nanotechnology	22

# CONTENTS

## FOOD SECURITY, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

New £1.4M Data Sharing Network to Boost Traceability	23
Collaboration Needed to Tackle Food Fraud	23
Holland & Barratt to Test Authenticity of Manuka Honey	23
Press Release on Dual Standards of Food Products	24
FSA Completes Blockchain Slaughterhouse Trial	24
New Livestock Traceability Service	24
China Allows Rainbow Trout to be Labelled as Salmon	24

## GLOBAL STANDARDS

BSI Revises Global Safety Standard	25
CODEX Forum to Address Food Fraud and Authenticity	25
GFSI Grant Technical Equivalency to GAP	25
BRC Global Standard for Food Safety V8 Published	25

## HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Which Nutritional Labelling Scheme is Best?	26
UK Consumers Confused by Conflicting Nutrition Advice	26
326 Businesses Hit by UK Soft Drinks Industry Levy	27
First Positive Opinion on Tea Health Claim Received	27
Study Eliminates Concerns about Folic Acid Fortification	27
Outbreaks of Foodborne Illness in England and Wales	27
Child Obesity in 10 to 11-Year Olds at All Time High	28

## IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Suspension of Imports of Fishery Products from Brazil	28
Guidance on Import of Live Animals from Third Countries	28
Certification Required for Exporting Food from the UK	28
Non-EU Countries Face Antibiotic Rules on Meat Imports	29
EU Beef, Sheep & Goat Meat Exports See Rapid Fall	29

## REGULATORY

Farming Regulation Changes Proposed	30
FSA Publish Tenth Regulating Our Future Newsletter	30
Food and Feed Law Legislation Review Published	30
Instrument to Address Deficient Acts Due to Brexit	30

## RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY

Research Shows Fish are Losing Their Sense of Smell	31
Study Reveals Pros and Cons of Insect-Enriched Bread	31
'Nature's Antifreeze' to Improve Shelf Life of Foods	31
Guidance on Nanotechnologies in Food and Feed	31
German Start-up Develops 'Real Sugar Without Calories'	31

## SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT & CSR

Consumers Want Ethical Labels but Price Matters More	32
Palm Oil Alternatives Could be Environmentally Worse	32
Study highlights Amount of Wasted Fresh Fruit and Veg	32
Investors Call for Stronger Standards from RSPO	32
Sustainable Black Plastic Circular Economy	33
Strategy for Long-term EU Greenhouse Gas Emissions	33
Defra 2nd National Adaptation Programme	33
Latest Figures on Single-use Plastic Carrier Bags	33
EA Reports on Air and Water Quality in England	34
Common Format for National Air Pollution Control	34
Commonwealth Countries unite to Tackle Ocean Plastic	34
Good Agricultural Practice for Reducing Ammonia Emissions	34

## FOOD FRAUD REPORTS

NFCU Quarterly Bulletin	35
JRC Summary of Articles on Food Fraud and Adulteration	35

## CONSULTATIONS

Recent Consultations	35
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## BFFF TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP

Agenda for Meeting on 11th July 2018	36
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## FOREWORD

Welcome to the latest edition of the BFFF Technical and legislative update.

Despite the summer months being upon us, which traditionally sees a period of reduced activity at an EU level, there seems to have been a lot going on in the world of food and in this edition, we've tried to pick out some of the highlights for your review. This includes the latest updates on contaminants such as glyphosates and Fipronil, articles on foodborne viruses such as Listeria and Salmonella and the latest on animal welfare issues. You'll also find the regular focus on Food Fraud with handy links to reports from the National Food Crime Unit, the Joint Research Council and from the EU. Whilst these reports don't detail every 'incident', in combination they should serve to raise awareness of new trends in food criminality not just here in the UK but worldwide.

This edition also brings you another interesting article from our colleagues at the Anaphylaxis Campaign. For those of you interested in hearing more about emerging allergens be sure to turn to page 39 where you will find details of the Anaphylaxis Campaign Corporate Conference for which, as a BFFF member you can attend at a discounted rate. If you do wish to book tickets be quick! – It's due to be held on Tuesday 18th September and is sure to get booked up.

We are pleased to inform you that the planning for the next BFFF Technical Seminar is well under way. The event will be held on Thursday 7th February 2019 at the Birmingham Hilton Metropole and once again, there will be a wide-ranging and interesting debate on the major technical issues facing food businesses today. This will include a look at 'Where are we heading?' – including the post-Brexit landscape and culture measurement, 'Innovation' – with topics such as stable isotope testing, rapid testing and frozen manufacturing developments and 'Looking to the future' including big data, blockchain and insurance issues. To ensure you don't miss out on this 'must attend event', please email [crystalholmes@bfff.co.uk](mailto:crystalholmes@bfff.co.uk) to request a booking form.

As always, whilst we cannot cover everything in the T&L and we've tried to include those articles which we feel are most interesting and informative. We continue to work on many other projects which may not necessarily be covered here but can be found in our Technical Group papers. The agenda from our latest Technical Expert Group meeting is available for your information at the back of this edition. Here you will see just how wide a variety of subjects the group discusses and monitors in the interests of the whole membership. Remember, any technical papers issued to the group are available for all members so if you would like a copy of any then please do let us know.

Enjoy your read and as always, any comments you have would be most welcome!

Please contact BFFF if you would like to receive additional / back copies of this newsletter



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We do hope that you find the T&L a valuable read.



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# ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

## EFSA AND JRC RENEW COMMITMENT TO WORK TOGETHER

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have renewed their commitment to work together in a variety of scientific and technical areas related to food and feed safety, animal health and welfare, plant health and nutrition. Both institutions will put emphasis on exchange and joint activities in the areas of

- sectorial food and feed legislation (e.g. GMOs, feed additives, or pesticides);
- alternative methods to protect animals;
- combined exposure of chemicals and chemical mixture; and
- collection and use of landscape and environmental data to be used for risk assessment.

Some examples of the collaboration include:

- EFSA-ECHA guidance for the identification of endocrine disruptors in the context of biocidal products regulation and the placing of plant protection products on the market, to which JRC contributed with its expertise on in vitro and in silico mechanistic data.
- IPChem Database, run by the JRC supported by EFSA

EFSA is responsible for the safety assessment and the JRC, which runs the European Union Reference Laboratory for Food Contact Materials, is in charge of analytical methods performance, inter-laboratory comparisons, technology transfer, trainings and networking. JRC and EFSA also have complementary roles in the authorisation process of GMOs and feed additives.

## EC CALLS FOR STRONGER FOOD LABELLING ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

The European Commission's health and food safety representative, Vytenis Andriukaitis, has called on Member States to take tougher enforcement action on food labelling amid calls for increased regulation.

According to Andriukaitis national governments should strengthen their national enforcement activities on the labelling practices followed by food businesses. He stressed that the European Union has a number of food laws designed to prevent food makers and distributors misleading consumers through labelling or advertising and that the EU has a regulation specifically demanding clear communication.



"The provision of food information should pursue a high level of protection of consumers' health and interests by providing the basis for final consumers to make informed choices and to make safe use of food, with particular regard to health, economic, environmental, social and ethical considerations," he wrote in a letter to EU ministers.

He also highlighted that the European Court of Justice had ruled that even when food information is provided in accordance with EU legislation, this may be insufficient if an "erroneous or misleading" impression is given to the consumer via packaging or labelling. "Misleading labelling practices would merit further attention in your national control activities," he said.

The statement comes in response to a report from the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), which argued that food makers use "grey areas" in EU legislation to "sugar coat" the quality of their products. In the report the BEUC recommended the EU should define the key terms commonly used on labels to market quality aspects of foods and beverages to consumers, such as 'traditional', 'artisanal' or 'natural', the consumer organisation suggested.

Additionally, they recommended that minimum levels of whole grain content for 'whole grain' claims should be set along with minimum content rules for products which highlight certain ingredients, such as fruits, on the front of the pack. It also recommended the percentage of advertised ingredients, such as fruit, should be displayed front of pack.

"The EU law clearly states that food labelling and packaging should 'not mislead the consumer'. However, manufacturers have been taking advantage of grey zones in the EU law to make their products look like they are better quality than they actually are. It is urgent that the EU institutions come up with a recipe to end those deceptive practices and that Member States make sure food makers comply with such rules," the BEUC said.

## ECJ RULES CROPS OBTAINED BY MUTAGENESIS ARE GMOS

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has ruled on the so-called new plant breeding techniques (NPBTs). In a surprise move, it said that crops obtained by mutagenesis are GMOs as the techniques and methods of mutagenesis alter the genetic material of a plant in a way that does not occur naturally.

“It follows that those organisms come, in principle, within the scope of the GMO Directive and are subject to the obligations laid down by that directive.” The ECJ said.

It had been widely expected that the ruling would follow the same opinion as taken by Michal Bobek, the Advocate General of the ECJ, back in January, where he stated that organisms obtained by mutagenesis are, in principle, exempted from the obligations in the GMO Directive.

The EU Court did recognize, however, that the GMO Directive should not apply to crops obtained by means of certain mutagenesis techniques, namely those which have conventionally been used in a number of applications and have a long safety record.

As regards whether the GMO Directive may also be applicable to plants obtained by mutagenesis techniques that have emerged since the adoption of that Directive, the ECJ argued that the risks linked to the use of these new mutagenesis techniques might prove to be similar to those that result from the production and release of a GMO through transgenesis.

In 2016, France had asked the ECJ to rule on the status of certain genetic engineering techniques after a group of farmers and environmental organizations called for crops created by these techniques to be considered as GMOs and legislated accordingly. Those organizations had argued that if not categorized as GM, there would be few safeguards in place to control the use of such plants or monitor any impact their release into the environment may have.

Activists welcomed the ECJ decision hailing it a big victory for the environment, farmers and consumers. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) said: “The confirmation by the European Court of Justice that new GMOs will be subject to traceability and labelling is good news for organic breeders, farmers and processors but also for all European producers and consumers as it brings clarity and will ensure the freedom to avoid such GM products and the protection of the environment from the potential risks of these new technologies.”

“The European Commission cannot delay action anymore and now has to ensure that the EU legal framework is properly enforced by Member States. The Commission should immediately launch a research project to develop detection methods that will complement the traceability system, to ensure an adequate segregation of these new GM plants and to prevent the contamination of organic and conventional GMO-free food and feed production in Europe,” it said.

## ADDITIVES, CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS & FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

### FRANCE TO TAKE LEAD IN GLYPHOSATE EVALUATION

The European Commission is pushing for France to take over from Germany as the lead country responsible for assessing the safety of Glyphosate.

The Commission’s plan would mean that French food safety authorities would be put in charge of determining whether the weedkiller is safe for use in Europe’s agriculture sector. Their assessment would then have important influence over whether the EU decides to continue to allow glyphosate on the European market.

Last year, the decision was made to renew the herbicide’s license in the EU for another five years. The decision passed thanks to a last-minute U-turn by Germany, whose agriculture minister took his own line rather than the government’s and ordered a vote in favour of renewing, rather than abstaining.

The main accusation against Germany’s food safety agency is that in its positive assessment of glyphosate, it copied dozens of pages directly from an assessment carried out by the Glyphosate Task Force, a group of 22 companies financing safety studies into the herbicide. Germany’s Federal Institute for Risk Assessment has said it “vigorously rejects” all such allegations, noting that everything it reviewed was done independently and from original studies.



## DAMNING REPORT ON FIPRONIL SCARE PUBLISHED

A report into the fipronil safety scare that embroiled the Dutch egg sector last year has concluded that the government and egg producers failed to make food safety enough of a priority.

Fipronil, an insecticide used to control pests was detected in Dutch and Belgian eggs and prompted a massive egg recall across Europe. The Netherlands Food and Consumer Safety Authority (NVWA) ultimately took the “precautionary measure” of blocking poultry products from nearly 200 farms. It later transpired that a Dutch company, Chickfriend, had used fipronil at poultry farms to combat red mite.

According to European regulations, the primary responsibility for food safety lies with the companies producing and distributing food products. But the report found that many farms fail to adequately assess food safety risks and the understanding of regulatory obligations is too limited with most not prepared to deal with a food safety incident. Moreover, Integrated Chain Management Egg, the voluntary supply chain quality scheme, was found wanting with regard to food safety.

“The inspections performed by certifying authorities mainly have an administrative nature. Company visits are announced in advance, which impairs the effectiveness and credibility of the inspections. It also makes the chance of detecting fraud or misrepresentation small. Up to 2018, laying-hen farms, packing stations and supermarkets have been unsuccessful in banning eggs from the trade that are, according to the law, unsuitable for consumption. Fipronil-eggs repeatedly penetrating the shelves of the supermarkets shows that food safety is insufficiently ensured by private parties” it warned.

The Commission believes that the Dutch food safety authority (NVWA) should have stepped in sooner. NVWA had received tip-offs that fipronil was being used on poultry farms as early as 2016. However, the agency failed to follow its internal procedures meaning that these concerns were investigated as criminal proceedings. A lack of resources meant that the criminal investigation was not launched until April, May and June 2017 due to a “lack of capacity”. However, the Commission is of the opinion that at the end of 2016, based on the information available at that time, enforcing actions would have been possible pursuant to the Plant Protection Products and Biocides Act.

The ministries responsible for overseeing food safety also failed to properly inform parliament about the fipronil scare. “The ministries had much trouble recapitulating the correct information. Letters sent to the House of Representatives in August 2017 were incomplete and provided a distorted picture of the situation” the report stated.

“Food safety must be given the highest priority when establishing their work activities and processes. The commission recommends companies and directors in the egg sector to take care of a credible system of self-regulation in which food safety is the key priority. The commission is of the opinion that the NVWA has to ensure that food safety is considered the highest priority in all departments. Food safety has to be integrated visibly and unambiguously within the organisation. Indications must be assessed integrally and in a timely manner so maximum clarity on the risks and the social impact of the violations is obtained prior to making a decision on an administrative or criminal approach” it said.



## STYRENE NOW CONSIDERED A PROBABLE CARCINOGEN

After forty years of styrene being classed as a possible carcinogen, research by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), has found that it could increase the risk of cancer. The study, which was largely based on register-based studies from Aarhus together with new animal evidence, reviewed data from more than 70,000 people who worked in the Danish plastics industry between 1968 and 2011. It found that their incidence of acute myeloid leukaemia was more than double the usual number of cases and as a result, styrene has been upgraded from a ‘possible carcinogen’ to a ‘probable carcinogen’.

Styrene is included in synthetic rubber, some insulation materials, disposable tableware, packaging and fiberglass plastic.

The issue of styrene and cancer has been a priority for IARC ever since an accumulation of leukaemia cases among employees in the American synthetic rubber industry was seen in the 1970s. However, it was not possible to establish whether the American workers contracted leukaemia from handling styrene or from butadiene, a chemical, which is styrene’s permanent companion in the production of synthetic rubber.

You can read more about the study here: <https://tinyurl.com/yd6vqn8o>

## TESTS REPORTEDLY REVEAL GLYPHOSATE CONTAMINATION OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS

Environmental action group the Organics Council recently reported that they detected “trace levels” of the pesticide glyphosate in two out of the three certified organic grain and cereal products it tested as part of its organic product multi-residue pesticide survey basket, which examined various organic certified items purchased at UK supermarkets.

Waitrose Duchy Organic Farmhouse Batch wholemeal bread and Tesco Organic Plain Flour both tested positive for the pesticide at below the quantification threshold of 0.01mg/kg but at concentrations higher than 0.002mg/kg, the Organics Council said. Whole Earth Golden Organic Corn Flakes – the third cereal product examined in the survey – was not found to contain glyphosate.

The maximum permitted residue level for glyphosate in the EU is 0.01 mg/kg, while 0.002mg/kg is the lowest limit of quantification available by the test method used. The results fell somewhere between these two levels but the Organics Council said it cannot tell “how close” to the threshold limit the glyphosate in these products were.

Assuming no “deliberate malpractice”, the Council said that historic soil contamination is one potential source of contamination. If this were the case it would highlight “failures when commissioning new organic farm sites”, the Council said. They also suggested that the transfer of contaminating substances between organic and non-organic farms could be another source of contamination due to “poorly set up buffer zone separation statutory requirements”. Contamination could also have occurred post-harvest in mixed produce processing facilities, the Organic Council noted.

The Organic Council’s Dr Esme Purdie, who was formerly an environmental microbiology and toxicology specialist at King’s College London, said that the results place a question mark over the effectiveness of measures to separate organic and conventional products.

“These survey results highlight that the current organic regulations are not effectively protecting organic produce and an urgent review of agricultural policies and systems are required to stop any further contamination of our soils with persistent and harmful contaminants, such as glyphosate.” she said.

However, UK organic certification body the Soil Association was more conservative in its interpretation of the survey’s findings stating “Extrapolating these results to be indicative of widespread contamination with carcinogenic pesticide of organic grain and cereal products sold in UK supermarkets is an exaggeration at best, misleading at worst.” The Soil Association also highlighted what it termed a “significant lack of detail” released by the Organic Council

“Regarding the results claimed for organic flour, the lab cannot quantify glyphosate at less than 0.01 mg/kg and is therefore inconclusive on what the level is. Organics Council claim it is more than 0.002 mg/kg but this level is so low (2 parts per 100 million) that it is at the limit of detection,” they said.

The Organics Council is a crowd-funded volunteer organisation with the stated aim of campaigning to “make organics more organic”. It began its research two years ago.

## EFSA UPDATES ON GUIDANCE FOR ENDOCRINE DISRUPTOR IDENTIFICATION

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published a report outlining the work undertaken in producing guidance on the identification of endocrine disruptors. EFSA and the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) were asked by the European Commission to develop a common Guidance Document for the implementation of the hazard-based criteria to identify endocrine disruptors in the context of Regulations (EC) No. 1107/2009 and (EU) No. 528/2012. This report summarises the outcomes of the different consultation processes carried out by EFSA and the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). The comments received were considered in the finalisation of the Guidance. After adoption by both EFSA and ECHA the Guidance was issued on 7 June 2018.

The report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8fsqw6o>

The guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8qhjgky>

## EVALUATION OF POTENTIAL TOXICITY OF TITANIUM DIOXIDE USED AS AN ADDITIVE (E 171)

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) recently published a Scientific Opinion on the evaluation of four new studies on the potential toxicity of titanium dioxide (E171) used as a food additive and to indicate whether they would merit re-opening the existing opinion of EFSA on its safety as a food additive.

The Panel considered that the four studies evaluated, highlighted some concerns but with uncertainties, therefore their relevance for the risk assessment was considered limited and further research would be needed to decrease the level of uncertainties. Altogether, the Panel concluded that the outcome of the four studies did not merit re-opening the existing opinion of EFSA related to the safety of E171 as a food additive.

The scientific opinion can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ya9z92ha>

## FOOD ADDITIVE RE-EVALUATION WORKSHOP ANNOUNCED

The European Food Safety Authority have announced that they will host a one-day workshop in November 2018 on the status of their ongoing work into the re-evaluation of food additives which will focus on food additives intended to be used in foods for infants below 16 weeks of age.

In order to address any data gaps for the additives that have previously been identified by EFSA they also published seven data calls to help provide information that may be crucial for EFSA's scientific assessments. These include a request for information on the use of; sodium octenyl succinate (E 1450), xanthan gum (E 415), locust bean gum (E 410), pectin (E440i) and amidated pectin (E 440ii) and sodium carboxymethylcellulose (E 466) in foods for infants below 16 weeks of age.

Representatives from EU bodies, international organisations, national authorities, NGOs, industry, research and academia are welcome to join the event. They are also invited to help shape the workshop programme by sending suggestions to: [FIP@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:FIP@efsa.europa.eu)

Further information on the event including how to register will be published on the EFSA website at a later date. In the meantime, the calls for data can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycoh8jtu>

## ANNUAL REPORT OF EXPERT COMMITTEE ON PESTICIDE RESIDUES IN FOOD

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recently published the Annual Report of the Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food (PRiF) for 2017.

In 2017, 3357 samples of food and drink from the UK supply chain were tested for pesticide. The results showed that 53% of the samples tested by the laboratory did not have any residues of the pesticides tested for. However, the results also show that around 3% of the samples contained a residue above the MRL set by law. This report details all these results and follow-up actions and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybf9zgpd>

## EFSA ADDS AND IMPROVES CHEMICAL HAZARDS DATABASE

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have added a further 321 substances to their chemical hazards database OpenFoodTox. The OpenFoodTox database on chemical hazards now includes data on over 4,750 chemical substances following the addition of these extra substances. The database also has a more accessible interface with more features for exploring the data. It provides summary toxicological data used by EFSA for the setting of safe levels of food and feed chemicals in humans, animals and the environment since 2002. Several key computer models have been developed for predicting toxicity of substance found in food and feed using the database as well helping to develop tools to help provide methods for risk assessment as alternatives to traditional toxicity studies using animals.

More information can be found in EFSA's recent press release: <https://tinyurl.com/y9fexv9t>

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO PROTECT INFANTS FROM EXPOSURE TO PESTICIDES IN FOODS

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published recommendations to protect young infants from exposure to pesticides in foods. It recommends that the maximum levels of certain types of pesticide residues that can be present in foods intended for infants and young children be reviewed, to ensure ample protection for infants under 16 weeks even at the very highest possible exposure levels.

It also recommends the establishment of safe intake levels of pesticide residues for infants below the age of 16 weeks in accordance with the guidance of EFSA's Scientific Committee.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8hm9lux>



## DEFRA PUBLISH LATEST RESULTS OF PESTICIDES MONITORING PROGRAMME

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) recently published the quarterly results from the government's monitoring programme in 2017 to check home-produced and imported food for pesticide residues to include quarter 4 results. This quarter's programme surveyed 931 samples of 31 different foods. 39 of the samples contained residues above the legal MRL. These results are in the surveys of beans with pods, infant formula, okra, oranges, parsnips, peppers, potatoes, poultry, prepared poultry, prepared fresh fruit, rice and speciality fruit.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8zj6gv5>

## FSA PUBLISH LATEST CONTAMINANTS UPDATE

The Food Standards Agency have recently published a stakeholder update on rapidly developing policy on food contaminants. The update includes the current position on mycotoxin and plant toxins including:

- Ochratoxin A – the European Commission carried out a targeted consultation of European trade associations on possible maximum levels to be set for certain foods which currently do not have a maximum level;
- Erucic acid – following a targeted consultation specific maximum levels for erucic acid in oils and fats are being considered;
- Ergot Alkaloids – discussions have continued on setting maximum levels for ergot alkaloids in cereal-based products;
- Alternaria toxins – discussions on managing possible risk from the presence of Alternaria toxins are continuing and the setting of MLs or guidance levels are being considered for tomato purée, tomato juice, sunflower seeds, tree nuts, cereals grains and cereal derived products, cereal based foods for infants and young children, ready to eat soups (before reconstitution);
- Pyrrolizidine alkaloids in honey, tea, herbal infusions and food supplements – proposals include setting maximum levels or action levels for PAs in these products. Any data on occurrence of PAs in culinary herbs is requested to inform future discussions;
- Tropane alkaloids – regulatory measures are being considered for setting maximum levels for buckwheat, millet, sorghum, tea and herbal infusions, cereal bars and spices as well as some corn products;
- Acrylamide – the Commission has finalised guidance on the application of the legislation. A future monitoring recommendation on levels in foods was also endorsed at the Standing Committee. The Commission will also start discussion in the autumn to consider whether it is appropriate to establish maximum levels for acrylamide in foods for infants and young children.

Discussions also included mercury and methylmercury in fish, perchlorate, furan and methylfurans, lead and mineral oil hydrocarbons.

You can view the update in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9anmnc8>



## EFSA PUBLISH PESTICIDES REPORT FOR 2016

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have recently published a Scientific Report on the 2016 European Union report on pesticide residues in food. This report provides an insight into the official control activities carried out by EU Member States, Iceland and Norway in 2016. Overall, 96.2% of the 84,657 samples analysed fell within the legal limits (81,482 samples). In total, 50.7% of the tested samples were free of quantifiable residues (residue levels below the limit of quantification (LOQ)), while 45.5% of the samples analysed contained quantified residues not exceeding the MRLs.

The report can be viewed in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9fexv9t>

# ALLERGENS

## TRENDY GRAIN POSES POTENTIAL RISE IN SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTIONS



The following article has kindly been provided by David Reading OBE, Founder and Honorary Vice-President of the Anaphylaxis Campaign.

A young woman suffered a life-threatening allergic reaction after eating canapes during a celebration. The ingredient that had caused the problem remained a mystery – until a doctor decided to test her for buckwheat allergy. The test proved strongly positive.

Buckwheat is a major, potent allergen in Japan and Korea, where its use is widespread and as the UK diet becomes more varied, we are likely to see a rise in cases here. A surge of interest in Buckwheat has resulted from people following a gluten-free diet for medical and lifestyle purposes, as well as a boost in popularity from celebrity chefs promoting the grain as the latest food trend.

Members of a UK research team presented the case of a 63-year-old woman who suffered a severe allergic reaction (known as anaphylaxis) after eating health-food muesli. In addition, the research team described the case of a 57-year-old man who had a reaction after eating home-baked bread which was prepared using buckwheat flour. Tests confirmed that buckwheat was the cause of the reactions in both cases and the researchers concluded that buckwheat presents the UK with a potential allergy problem. The UK is not alone. There could be an emerging problem in Italy, where scientists have reported that pizzas containing buckwheat have been shown to trigger reactions.

Buckwheat is not a true cereal but is related to sorrels, docks, bindweed and rhubarb. A report from Sweden says: "Buckwheat does not contain gluten, and is a common supplement for patients with coeliac disease. We have noticed adverse reactions among members of a society for gluten-sensitive patients."

Interestingly, there is evidence that it's not only eating buckwheat that is a cause of the problem. Researchers in various countries have reported allergy problems for people who use pillows containing buckwheat husks. The manufacturers say that these pillows conform better to the neck and head compared with standard feather pillows, providing users with improved sleep and reductions in neck or back pain. But for some people, inhaling the buckwheat in the pillows seems to trigger allergic reactions and may even cause sensitisation, the process in which an individual becomes allergic to something in the first place.

If you are interested in reading more about the studies referenced above, you can find them here:

The UK paper quoting two case histories: <https://tinyurl.com/y7a84usk>

The Italian study: <https://tinyurl.com/yc47u7ye>

Buckwheat pillows: <https://tinyurl.com/ybnuy2cs>

The Swedish study: <https://tinyurl.com/y8j6bcyz>

*David Reading OBE is the Founder and Honorary Vice-President of the Anaphylaxis Campaign, the only UK wide charity solely focused on supporting people at risk of severe allergic reactions. They provide tailored advice to the food industry through corporate membership and expert-led conferences to support you to protect your customers. Their next Conference on 18th Sept 2018 in London will address the topic of emerging allergens and Dr Michael Radcliffe, Consultant in Allergy Medicine, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust will be speaking on 'Food allergy in the real world'. To find out how to book tickets turn to page 39.*



## £750K GLUTEN-FREE RESEARCH FUND AVAILABLE

Food manufacturers are being invited to apply for a share of a £750,000 research fund into better coeliac disease diagnostics and gluten-free food production.

Businesses and researchers only have until 3rd September to apply for the fund from Coeliac UK, the UK charity for people who need to live gluten-free, and Innovate UK, the Government's innovation agency.

Applications for a share of the funding are to be made through three priority themes – digital self-care tools, healthcare diagnostics and better gluten-free food production. Grants will range up to £250,000.

Sarah Sleet, chief executive of Coeliac UK said a number of interested parties had already been in contact, and more applications were encouraged. "This is a fantastic opportunity for businesses and researchers to develop competitive advantages, which will be of benefit to a badly underserved patient group. We are delighted to be working with Innovate UK to promote more innovation in these areas" she said.

Earlier this year, Coeliac UK launched a research fund and accompanying fundraising appeal, aiming to raise £5m to change the future for people with coeliac disease and gluten-related autoimmune conditions.



## ASDA TO INTRODUCE ONLINE NUTRITIONAL AND DIETARY SEARCH TOOL

Asda had announced that it is to introduce a personalised online nutritional search to its e-commerce offering to make it easier for consumers with allergies or special dietary requirements to buy groceries online.

In collaboration with app developer Foodmaestro and product information provider Nielsen Brandbank it will offer a "custom filter option" designed to help customers with "complex dietary and lifestyle needs" to find the food they want. This includes custom filters that allow people to filter products identified as matching their diet, lifestyle or nutritional choices.

Available across Asda Online Groceries, customers will be able to select from filters matching several food allergens and intolerances including nuts, gluten and lactose, as well as diets and lifestyles including vegetarian, vegan, halal and kosher. New options to sort results by sugar, salt, carbohydrates and fat have also been introduced.

Foodmaestro works closely with the Anaphylaxis Campaign, and are the group who developed the platform behind the Coeliac UK Food and Drink directory. Foodmaestro also developed the mobile Gluten Free Food Checker and the Low FODMAP Diet app, which is used across the UK in many NHS Trusts, in partnership with King's College London and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.

## HYGIENA EXPANDS INTO GLUTEN INTOLERANT FOOD SAFETY TESTING

Hygiena has acquired Biomedal's Food Safety division, which specialises in gluten intolerance. Biomedal Food Safety, in Seville, Spain, offers allergen tests including the GlutenTox product line, which contains the G12 antibody that detects the most immunogenic component responsible for gluten intolerance.

GlutenTox Pro holds the certification of the AOAC Research Institute for Performance Tested methods (certificate no. 061502).

The new division will be based in Seville and renamed Hygiena Diagnóstica España. It will provide more than 20 specific allergen tests available as a sensitive enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) format or dipstick to verify cleaning efforts and test finished products.

Steven Nason, CEO, Hygiena, said the company wanted to expand its food safety testing portfolio. "Our allergen business has been growing rapidly and customers around the world have been asking us for a wider array of allergen tests. We will continue investing in new product research and development and further expand our allergen product portfolio" he said.

# ANIMAL WELFARE

## NESTLE TO INCREASE POULTRY WELFARE STANDARDS

Nestlé has announced plans to globally raise welfare standards for poultry used in its products.

The producer, who uses around 10,000 tonnes of poultry meat in Europe per year, plans to have all of its suppliers under one standard and, by 2026, is aiming to have all Nestlé food products in Europe that use chicken as an ingredient moved to one higher standard for welfare as per the requirements set out in the European Broiler Ask. This announcement builds on a pledge on broiler welfare made by Nestlé in the US last year and the company's decision to source cage-free eggs only on a global basis by 2025.

The plans will be rolled out in a phased approach, with the first phase tackling issues such as access to natural light and perches, and lower stocking densities. Nestlé said that while this would drive additional costs for suppliers, it would create the opportunity for longer-term deals.

Its chilled meat brand Herta will make changes in its sourcing of chicken, starting 1 January 2019, as part of the longer-term transition to higher welfare standards. These products will be available under the existing Herta 'Preference' mark in France.

A Nestlé spokesperson said it would cut suppliers that did not meet the standards it set out, but support them as much as possible. "Our approach is generally to accompany suppliers along the process and to support them. Our focus is on doing this progressively and bringing our suppliers along with us."

Nestlé Zone Europe, Middle East and North Africa CEO Marco Settembri said: "Consumers want to know where their food comes from and how it is made. As part of our commitment to source ingredients responsibly, we will improve welfare standards for millions of chickens used in our food products in Europe, including our Herta, Buitoni, Wagner and Maggi ranges."

## NESTLE CO-CREATES GLOBAL COALITION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

Nestlé has stepped up its efforts to improve animal welfare standards across the food supply chain by co-creating the world's first global food industry-led group, the Global Coalition for Animal Welfare.

Nestlé will be among six other companies aiming to work towards improving animal standards across the global food supply chain to meet consumer demand. The collective group of major companies and animal welfare experts will address current systemic barriers to change, share best practices as well as accelerate the development of standards and progress on key welfare issues.

The Global Coalition for Animal Welfare group aims to publish an action agenda in the first half of 2019 focusing on cage free policies and improved broiler chicken welfare.

## NEWCASTLE DISEASE IN BELGIUM, NETHERLANDS AND LUXEMBOURG

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have urged poultry and game bird keepers across the United Kingdom to be vigilant of Newcastle Disease following reported cases in flocks across Europe. Recent cases in Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg have led to the APHA to advise that the risk of the disease in UK flocks has risen from 'low' to 'medium'. They also updated the guidance on how to spot and report the disease and added information about the current risk status with recent cases in Europe.

However, Public Health England advises the risk of Newcastle Disease affecting people is very low.

You can find more information here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9dlxjyk> along with the updated guidance here: <https://tinyurl.com/yblcd7gr>

## DEFRA ISSUE GUIDANCE ON RULES FOR CCTV IN SLAUGHTERHOUSES

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have recently updated the guidance for the operators of slaughterhouses in England on how to comply with the rules on the mandatory use of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV). The guidance tells slaughterhouse operators in England how to comply with the rules which came into force on 4 May 2018. The rules require them to install and operate a CCTV system, keep CCTV images for 90 days, and make the images available to inspectors. The update includes minor editorial changes to help answer questions received and to clarify issues raised. The updated guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybvqx3fl>

## CHINA REPORTS FIRST CASE OF ASF IN PIGS

As many as 8,000 pigs have reportedly been affected with African Swine Fever (ASF) in China's Liaoning region, according to the UK government. The government's disease report claimed this was the first ever case of ASF in China, and that it had swept across from Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Russia over the past few months.

Russian businesses Rusagro and RPBI have reportedly had to cull thousands of pigs on their production facilities in recent weeks, while ASF has also significantly affected Ukraine's pork industry.

The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has carried out risk assessments in China and concluded that the country's north-eastern region is the most likely area to be affected by the disease. Disease control measures have been put in place, such as culling affected and susceptible animals across the infected areas.

"The detection of ASF on a pig farm in China, just north of North Korea, on 1 August 2018, represents a new jump in geographic spread," the report said. "Its origin is unknown at present. It is also unknown whether this represents the index case. China carries out early warning surveillance in this region, but it is focused on large commercial pig farms, rather than the small semi-commercial and backyard sectors."

Following the news, countries such as Japan have tightened quarantine operations at airports and seaports, especially for travellers from Shenyang and Dalian, near where the infection was found. Japan will be using more sniffer dogs than usual and alerting travellers to China's ASF outbreak.

China is home to half of the global pig population and is the largest consumer of pig meat, with thousands of backyard and large-scale farms operating in the northern, central and southern regions.

## DEFRA PUBLISH BIOLOGICAL SECURITY STRATEGY POLICY PAPER

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have published a policy paper on a biological security strategy which outlines plans for protecting the UK and its interests from significant biological risks. Significant outbreaks of disease such as avian influenza, are amongst the highest impact risks faced by the UK and the paper draws together the work taking place across government departments to protect the UK and its interests from significant biological risks. It sets out the nature of the biological risks and the actions that can be taken in response to these challenges.

The policy paper can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yakry9v9>

## UPDATES ON BADGER CONTROL IN 2017 FOR BOVINE TB

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have updated information and data on the monitoring of badger culls to control Bovine Tuberculosis in parts of England in 2017. This update includes the addition of the summary of supplementary badger control 2017 and the Chief Veterinary Officer's advice on the outcome and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybq62njg>

## GOVERNMENT UPDATE GUIDANCE ON PREVENTING FISH OR SHELLFISH DISEASES

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and three other Government agencies recently published updated guidance on reducing the risk of disease in fish or shellfish, where to find out where notifiable diseases have been found and what to do if your fish or shellfish have a disease. The updated guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/q6rhb7b>

## UPDATED GUIDANCE ON WARBLE FLY

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have published updated guidance on how to spot warble fly, what to do if you suspect it and measures to prevent its spread. This update includes the addition of a link to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate product information database and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybn4r8q8>

## DEFRA UPDATE GUIDANCE FOR ON-FARM WELFARE

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have published updated guidance on the code of recommendations and guidance for laying hens, meat chickens, ducks, turkeys and other birds bred on farms. This update includes the addition of the explanatory memorandum for the draft code of practice for the welfare of laying hens and pullets. You can find the updated guidance here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8pqq4qq>

## UPDATES ON AVIAN INFLUENZA IN EUROPE AND THE UK

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have published preliminary and updated outbreak assessments for avian influenza (bird flu) in Europe and in the UK. Updates include:

- 9th July 2018 situation assessment for highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N6) in the UK and Europe and highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N8) in Europe and Western Russia
- 17th August 2018 preliminary outbreak assessment for H5N2 HPAI poultry in Western Russia.

Overall, it is considered that the risk of further outbreaks of H5N6 in wild birds in the UK is "LOW". The presence of H5N8 in southern Europe and western Russia poses a "VERY LOW" risk to wild birds in the UK because there are no waterfowl that migrate from these regions at this time of year but this will change in the next few weeks as the birds start to leave their breeding grounds. Other pathways for incursion through legal trade remain negligible.

There are still uncertainties around the source of infection of the H5N2 HPAI affected flock and whether there is wider virus circulation in the area or if wild birds will be capable of transmitting the virus. Therefore, the situation will be kept under review.

Both updates can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/zndjqem>

## NORWAY IMPROVES ANIMAL WELFARE DURING TRANSPORT

The EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) recently announced that following an inspection in April this year, it had concluded that the control system for animal welfare during transport in Norway had improved since the last mission carried out by ESA in 2012. ESA found that the competent authority in Norway (NFSA) has established rules on penalties applicable to infringements of the legislation, such as animals found unfit for transport, and is taking measures to ensure they are implemented. ESA noted that the NFSA efficiently communicates with stakeholders, such as farmers and transporters. Drivers and attendants of road vehicles are being trained with a focus on challenges and practical aspects to be granted a certificate of competence.

More information can be found in a recent ESA press release: <https://tinyurl.com/y84drxnw>

## BREXIT

### CIEH CRITICISES GOVERNMENT AMIDST BREXIT MEAT INSPECTOR SHORTAGE

The UK Government has been accused of ignoring warning signs of a shortage of meat inspectors by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH). CIEH head of policy Tony Lewis said the Government had been repeatedly warned of Brexit's negative impact on staffing in a number of sectors where there was a high reliance on EU nationals fulfilling key roles. This was especially true for the meat sector, where many OV's are from the EU.

"We have been concerned for some time that the Government is simply not getting a grip on the key issues around Brexit and the UK's food security and this is simply another example of their lack of understanding" Lewis said.

He added that the CIEH could point the FSA towards an untapped pool of health professionals who, having previously held responsibility in this area, could step in and help address the current shortage of meat inspectors.

The CIEH also warned that a no-deal Brexit ran the risk of threatening the security of food in the UK, if the Government didn't factor in the agri-food industry in Brexit negotiations. It also criticised contingency plans from the Government to suspend food regulations in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

Eville & Jones, the company that supplies Official Veterinarians (OVs) for the Food Standards Agency (FSA), said the shortage had reached "crisis point" and blamed Brexit uncertainty for losing about 20 vets a month.

However, an FSA spokesperson said: "There is no evidence to suggest the decision to leave the EU has caused any significant shortages in the veterinary workforce in the UK. We continue to maintain a sufficient veterinary workforce to effectively deliver official controls to protect public health and animal welfare. Our most recent data from Eville & Jones shows staff levels as satisfactory. Eville & Jones has also advised us of a significant number of new recruits being introduced between July and September. As we prepare for EU Exit, we will continue to monitor the situation carefully."



## AHDB LAUNCHES BREXIT REVIEW CALCULATOR FOR FARMERS

The Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) has rolled out an online calculator, designed for farmers to review how businesses are performing and how they may be impacted by Brexit.

The calculator analyses five key areas of a business, including profit and performance, individual farm performance and how they can prepare for challenges such as Brexit. It allows individuals to input their own data and see what effects the different Brexit scenarios might have on their business. It also features a resilience check list, which uses questions to identify areas of the business that may benefit from additional attention to ensure it is sustainable after Brexit.

AHDB chief strategy officer Tom Hind said it was important for businesses to make conscious, proactive and strategic decisions to be fit for the future.

“Tremendous uncertainty still surrounds the outcome of Brexit negotiations. Last year, we analysed how a range of Brexit scenarios could impact on different farming sectors. Feedback from farmers and growers has indicated that many are unsure how the different scenarios might affect them, so we have now produced a tool to help them better understand what Brexit could mean for their bottom line” he said.

The Brexit Impact Calculator can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/ya6e82jg>

## DISCUSSIONS ON HOW FOOD SAFETY RISKS DECISIONS WILL BE MADE POST BREXIT

The Lords Select Committee published on 4th July 2018 a notification that the EU Energy and Environment Sub-Committee held a roundtable discussion to explore how food safety risk management decisions will be taken when the UK leaves the EU. When the UK leaves the EU, it will no longer be the case that the EU will make decisions on food safety and risk. This session explored the following topics:

- The extent to which food safety risk management is currently undertaken at an EU level, and how that process works;
- Whether, when the UK leaves the EU, the UK could remain part of that process (if it wanted to);
- What gaps would be created by us leaving that process, that will need to be filled domestically

Further detail from the Roundtable session can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8ramcbp>

## GOV. PUBLISHES DRAFT STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS UNDER EU WITHDRAWAL ACT 2018

The UK Government published on 24th July 2018 the first draft Statutory Instruments (SI's) under the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018 which will ensure that the English legislation, which implements EU Directives and Regulations will continue to be operable in England after the UK leaves the EU.

The draft SI's will be scrutinised by a new committee in the House of Commons and the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee in the House of Lords who will consider the suitability of the legislation before they are formally 'laid' in Parliament. The first batch includes the Animal Health and Welfare (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 which comes into force on 14 January 2019. The instrument also ensures that the English legislation, which provides enforcement powers and, in some cases, stricter national rules, for the EU Regulations protecting the welfare of animals at the time of killing and the welfare of animals during transport will continue to be operable and enforceable in England after the UK leaves the EU. The draft SI's can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc5e3s76>

## UPDATED GUIDE ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND BREXIT

The Intellectual Property office (IPO) have published an updated guide offering information on the future of intellectual property (IP) laws following the decision that the UK will leave the European Union (EU).

The government published a White Paper on the Future Relationship Between the United Kingdom and the European Union on 12 July 2018, setting out an important vision for elements of the future relationship between the UK and EU on intellectual property. In particular, the White Paper proposes that the UK should continue to participate in the unitary patent system and the Unified Patent Court that underpins it.

The guide states that the existing UK system for protecting trade mark rights will remain largely unaffected by the UK's decision to leave the EU. While the UK remains a full member of the EU then EU Trade Marks (EUTM) continue to be valid in the UK. When the UK leaves the EU, in any scenario, an EUTM will continue to be valid in the remaining EU Member States and UK businesses will still be able to register an EU trade mark, which will cover all remaining EU Member States. The updated guide can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y76rjsqg>

## COMMISSION COMMUNICATION ON PREPARING FOR BREXIT

The European Commission published on 19th July 2018 a “Communication on preparing for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 30 March 2019 (COM(2018) 556 final)”.

This Communication describes the ongoing preparedness work, outlines the preparedness actions taken so far and points to the challenges ahead. However, while progress has been made on the withdrawal agreement important issues remain open, including the continued protection in the UK of geographical indication protected in the UK.

It is currently planned that the Withdrawal Agreement would be agreed by the EU and the UK in October 2018 accompanied by a political declaration on their future relationship. If the draft Withdrawal Agreement is agreed by the EU and the UK, it would provide for a transition period between the withdrawal date and 31 December 2020. During the transition period the Union rules as they continue to evolve, would in general apply to and in the UK, although the UK would no longer participate in the governance or decision making of the EU institutions, bodies or agencies. In the absence of an agreement on a withdrawal agreement or if it is not ratified in time, there will be no transition period and EU law will cease to apply to and in the UK as of 30 March 2019.

The Communication discusses contingency planning, who should prepare, and legislative changes and other instruments. It also provides sectorial illustrations of preparedness challenges and actions including for food safety. The communication can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7vsufx4>



## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

### MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS DROP IN 2018

The number of mergers and acquisitions in the food and drink industry has dropped during 2018 compared with last year according to industry advisory service Alantra, who reported that in the first six months of 2018, there were 27 merger and acquisition (M&A) deals in the food and drinks sector, down from 41 in the first half of 2017. Alantra said the fall followed a high in 2017, due to strong financial liquidity and a large number of food and beverage assets coming to market ahead of Brexit. However, it added: “There is still good momentum in the sector and there have been a number of significant deals completed in the first half of the year.”

Alantra directors Simon Peacock and Charles Lanceley identified key drivers that were positive for the sector, including: a strong appetite for high growth categories such as pet nutrition; continued investment in healthy products following consumer demand and a sugar tax increase; continued private equity interest in food and drink M&A; and family-owned businesses in the sector remaining attractive to buyers.

Analysts Grant Thornton also identified that activity wasn’t as strong at the start of the year. It reported that 50 deals took place in the sector in the second quarter of 2018, up from 39 in the first quarter. Similarly to Alantra, it highlighted private equity investment as a key driver.

Trefor Griffith, head of food and beverage at Grant Thornton UK LLP, said: “Whilst the uncertainty surrounding Brexit remains, companies have to continue to move forward, including pursuing M&A strategies. It is also promising that we have seen interest from private equity investors increase this quarter, demonstrating that the resilient, defensive and fragmented nature of the food and beverage sector remains highly attractive to these investors.”

Grant Thornton also recorded an increase in overseas investment in UK assets. These made up 44% of deals during the second quarter, up from 42% in the first quarter.

Griffith added: “Whilst food and beverage businesses need to continue considering international relationships in order to remain competitive, they must also start to re-evaluate their sustainability strategies and look at reducing their food waste. It has never been more pertinent to the industry, and businesses must view this as an opportunity to innovate, drive efficiencies and streamline supply chains. As well as making commercial sense, consumers across the world are increasingly demanding products that are environmentally friendly. It will be interesting to see how the industry responds to this in the coming months and years.”

## EC LAUNCHES ESMERA ROBOTICS PROJECT

The European Commission have launched the ESMERA (European SMEs Robotics Applications) project this year and is offering €200k to European Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) who have robot technology that can unlock real-life problems.

As part of the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, the EU-funded robotics project has opened its first call for proposals from now until October 31st. The testing and evaluation phase will last nine months and there will be a second open call with new challenges from Energy, Manufacturing, Construction and Agri-Food in November 2019.

The idea behind the ESMERA project is to set up a mechanism for facilitating the research and development of robotics technologies by European SMEs. It will focus on EU SMEs oriented towards the development of novel technologies and those in need of technical and business support to take their ideas to market. Key European companies have defined eight real-life industrial challenges that need innovative robotics in four areas; Energy, Manufacturing, Construction and Agri-food.

The Selection Process will be carried out in two competitive phases.

- Phase I: 16 projects, so called experiments, will be selected to compete in proving their concept.
- Phase II: 8 winners are selected. They gain industrial leadership and business support to advance their path towards industrializing and commercializing their solutions.

SMEs can propose an experiment on their own or form a small consortium of up to two partners, teaming up with R&D organizations or other companies supplementing their competences. For both phases combined, each team can receive up to €200k of funding.

To boost the technology development by European SMEs, four robotics Competence Centers (CCs) have opened their doors to ESMERA with robotic equipment, test environments and expertise, bridging the gap between research and industry:

- Laboratory for Manufacturing Systems and Automation (LMS) at the University of Patras (Project Coordinator)
- Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique et aux Énergies Alternatives (CEA)
- Technische Universität München (TUM)
- Fundación TEKNIKER (IK4-TEKNIKER)

Three facilitators in robotics; Blue Ocean Robotics; COMAU and R.U. Robots; have successfully undergone the process themselves and will provide mentoring and support in developing business cases and managing the complete chain from idea to market.

## TESCO ASKED TO ADDRESS CARREFOUR SUPPLIER CONCERNS

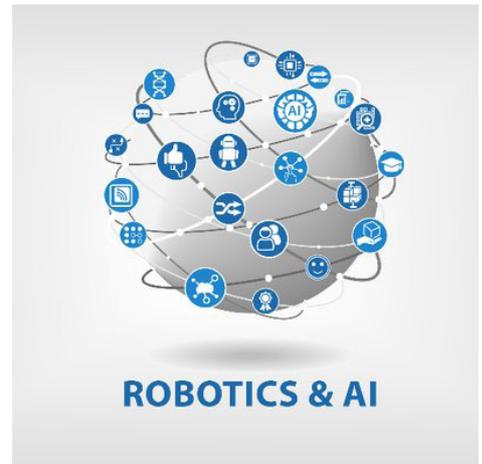
Tesco has been asked by a parliamentary committee to respond to concerns that its proposed strategic alliance with French retailer Carrefour would damage smaller UK-based food producers. However, Tesco's written response to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (EFRA), due on 11th July, has been held up, after it emerged EFRA's letter was addressed to the supermarket's old Cheshunt address.

In the letter, dated 4th July, EFRA chair Neil Parish MP invited Tesco chief executive Dave Lewis to explain why the supermarket had entered into a strategic alliance with Carrefour, and what the terms of the alliance would be.

When announced at the start of the month, Tesco and Carrefour said the alliance would cover the strategic relationship with global suppliers, the joint purchasing of own-brand products, and goods not for resale.

Concerned that Tesco's increased buying power could reduce the amount paid to suppliers and producers, EFRA has asked whether the supermarket anticipates reductions in the prices it pays to smaller-scale UK-based food producers over the short to medium term. In contrast, the committee would like to know to what degree the alliance would lead to reductions in the price paid by consumers on everyday products. In light of Tesco announcing the alliance would be governed by a three-year operational framework, EFRA is also seeking clarity into its long-term ambitions with Carrefour.

Separately, French competition watchdog Autorité de la Concurrence said it would open an inquiry to investigate the impact of the tie-up between Tesco and Carrefour.



## **GREENYARD LISTERIA RECALL ESTIMATED TO REACH €30M**

Greenyard Foods has estimated that the cost of its massive Listeria recall will total at least €30m after it was forced to pull frozen vegetables processed at its Hungarian production plant from shelves across Europe.

In an update to the market issued on 17th July, Greenyard's initial estimates forecast that around one-third of the cost will be registered as an impairment charge on the balance sheet, with the remaining two-thirds expected to have a cash impact. The company said 80% of the current expense will constitute non-recurring items. Greenyard added that it is not currently possible to provide an aggregate assessment of the potential financial impact of the outbreak.

The process of recalling relevant products from customers and consumers is "ongoing", with returned products being destroyed. In order to minimise disruption to its customers, Greenyard have said it is helping to source "alternative supplies".

## **QADDEX TO LAUNCH FREE SOFTWARE TOOL FOR DEVELOPING TRACEABILITY SYSTEMS**

Supply chain software costs are preventing smaller food firms from developing robust traceability systems, so a free software tool is being introduced by food industry software specialist Qadex to encourage an honest, level playing field.

A year in the making, the "Supply Chain Mapper" allows users to map their supply chain – from farm to fork – and share these maps with their customers, thereby assisting with full ingredient traceability and risk assessment.

The platform enables users to achieve full supply chain visibility for multi-component processed foods, collaborate and share data with multiple customers, and manage site and product profiles. Once updated, it can be shared with any number of customers and sharing settings can be changed at any time. The product can generate extensive reports and analytics showing the status of all outstanding requests and clearly shows with which customers users are sharing data.

Qadex managing director Stephen Whyte said the product avoided the complex charging structures of rival services and was simpler to grasp and navigate. Charges involved in the free flow of data across the supply chain were also being used as an excuse for withholding data, he claimed. "Charging has become an obstacle to supplying data. What we have done is remove that obstacle. There's now no reason why a supplier can't supply data unless they are unwilling. Those who are unwilling get a red flag and that becomes part of the risk assessment" he said.

Users simply register on the site, set up their solution, add their product details and request supply chain maps from suppliers at the click of a mouse. Supply chain maps enable 'chain of custody' mapping, in which users' full supply chains can be seen in chronological view or map view. A zoom function allows users to focus on supplier locations and countries of origin. Whether they are procuring ingredients directly or through agents and brokers, the system enables users to drill down to storage locations, right back to individual farmers and fishing vessels. The results of site audits conducted anywhere in the world could be viewed instantly on the system and enable suppliers to respond quickly to regulators and the media on an emerging issue. Following registration, users are also automatically enrolled in Qadex's Training Academy, which gives them free access to extensive training materials and frequently asked questions.

Most of the modules in the basic Supply Chain Mapper package are designed to be free to use by all tiers of the supply chain, from farmers to retailers for up to three years. After that time, full data sharing would become subject to reasonable charges. Optional extra services could also be added by users at a cost, said Whyte.

Planned additional functions include a facility to manage customer compliance data for the EU's Food Information for Consumers Regulation and a tool to update site certification and assurance status and share this with customers.

## **WALES TO EMBARK ON 5-YEAR MEAT PRODUCTION PROGRAMME**

Hybu Cig Cymru – Meat Promotion Wales (HCC) is to lead a five-year, £9.2m Red Meat Development Programme to help Welsh farming prepare for a post-Brexit world.

The programme is expected to engage with all aspects of the supply chain, boosting farm productivity while ensuring that future red meat production meets the demand of an ever-changing and increasingly discerning consumer, both at home and abroad. It will be delivered by HCC in collaboration with industry partners, and will consist of three strategic projects that will focus on animal health, genetics and meat quality.

Within the animal health planning section of the project, HCC plans to deliver, in conjunction with partner organisations and veterinary practitioners, a workstream that will demonstrate the long-term benefits of proactive flock and herd health planning. The genetics project will seek to highlight how using rams with known genetic performance can have a positive impact on the Welsh sheep flock.

The third component of the Programme will be a supply chain-led project that will look to assess and develop the meat quality of Welsh Lamb. The project will centre on evaluating practices that can be adopted pre- and post-farmgate to secure and enhance Welsh Lamb's position as a premium product.

# FOOD SAFETY AND ZOOSES

## PHE REPORT CLAIMS WGS IS REDUCING FOODBORNE ILLNESS

Public Health England (PHE) have published a report outlining the development of a whole genome sequencing (WGS) technique for the investigation of infectious diseases. The document outlines the extensive development process undertaken by PHE to establish the central WGS service and the transformation of a national bacteriology reference laboratory into a genomics-led service. This includes changes in workflows, working practices and revisions to analytical procedures as services have migrated to using WGS for pathogen typing, surveillance and outbreak investigation.

The reports concludes that 'the introduction of routine WGS has improved national and local surveillance, increased the number of outbreaks being detected and has led to outbreaks being detected earlier than previously possible'.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/yd9dgx2m>

## EU MULTICOUNTRY SALMONELLA OUTBREAK LINKED TO CUCUMBERS

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has linked a multi-country outbreak of *Salmonella enterica*, subspecies *S. Agona*, to ready-to-eat foods containing cucumbers but have been unable to nail down the precise source of contamination.

In total 147 cases have been reported across five European countries: the UK, Denmark, Finland, Germany and Ireland. The UK has been worst hit, with 129 outbreak cases. Finland has seen 15 sicknesses due to the *Salmonella* strain while Denmark, Germany and Ireland have all reported one incident. While cases were detected as far back as 2014, the number of people falling ill peaked in April 2017 and 2018.

The outbreak was first detected in the UK using whole genome sequencing (WGS). All *S. Agona* isolates from the five countries are genetically close with a maximum difference of two alleles from any other single isolate by core genome multilocus sequence typing scheme (cgMLST) using the ECDC Enterobase pipeline. The close genomic relationship and the distinct seasonal spring peaks suggest that cases are part of an intermittent common source outbreak, EFSA suggested.

EFSA said test results suggest the outbreak could be linked to cucumbers. Seventeen *S. Agona* food isolates from 2018, detected in the United Kingdom, were found to be closely genetically related to the human strains. The food isolates were from cucumbers sampled during processing before and after washing and ready to eat food products containing cucumbers.

However, EFSA added that there is insufficient epidemiological information available on the consumption of contaminated products by humans to support the microbiological evidence provided by the isolation of the outbreak strain in food. The epidemiological investigations in the other affected countries did not generate any strong hypothesis about the vehicle or source of infection.

The contaminated samples were found at five plants owned by two different companies. Although the cucumbers used in all final contaminated products originated from Spain for a limited period, from November 2017 to April 2018, EFSA said no connection between supply chains was identified. The primary producers of cucumbers were different and cucumbers were delivered to different processing companies through different distributors in the UK.

The laboratory results for *Salmonella* in all cucumber samples, taken either at primary production level in Spain or during distribution to/within UK, were negative.

The EFSA Technical Report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybnveu8m>



## FSA PUBLISH ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2017/2018

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) reports that it has published its Annual Report and Accounts for the last financial year, which covers the Agency's performance and activities in 2017/18 across England, Wales and Northern Ireland at a net cost of GBP93.2m. The report also refers to the role of the FSA when Britain leaves the EU and can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/yd6qlqwp>

## NORWAY HIGHLIGHT FOODS THAT INCREASE LISTERIOSIS RISK FOR THE VULNERABLE

Some foods, under certain conditions (packing methods, storage time and temperature), may increase the likelihood for vulnerable groups to develop listeriosis, according to a recent risk assessment. The Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food and Environment (VKM) evaluated products within four groups: fish and seafood, meat, dairy products and fresh produce (including fruits, vegetables, berries, potatoes, nuts, seeds and cereal products).



Mattilsynet (Norwegian Food Safety Authority) asked VKM to assess the Listeria risk to pregnant women and other vulnerable groups (such as children and the elderly) and update health advice from 2009 on *Listeria monocytogenes* to these consumers bearing in mind new knowledge on the growth and survival of Listeria in various products.

Those products which were found to increase the chances of Listeriosis infection were:

- Cold-smoked and hot-smoked fish, cured fish, cooked shrimps, processed fish packed after cooling.
- Heat-treated meat products the manufacturer intends for further heat-treatment prior to consumption but are often not heat treated by the consumer. Such items are meat patties, meatballs and sausages.
- Cured raw meat, smoked raw meat without curing or preservatives or heat treatment and chicken salad.
- Unpasteurized dairy products and pasteurised items like sliced or grated cheese, mozzarella used in salad, all spreadable and soft cheeses.
- Some cut, fresh vegetables and fruit, especially melons. This applies also to sprouts and freshly cut ready-to-eat products with several ingredients as well as inappropriately preserved home-canned and fermented food.

The report concluded that Listeria is found in all food groups, but the probability that pregnant women and other vulnerable groups get so much of the bacteria from food that they can become ill vary for different foods. The effect of measures that reduce probability also varies.

You can download the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/ychhaml8>

## PUBLIC ATTITUDES TRACKER SURVEY RESULTS PUBLISHED

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) published on 1st August 2018 the results of the Biannual Public Attitudes Tracker (May 2018) which monitors changes in consumer attitudes towards food-related issues and the FSA.

The top food safety issues of concern for respondents were:

- Food hygiene when eating out (33%)
- Chemicals from the environment, such as lead, in food (30%)
- Food additives (29%)
- Food poisoning (28%)

The top wider food issues of concern were:

- The amount of sugar in food (55%)
- Food waste (51%)
- Food prices (43%)
- Animal welfare (42%)

In addition, 82% of respondents reported that they were aware of hygiene standards in places they eat out at or buy food from but only 15% of respondents were aware of specific rules about allergens and 11% reported that they have a food intolerance and / or allergy themselves.

The majority reported that they trust that food is what it says it is and is accurately labelled (75%) and 73% trusted the authenticity of ingredients / origin / quality of food.

Findings also demonstrated that only 41% of respondents trusted that people who produce and sell food have their best interests at heart.

You can view the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9tv6oqe>

## **GUIDANCE DEVELOPED REGARDING LISTERIOSIS FROM FROZEN VEGETABLES**

Following the recall of frozen vegetables Public Health England (PHE) published on 19th July 2018 guidance relating to listeriosis. The document intended for use by healthcare professionals in answering queries from the public or patients and can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/yarretck>

Members of the BFFF Technical Expert Group have also been working hard to develop further guidance in this area and we are pleased to say that the BFFF Guide to the Management of Risk of Listeriosis from Frozen Vegetables will be published shortly. This latest guidance aims help food businesses understand the importance and control of Listeria by providing clear instructions for use, whether that be between business to business or from business to consumer, and will sit alongside the already established BFFF Guide to the Management of Listeria in Food Processing.



## **CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO HEALTH AND IDENTIFICATION MARKS**

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) launched on 27th July 2018 a consultation concerning changes to health and identification marks on certain food products that are required after the UK leaves the EU. When the UK leaves the EU, the letters 'EU' or 'EC' within the current marks will no longer be permitted. This change will impact on all approved establishments. To provide for this change, the FSA proposes to amend the current health and identification mark by removing the 'EU' or 'EC' prefix.

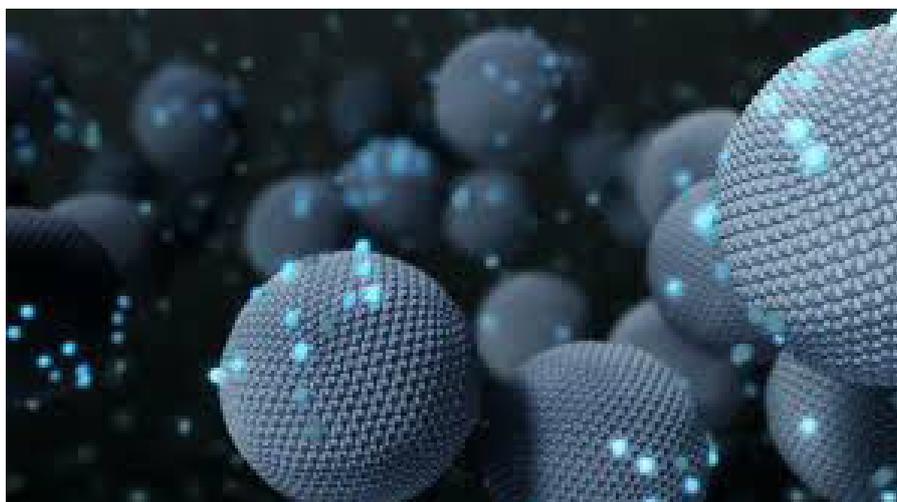
This update will ensure that UK products continue to display an appropriate label that clearly shows the product has been subject to the strict health and welfare checks that will continue after the UK leaves the EU. The consultation closed on 27th August 2018 but a stakeholder letter detailing the proposed changes can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/yckvcrt8>

## **EFSA PUBLISH GUIDANCE ON HOW TO ASSESS SAFETY OF NANOTECHNOLOGY**

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published guidance on how to assess the safety of nanoscience and nanotechnology in food and feed applications. The guidance is intended for risk assessors, risk managers and applicants on assessing the potential risks of using nanotechnology in foods (including novel foods), food contact materials, feeds and feed additives.

After a pilot phase, a second guidance will be developed in 2019. The outcome of the public consultation on the draft guidance on risk assessment of the application of nanoscience and nanotechnologies in the food and feed chain is also reported.

You can find more information and access the guidance here: <https://tinyurl.com/yb8egbad> along with the outcome of the consultation here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8gkbye5>



# FOOD SECURITY, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

## NEW £1.4M DATA-SHARING NETWORK TO BOOST TRACEABILITY

Food traceability is expected to be boosted by a new £1.4m data-sharing network that will look at how the Internet of Things (IoT) can benefit manufacturers. Made up of computer and data scientists, chemists, and economists, the Internet of Food Things (IoFT) Network Plus will investigate how artificial intelligence, data analytics and emerging technologies can digitalise the UK food supply chain.

The network, led by the University of Lincoln in partnership with the universities of Southampton, Surrey, East Anglia, and the Open University, has a heavy emphasis on the traceability of food and will examine how machine learning and artificial intelligence can extract value from the vast amounts of data available across the whole food supply chain, improving efficiency and reducing food waste. It will also look at the application of the IoT in connected homes of the future – for example, smart refrigerators that trigger a grocery order when food items run low, or cooking devices that could help people live healthier lives.

Businesses and researchers nationally will be able to facilitate workshops, run annual conferences to share best practice across the sector, and bid for funding for pilot studies, projects and reviews. The creators of the network hoped that, collectively, these initiatives, which will run until May 2021 would contribute to progressing the digitisation of UK food and drink manufacturing.

Alongside academic expertise, the project will also involve industry specialists from a range of areas, such as engineering company Siemens, IoT and machine management firm IMS Evolve, rural agricultural consultancy Collison & Associates, and research group High Value Manufacturing Catapult. In addition, regulators such as the Food Standards Agency and GS1 – the international agency that sets data standards for bar codes – will have input.

The project is funded by a £1.14m grant from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), which is part of UK Research and Innovation, a non-departmental public body funded by a grant-in-aid from the UK government.

## COLLABORATION NEEDED TO TACKLE FOOD FRAUD

The head of the Food Standards Agency's (FSA's) National Food Crime Unit has renewed calls for collaboration between the organisation and manufacturers, to help prevent food fraud.

In a video interview, filmed at a recent Food Safety Conference, head of food crime Andy Morling questioned why manufacturers were not reporting instances of fraud.

"Food safety officials said that food fraud is on the increase. Well if that's the case, why has it not been reported to my agency?" asked Morling.

"My worry is about the small percentage in industry who feel that we would not protect their anonymity or their business interests if they were to report to us" he said.

When a food business has become a victim of fraud, there is an ethical obligation for them to report the instance to the Food Crime Unit, argued Morling. However, he called for an end to a culture of "finger pointing" at businesses that had inadvertently passed on fraudulent products to their customers.

Morling also talked about the recent funding awarded to the FSA to help bolster its National Food Crime Unit, allowing the organisation to investigate the intelligence it gathers – instead of passing it on to other agencies. The funding would also increase the Food Crime Unit's number of staff from 22 to 80. You can watch the video interview here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc8bbcc9>

## HOLLAND & BARRATT TO TEST AUTHENTICITY OF MANUKA HONEY

Approximately 10,000 jars of Manuka honey are sold worldwide each year, despite only 1,700 tons being made. In a bid to ensure that the Manuka honey it sells is genuine, Holland & Barratt is planning to test samples of every batch it receives.

Manuka honey ('liquid gold'), which can cost up to £100 a jar, is made by bees that pollinate the Manuka bush in New Zealand and has antimicrobial properties. Authenticity will be assessed by measuring methylglyoxal (MGO), an indicator of antimicrobial strength.



## **MEPS ISSUE PRESS RELEASE ON DUAL STANDARDS OF FOOD PRODUCTS**

MEPs recently published a press release regarding consumer product quality and stating that products sold under the same brand and packaging should have the same composition.

Tests in some EU countries mainly in Central and Eastern Europe, found same-brand fish fingers with less fish, sliced bread with less whole wheat flour, and orange drinks with no orange content.

MEPs are calling for swift cross-border cooperation and data-sharing, including on potentially non-compliant products and possible unfair practices, among national consumer protection and food authorities, consumer associations and the EU Commission in order to tackle dual quality and ensure that the rules are enforced better and more consistently.

MEPs also invite manufacturers to consider including a logo on the packaging that would show that the content and quality of the same brand is the same across all EU countries.

The report by Olga Sehnalová will be put to a vote by the full Parliament at September's plenary session. The new legislative proposal amending the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive is expected to be put to a committee vote in November.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9wq77yy>

## **FSA COMPLETES BLOCKCHAIN SLAUGHTERHOUSE TRIAL**

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has successfully completed a pilot using blockchain technology in a cattle slaughterhouse, claiming that the data tool offers 'great opportunities' for further development.

A block chain is a type of database that takes a number of records and collates them in a block. Each block is then 'chained' to the next block, using an encrypted signature. This allows block chains to be used like a ledger, which can be shared and checked only by those with appropriate permissions, leading to the tool being hailed as tamper-proof.

In the pilot both the FSA and the slaughterhouse had permission to access data, giving the benefit of improved transparency across the food supply chain. The FSA reported that a further pilot which was planned for July, would give permission to farmers to access data about animals from their farm.

The next action would be for further work to replicate this in other plants, the agency said. One of the priorities would be to ensure that everyone across the chain got the full benefit of the new way data was managed and accessed as 'permissioned' data to the FSA, slaughterhouse and farmer.

If use of blockchain technology continued to show success in pilot projects, its permanent use would need to be industry-led because data currently was limited to the collection and communication of inspection results, said the FSA.

The FSA established a Food and Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT) collaborative group last year. It said it would continue to work with DLT experts from government, food sector, technology industry and academia on the use of blockchain, including regulatory compliance of food.

## **NEW LIVESTOCK TRACEABILITY SERVICE**

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) together with two other Government agencies recently published a press release concerning a new agreement that has been signed between AHDB and Defra setting out how AHDB could develop a new multi-species livestock traceability service for England.

The initiative was instigated by key industry stakeholders and is set to be rolled out from 2019. Activity will take place over the next few months to undertake due diligence and develop a target operating model for the new service. That detailed work will enable a final decision on whether to proceed with the collaboration to be taken in the autumn.

More detail can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9wq77yy>

## **CHINA ALLOWS RAINBOW TROUT TO BE LABELLED AS SALMON**

China has introduced new rules that allow rainbow trout to be labelled and sold domestically as salmon, following a report published earlier this year revealing that for years rainbow trout has been labelled as the similar looking salmon. The China Aquatic Products Processing and Marketing Alliance has now announced in a ruling that 'to standardise the industry, salmon was now considered to be the 'umbrella name of the salmonidae fish'.

However, this announcement has resulted in a furious backlash from Chinese consumers, particularly over concerns that trout is more susceptible to parasites.

# GLOBAL STANDARDS

## BSI REVISES GLOBAL SAFETY STANDARD

Business standards firm BSI has revised the international standard for food safety management. The updated standard, 'ISO 22000:2018 Food safety management systems – requirements for any organisation in the food chain', is designed to provide a best-practice framework for any organisation, from a small, family-owned farm to a multinational foodservice outlet, to implement a food safety management system.

The standard, first published in 2005, was created to help reduce the one in 10 people who fall ill or the 420,000 individuals who die every year due to contaminated food, according to World Health Organization estimates. BSI believes that long and complex supply chains in today's food production have led to food incidents and scares, impacting consumers and causing economic loss to businesses.

The ISO 22000 offers guidance on how to plan, implement, operate, maintain and update a food safety management system. It advises how to demonstrate compliance with statutory and regulatory food safety requirements; evaluate and assess mutually agreed customer food safety requirements and demonstrate conformity; and communicate food safety issues to interested parties effectively.

It also offers guidance on ensuring an organisation conforms to its stated food safety policy; seeking certification or registration of food safety management systems by an external organisation or making a self-assessment or self-declaration of conformity to the standard.

## CODEX IDEAL FORUM TO ADDRESS FOOD FRAUD AND AUTHENTICITY

Codex have recently advised that international governmental and nongovernmental organizations have agreed that Codex is the ideal forum to address issues related to food fraud and authenticity on the margins of the 41st Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Recent food scandals make it imperative to investigate solutions to this problem. While a number of initiatives exist to tackle food fraud, which has mainly an economic component but can also pose health risks, Codex is well placed to coordinate efforts towards defining and harmonising standards related to these issues.

You can read more in a recent press release: <https://tinyurl.com/y97hd9b9>

## GFSI GRANT TECHNICAL EQUIVALENCY TO GAP & PROGRAMME FOR SPECIALITY CROPS

Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) has granted 'technical equivalency' to the USDA's Harmonized Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Plus+ programme for 'specialty crops', including fruits and vegetables. The move means that producers who use this system will find it easier to export produce to countries that often require GFSI certification, such as the EU and Japan.

## BRC GS GLOBAL STANDARD FOR FOOD SAFETY VERSION 8 PUBLISHED

The long awaited BRC Global Standard for Food Safety version 8 has now been published and is available to download for free from the BRC bookshop here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycuyohk3>

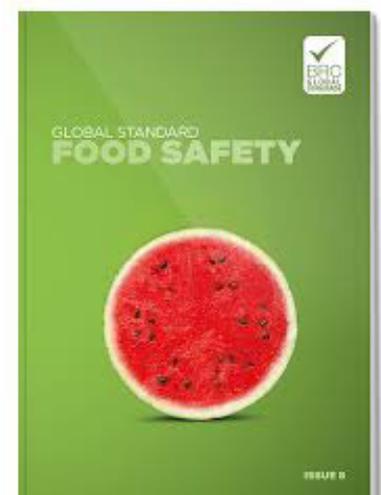
Note, the Interpretation Guidelines are also available to download although there is a £125 charge.

For those wanting to gain an overview of the BRC and the BRC Food Safety Standard and learn more about the main components, changes and updates in BRCv8, SAI Global have produced a webinar.

The webinar is aimed at those in the food and food ingredient manufacturing, processing and packing industries responsible for product safety, integrity, legality, quality and operations.

BFFF members can access the webinar for free here: <https://tinyurl.com/y93t8n2y>

Campden BRI are also holding a number of briefing sessions throughout September, October and November which may be of interest: <https://tinyurl.com/y9s5ntb2>



# HEALTH AND NUTRITION

## NO CONSENSUS ON WHICH NUTRITIONAL LABELLING SCHEME IS BEST

A “global proliferation” of nutrition labelling is underway but, according to the European Food Information Council (EUFIC), no consensus exists on which types of labels are most effective. According to the EUFIC’s 2018 Global Update on Nutritional Labelling, public and private labelling initiatives are gaining steam.

Countries can broadly be divided into two main groups: those that have a mandatory requirement for nutritional labelling, like European Union Member States and the US, and those that have voluntary guidelines, including Switzerland and South Africa.

The EUFIC noted a regional split between the type of labels different countries opt for. In Asia-Pacific, North and Eastern Europe positive logos are proving increasingly popular. Some South American countries are more likely to opt for health warnings while traffic light labels are gaining ground in Western Europe.

However, while distinct approaches are being taken to nutritional labelling, there is currently little agreement on which labels are most effective at promoting behavioural changes. The EUFIC note that the wide variety of labels along with vast differences in study design and sample size for all the different studies make it difficult to definitively conclude which type of messaging may influence consumer choices to a greater extent. Study results will vary depending on region, culture or even the amount of exposure of consumers to different types of labels. It may also depend on the type of consumer how well these labels work or their socio-demographic differences. Lastly, it’s important to take into account what exactly a study has looked at (e.g. identifying a healthier product, purchase intention, actual choice or changes in consumers behaviour).

EUFIC stressed policy decisions should be based on science. The key question is how appropriate and meaningful nutrition information can be provided on the food label so that motivated consumers can act on their desire to improve their diets, the organisation suggested.

“There is great interest among stakeholders and the research community in the potential of nutrition labelling to guide consumers in their product choices so as to enable them to adopt more balanced eating habits. In this respect, it is clear that what matters is the overall diet, not the consumption of an individual product,” the group noted.

In order for labelling schemes to legitimately communicate with consumers, government backing is needed, EUFIC continued. “The EU’s adoption of a harmonised format for FOP labels and national-level schemes in the UK and France have made it clear that government backing is needed to support a scheme’s credibility, while at the same time raising the question of how such schemes might impact international trade.”

## UK CONSUMERS CONFUSED BY CONFLICTING NUTRITION ADVICE

Conflicting media messages and guidance over food choices is making it difficult for UK consumers to find reliable information on healthy eating, a survey has found.

Four-in-10 (43%) UK adults had difficulty finding reliable information on healthy diets, with changing information, messages and advice from media (76%) and experts (61%) the biggest causes of confusion, according to the research by the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF).

The survey, conducted as part of BNF’s Healthy Eating Week, questioned almost 500 adults across the UK. It found that social media platforms were highly influential when it came to nutritional information, with 37% of adults using it as their primary source of information. Less than a third (30%) of respondents said they used the NHS website, a quarter visited other health websites, and 14% said they gathered nutritional information from a doctor, hospital or health clinic.

“The UK is in the middle of an obesity crisis, and a lack of consumer knowledge and reliable information on healthy eating is a huge cause for concern,” said Roy Ballam, BNF’s managing director and head of education.

“In the digital age, with growing concerns about the trustworthiness of information in the media, many are confused about which online sources are reliable – unsurprising when there is so much conflicting advice available. The public need to receive more consistent messaging about diet and nutrition if we are to stand a fighting chance of changing these worrying health statistics” he said.

Despite the confusion, 68% of survey respondents said they were motivated to eat healthily to control their weight and, when shopping for food, 61% of adults said they always or often checked nutrition labels on food. However, 48% of adults said busy lives and stress played a large role in stopping them from eating healthily, and 40% said that being too tired after work was the main reason for not being active. Meanwhile, 24% of respondents said there were limited healthy food and drink options available at work or close by, while 28% said there were too many unhealthy snacks available in their work setting.

## 326 BUSINESSES HIT BY UK SOFT DRINKS INDUSTRY LEVY

In the UK, 326 businesses have registered for the Soft Drinks Industry Levy, according to data from HMRC and obtained by chartered accountants UHY Hacker Young.

Introduced in April, the Soft Drinks Industry Levy (SDIL) taxes manufacturers 18p per litre for drinks with 5g sugar per 100ml, and 24p per litre for drinks with more than 8g sugar. Producers, importers and packagers of drinks that are subject to the levy are required to register for the SDIL. Small producers (those who produce less than one million litres worldwide of liable drinks a year) are exempt from the levy.



The data obtained by UHY Hacker Young from HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not quantify the total sums producers are paying under the levy or how much the levy is raising; but does indicate the number of companies that are paying a tax on sugar-sweetened drinks.

In March, the UK government said income from the levy was likely to be half of what was originally predicted, at £240m instead of £520m, saying this showed the success the levy was having in encouraging producers to reformulate or shift their emphasis to lower sugar products. The government has pledged, however, that the full £520m for school sports will still be funded from other sources.

UHY Hacker Young says that while the reaction of soft drinks manufacturers to the SDIL has been a positive one, targeted taxes of this type run the risk of gradually adding to red tape and complexity in the tax system.

## UNILEVER FIRST IN EU TO RECEIVE POSITIVE EFSA OPINION ON HEALTH CLAIM FOR TEA

Unilever has received a positive opinion from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on the company's evidence that black tea can improve attention. This makes Unilever the first company in the EU to receive a positive scientific opinion on a health claim for tea.

"Some initial evidence suggested that black tea could improve attention, which is the ability to concentrate on, filter and utilize incoming sensory information. So, we set out to generate the scientific evidence to confirm this," Dr. Amelia Jarman, R&D Director and lead scientist at Unilever said.

Unilever, in collaboration with external academic experts, ran three pivotal human intervention studies in which volunteers drank two to three servings of either black tea or colored and tea-flavored water on separate occasions. The volunteers undertook a series of tasks to measure attention before and after each serving, and were tested on both the accuracy and speed of their responses.

Unilever reports that the results consistently showed that after drinking black tea, the attention scores were higher. One of the studies, which is proprietary, demonstrated that the stronger the tea, the higher the attention scores.

EFSA published its public opinion that "owing to its caffeine content, black tea improves attention," on 24 May, which was followed by a 30-day period of consultation. The European Commission will now review the EFSA opinion. If the application is granted, Unilever will have exclusive rights to use this health claim for a period of five years.

## NEW STUDY ELIMINATES CONCERNS ABOUT FOLIC ACID FORTIFICATION

UK Government ministers are considering adding folic acid to white flour and bread to prevent babies from developing neural tube defects, such as spina bifida, in the womb. It has been proposed that fortification with folic acid could save 165-500 babies a year. The move has not been backed before due to concerns that 'adding the vitamin to flour and bread would effectively lead to an overdose with unspecified health consequences'.

However, new research at Queen Mary University of London and the School of Advanced Study, University of London, has concluded that this assumption was based on a 'flawed study' and that there should not be any safety concerns. The chairman of the all-party group on folic acid fortification, Owen Smith, has said that 'The scientific evidence for fortification is absolutely clear. The Government must now get on with legislating for the mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid'.

## GENERAL HYGIENE - OUTBREAKS OF FOODBORNE ILLNESS ENGLAND AND WALES

Public Health England (PHE) have recently updated the latest figures for gastrointestinal infections and foodborne outbreaks in humans in England and Wales. To view the figures, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybo7eovs>

## CHILD OBESITY IN 10 TO 11-YEAR OLDS AT ALL TIME HIGH

Public Health England recently published a news story on the analysis of the National Child Measurement Programme which shows that the proportion of children aged 10 to 11 years old with severe obesity has reached an all-time high.

Analysis of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) between 2006 to 2007 and 2016 to 2017 details trends in severe obesity for the first time. The programme captures the height and weight of over one million children in Reception (aged 4 to 5 years) and Year 6 (aged 10 to 11 years) in school each year.

The findings also show stark health inequalities continue to widen. The prevalence of excess weight, obesity, overweight and severe obesity are higher in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived – this is happening at a faster rate in Year 6 than Reception. Other observations include: - an upward trend of excess weight, obesity and severe obesity in Year 6 children; - a downward trend of excess weight, overweight, obesity and severe obesity in Reception age boys; - a downward trend of underweight in Reception age boys and girls, and Year 6 girls.

You can find more detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybqgjtoe>

## IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

### SUSPENSION OF IMPORTS OF FISHERY PRODUCTS FROM BRAZIL

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/981 of 11 July 2018 amending the list of Brazilian establishments from which imports into the Union of fishery products intended for human consumption are permitted was published in the Official Journal of the EU, L176/11, 12/07/2018.

In September 2017, a Commission inspection revealed that primary production establishments supplying Brazilian establishments from which imports of fishery products are permitted are neither identified, nor subject to official controls. Consequently, that audit concluded that the competent authority in Brazil is neither in the position to provide the guarantees set out in Article 12(2)(a) and (b) of Regulation (EC) No 854/2004, nor to provide all the guarantees referred to in the health certificate for fishery products laid down in Appendix IV to Annex VI to Commission Regulation (EC) No 2074/2005.

In addition, the inspection revealed serious deficiencies with regard to infrastructure and hygiene requirements in a number of inspected Brazilian establishments from which imports of fishery products are permitted and showed a systemic lack of effective controls by the Brazilian competent authorities with regard to fishery products.

Therefore, the list of establishments referred to in Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 854/2004 is amended in order to remove all entries of Brazilian establishments from which imports into the Union of fishery products for human consumption are permitted.

The Regulation entered into force on 13th July 2018 and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybhjj6pz>

### DEFRA UPDATE GUIDANCE ON IMPORT OF LIVE ANIMALS FROM THIRD COUNTRIES

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have published updated guidance on importing live animals or animal products from non-EU countries which covers obtaining the right licence, locations where you can import from, and the checks consignments must pass at a Border Inspection Post (BIP). This amendment also includes the list of updated BIP fees.

You can find the updated guidance here: <https://tinyurl.com/pa2upmn>

Defra and the APHA also published an update to the list of general licences and authorisations which allow certain animals and products of animal origin to be imported into Great Britain.

This amendment includes the updated general licences for research and diagnostic samples and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yacavc5v>

### UPDATE ON CERTIFICATION REQUIRED FOR EXPORTING FOOD FROM THE UK

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), together with three other Government agencies have published updated guidance on certificates required for exporting food, drink and agricultural products from the UK.

This amendment includes the update to the Export Health Certificate (EHC) list and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/z26pd6l>

## NON-EU COUNTRIES FACE NEW ANTIBIOTIC RULES ON MEAT IMPORTS

Countries wanting to import meat into Europe will now have to abide by EU laws on antibiotics as part of a new regulation on veterinary medicine. European Parliament has decided that products of animal origin imported by third countries will now have to meet the EU's requirements of antibiotics use. However, there are concerns for several non-EU countries that these new measures could have an adverse impact by disrupting global trade, according to reports.

A vital part of the new rules – which are to be laid out in full in the EU's tertiary legislation – is the ongoing fight against antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and how the new rules impose measures to help limit the use of antibiotics in the animal sector. According to the alliance for better food and farming Sustain, the overuse of antibiotics in animals is contributing to the danger of antibiotic resistance in humans.

Alison Craig, from the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics, says that we could be entering a “post-antibiotic age” where in the future people could get a common infection and die from it in a hospital because the antibiotics will not work anymore.

“Intensive livestock production is dependent on the routine preventative use of antibiotics and it couldn't operate without that. Because animals or birds are being kept in very high numbers in confined areas on their own faeces, infection is inevitable, that's why they use antibiotics on a routine preventative basis” she said. But the routine preventative use of antibiotics can then lead to a build-up of antimicrobial resistance in these animals which passes to us through the food chain.”

The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that farmers must stop using powerful antibiotics on animals because of the serious risk to human health. Historically antibiotics have been routinely fed to farmed animals as a preventative measure to stop them catching diseases. However, with the rise of antibiotic resistance and the lack of new antibiotics being discovered there is pressure on the farming industry to stop this practice.

## EU BEEF, SHEEP AND GOAT MEAT EXPORTS SEE RAPID FALL

The outlook for European Union (EU) beef, sheep and goat meat exports looks bleak, with sales tumbling, according to an EU agricultural markets 2018 and 2019 forecast, released by the European Commission.

Beef exports started falling in December 2017, and this has continued into this year, with exports almost 15% lower in the first four months of 2018 year-on-year. Hong Kong (-7%) and Bosnia & Herzegovina (-17%) were key problem markets, especially as they were the second and third most important export destinations for EU beef. In January-April 2018, EU beef exports to other key destinations, such as Switzerland, Norway, the Philippines and Algeria, also fell, although sales to Turkey (now the top importer) and Israel rose. One reason for the fall is that Brazil increased its beef exports by 25% in these months year-on-year, mainly to Hong Kong, China, Egypt, the EU and Chile. The US, Argentina, New Zealand and Paraguay also expanded their exports, including to traditional EU export partners.

“The outlook for EU exports in 2018 is therefore bleak (-6%), as there is little potential for expansion, and will depend mainly on two markets: Turkey and Israel,” said the Commission note.

Meanwhile, EU beef imports are projected to be 8% higher across 2018, with Brazil increasing deliveries after recovering from the 2017 meat health scandal and Argentina exports growing 40% year-on-year for January-March 2017.

There was a similar grim forecast for sheep and goat meat exports – expected to fall 7% across 2018. Exports to key Middle East partners – Oman, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – dropped significantly and Algeria has stopped importing from the EU. Also, EU exports of live sheep were down 10% for January-April and were expected to fall 20% across 2018, with sales to the key Libyan market more than halving, as this unstable strife-wracked country suffers liquidity problems. Sheepmeat imports to the EU are projected to be stable, however. And net sheep and goat meat production in the EU increased 7% year-on-year in the first quarter, but that followed a 7% fall last year.

There is better news for EU pigmeat exports, which the Commission has projected will rise 2.5% in 2018, with increasing sales to South Korea, the US, Japan and the Philippines making up for falls in sales to China.

The Commission is also projecting a 2.5% increase for EU poultry exports across 2018, with an 8% year-on-year increase during January-April, mostly due to the Philippines, where a bird flu ban had reduced exports the previous year.

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## REGULATORY

### FARMING REGULATION CHANGES PROPOSED

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), together with four other Government agencies published a press release regarding an interim report which proposes a simplification of the way farming is regulated. The interim report sets out the problems with the current system of regulation, largely borne out of the requirements of membership of the CAP which farmers and regulators alike find unduly precise and inflexible.

With Brexit, there is an opportunity to rebuild trust between the regulating authority and the farmer, which would maintain high standards on farms and support farmers to comply. The interim report also recommends better use of technology such as satellite imagery to check compliance. This could maximise the information gathered ahead of any inspection to support comprehensive visits for farmers and regulators alike. The review is due to complete its work by the end of 2018 and will publish a final report with recommendations.

The news article and interim report can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7pjcks4>

### FSA PUBLISH TENTH REGULATING OUR FUTURE NEWSLETTER

The Food Standards Agency have published the 10th Regulating Our Future newsletter. This issue expands on the FSAs' digitally-enabled approach to registration and gives an update on developing thoughts around Regulated Private Assurance. It also expands on what the FSA will be delivering over the months ahead, with further updates issued.

You can read the newsletter in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycbvpopb>



### FOOD AND FEED LAW LEGISLATION REVIEW (JANUARY - MARCH 2018) PUBLISHED

The Government Chemist recently published a report providing information and updates on UK food and feed law and related scientific and regulatory issues. This is the fourth in a series of quarterly reports produced under the Government Chemist Programme 2017-2020 and provides a compendium of UK food and feed law of interest to the Government Chemist, Public Analysts and those working primarily in food and feed standards.

Key issues covered include the UK exiting the EU, reports from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) and World Health Organisations (WHO). The report also provides information about the newly formed Food and Drink Sector Council.

You can view the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybwpfmgz>

### BEIS PUBLISH INSTRUMENT TO ADDRESS DEFICIENT ACTS DUE TO BREXIT

BEIS have recently published The Groceries Code Adjudicator Act 2013, Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015, and Enterprise Act 2016 (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018. This instrument amends UK primary legislation to address deficiencies in the three Acts which arise from the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union.

More information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8g4p949>



## RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

### RESEARCH SHOWS FISH ARE LOSING THEIR SENSE OF SMELL

Researchers at University of Exeter say that fish are losing their sense of smell due to the rise of carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere that is making the oceans more acidic, as the gas is absorbed by seawater to form carbonic acid. They warn that without their sense of smell the fish will find it more difficult to survive, as their ability to find food and safe parts of the ocean to reproduce, recognise each other and to be aware of danger will be affected.

The lead author of the study, which was carried out in sea bass, Dr Cosima Porteus, said 'By the end of the century, potentially even sooner, it could become more difficult to buy fish. We might have to rely more on aquaculture, where fish aren't in the sea and don't have to worry about predators. But there are limits to how much we can increase that, especially in a growing population'.

### STUDY REVEALS PROS AND CONS OF INSECT-ENRICHED BREAD

A new study from Italy finds edible insect powder can be successfully incorporated into leavened baked goods to improve their nutritional trait, but there is a downside.

Researchers from Marche Polytechnic University in Ancona have found that adding 10% cricket powder to bread substantially enhances its nutritional traits especially the protein content and essential amino acids and does not have too much of a negative effect on the dough's technological and organoleptic parameters. However, the scientists noted the presence of bacterial spores that could potentially spoil the bread or even make people sick.

The scientists did overcome this hurdle, though, through the use of preventive treatments like blanching or microwave drying the insect powder before adding it to the bread.

Insects are consumed by 2.5 billion people worldwide, and their high nutritional value has been attracting the attention of researchers and the food industry. Eating insects is also good for the environment as they take much less space and other resources than other livestock, while introducing them to the daily diet would relieve the pressure on food resources expected to reach critical mass by 2050. You can read more about the research here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9jtp2nw>

### SCIENTISTS DEVELOP 'NATURE'S ANTIFREEZE' TO IMPROVE SHELF LIFE OF FOODS

Scientists from the Department of Chemistry and Warwick Medical School at the University of Warwick are investigating how polar fish survive in sub-zero water temperatures to see if they can develop 'natural antifreeze' proteins to improve the shelf life of foods.

These fish have evolved a special set of proteins that prevent their internal water from forming ice crystals and allow them to survive in these very harsh conditions. The scientists have produced bioinspired versions of the polar fish proteins, and have shown that not only can they slow down ice crystallisation but they are also less toxic than the antifreeze agent currently used in biological studies. They claim that these mimics may be more viable to produce on a large scale, compared to the natural fish proteins. The scientists say that 'The revolutionary method has potential applications within the food industry, organ transportation and medicine - as well as in laboratory research'.

### EFSA GUIDANCE ON NANOTECHNOLOGIES IN FOOD AND FEED

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have published guidance on how to assess the safety of nanoscience and nanotechnology applications. The guidance gives practical suggestions on the types of testing that are needed and the methods that can be applied and focuses on the safety assessment for human and animal health, which underwent a three-month public consultation and considers all comments received. It covers areas such as novel foods, food contact materials, food and feed additives, and pesticides and is intended for all interested parties – in particular risk assessors, risk managers and applicants. The guidance will now enter a pilot phase, with finalisation envisaged by the end 2019. You can find the guidance here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybdqj3ev>

### GERMAN START-UP DEVELOPS 'REAL SUGAR WITHOUT CALORIES'

German start-up Savanna Ingredients GmbH is producing initial quantities of allulose monosaccharide, also known as allulose, which is a rare but up and coming natural sugar that it positions as 'real sugar without calories.' Allulose exists in very small quantities in nature and can be found in foods such as figs, raisins, molasses and maple syrup. You can read more about Allulose here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7buoej2>

# SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT & CSR

## SEAFOOD CONSUMERS WANT ETHICAL LABELS BUT PRICE MATTERS MORE

A significant new study from the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) reveals mixed consumer attitudes to seafood sustainability, demonstrating demand for independent ethical labels but also a trend for price to motivate purchase. For the second time, the MSC commissioned a comprehensive survey to gauge the attitudes of global seafood consumers. Research agency GlobeScan surveyed more than 25,000 consumers in 22 countries – and the findings offer a complex picture of consumer attitudes to seafood.

Seafood consumers globally agree: there is a growing need to protect seafood and the oceans for future generations. A large majority, 83%, recognised this. There is also an appetite from consumers to hear more about the sustainability of the seafood they buy, with 70% of respondents suggesting this would be welcome.

Globally, consumers are united in thinking that the biggest threat to the oceans is pollution, followed by overfishing. A large proportion, 72% of seafood consumers, agree that in order to save the oceans we need to consume seafood from sustainable sources. An increasing number of people believe we should switch to another type of fish if it is more sustainable, with this figure rising to 70% in 2018 versus 68% in 2016.

While the survey showed there is an appetite for sustainably sourced fish, the MSC said that it also demonstrated another trend: in some markets “price trumps sustainability” when it comes to purchase intent. In particular, men were more likely to be motivated by price than women.

The MSC described this as a “notable change” from the first study in 2016. “Consumers globally have started putting price before sustainability as a motivator of their seafood purchase decisions,” the researchers said. However, the certification body also noted consumers in some markets continue to prioritise sustainability. These include Germany, Austria, China, Spain, UK, Switzerland, Italy and Sweden.

You can read the study in more detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9nbhva6>

## NEW REPORT STATES PALM OIL ALTERNATIVES COULD BE ENVIRONMENTALLY WORSE

A new report examining palm oil says its production is a disaster for tropical rainforests and trashing the habitats of orangutans and tigers – but alternatives like soya, corn and rapeseed could be even worse because these crops are much more land-hungry. The report ‘Oil palm and biodiversity’ is an in-depth analysis by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Oil Palm Task Force which delves into the many challenges of palm oil production in countries like Malaysia and Indonesia.

“When you consider the disastrous impacts of palm oil on biodiversity from a global perspective, there are no simple solutions,” said IUCN Director General Inger Andersen. “Half of the world’s population uses palm oil in food, and if we ban or boycott it, other, more land-hungry oils will likely take its place. Palm oil is here to stay, and we urgently need concerted action to make palm oil production more sustainable, ensuring that all parties – governments, producers and the supply chain – honour their sustainability commitments.”

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybyc5ya3>

## JRC STUDY HIGHLIGHTS AMOUNT OF WASTED FRESH FRUIT AND VEG

A recently published Joint Research Centre (JRC) article has revealed that EU households generate roughly 35.3 kg of fresh fruit and vegetable waste per person per year, 14.2 kg of which, is avoidable. The UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates that about one-third of the food produced globally for human consumption is lost or wasted. Around 88 million tons of food is wasted annually in the EU, with associated costs estimated at €143 billion. More detail can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8b6mox4>

## GLOBAL INVESTORS CALL FOR STRONGER STANDARDS FROM RSPO

More than 90 institutional investors representing more than 6.7 trillion US dollars in assets have called on the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) to strengthen its standards for certifying the sustainable production of palm oil.

In a letter sent to the RSPO, investors voiced their concerns over the group’s relevance and effectiveness and the current disconnect between corporate policy commitments and the RSPO’s Principles and Criteria Guidance. The investors outline specific recommendations to help bridge the gap. You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybbe5ekw>

## COLLABORATION SHOWS BLACK PLASTIC CIRCULAR ECONOMY IS SUSTAINABLE

Innovative UK packaging supplier Faerch Plast has been working collaboratively with Marks & Spencer, Tesco and Sainsbury's and leading UK waste re-processor Viridor to convert recycled black plastic into new food grade packaging. The result is a circular economy solution to a previously challenging material, which will initially see 120 tons of black plastic (eight million items) recycled each month starting in July, the company claims.

The project has been welcomed by Environment Secretary Michael Gove: "This global leading scheme has the potential to mean the UK exports less of its waste, could divert huge amounts of plastic away from landfill and prevent virgin plastic entering the market in the first place."

You can read more about the work here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9xz6wy9>

## STRATEGY FOR LONG-TERM EU GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS

The EC have published a roadmap on the strategy for long-term EU greenhouse gas emissions reductions in accordance with the Paris Agreement. The EU is currently putting in place policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030 and achieve high level of ambition on renewables and energy efficiency (the so-called energy and climate framework for 2030). The policies, legislative instruments and support programmes from the European budget will put the EU on a trajectory compatible with the Paris Agreement, but further measures are needed for the time after 2030.

The EU has currently an objective in the context of necessary reductions by developed countries as a group, to reduce emissions by 80-95% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels. The EU's long-term strategy should include a vision for the mid-century and how the European Union can help protect the planet, defend its people and empower its economy, with various options for decarbonisation, and their implications with regards to technology choices, and their socioeconomic factors.

The roadmap can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yatan86l>

## DEFRA PUBLISHES 2ND NATIONAL ADAPTATION PROGRAMME (2018 TO 2023)

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have published a Policy Paper setting what it plans for the UK Government and others for the next 5 years to be ready for the challenges of climate change. The report forms part of the five-yearly cycle of requirements laid down in the Climate Change Act 2008 and discusses issues such as flooding and coastal change, risks to health, well-being and productivity from high temperatures, shortages in the public water supply for agriculture, energy generation and industry and risks to domestic and international food production and trade and actions that will be taken to ensure a food supply chain which is resilient to the effects of a changing climate.

You can access the paper here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybjt7m3o>

## DEFRA RELEASE LATEST FIGURES ON SINGLE-USE PLASTIC CARRIER BAGS

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have released the latest figures for the single-use plastic carrier bags charge in England. They also issued a press release on the summary data for 2017 to 2018. The new figures show that customers of the country's biggest supermarkets bought nearly a quarter fewer plastic bags last year compared to 2016/17 which represents a decrease of nearly 300 million bags.

Overall the use of single use plastic bags has dropped by 86% since the Government introduced its 5p plastic bag charge in 2015, which has taken over 9 billion plastic bags out of circulation, and an estimated 50% reduction in plastic bag marine litter.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybx36elk> and here: <https://tinyurl.com/yasu8ldt>



## EA PUBLISH REPORTS ON AIR AND WATER QUALITY IN ENGLAND

The Environment Agency have issued reports summarising the data and information regarding the state of air quality, water resources and water quality in England. These reports cover the key environmental issues relating to:

- air quality – the concentrations of pollutants in our air, and their effects on the environment and health
- water resources – how much clean water we have available
- water quality – including rivers, estuaries, coasts and groundwater

The reports include the:

- status and trends
- current and future pressures

The reports can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8x7amry>

## DRAFT DECISION ON COMMON FORMAT FOR NATIONAL AIR POLLUTION CONTROL

The EC have published a Draft Implementing Decision laying down a common format for national air pollution control programmes under Directive (EU) 2016/2284 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants.

The national air pollution control programme is the principal governance tool under Directive (EU) 2016/2284 supporting Member States to plan their national policies and measures with a view to complying with the national emission reduction commitments laid down in that Directive for 2020 and 2030, thereby enhancing predictability for stakeholders while also supporting a shift of investments to clean and efficient technologies.

It contributes to achieving the air quality objectives pursuant to Article 1(2) of that Directive, as well as to ensuring coherence with plans and programmes set in other relevant policy areas, including climate, energy, agriculture, industry and transport.

You can find the Draft Implementing Decision here: <https://tinyurl.com/yb7tyn6u>

## COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES UNITE TO TACKLE OCEAN PLASTIC POLLUTION

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have published a press release regarding the meeting of countries across the Commonwealth to discuss the next steps in tackling plastic entering the marine environment.

The Alliance, which was announced by the Prime Minister during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London (16-18 April), aims to unite countries around the Commonwealth so they can work together to turn the tide on plastic entering the marine environment. It sees each country pledging to act; be this by a ban on microbeads, a commitment to cutting down on single use plastic bags, or other steps to eliminate avoidable plastic waste.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycrbo53p>



## DEFRA PUBLISH GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE FOR REDUCING AMMONIA EMISSIONS

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have published a Code of Good Agricultural Practice which provides best practice guidance for reducing ammonia emissions from farms in England.

Agriculture is responsible for 88% of UK emissions of ammonia gas and this voluntary guide is intended to help farmers improve air quality. The guidance explains the practical steps farmers, growers, land managers, advisors and contractors in England can take to minimise ammonia emissions from farms. Recommended measures include ways of storing and applying organic manures, ways of applying fertilisers, and modifications to livestock diet and housing.

You can find the guidance here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybdofe4g>

## FOOD FRAUD REPORTS

### NFCU QUARTERLY BULLETIN

Please find below a link to the latest Food Crime Quarterly Bulletin (June 2018 issue).

This report highlights key trends, emerging issues or gaps in knowledge in relation to dishonesty affecting food, drink and animal feed in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. These issues have been identified through analysis of intelligence received and developed by the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU).

The NFCU stress that cannot detail every theme identified since the last Quarterly Bulletin. Instead, this report aims to improve awareness of significant or new trends in food criminality in order to strengthen the overall response to an issue, and through this improve the understanding of an issue by encouraging further reporting.

Food Crime Quarterly Bulletin (June 2018 issue): <https://tinyurl.com/y7sncwpc>

### JRC SUMMARY OF ARTICLES ON FOOD FRAUD AND ADULTERATION

Please find below a link to the latest issued summary from the Joint Research Centre (JRC) on Food Fraud and Adulteration. <https://tinyurl.com/yak5s336>

The Joint Research Council publishes every month a summary of articles on Food Fraud and Adulteration. Note: The selection of articles reflects their media coverage and does not reflect the frequency of food fraud in a particular country and/or concerning a particular food product.

Previous editions of the JRC report can also be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycofdokn>

## CONSULTATIONS

Consultation	Purpose	Link	Deadline
FSA - Meat Establishments Proposal	Views sought on proposed revisions to current Operational Policy used for the approval of meat establishments.	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/y9hy3lu2">https://tinyurl.com/y9hy3lu2</a>	20th September 2018
FSA - Amendments to Food Law Code of Practice	Consultations on the proposed amendments to the Food Law Code of Practice (England) and the Food Law Code of Practice (Northern Ireland).	England: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/y7m9ymly">https://tinyurl.com/y7m9ymly</a> Northern Ireland: <a href="https://tinyurl.com/yae2nwgz">https://tinyurl.com/yae2nwgz</a>	27th September 2018
EFSA - Chemical Contaminants	Call for relevant data on occurrence in food and feed.	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/y89uma5n">https://tinyurl.com/y89uma5n</a>	1st October 2018
EFSA - Food Additives	Call for food additives usage level and/or concentration data in foods and beverages.	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/y9jgwc3g">https://tinyurl.com/y9jgwc3g</a>	1st October 2018
EC Consultation on EU Marketing Standards for Fishery and Aquaculture Products	To ensure supply of sustainable products to the EU market, fair competition among operators and improved profitability of the fishery sector as well as a level-playing field between EU and imported products.	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/y9dcyw7y">https://tinyurl.com/y9dcyw7y</a>	9th October 2018



# British Frozen Food Federation Technical & Legislative Expert Group

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Meeting of the Technical and Legislative Expert Group  
To be held at 10am on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018  
Belton Woods Hotel, Grantham

1. Guest Speaker – 10:00 -11:00am - Paul Vanston, Chief Executive - INCPEN
2. Apologies and Welcome
3. Minutes of previous meeting
4. Action Points & Matters arising
5. Introduction and Member Benefits Update (J.Hyman)
6. Items for discussion - see list following
7. Items to discuss if time – see list following
8. Update on activities of other groups/associations- see list following
9. Items for information – see list following
10. Items carried forward – see list following
11. Contact with other organisations
12. Projects
13. Any other business

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Agenda Item 1 – Guest Speaker - Paul Vanston, Chief Executive - INCPEN

- Please refer to papers 2018\_03\_T, 2018\_03\_AC and 2018\_03\_AL for background information

Agenda Item 5 – Introduction and Member Benefits Update

- 5.1 Update from John Hyman on Member Benefits

Agenda Item 6 – Items for discussion

- 6.1 Listeria mono. outbreak – update on current situation, work of the subgroup (2018\_03\_D) & FSA Precautionary advice on cooking frozen vegetables (2018\_03\_AP)
- 6.2 Application of Expiry Dates/removal from fresh fruit and veg (no paper)
- 6.3 FSA review of meat cutting plants & Q&A's on Use By dates (2018\_03\_C/2018\_03\_E/2018\_03\_AD/ 2018\_03\_AH)
- 6.4 Tech seminar- Planning progress update

Agenda Item 7 – Items to discuss if time

- 7.1 CO<sub>2</sub> shortage update - impact on industry & contingency planning etc (2018\_03\_AM/2018\_03\_AN)
- 7.2 Childhood Obesity Plan/ Sugar reduction progress report (2018\_03\_V/2018\_03\_X/2018\_03\_AF)
- 7.3 Efficacy of withdrawals and recalls (2018\_03\_K/2018\_03\_AE)
- 7.4 Audit optimisation project update (including update on BRC+) (no paper)
- 7.5 BFFF/WRAP Citizen Food Waste Prevention (no paper)
- 7.6 Salt in Scampi Challenge -update on discussions with PHE (no paper)

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### Agenda Item 8 – Activities of other groups/associations

#### 8.1 Feedback from members on any activities of other groups/associations as relevant (2018\_03\_M):

- FSA Regulating Our Future
- Food Industry Intelligence Network (FIIN)
- Seafood Industry Alliance (SIA)
- Provisions Trade Federation (PTF)
- British Poultry Council (BPC)
- BRC Labelling and Legislation Working Group
- Campden BRI working groups and Scientific Technical Committee
- Food & Biocides Industry Group (FBIG)

### Agenda Item 9 – Items for Information

2018\_03\_A - UKHospitality press release and interim guidance on Acrylamide

2018\_03\_B - New version of Draft Implementing Reg. on Art 26(3) on voluntary COOL

2018\_03\_F - Producer Responsibility for Packaging Summit

2018\_03\_G - PHE Nutrient Profiling Model consultation - closes 15th June

2018\_03\_H - Updated Acrylamide Guidance

2018\_03\_I - Brazilian meat update

2018\_03\_J - GM technology

2018\_03\_L - Consultation\_ European guide to good practice for smoked fishes and/or salted and/or marinated

2018\_03\_N - BFFF/Seafish Importers Forum Minutes and Indian Aquaculture update

2018\_03\_O - TRQ update

2018\_03\_P - SCoPAFF meeting - discussions on MRLs for chlorate

2018\_03\_Q - Lords Report on Leaving the EU

2018\_03\_R - Fipronil update

2018\_03\_S - MRC develop new test for peanut allergy

2018\_03\_U - Westminster Forum - The future of food regulation

2018\_03\_W - FSA consultation on importation of rice products from China

2018\_03\_Y - Potential Titanium dioxide ban in France

2018\_03\_Z - Campden BRI Blog on Hepatitis E

2018\_03\_AB - BRC GS Storage & Distribution and Agents & Brokers TAC minutes

2018\_03\_AG - Animal diseases updates

2018\_03\_AK - Guidance on identifying endocrine disruptors in pesticides and biocides

2018\_03\_AO - Consultation-Ecolabels

#### Agenda Item 10 – Items Carried Forward

Standing agenda items awaiting further development:

- 10.1 Glaze Methodology
- 10.2 Whole Genome Sequencing
- 10.3 GFSI
- 10.4 FRPERC project on Frozen storage of meat
- 10.5 Peas Please Initiative
- 10.6 PA3 relaunch programme – due April through to July
- 10.7 BRC v8 – publication due August

#### Agenda Item 11 – Contact with other Organisations

- American Frozen Food Institute (AFFI) – Listeria
- Entecom -Consultants to South African government – Listeria
- Erudus
- SAI Global

#### Agenda Item 12 – Projects

- 12.1 Listeria Addendum – Draft in progress-see agenda item 6.1
- 12.2 Shelf Life Project – no further progress

#### Agenda Item 13– Any Other Business

Suggestions from the group welcomed

# Anaphylaxis Campaign

Supporting people at risk of severe allergies

## Food Allergies: Developing a Safer Future

Join us and over a hundred professionals from the food and pharmaceutical industries for our expert-led conference event on Tuesday 18th September 2018. This year we're focusing on the topic 'Food Allergies: Developing a Safer Future', sharing expert insights from a variety of opinion leaders including regulators, scientists and food industry experts.

Our 2018 Corporate Conference will be an opportunity for you to meet and listen to renowned speakers from the food industry, exchange views and experiences and network with other organisations that have an interest in allergies.

## Speakers not to be missed...

Chaired by Professor Tony Hines, MBE, FIFST of Hines Food Chain Management and Training Ltd, we're delighted to announce our confirmed speakers from the regulator, scientist, healthcare professional and food industry fields include...

- Professor Clare Mills, Professor of Molecular Allergology, Manchester Institute of Biotechnology
- Julia Pepler, BSc (Hons) PgDip, MA. Director, Food Integrity Consulting Ltd
- Kate Clough, Associate Partner, Instinctif Partners
- Michael Walker, Referee Analyst in the Laboratory of the Government Chemist
- Barbara Hirst, Consultant, Food Safety and Quality, RSSL
- Dr Michael Radcliffe, Consultant in Allergy Medicine, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

## Also providing their expertise as part of our Panel Q&A session are:

- Chun-Han Chan, Senior Scientific Officer, Food Allergen Legislation and Risk Assessment, Food Standards Agency

## Book your place

We are offering tickets to BFFF members at the discounted rate of £115+VAT. To book, email [events@anaphylaxis.org.uk](mailto:events@anaphylaxis.org.uk) and quote 'BFFF & AC Conference'. Payment can be made by card or invoice.

## The Venue

We're holding our 2018 Corporate Conference event at an exciting new venue in central London, No.11 Cavendish Square. Situated just moments from Oxford Circus, the award-winning venue combines classic Georgian period features with contemporary interior design.



For further information or to download a copy of this newsletter, please visit [www.bfff.co.uk](http://www.bfff.co.uk).



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