

T & L UPDATE

BFFF TECHNICAL AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2015 - ISSUE 76



British Frozen Food Federation

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FOREWORD

Hello and Welcome to the latest edition of the BFFF Technical and Legislative Update.

We have lots inside this issue to help you stay abreast of the latest Technical and Regulatory developments; including links to essential technical information and access to up to date guidance. All designed to help you stay informed and compliant, we hope that you find it useful!

As we start 2015, full two years after the scandal on horsemeat broke, how we assure food authenticity has changed beyond recognition. To help support food hygiene professionals CIEH has launched TiFSiP, The Institute of Food Safety, Integrity and Protection. TiFSiP has been created in recognition that food safety, integrity of the food chain and the mechanisms needed to ensure product and consumer protection can only be achieved through collaboration across the whole industry, including Regulators. TiFSiP is open to all practising professionals not just EHO's. Find out more in the authenticity section.

Over the new year we've seen the publication of two updated certification standards that you may need to be aware of:

- the BRC Global Food Standard V7 has strengthened controls for the management of the supply chain and can now be downloaded free from their website alongside all current BRC standards; also,
- the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) has revised and relaunched its chain of custody certification standard for seafood suppliers, processors and vendors

Find out more about both inside.

The impact of the F Gas regulation, which requires the phase out of certain refrigerants, started to take effect from 1 January. There is lots of information available so that businesses can assess how it will impact them and start taking the appropriate steps. In the refrigeration section there are links to information and guidance from The Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Industries Board (ACRIB), Defra and the European Commission.

There is also renewed debate about stunning before slaughter. The British Veterinary Association instigated an e-petition in May 2014 it has already had over 114,000 signatures and triggering a Commons Debate on 23 February. The debate coincides with the FSA animal welfare survey a must read for those involved in the meat industry.

We do hope that you find T&L 76 interesting and useful, if you have any feedback we'd love to hear it!



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

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



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PRIMARY AUTHORITY

BRDO UPHOLDS PRIMARY AUTHORITY ADVICE IN FIRST PA DETERMINATION

A dispute over different local authority interpretations of the law has been resolved in the first ever Primary Authority determination. The Better Regulation Delivery Office, BRDO, has upheld advice from primary authority Newcastle City Council to Member business Greggs Plc. about provision of toilets in its retail premises.



Since Primary Authority was launched in 2008, BRDO has worked with more than 100 local authorities to find resolutions to differences of view which would otherwise have created unnecessary costs for businesses, whilst ensuring that vital regulatory protections are maintained for consumers and the environment. This challenge from Kingston upon Hull City Council is the only issue which has reached the dispute resolution process set out by legislation in the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 which established Primary Authority.

Kingston upon Hull City Council had challenged Newcastle City Council's Primary Authority Advice, insisting that two of Greggs' retail outlets provide toilets on the premises. The assurance provides certainty for the business about future investment decisions and clarity for all parties, helping to inform regulators and businesses elsewhere. It also reinforces the protection that being part of a Primary Authority partnership can bring. Find out more: <http://tinyurl.com/nes25nn>

ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

EUROCOMMERCE PUBLISH REPORT ON SUPPLY CHAIN INITIATIVE

The Supply Chain Initiative (SCI), which aims to promote good practice in commercial relations along the food supply chain, has presented its first annual report at an event in the European Parliament. The SCI was set up by EuroCommerce the Umbrella trade organisation for the EU's major retailers and wholesalers,

EuroCommerce believes that the retail and wholesale industry has delivered on its commitment to the SCI, with many companies, large and small, signing up to the initiative and adopting concrete measures. Many of its member associations have also played a key role by establishing national platforms to dialogue. In several countries, farmers' organisations are part of those platforms.

The SCI will require time and a reasonable legal certainty and predictability to demonstrate its effectiveness. The retail and wholesale sector calls on the EU institutions to closely monitor developments and to refrain from making definitive conclusions while the scheme is still developing. This first Annual Report is a first milestone and a baseline measurement that will encourage further progress and is seen as a potential alternative to EU Regulation of the supply chain. The EuroCommerce report is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/qzhkmuh>

2015 FISHING OPPORTUNITIES AGREED

EU Ministers reached a political agreement on 2015 fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks in EU and non-EU waters and in the Black Sea. This annual proposal sets the limit for the amount of fish which can be caught by EU fishermen from the main commercial fish stocks next year and it is for the first time based on the new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) which aims to have all stocks fished at sustainable levels. Ministers also discussed the state of play of discussions between the European Parliament and Council on the implementation of the landing obligation (banning of discards) which came into force gradually from 1st January 2015. Read the press release: <http://tinyurl.com/k48aopb>

EC CALLED ON TO INTRODUCE COOL LABELLING FOR MEAT AS AN INGREDIENT

In its latest meeting the European Parliamentary Committee on the Environment, Health and Food Safety (ENVI) passed a resolution that meat used as an ingredient in processed foods, such as lasagne, should be labelled with country of origin. They call on the European Commission, which published a report on the issue in late 2013, to come up with legislative proposals in order to rebuild consumer confidence in the wake of the horsemeat scandal and other food fraud cases.

The resolution, passed by 48 votes to 15 with 4 abstentions, urges the Commission to follow up its 2013 report with legislative proposals to make it mandatory to state the country of origin of meat used in processed foods, in order to ensure more transparency throughout the food chain and better inform European consumers.

MEPs reiterate their concern over the potential impact of food fraud on food safety, consumer confidence and health, the functioning of the food chain and farm produce prices. They emphasise the importance of rapidly restoring the confidence of European consumers.

The resolution will now be discussed along with an oral question to the Commission, and put to a plenary session vote in February.

For more information including access to the Commission go to: <http://tinyurl.com/qc7wucv>



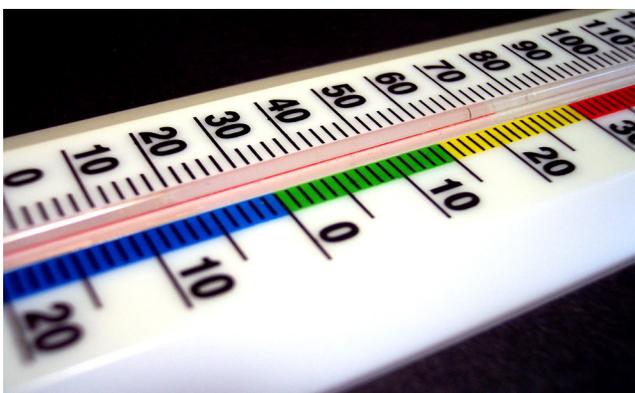
COMMISSION REVIEW OF TRANSPORT AND STORAGE TEMPERATURES

Following a two part European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) opinion published in mid 2014 on temperature requirements for meat and carcasses during storage and transport, the European Commission are considering legislative proposals to amend the provisions concerned in Hygiene Regulation 853/2004. As part of the work they have conducted a limited stakeholder consultation (AVEC (poultry) and UECBV (meat)) to understand what standards are currently being used. The proposal does not concern the transport of frozen meat.

The two EFSA opinions concerned are:

Part 1: Scientific Opinion on the public health risks related to the maintenance of the cold chain during storage and transport of meat. (meat of domestic ungulates) – this concluded that flexibility in transport and storage temperatures could safely be given to meat and carcasses, subject to acceptable temperatures being achieved within a certain time and also that it could be demonstrated that the temperature continues to fall during storage and transport. Currently the hygiene Regulation No. 853/2004 specifies that meat **must** have achieved a temperature of 7°C or lower throughout the meat before it can be transported and that this must be maintained.

The opinion is available through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/pt2l5zo>



Part 2: Scientific Opinion on the public health risks related to the maintenance of the cold chain during storage and transport of meat. Part 2 (minced meat from all species)- this concluded that alternative time-temperature combinations for the storage of fresh meat between slaughter and mincing are possible without increasing bacterial pathogen growth, and that different times for the storage of fresh meat intended for minced meat preparation are safe at different storage temperatures. Part 2 is available on the EFSA website through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/lyljpwj>

ANALYTICAL AND METROLOGY

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES GUIDANCE AND CONSOLIDATED TEXTS

The National Measurement Office (NMO), part of BIS, has published guidance to accompany amendments to the Weights and Measures (Food) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 which came into force on 13 December 2014 to accompany the Food Information Regulation (FIC).

The NMO are the competent authority in the UK dealing with the quantity labelling aspects of FIC. The National SI and guidance are for GB only.

FIC introduced a new universal quantity labelling rule for prepacked product which requires weight or volume to be labelled and the National SI has been amended to ensure that overlaps in the requirements are removed. The main quantity indication changes are:

- Existing national rules have been retained only where they apply to loose foods, foods sold in open containers, foods sold for direct sale or certain wholesale transactions – as quantity indications are not covered for these in FIC;
- the former national exemptions for small packages or specific products have been revoked;
- Non e-marked packaged foods are no longer required to meet the quantity labelling rules under the Weights and Measures (Packaged Goods) Regulations 2006 (PGR); however e-marked products must meet both the requirements of FIC and PGR;
- Foods which are normally sold by number do not need to mark weight or volume, provided that the number is marked or product can be seen and counted from outside the packaging;
- Foods which are sold in a liquid medium must also label the drained net weight of the food; and
- For glazed frozen foods the net weight indicated should be exclusive of the ice glaze.

The guidance can be found on the Gov.uk website: <http://tinyurl.com/npddxbt>: <http://tinyurl.com/orhlaf4>

As the W&M (Food) Regulations 2014 only detail amendments to national legislation, consolidations of the secondary legislation have been produced. These are for guidance purposes and although they have no legal standing, having consolidated versions is quite useful. These versions can also be downloaded from Gov.uk website via the link above;

- The Weights and Measures Act 1963 (Cheese, Fish, Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, Meat and Poultry) Order 1984
- The Weights and Measures (Packaged Goods) Regulations 2006
- The Weights and Measures (Miscellaneous Foods) Order 1988
- The Weights and Measures (Intoxicating Liquor) Order 1988

REVIEW OF PRE-PACKAGES DIRECTIVES

The National Measurement Office (NMO) announced on 17 December 2014 that the European Commission has launched a review of the three pre-packages Directives. The three directives are: Directive 75/107/EEC concerning bottles used as measuring containers; Directive 76/211/EEC concerning the quantity contained in pre-packed products; and Directive 2007/45/EC on pack sizes.

The evaluation will analyse the effects of the three Directives over a five-year period (2009-2013) and is scheduled to run until July 2015. The review seeks to assess the:

- relevance of Directives from individual companies' points of view;
- coverage of the Directives (geographical, sectorial and by company type);
- barrier and motivations behind the use of the e-mark; and
- cost of applying the e-mark.

A short on-line survey is open to take views and comments and is open until 7 April 2015. Find out more and take part in the survey via this link: <http://tinyurl.com/ld38lb9>

ANIMAL WELFARE

AVIAN FLU OUTBREAK RESTRICTIONS LIFTED IN YORKSHIRE

Defra announced on 21 December 2014 that all restrictions for the avian flu outbreak at a duck breeding farm in Yorkshire have been lifted as a new case in Hampshire is confirmed.

This means that all poultry keeping farms within the 10km surveillance zone around the infected property are now allowed to move poultry and other animals without restriction. Other restrictions covering the storage, transport and sourcing of meat products are also lifted.

A protected zone which imposed additional movement controls on properties within 3 km of the infected farm was lifted on Friday 12 December.

Investigations continue into the most likely source of the outbreak.

Poultry keepers should remain vigilant for signs of disease and maintain the highest levels of biosecurity at all times. If you have any concerns, seek prompt advice from your vet.

Defra have produced some information on the following website about avian influenza and how to spot it: <http://tinyurl.com/mmu8g3>

A new low severity case of avian flu has also recently been confirmed in chickens at a farm in Hampshire. All birds at the farm have been culled and action has been taken to prevent any spread of the disease and a 1km poultry movement restriction zone has been imposed

Tests have confirmed the outbreak as a low severity H7N7 strain of the disease, a much less severe form than the H5N8 strain found at the Yorkshire duck farm in November. There are no links between the two cases.

Following the outbreak in Hampshire the FSA have restated their advice, that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers.

The risk of getting bird flu through the food chain is low. Some strains of avian influenza can pass to humans, but this is very rare. It usually requires very close contact between the human and infected live birds. FSA also confirm that properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.

More information about the outbreak can be found on the GOV.UK website: <http://tinyurl.com/mmu8g3>



EFSA OPINION ON AVIAN INFLUENZA A SUBTYPE H5N8

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published a Scientific Opinion on highly pathogenic avian influenza A subtype H5N8.

The entry of HPAI H5N8 into Europe and its subsequent spread within Europe are two separate events with possibly different transmission vectors. Following epidemiological investigations of infected poultry holdings, there is not yet a clear indication of the source of the virus. There are no known direct bird migration routes from Asia to western Europe. EFSA recommends assessing biosecurity procedures with a focus on segregation, cleaning and disinfection, and improving where necessary.

Given the apparent low pathogenicity of HPAI H5N8 for several wild bird species, focused strategic and proportionate enhancement of active and passive surveillance of living and dead wild birds in the high risk areas would improve the understanding of the risk of virus transmission to poultry.

The EFSA Scientific Opinion can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/mtb24f3>

NON STUN ANIMAL SLAUGHTER – HOUSE OF COMMONS LIBRARY NOTE

Religious slaughter of animals for food without pre-stunning is currently permitted in the UK for Muslim (Halal) and Jewish (Shechita) methods in line with permitted exemptions to EU slaughter regulations which require pre-stunning. In practice, around 80% of halal meat in the UK is from animals that have been pre-stunned. The UK Government has said that it would prefer all animals to be pre-stunned before slaughter on welfare grounds but it observes the rights of religious communities. However, animal welfare groups, including the British Veterinary Association (BVA) and RSPCA are calling for an end to non-stun slaughter. All parties in the debate would like to see labelling of meat which provides more consumer information on the slaughter methods used.

The BVA instigated an e-petition in May 2014 on this matter and it has already had over 114,000 signatures triggering a Commons Debate. A counter petition, calling for the protection of the right to non-stun religious slaughter, has 38,000 signatures.

A back bench debate in the House of Commons took place on 23 February as a result of the petition, access the Hansard record via this link: <http://tinyurl.com/l6w3pvw> the Commons Standard Library note at this link: <http://tinyurl.com/p7gur67>

FSA ANIMAL WELFARE SURVEY 2013

The FSA has recently published the results of its 2013 animal welfare survey of slaughterhouses in Britain. The survey, last carried out in 2011, gives a snapshot of how well animal welfare requirements were followed in slaughterhouses during one week in September 2013.

The results showed an improved picture compared to the 2011 survey – 96% of red meat slaughterhouses and 96% of white meat slaughterhouses were compliant with the animal welfare regulations, compared to 86% and 84% respectively for 2011. While there have been positive shifts in compliance, there are still areas where improvements are required.

Other key findings of the survey include: increased uptake of monitoring using CCTV; increased use of gas stunning in the slaughter of poultry (now 71%) and the number of animals not stunned prior to slaughter (allowed in accordance with religious rites) accounted for 2% of cattle, 15% of sheep and goats, and 3% of poultry. The full report can be accessed on the FSA website through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/l7pf44a>

Defra Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC) have also recently issued an opinion on the use of CCTV in slaughterhouses to assess the welfare of farmed animals. FAWC recommends that all slaughterhouse operators install and utilise CCTV in slaughterhouses in a structured and proportionate way. It also makes recommendations on how CCTV is installed and operated, how staff are trained and informed and also future developments in technology are progressed to protect animal welfare. To access the opinion go to: <http://tinyurl.com/mbmaxyk>

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

BRC PUBLISH GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY STANDARD V7

The latest BRC standard, the Global Food Standard V7, can now be downloaded free from their website alongside all current BRC standards – including the Storage and Distribution standard and the Agents and Brokers standard.

It is also worth checking out 'BRC Participate' For the cost of purchasing a single standard on an annual basis, you can get unlimited access to all of the BRC standards and associated guidance along with other functionality.

Download the standards for free in the BRC bookshop and find out more about BRC Participate and how to subscribe on the BRC website: <http://www.brcglobalstandards.com/#>



GLOBAL STANDARD
FOR FOOD SAFETY

NEW MSC SEAFOOD TRACEABILITY STANDARD PUBLISHED

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) has revised and relaunched its chain of custody requirements for seafood suppliers, processors and vendors.

The updated MSC Chain of Custody Standard includes a new specific set of requirements designed to work better for consumer-facing companies, such as restaurants, fishmongers and caterers. The standard also continues to offer a 'group chain of custody' option for large organisations or groups of smaller businesses that wish to work together to get certified.

All MSC Chain of Custody audits must apply the updated standard from 1 September 2015. Certified organisations that have scheduled an audit before September 2015 should contact their certification body to verify when they will transition to the updated standard.

Find out more at: <http://tinyurl.com/q3qdhbm>

CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS & FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

RESTRICTIONS LIFTED ON IMPORTS OF MILK FROM CHINA

Commission Implementing Regulation (EC) No. 2015/170 on Imports from China has been published in the Official Journal of the EU. It repeals Regulation 1135/2009 (EU) imposing special conditions governing the import of certain products originating in or consigned from China.

Regulation 1135/2009 was introduced following the findings of high levels of melamine in infant milk, other milk products, soya and soya products and in ammonium bicarbonate intended for food and feed in China and imposed special conditions governing the import of these products originating in or consigned from China.

Since July 2009, when the restrictions were imposed, only one non-compliant sample has been reported by the competent authorities of the Member States and SCoFCAH made the decision that it was appropriate to repeal the Regulation. This new Regulation entered into force on 8 February 2015.

Access it through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/qj3dccc>



97% OF EU FOODS WITHIN LEGAL LIMITS FOR PESTICIDE RESIDUES

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have been sampling and monitoring pesticide residues in foods.

More than 97% of all the samples analysed in the programme fell within the legal limits for pesticide residues – with over 54% of sample free from any detectable trace of the chemicals.

These findings are part of the EFSA 2012 annual report on pesticide residues in food. The report is based on the analysis of almost 79,000 food samples carried out by 27 EU Member States, Iceland and Norway.

EFSA also carried out an assessment of whether current dietary exposure to pesticide residues presented a risk to human health – both in the long-term (chronic) and short-term (acute). They concluded that the presence of pesticide residues in food in 2012 was unlikely to have a long-term effect on consumer health. For short-term exposure to pesticide residues, a risk could not be excluded for about 0.02% of the samples if these foods were eaten in high quantities.

EFSA have developed an interactive report that lets you find out more about the samples analysed. More information and the interactive report can be found on this page: <http://tinyurl.com/q43gpvd>

EFSA TO REOPEN OPINION ON PERCHLORATE IN FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) will re-examine its 2014 scientific opinion on perchlorate in food. This comes following confirmation that there was a technical error in the estimation of consumer exposure to perchlorate in the diet.

EFSA's expert Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain has committed to re-open the opinion and update its risk assessment as soon as possible. Experts stated that the update would likely result in a change in the estimation of consumer exposure and therefore a revision of its previous final conclusions.

The document that is under review is accessible via this link: <http://tinyurl.com/oaxat85>

FSA POLICY UPDATE

The FSA have published a useful update on food safety policy development within the Agency. The update can be accessed through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/mhcwsrc>

The latest update includes information on a range of contaminants including Environmental (chlorates and arsenic), process (acrylamide), agricultural (aflatoxins) contaminants. There is also information on allergens and food contact materials (bisphenol)

Contact benjamin.nketiah@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk if you have any feedback or would like to receive the update directly



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EFSA OPINION ON RISKS TO PUBLIC HEALTH FROM BISPHENOL A

After the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) review of currently available information on the risk of exposure and toxicity on human health of bisphenol A (BPA) they have concluded that BPA poses no health risk to consumers of any age group (including unborn children, infants and adolescents) at current exposure levels. Exposure from the diet or from a combination of sources (diet, dust, cosmetics and thermal paper) is considerably under the safe level (the "tolerable daily intake" or TDI).

Although new data and refined methodologies have led EFSA's experts to considerably reduce the safe level of BPA from 50 micrograms per kilogram of body weight per day ($\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ of bw/day) to 4 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ of bw/day , the highest estimates for dietary exposure and for exposure from a combination of sources (called "aggregated exposure" in EFSA's opinion) are three to five times lower than the new TDI.



Uncertainties surrounding potential health effects of BPA on the mammary gland, reproductive, metabolic, neurobehavioural and immune systems have been quantified and factored in to the calculation of the TDI. In addition, the TDI is temporary pending the outcome of a long-term study in rats, which will help to reduce these uncertainties.

BPA is a chemical compound used in the manufacture of food contact materials such as re-usable plastic tableware and can coatings (mainly protective linings). Another widespread use of BPA is in thermal paper commonly used in till/cash register receipts. Residues of BPA can migrate into food and beverages and be ingested by the consumer; BPA from other sources including thermal paper, cosmetics and dust can be absorbed through the skin and by inhalation.

To access the full EFSA opinion go to: <http://tinyurl.com/pk4j9gp>

NUT CONTAMINATION FOUND IN SPICES

Over the last few weeks the FSA have publicised a number of spice related product recalls. The first on 31 January, was the Bart Ingredient Company Ground Cumin. Certain batches had been found to be contaminated with almond and peanut protein at >75ppm by the FSA as part of their monitoring programme in response to issues experienced in North America and Canada.: Find out more at: <http://tinyurl.com/ml2hmp9>

The result of the FSA's Elisa testing and the basis for the recall was questioned at the time and as a result the FSA have made public the associated risk assessment that they carried out in advance of the recall. The risk assessment is available on the BFFF website, find it in the chemicals and contaminants section of Technical Guidance: <http://bfff.co.uk/technical/guidance/>

The origin of the recalled Bart spice is Turkish other samples from this supply chain that have been tested were negative.

A second incident involved multiple recalls following confirmation that a batch of paprika was the most likely source of undeclared almond protein in a number of food products which have been recalled. Investigations indicated that a spice mix supplied by Santa Maria UK Ltd used in the three products contained undeclared almond protein. Subsequent industry testing revealed that the paprika in the spice mix was the most likely source. Further investigations into the supply chain of paprika are continuing. The products include Fajita and Enchilada meal kits from retailers including Tesco, Sainsbury, Morrisons and Aldi.



There is no evidence that the two incidents are linked. Find out more on the FSA website: <http://tinyurl.com/k8j2dk4> and <http://tinyurl.com/lmj8ht2>

CONTROLS PUT USE OF CHLORINE BASED BIOCIDES AT RISK

A default limit for chlorate residues (MRL) on food set by Regulation 396/2005 is 0.01 mg/kg. This limit was set based on the use of prohibited pesticides and does not cover the presence of chlorate as a result of legal uses such as chlorine based disinfectants.

As the 0.01 mg/kg URL limit is not realistic and is commonly exceeded in routine monitoring an interim limit of 0.5 was discussed at the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH) meeting of 22/23 Sept 2014 and Member States agreed to take a proportionate approach to enforcement as a provisional solution until August 2015. This was pending the completion of a risk assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). EFSA have been requested to provide a scientific opinion by April 2015 so that it can be considered by Scofcah in June.

In the meantime Germany and Belgium have imposed interim limits for testing. According to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) there are currently no plans to set interim limits for monitoring purposes in the UK. Should elevated levels be found, the FSA will carry out a risk assessment on a case by case basis, taking into account the level of contamination, food, consumption patterns and exposure.

Christina Baskaran and Kwabena Andam are leading on chlorates at the FSA - from the contaminants side, though with respect to the negotiations in Europe, HSE are leading, - Russell Wedgbury is the contact Russell.Wedgbury@hse.gsi.gov.uk he is coming from the pesticide aspect. The FSA have not been routinely testing for chlorates and have no data on chlorate residues in food. A monitoring programme was started during November / early December focussing on fruit and veg; the results of which are likely to be published in mid 2015. This data will be submitted as evidence towards the EFSA risk assessment. Realistically this means that the EFSA scientific opinion is likely to be delayed, the FSA believe it will not be available until late 2015.

BFFF Members are recommended to seek the advice of their chemical supplier on how the development chlorates can be controlled through the management of chlorine based disinfectants and sanitisers. For example the breakdown of chlorine to chlorate is catalysed by light, temperature and the presence of organic matter; therefore such chemicals should be sourced and used as freshly as possible and stored in opaque containers or in the dark. Operators should also be careful of their cleaning practises, rinsing where appropriate and eliminating possible areas of pooling.

FOOD SAFETY AND ZOOSES

MICROBIOLOGICAL RISK FROM CARROTS, BULB AND STEM VEGETABLES

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published a Scientific Opinion on the risks of *Salmonella* and other bacteria on carrots, bulb and stem vegetables.

Environmental factors (such as the proximity to farms), access of domestic and wild animals to vegetable growing areas, the use of contaminated water for irrigation or contaminated equipment are among the factors that cause contamination of carrots and bulb and stem vegetables - such as onion and garlic - with *Salmonella*, *Yersinia*, *Shigella* and Norovirus.

These are some of the findings of a scientific opinion on risk factors that contribute to the contamination of carrots and bulb and stem vegetables at different stages of the food chain.

EFSA's experts recommend that producers use good agricultural, hygiene and manufacturing practices to reduce contamination. Because of a lack of relevant information, EFSA could not assess the suitability of microbiological criteria at primary production or during processing of bulb and stem vegetables and carrots.

The Scientific Opinion is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/plk4pg7>



INFECTED SALESPERSON CONTAMINATED PRODUCTS IN HEPATITIS A OUTBREAK

An outbreak of Hepatitis A (Hep A) in Germany was caused by a bakery worker who contaminated products while packing and selling them, according to the Eurosurveillance report.

The report said that 83 laboratory-confirmed cases were found in Lower Saxony with onsets between 8 October and 29 December 2012 (77 primary and 6 secondary cases). It was the largest recorded Hep A outbreak since standardised surveillance started in the country in 2001.

Epidemiological and laboratory findings suggested that the salesperson contaminated products while packing and selling. It remained unclear where the infected person acquired the infection.

Hep A Virus is transmitted by faecal-oral route, by direct contact with an infected person or by ingestion of virus-contaminated food or water, or from contaminated surfaces.

The Hep A Eurosurveillance report of the outbreak in Germany is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/lwy7fgq>

EFSA TOOL TO ASSIST POLICY MAKERS ASSESS MICROBIOLOGICAL RISKS

The European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA's) experts have developed a toolbox that will help risk assessors prioritise the most significant microbiological risks.

The toolbox is primarily intended for experts of the Panel on Biological Hazards, but could also be used by other Panels and national food safety authorities. It will support a timely and transparent risk ranking. Experts have also assessed the available risk ranking tools and investigated how uncertainty can be taken into account in risk ranking models.

EFSA has also published an external scientific report which reviews the methodologies for ranking of risks related to food and feed safety, on the basis of their anticipated impact on human health. Experts have developed a framework – a decision tool that will help risk managers and risk assessors select the most appropriate methodology depending on the risk ranking question.

The Scientific Opinion on the development of a risk ranking toolbox is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/ny4e4lj> and the critical review of methodology and anticipated health impact is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/puc8vzq>

CHILD SAFETY IMPLICATIONS OF ARSENIC IN RICE PRODUCTS

A Channel 4 investigation onto inorganic arsenic levels in rice has questioned the safety of products aimed at children, like rice cakes and Kellogg's Rice Krispies.

The establishment of safe levels for naturally-occurring inorganic arsenic in food is currently being discussed by the European Commission, with maximum levels for products designed for children possibly 50% lower than that for the general population.

These first limits set for food, due next summer, have not yet been finalised but according to tests of 81 different products – conducted as part of the UK Channel 4 Dispatches programme and the Queen's University Belfast's Institute for Global Food Security – 59% would exceed the proposed recommended limits for children.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) told the programme that products exceeding these limits would be taken off the market. The Commission discussed the proposals in July, saying there was a leaning towards harmonised maximum levels for rice products since these sometimes showed 'very high levels' of inorganic arsenic. The maximum levels for such processed products would be around 15% higher than those for raw ingredients.

The European Commission report is available through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/nklh9tv>

E.COLI O157 REVISED GUIDANCE PUBLISHED

In December 2014, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) announced that it has published revised Guidance on E.coli O157 control of cross contamination.

The Guidance provides clarification to food businesses on the steps that they need to take to control the risk of food becoming contaminated by E.coli O157 and what businesses should be doing to protect their customers. The guidance can also be used by Local Authority food safety officers when inspecting businesses in their area.

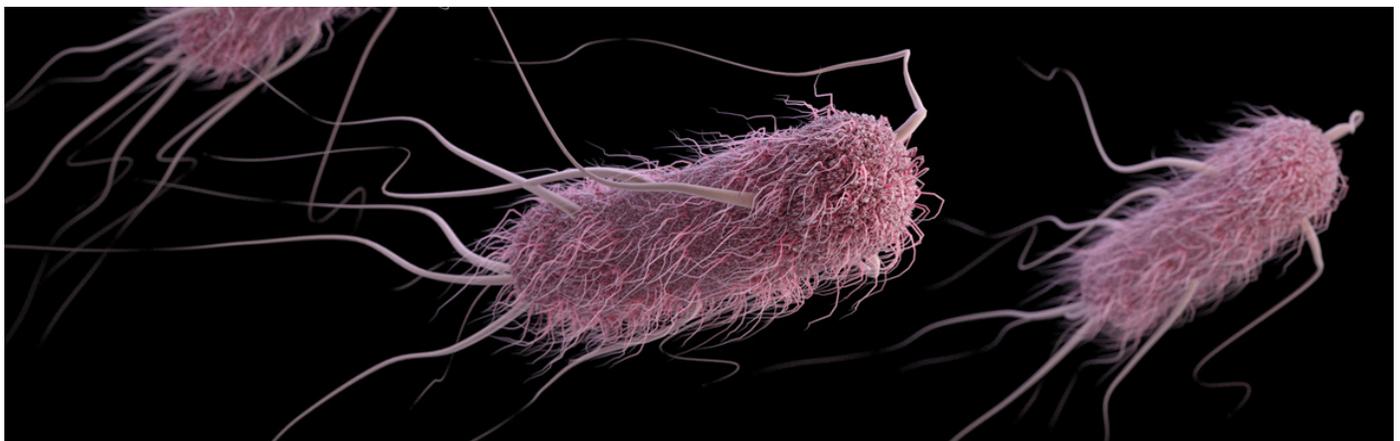
The FSA has also published a factsheet for caterers and guidelines for re-commissioning a vacuum packer.

The FSA wrote to heads of environmental health and trading standards departments on 18 December 2014 regarding the revised guidance. The points of clarification, listed in the Annex to the letter, do not fundamentally change the principles of the guidance and are as follows:

- Separation: To clarify that the controls implemented by a food business should be appropriate to the activities of the business, what is achievable, and the risk posed;
- Vacuum packers, slicers and mincers should not be dual used, unless they can be dismantled and fully disinfected between uses;
- To clarify that there is no requirement to take temperature readings of dishwashers unless there is reason to consider that a dishwasher is ineffective;

The FSA plans to run eight workshops for Local Authority officers in England on the revised guidance, from February to March 2015.

The FSA revised guidance is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/nstz4sk> and the FSA letter to Local Authorities can be viewed here: <http://tinyurl.com/pohrspk>



FSA LAUNCH ACT CAMPYLOBACTER E-NEWSLETTER

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has launched its Acting on Campylobacter Together (ACT) e-newsletter.

Campylobacter is the most common cause of human bacterial food poisoning in the UK. Each year it is estimated to be responsible for about 280,000 cases of food poisoning. Up to 80% of cases can be attributed to raw poultry meat.

To tackle this, and reduce contamination on UK-produced chickens, the whole food chain needs to play its part and the FSA is spearheading the ACT campaign from 'farm to fork' – including chicken producers, processors, caterers and retailers.

The regular newsletter will capture the good work taking place and bring together and share information on the Government and industry wide campaign.

You can find the content of the first edition via this link: <http://tinyurl.com/k6d8pex>

EFSA REPORT ON EU FOOD BORNE ILLNESSES FOR 2013

This report published by the European Food Safety Authority and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control presents the results of the zoonoses monitoring activities carried out in 2013 in 32 European countries (28 Member States and four non-Member States).

Campylobacteriosis was the most commonly reported zoonoses though compared to previous years the notification rate has stabilised; though the prevalence of Campylobacter in poultry meat remains high throughout the EU.

The trend for decreasing incidence of salmonellosis in humans continued and most EU Member States met targets for reducing Salmonella in poultry. However of a total of 5,196 food borne outbreaks most were still attributed to Salmonella.

Human listeriosis continues to increase, a trend since 2009 and up 8.6% from the 2012 report and resulting in 191 deaths – of which 64 occurred in France. The number of confirmed verocytotoxigenic Escherichia coli (VTEC) infections in humans also increased

However, Yersiniosis cases decreased reflected in positive findings for Yersinia in pig meat and its derived products. In 28.9 % of all outbreaks the causative agent was unknown.

Access the full report: <http://tinyurl.com/kbwj97k>



INTEGRATED ANALYSIS OF ANTIMICROBIAL DATA FROM HUMANS AND ANIMALS

The use of certain antimicrobials in animals and humans is associated with resistance to these antimicrobials in bacteria from animals and humans. There are also important differences in the consumption of antimicrobials in animals and in humans between European countries. These are some of the findings of the first integrated analysis of data from humans, animals and food in Europe published jointly by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

The ECDC/EFSA/EMA first joint report on the integrated analysis of the consumption of antimicrobial agents and occurrence of antimicrobial resistance in bacteria from humans and food-producing animals also identifies data limitations that need to be addressed to allow further analysis and conclusions to be drawn. These include additional data on antimicrobial consumption by animal species, data on antimicrobial consumption in hospitals in more European countries and monitoring of resistant bacteria in the normal flora from both healthy and diseased people.

The analysis was carried out at the request of the European Commission and combines data from five European monitoring networks that gather information from the European Union (EU) Member States, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland.

The report can be downloaded from the EFSA website: <http://tinyurl.com/k4d3of7>

FOOD SECURITY, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

COMMONS SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT ON FOOD SECURITY

The House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (ERA) has published a Report on Food Security: demand, consumption and waste, in which it calls on Government and retailers to do more to help consumers choose healthy food from sustainable sources, and waste less

The Report details how demands can be met sustainably and how individuals' need for affordable and healthy food can be met. In terms of consumer choice and food security, the Committee recommends that:

- Defra review with retailers the effectiveness of labelling regulations in informing consumers on key provenance and sustainability factors;
- Defra should commission research into the use of sustainability claims on products in order to assess the accuracy of such labelling;
- Defra should work with retailers and representative bodies to promulgate best practice on online information provision such as tools to allow customers to search for the healthiest products;
- Defra should set up a task force to co-ordinate national work by charities, local authorities, retailers, food producers and manufacturers to establish an effective food redistribution network across the country.

The report also recommends that Defra commission further research into the scale of 'food insecurity' in Britain to plug a data gap and calls on local councils, working closely with retailers, to use the planning system to promote healthy communities through the location of food stores that enable all to buy healthy food locally at affordable prices.

Access the report on the Parliament website: <http://tinyurl.com/onvggk4>

TIFSIP - CIEH LAUNCH NEW FOOD SPECIALIST ORGANISATION AND WEBSITE

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) has formally launched its new membership organisation The Institute of Food Safety, Integrity & Protection (TiFSiP) and unveiled the new website www.TIFSIP.org supporting it.

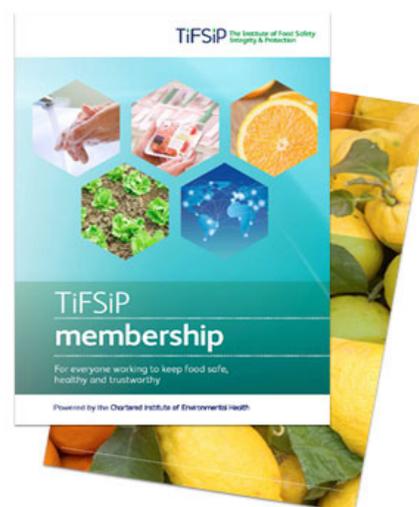
TiFSiP has been created in recognition that food safety, integrity of the food chain and the mechanisms needed to ensure consumer protection can only be achieved through a collaborative venture across the whole industry.

All those working in food production, manufacture, processing, preparation, quality control, regulation and sales now have the opportunity of being part of one professional community with the ability to share and receive relevant and current information, influence debates and thinking, horizon scan and enhance professionalism in the sector. TiFSiP is the vehicle that can achieve that and is focussed on enabling collaboration across the food community in the UK and internationally to include local and central government, industry, academia, professional bodies and trade associations.

TiFSiP membership offers knowledge and good practice, professional membership grades, collaboration, networking and events and will support the growing community of people who work in food throughout the food chain. TiFSiP will be of specific interest to all those specialising in food safety who are not currently CIEH members.

You can find the TiFSiP website through the above link, BFFF Technical Manager Su Dakin is a member of the TiFSiP Advisory Board which will advise on the development of the organisation to meet the needs of food professionals.

More information can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/k4pfx5h>



TiFSiP

The Institute of Food Safety
Integrity & Protection

IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

MDMA DRUGS SEIZED IN FROZEN CHICKEN

Border Force officers foiled a plan to import 90kg of the class A drug MDMA in out-of-date frozen chicken.

A man from Leeds was charged in December in connection with the plot to import the drug inside a consignment of frozen chicken with a 'use-by' date of 2010. The man was arrested after Border Force officers found the powdered drugs at Killinghome port, Lincolnshire, before alerting the National Crime Agency (NCA).

A kilogramme of the class B drug methoxetamine was also found among the pallets of chicken that had arrived on a lorry from the Netherlands. The NCA stated that the combined street values of the drugs found was estimated to be at least £4.5 million.

More information on this can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/mrb5mbk>

EU TRANSPARENCY ON TEXTS IN TTIP

The European Commission is negotiating **the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)** and is trying to be as transparent as possible. A final agreement would have 24 chapters, grouped together in 3 parts:

- Market access
- Regulatory cooperation
- Rules

And as part of the EC's latest transparency initiative, they're publishing:

- new 2-page factsheets, in plain language
- negotiating texts that have been given US negotiators:
 - EU textual proposals on parts 2 and 3 of the TTIP – these set out how the EC wants a final deal to read, line by line
 - EU position papers – what the EC want to achieve in a chapter.

Further texts will be published as they become available. The EC have committed to making the whole text of the agreement public once negotiations have been concluded – well in advance of its signature and ratification.

The TTIP negotiating texts, and further information are available here: <http://tinyurl.com/oynd9wx>

UK APPOINTS FIRST AGRICULTURE AND FOOD COUNSELLOR IN CHINA

The UK's first Agriculture and Food Counsellor in China has been appointed to help increase our growing food and drink exports to the country.

The announcement followed a trip to China with the Environment Secretary Elizabeth Truss. The new role, made possible with significant funding from the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), will help British firms tap into China's growing interest in speciality foods - a market expected to be worth a potential £39 billion this year.

Karen Morgan, based in the British embassy in Beijing, will represent the interests of UK businesses already exporting quality British food and drink produce to China, and firms looking to open new trade links. The role will involve identifying opportunities for new markets and further developing our excellent relationship with key Chinese authorities.

Our world leading food and drink businesses are steadily building their share of the lucrative Chinese market with a record £215 million worth of produce exported in 2013, up from £136 million in 2012 – this new appointment is expected to see these figures grow further.

More information on this can be found through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/njodkx3>

EU AND MOROCCO - PROTECTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

The European Union and Morocco have concluded negotiations on an agreement to mutually protect their Geographical Indications (GIs). Through this agreement Morocco and the EU will ensure high level protection for their respective GIs for food products. Also aimed at promoting and fostering trade relations in agricultural products and foodstuffs produced in Morocco and the European Union, the text of the agreement was initialled at chief negotiator's level.

Morocco is the first amongst the Southern neighbours of the EU to take this important step forward in promoting and protecting the quality of agricultural production. The objective of this agreement is to better protect consumers in terms of not being misled on the true origin and quality of the product.

The agreement is also a response to the willingness expressed by the EU Member States to promote the protection of Geographical Indications internationally and is a reflection of the converging views of the European Union and Morocco on matters related to quality policy, consumer protection and intellectual property.

More information is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/o9gq5cq>

FSA GUIDANCE ON ONWARD TRANSPORT FROM ANOTHER MEMBER STATE

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) wrote to local authorities on 18 December 2014 on guidance for onward transport from another Member State.

The FSA clarifies the procedure to follow with regards to requests from a Designated Point of Entry (DPE) in another Member State for the onward transportation to the UK of certain food products of non-animal origin restricted under the import requirements of Regulation (EC) 669/2009.

The letter was addressed to all UK Local Authorities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The letter is available to read here: <http://tinyurl.com/npx7lvb>

LABELLING AND GENERAL FOOD LAW

EC COMMUNICATION ON DATE OF FIRST FREEZING AND DUAL WEIGHT INDICATIONS

The European Commission have written to Defra on the questions of:

- Whether it is legally permissible to label with the total weight inclusive of glaze, on a voluntary basis, in addition to the mandatory net weight excluding glaze on a frozen product bearing a protective ice coating.
- When is the date of first freezing for meat, meat preparations and unprocessed fishery products that have been frozen more than once.

The Commission response is:

1. Under the Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011, it is not allowed to declare the weight of the glazed food inclusive of the glaze (total/gross weight), in addition to the indication of the net weight exclusive of the glaze.
2. The date of first freezing referred to in Annex III, point 6 of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 corresponds to the date on which the carcass of meat, meat or fish used as raw materials for the production of the final product have been frozen for the first time.

The information BFFF have from Defra is that they disagree with both of these positions and will continue to challenge the Commission on them. Defra have a bi lateral meeting with the Commission at the beginning of March to talk about the two issues which relate to the interpretation of FIC Regulation 1169/2011 on Food Information to Consumers. Then on March 20 following the bi-lateral meeting there is a working group meeting between the Commission and the Authorities of the EU Member States when I understand these will again be discussed.

Many BFFF Members are asking whether they should be changing their labelling, I hope that the requirement on whether this is necessary will become clear after the 20 March meeting. In the meantime, discussions are ongoing and I would not suggest that any labelling changes are progressed as yet.

Once a decision is made and if it changes the current labelling practice, BFFF will work with the UK Authorities to allow a suitable transition period for changes to be made.

NUTRITION, ADDITIVES AND HEALTH

DOH PUBLISH NUTRITION LEGISLATION INFORMATION SOURCES

The Department of Health (DoH) have published a list of nutritional legislation sources. It sets out information sources to help food businesses comply with current nutritional legislation.

The information note covers:

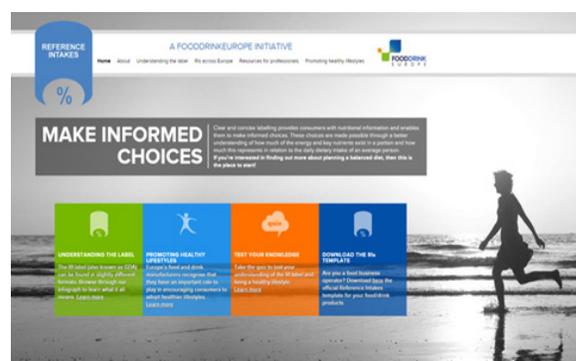
- General food labelling on food and drinks;
- Food supplements;
- Fortified foods (i.e. foods which have extra vitamins or minerals added);
- Nutritional health claims; and
- Foods known as 'parnuts' food (i.e. infant formula, follow-on formula, medical foods, baby foods, slimming foods and gluten-free foods).

The Nutritional Legislation Information Sheet can be accessed via this link: <http://tinyurl.com/q4ypb9a>

FOODDRINKEUROPE NEW REFERENCE INTAKE WEBSITE

FoodDrinkEurope (FDE) announced in December 2014 that it has launched a new reference intakes website. In view of the entry into force of the EU Regulation on the provision of food information to consumers, FDE has launched the website to explain the concept of Reference Intakes.

The website, which can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/ond9ya6>, allows consumers to explore the new Reference Intakes label through easy-to understand infographics. Visitors can also take an interactive quiz to test their understanding of labels and get tips about living a healthy lifestyle.



The website also features useful tools for food and drink manufacturers, especially SMEs, who can learn more about the EU legislation and download the Reference Intakes templates to use on their products.

ACTION SALT HIGHLIGHT HIGH LEVELS OF SALT IN PIZZA

Consensus Action on Salt & Health (CASH) has published new survey results that highlight high levels of salt in pizza, both in the UK and Worldwide.

The survey results found:

- Half of all UK pizzas surveyed contain more salt per pizza than the UK daily maximum of 6g
- Five pizzas were found to contain 16g salt – the equivalent of 7 Big Macs!
- Some countries are being fed TWICE as much salt from the same pizza as in other countries
- Many pizzas now have MORE salt than they did 2 years ago

Almost half (48%) of all pizzas surveyed in the UK (612 out of 1,267) exceed the maximum recommended salt limit for an entire day (6g/day). This is despite a call to action in 2012 following a previous pizza survey and new salt reduction targets being set by the Department of Health's salt pledge.

The CASH survey results have been further broken down to include data for supermarkets, out of home, and media coverage.

More information of the survey results, the salt reduction pledge and breakdown data can be found on the CASH website, here: <http://tinyurl.com/ohdzchc>

SUSTAIN PUBLISHES 'FOOD HEROES AND ZEROES' OF 2014

Sustain has published an end of year round-up of children's 'food heroes and zeroes' of 2014. It highlights the Children's Food Campaign's 2014 activity, campaigns and successes.

Food Heroes:

- School Food Plan and the Department of Education – revised school food standards, cooking skills and food education back on the curriculum, and the introduction of free school meals.
- The British Dietetic Association's Dietitians in Obesity Management Specialist Group – removal of sweets and chocolates from tills of leading supermarkets.
- British Heart Foundation – promoted the signing of petition to close loopholes which allowed marketing of junk food to children.

Food Zeroes:

- Committee of Advertising Practice and the Advertising Standards Authority – whilst a couple of complaints have been upheld, progress has been slow, and unconvincing evidence to suggest that the changes in the CAP Code will better protect children from junk food marketing.
- Coca-Cola – launched 'Coca-Cola Life' which contains over 4 teaspoons of sugar per 300ml and the nature of selling sugary products has not changed.
- The Responsibility Deal – The Department of Health's Responsibility Deal didn't persuade food businesses to agree to even the lowest denominator set of options and the idea was shelved.

For more information, including the full list of 'Food Heroes and Zeroes, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/mbfn9fn>

OUTBREAK OF EBOLA VIRUS IN WESTERN AFRICA

The current outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EBV) in West Africa is of serious concern. The outbreak involves four countries - Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria, and is expected to last many months.

The European Commission is closely working with the EU Member States within the Health Security Committee (HSC) to keep them informed about the latest developments and to coordinate approaches on prevention and preparation for Ebola, in accordance with Decision 1082/2013/EU on serious border health threats.

The Commission's Health & Consumers Directorate-General has been closely monitoring the event in cooperation with the ECDC and the World Health Organisation (WHO) since news of the outbreak broke in March 2014. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is producing risk assessments, epidemiological updates and other information. The risk of importation to the EU is considered very low. The Commission is also boosting its investment in Ebola research.

The following link is to the European Commission website and has information on, and link to, latest developments, traveller information, press material, audio visual material and scientific advice: <http://tinyurl.com/n3rls97>

CHANGES TO EU HEALTH CLAIMS REGULATION - APPROVAL

Commission Regulation (EU) 2015/7 of 6 January 2015 authorising a health claim made on foods, other than those referring to the reduction of disease risk and to children's development and health and amending Regulation (EU) No 432/2012 was published in the Official Journal of the EU, L3/3, 7/1/2015.

As a result of a positive European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) opinion, this Regulation permits the claim "Carbohydrates contribute to the recovery of normal muscle function (contraction) after highly intensive and/or long-lasting physical exercise leading to muscle fatigue and the depletion of glycogen stores in skeletal muscle".

The claim may be used only for food which provides carbohydrates which are metabolised by humans (excluding polyols). Information shall be given to the consumer that the beneficial effect is obtained with the consumption of carbohydrates, from all sources, at a total intake of 4 g per kg body weight, at doses, within the first 4 hours and no later than 6 hours, following highly intensive and/or long-lasting physical exercise leading to muscle fatigue and the depletion of glycogen stores in skeletal muscle. The claim is included in the Union list of permitted claims and the Regulation entered into force on 27 January 2015.

The Official Journal is available via this link: <http://tinyurl.com/m9aawel>

SUGAR IN FOOD AND DRINKS BILL PUBLISHED

The text of the Sugar in Food and Drinks (Targets, Labelling and Advertising) Bill 2014-2015 has been published.

The Bill would require the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Food Standards Agency (FSA), to set targets for the total amount of sugar to be consumed in the UK annually with the aim of reducing the amount of sugar consumed (and therefore the sugar content of products), and to provide an annual update on progress against these targets to Parliament.

The proposals would also add a further labelling requirement on products whereby the sugar content of food and drink products would be represented in teaspoon units, with each teaspoonful regarded as 4 grams of sugar.

Finally, the Bill puts forward the introduction of standards on the advertisement of food and drink products, including ensuring that the sugar content of a product is displayed on any advertisement or promotional material. It would also prohibit the description of a product as “*healthy*” or “*low-fat*” where the sugar content exceeded 20%.

Whilst the Bill is highly unlikely to become law with the General Election looming in May, it does have cross-party support, so provides an insight into the potential future regulation of the sugar content of food and drink products. The sector is clearly under continued pressure in respect of sugar, though it is questionable whether such regulation is necessary or helpful, given the innovative and voluntary steps already being taken by producers and retailers to address this complex issue.

The *Sugar in Food and Drinks (Targets, Labelling and Advertising) Bill* is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/l2f4a7b>

REFUSAL OF ARTICLE 13(5) HEALTH CLAIMS

Commission Regulation (EU) 2015/8 of 6 January 2015 refusing to authorise certain health claims made on foods, other than those referring to the reduction of disease risk and to children’s development and health was published in the Official Journal of the EU, L3/6, 7/1/2015.

This Regulation refuses the inclusion of a number of Article 13(5) health claims in the Union list of permitted claims relating to the following claims relating to glucose:

- Glucose is metabolised within body’s normal energy metabolism;
- Glucose supports normal physical activity;
- Glucose contributes to normal energy-yielding metabolism;
- Glucose contributes to normal energy-yielding metabolism during exercise;
- Glucose contributes to normal muscle function.

However, the health claims used prior to the entry into force of the Regulation may continue to be used for a maximum period of six months after the entry into force of the Regulation on 27 July 2015. The Official Journal is available via this link: <http://tinyurl.com/m9aawel>

EFSA AND FSA STATEMENTS ON THE BENEFITS OF EATING FISH

The European Food Safety Authority’s (EFSA) Scientific Committee has published a statement on the benefits of fish/ seafood consumption compared to the risks from methylmercury in fish and seafood.

Following a request from the European Commission to carry out a risk benefit analysis as regards the risks and benefits to human health of fish and seafood consumption related to methylmercury, the EFSA Scientific Committee created scenarios based on typical fish consumption patterns of population groups at risk of exceeding the tolerable weekly intake (TWI) for methylmercury. Consuming species with a high content of methylmercury influences the number of servings that can be eaten before the Tolerable Weekly Intake (TWI) for methylmercury is reached.

The Scientific Committee is recommending that each member state should consider its own pattern of fish consumption, especially the species of fish consumed, and carefully assess the risk of exceeding the TWI of methylmercury while obtaining the health benefits resulting from consumption of fish and seafood.

FSA has already published advice on this issue for UK consumers, and is reminding people of the importance of following the recommendations. For pregnant women, the amount of tuna consumed should be no more than two tuna steaks a week (about 140g cooked or 170g raw each). Children, pregnant women and women who are trying to get pregnant should not eat shark, swordfish or marlin.

The EFSA article can be access via this link: <http://tinyurl.com/pcolaxq> and the FSA update here: <http://tinyurl.com/mml24xv>

PROCESSING AND RETAIL

CATALOGUE OF VEGETABLE SPECIES

The Official Journal of the European Union, C446/01, includes the full 33rd complete edition of 'Common catalogue of varieties of vegetable species'.

Catalogues are based on the registration of plant varieties in EU countries after they have been technically examined there and notified to the Commission. Variety registration is a precondition for the certification of seed.

To be listed, varieties must meet standards on:

- Distinctness;
- Uniformity;
- Stability; and
- Value for cultivation and use - for agricultural crops.

This value is based on:

- Yield;
- Resistance to harmful organisms;
- Response to the environment; and
- Quality characteristics.

The Official Journal C446/01 can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/ktjh3ff>

FSB "SUPPLY CHAIN BULLYING AFFECTS 1 IN 5 SMALL BUSINESSES"

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) released information in December 2014 stating that new research has uncovered alarming levels of widespread unfair dealing.

The new survey of 2,500 members found almost one in five (17%) said they faced supply chain bullying in one form or another in the past two years.

The results indicate a serious deterioration of payment practices much wider than 'pay to stay'. The FSB is calling for a toughening up of the Prompt Payment Code, as well as fresh measures to stamp out the most heinous examples of bad practice like retrospective discounting and 'pay to stay'.

The Prompt Payment Code should be a key tool in improving payment culture. The Government has promised to toughen up the code. The FSB wants to see any company looking to supply the public sector to extend the governments standard 30 day prompt payment terms to their own suppliers. Small businesses want 60 day payment terms to be set as an absolute maximum for any business signed up to the Prompt Payment Code. If a company will not agree to 60 days they should not be allowed to sign up.

FSB has produced a list of examples of the most common poor payment practices, which can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/pv5lr36>

GROCERY ADJUDICATOR MEETING WITH RETAIL CODE COMPLIANCE OFFICERS

The Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA) meeting records from November 2014 have been published.

The GCA meets with Code Compliance Officers (CCOs) quarterly and plans to meet as a group at intervals during the year. These meetings allow the Adjudicator to provide an update to all CCOs on the work of the GCA and to make retailers aware of the main areas of concern raised by suppliers.

CCOs are asked to assess if the retailer practice on the issues raised are carried out in their organisations and to consider what action may be taken to ensure a breach of the Groceries Supply Code of Practice does not occur.

The meeting notes are available here: <http://tinyurl.com/m235pr2>

OPEN COMPETITION ENQUIRY ON PORK PIES SECTOR

The Competition Marketing Authority (CMA) has found that Pork Farms' completed acquisition of Kerry Foods' chilled savoury pastry (CSP) business gives rise to a realistic prospect of a substantial lessening of competition and will be referred for an in-depth phase 2 investigation unless acceptable undertakings are offered.



Pork Farms' and Kerry Foods' CSP business both manufacture and supply branded and own label CSP pork products to the food retail sector. The CSP sector includes a range of products, such as: pork pies, sausage rolls, pasties and slices, quiches and scotch eggs, and is worth approximately £1 billion a year.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) found that, as a result of the transaction, which completed on 17 August 2014, the merged entity will become the largest or second largest manufacturer and supplier of some CSP products to grocery retailers and to convenience stores, either as own label or branded goods. For these products, the merged entity will face competition from only 1 or 2 other large suppliers.

The CMA has found that there is a realistic prospect that the merger will result in a substantial lessening of competition in the branded, own label and convenience retail segments of the supply of cold pies, and the supply of sausage rolls, pasties and slices (when considered in combination) or the supply of sausage rolls (when considered individually). The CMA has also found that there is a realistic prospect that the merger will result in a substantial lessening of competition in the own label segment of the supply of hot pies. The CMA is concerned that a lessening of competition may result in higher prices or a reduction in choice or quality for consumers of these CSP products.

For more information on the merger, and the CMA inquiry, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/oyq9v7k>

ASA UPHOLD COMPLAINTS ON ALDI 'SWAP AND SAVE' COMPARISON

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has upheld two complaints regarding the Aldi 'Swap & Save' advertising campaign.

The TV advert featured four shoppers discussing their experience of swapping from their usual supermarket to Aldi.

Tesco challenged two points:

- the comparison was misleading and did not comply with the Code, because they believed the eight-week comparison period was out of date and invalid for a price sensitive market (and the later revalidation of the prices was not sufficient to address that), the weekly shops were not compared on a like-for-like basis, the selection of items to include or exclude was arbitrary and the explanatory information in the ads was not sufficiently prominent; and
- the comparison was not verifiable, because they believed the relevant verification information was flawed.

The ASA upheld both complaints and ruled that the ads must not appear again in their current form. ASA told Aldi Stores Ltd to ensure that in future the basis for comparisons was made clear and did not mislead, and that their comparisons were verifiable. The full details can be found on Adjudication page of the ASA website, found here: <http://tinyurl.com/mwvxvu4>

LAUNCH OF THE RETAIL OMBUDSMAN SERVICE

The Retail Ombudsman Service (TRO) was launched on 2 January. The TRO is an independent and impartial organisation for the resolution of disputes between consumers and retailers. The service is free to consumers who can complain to TRO before they contact the retailer or if they have contacted the retailer and not had a satisfactory response within 8 weeks.

The ombudsman acts on behalf of 3000 retailers who have signed up to its service and are bound to a code of practice to honour the outcome of the TRO service. It has been reported that in its first weekend over 300 complaints were received.

Find out more on the TRO website: <http://tinyurl.com/nbm4hyo>

GROCERY CODE ADJUDICATOR GETS POWERS TO FINE

Regulatory measures that will grant the Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA) the power to fine UK supermarkets that have breached the Groceries Code have been laid in Parliament.

The Adjudicator will be able to impose penalties on the large supermarkets of up to 1% of their annual UK turnover, dependant on the seriousness of the breach. The GCA has published guidance on the principles that will be used to calculate the level of any fine.

These new measures will sit alongside existing powers to issue supermarkets with recommendations as to their future conduct, and to 'name and shame' those that have breached the code.

The code imposes on the supermarkets an over-arching principle of fair dealing with their direct suppliers; and includes, amongst other things, specific provisions governing terms of supply, timing of payments, marketing and promotional costs, and payments as a condition of being a supplier. The code does not govern issues relating to pricing.

Find out more and also to access the Regulation and A copy of the GCA guidance on the principles that will be used to calculate the level of any fine at: <http://tinyurl.com/q762jqw>



THE CMA CONSULT ON UNFAIR CONTRACT TERMS



The Competition and Markets Authority has opened a consultation on a suite of draft unfair contract terms guidance. The guidance is aimed at helping businesses ensure that the contract terms and notices that they use with consumers are fair.

The new CMA guidance updates and expands 2 key information documents for business, in the light of expected legislative changes. This guidance helps explain the Consumer Rights Bill, which is now going through Parliament, and if passed, would consolidate and

enhance the protection for consumers offered by existing unfair contract terms laws. It is expected to come into force as an Act later in 2015.

The consultation closes on 30 March 2015. The CMA will publish a final version of the guidance and a summary of the responses received. To find out more and respond to the consultation go to: <http://tinyurl.com/km92ezy>

DEBATE BEGINS ON MECHANICALLY SEPARATED MEAT FOLLOWING ECJ JUDGEMENT

Since the European Court of Justice (ECJ) judgement on the Newby case last year and a subsequent letter from the European Commission to the Authorities of EU Member States, reinforcing the requirement for them to enforce the ruling, the FSA have been reviewing and taking legal advice on their current policy position.

A number of BFFF members have contacted me and are very concerned about preserving the current classification of baardered poultry wishbone meat as Non MSM; to date the FSA have supported this position.

I am aware that other EU Members States, most notably Germany but also Netherlands and Poland are requesting businesses to reclassify baardered poultry wishbone as MSM and that inconsistency is developing across the EU.

The FSA have convened a meeting of interested Trade Associations, including BFFF, on 25 February, to discuss guidance they have developed on compliance with the ECJ ruling. If you are interested in being kept updated on the topic, drop me an e mail: sudakin@bff.co.uk and I will include you in the Member Interest Group for this topic.

REFRIGERATION

F GAS: GUIDANCE FOR USERS, PRODUCERS AND TRADERS

The EU has introduced a new regulation on the use of fluorinated greenhouse gases. The new Regulation (EU) No 517/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 replaces the 2006 regulation and started to take effect from 1 January 2015. It impacts anyone who:

- manufactures, uses or services equipment that contains F gases, like refrigeration and air conditioning systems, solvents or aerosols
- produces or wholesales F gas
- imports or exports F gas, or equipment containing F gas, to or from the EU

The Gov.uk website now features an extensive list of guidance, on various topics surrounding F Gas, for Users, Producers and Traders.

The sections on the website are:

- 'Operators' (users) of equipment containing F Gas
- Refrigeration or air conditioning equipment containing HCFCs
- Service companies that maintain equipment containing F Gas
- HFC phase down
- Equipment manufacturers and importers
- Semiconductor manufacturers and magnesium smelters
- Businesses with record keeping requirements
- Regulated gases and supporting guidance

All of the relevant information, along with links to the sections, is available here:

<http://tinyurl.com/o8s4hfm>

You can also find out more about F Gas Regulation on the European Commission website through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/peup5wd> from information available on the ACRIB website here: <http://tinyurl.com/puneevt> and some comprehensive guidance notes on the responsibilities in particular sectors on the Ray Gluckman website, as developed in conjunction with Defra: <http://tinyurl.com/lpxmh8p>

The UK Regulation providing for enforcement of the EU regulation was laid in Parliament on 19 February and, subject to parliamentary approval, will come into force on 19 March 2015, it can be accessed through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/oxj52pb>



LIST OF REGULATED FLUORINATED GREENHOUSE GASES



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

On 31 December 2014, Defra published a list of fluorinated greenhouse gases covered by EU Regulation 517/2014.

The table includes the substance name, industrial designation, chemical formula and global warming potential.

The published list is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/mtag4gl>

The EU's 2014 F Gas regulation can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/ggxzv9m>

REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT AND OFFICIAL CONTROLS

BRDO PUBLISH GROWTH DUTY DRAFT GUIDANCE

The Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO) has published draft guidance on growth duty.

The draft guidance has been published to assist understanding of how the growth duty is intended to operate in practice. The duty is included in the Deregulation Bill and obliges regulators to have regard for economic growth when making decisions.

The guidance is principles-based to enable a wide range of regulators to incorporate the duty into their policies and operations as appropriate as there is no one size that fits all.

The draft guidance is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/pbv3cnd>

There is also an impact for non-economic regulators, which can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/ns65h34>

FSA LETTER ON FIR ENFORCEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT NOTICES

The FSA have written to Local Authorities giving them guidance for issuing Improvement Notices with respect to the new Food Information Regulations (FIR) 2014. Most of the new provisions of the FIR came into force on 13th December 2014 and FSA have been updating Local Authorities on the enforcement provisions that would be in place from that date.

Businesses Operators are responsible for complying with the Regulations to ensure that consumers are provided with the necessary information. Local Authorities are encouraged to adopt a proportionate approach when dealing with contraventions of the new labelling and customer information requirements. The FSA states that when determining the appropriate action to take, each case should be considered on its own merits, and that consideration should be given to whether the FBO can demonstrate that they have taken or are taking appropriate action to update their labelling to comply with the Regulations, and whether there are any food safety implications.

Consideration also needs to be given to any advice issued by, or agreement reached by, other LAs (including, the Primary Authority or Home Authority) in accordance with Article 541 of EU Regulation 1169/2011. In these instances the FSA are requesting that the enforcing authority adopt a flexible approach.

The letter and guidance that is provided in the annex is available on the FSA website: <http://tinyurl.com/naza92u>

SENTENCING GUIDELINES FOR FOOD HYGIENE OFFENCES

During 2014, there have been several instances where the Courts have levied higher fines for Health and Safety, Food Hygiene and Corporate Manslaughter offences. The Sentencing Council have drafted guidelines supporting these higher fines and to provide a framework for considering what might be the appropriate and proportionate punishment.

The guidelines are new for food but are seen as necessary as with only relatively few prosecutions each year (just 280 in UK during 2013) and a wide variation in the size or organisation and level of culpability inconsistent sentencing is sometimes seen.

The draft guidelines and BFFF response to the consultation can be accessed in the enforcement section of the Technical Guidance page on the BFFF website: <http://bfff.co.uk/technical/guidance/>

The primary aim of the guidelines is “to ensure that all sentences are proportionate to the offence committed and in relation to other offences.”

The draft guidelines cover sentencing for corporate manslaughter, health and safety and food safety and hygiene offences. They are structured in a very similar to those used by the Courts when sentencing more typical ‘criminal’ offences such as burglary and theft, using a 4 step approach. Considering the seriousness of the offence, the level of culpability and the degree of harm a starting point for the level of penalty is established.

The Court will then consider whether the penalty is fair and proportionate and any mitigating or aggravating factors. Most of the penalties are fines but there are also some custodial sentences. Finally the Court will consider any other factors, for example if the organisation is a charity.

The consultation on the sentencing guidelines has now closed. BFFF, however, did respond on behalf of Members, that the proposed fines were too high and disproportionate, and also that a business’ turnover was not a suitable measure on which to judge the size of a business and its ability to pay.

FOOD STANDARDS SCOTLAND TAKES SHAPE

On 22 January 2015 the Scottish Minister for Public Health announced the appointment of seven board members for Food Standards Scotland, the new food body which takes over the functions of the FSA in Scotland from 1 April 2015; providing Scotland with regulation and independent advice on food safety and standards, food information and nutrition.

Find out more on the FSA website through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/n4wkfrd>

The Food (Scotland) Bill 2015 was passed by Parliament on 9 December 2014 and received Royal Assent on 13 January 2015

The bill also makes a number of amendments to the Food Safety Act 1990, including provisions on food information, contravention of food information law, the duty to report non-compliance with food information law, the food hygiene information scheme and the regulation of animal feeding stuffs.

The Act also deals with administrative sanctions, including fixed penalty notices and compliance notices.

The Act is published on the legislation.gov website and can be accessed through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/opnlpma>

FSA UPDATES POLICY ON APPROVAL OF STAND ALONE COLD STORES

The FSA has circulated an updated policy document to Local Authorities on the approval of Stand Alone Cold Stores.

Standalone cold stores are those which are not co-located with approved slaughterhouses, cutting plants or game handling establishments. There has been a requirement to clarify whether such coldstores should be approved under hygiene regulation 853/2004 or must only be registered under hygiene regulation 852/2004.



Historically coldstores have been seen as very low risk and have had only to be registered with their Local Authority; differences in interpretation since the publication of guidance in 2012 means that increasingly since then new coldstores and some existing have been asked to move to approval.

BFFF believe that there is potential that the move to be an 'approved' food business will mean additional regulatory burdens for Wholesales and Members operating standalone coldstores. This may be in the form of increased inspections, more stringent hygiene and fabric standards, the roll out of regulatory enforcement policies such as the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and extensions to charging for advice.

I am now in contact with Nicholas Laverty at the FSA and will be trying to arrange to meet with him, if possible in conjunction with Chris Sturman at the FDF and James Bielby of FWD.

The new policy position clarifies that a standalone coldstore must be approved if it is handling Products of Animal Origin (PoAO) unless it is exempted, exemptions are:

- Coldstores engaged in retail operations (ie supplying the final consumer)
- Coldstores engaged in supplying retail operations, including caterers, on a marginal localised or restricted basis
- Coldstores are part of a logistical distribution chain, that is PoAO that are prepacked and destined for a specific retailer, where activity is limited to storage and transport.
- Coldstores that exclusively handle composite products, that is products that contain both products of plant origin and processed PoAO.

We have always argued strongly that the operations carried out by coldstores supplying retail and food are the same and that consequentially that only coldstores carrying out handling, packing or wrapping operations for PoAO should be approved.

The FSA letter gives Local Authorities a year to approve all affected coldstore operations and can be found on the FSA website through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/pth448v>

RESEARCH

FOOD AND YOU 2014 SURVEY RESULTS

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published the results of its survey exploring the public's behaviours, attitudes, and knowledge on food safety issues across the UK

Following face-to-face interviews with more than 3,000 people across the UK, the survey found that:

- Overall, 53% of respondents said that they had made at least one change in their buying or eating arrangements in the last six months for financial reasons;
- Almost half of respondents who had a fridge (47%) reported never checking their fridge temperature;
- 50% of respondents who reported storing raw meat and poultry in the fridge reported practices in line with those recommended to avoid cross contamination;
- 65% of respondents recognised the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, and 20% reported using a scheme to check the hygiene rating of an establishment before choosing to eat there.

Regional differences were also identified.

The survey results can be accessed via this link: <http://tinyurl.com/qxca7vg>

and from the FSA at: <http://tinyurl.com/pet4v5a>

GERMAN CONSUMERS BELIEVE FARMING IS CAUSING ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

A recent Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) study on risk assessment has found that the majority of German consumers believe that animal farming is the cause of antimicrobial resistance.

In the public discussion, animal farming and its increased use of veterinary drugs are largely seen as the causes of for the increase in antimicrobial resistance.

In a survey, BfR has tried established what people in Germany actually know about the occurrence of pathogenic strains of bacteria and about resistance to antibiotics. According to a recent survey conducted by the BfR, more than half of the German population believe that antimicrobial resistance is most likely caused by animal farming. However, resistance to antibiotics affects human medicine as much as veterinary medicine and agriculture, meaning that the challenges can be overcome only through a joint effort.

More information on this is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/le6wpjy>

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT & CSR

GOOD PRACTICES IN FOOD WASTE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION

The European Commission has published a compilation of good practice initiatives in food waste prevention and reduction.

The initiatives include:

- Research and innovation;
- Awareness information and education;
- Policy, awards and self-imposed certification; and
- Food redistribution.

The new initiatives can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/p7unuro>

GLOBAL ACTION NEEDED ON WATER USAGE IN FOOD PRODUCTION

The Institution of Chemical Engineers (IChemE) is urging coordinated action to reduce the amount of hidden water used in food and drink production – estimated at up to 1.8 million litres per person every year equivalent to an Olympic size swimming pool.

Each person consumes between 2,000-5,000 litres of water embedded in their food, every day – or between 730,000-1,825,000 million litres annually.

Currently, around 90 per cent of all freshwater is used by agriculture (70 per cent) and industry (20 per cent), leaving just 10 per cent for domestic use.



However, as the population grows and more people move to a western-style diet, water extraction is estimated to increase by over 50 per cent to 6,900 billion per year.

By 2050, the overall impact will see around two thirds of the world's population living in 'water scare' areas, compared to just seven per cent at present.

A full analysis of the hidden water footprint in food and IChemE's recommendations are contained in a new policy report produced by IChemE called "Water Management in the Food and Drink Industry", which is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/lq9eqjj>

IChemE's recommendations and conclusions:

- All governments should set targets for reducing the amount of water used in food production worldwide by 20 per cent by 2020.
- Industry should improve the monitoring of water usage in food production worldwide by using water footprinting.
- Governments should ensure that the use of recycled water in food production becomes more widely accepted through creating, enforcing and promoting rigorous international quality standards.
- Manufacturers should be incentivised to use alternative, sustainable sources of water (e.g. water in food, rain-fall, saltwater).
- An investment of £500 billion (US\$800 billion) per year in the construction of new capacity, infrastructure and appropriate technologies to improve efficiency of water management globally.

MSC RESEARCH ON SUPERMARKET UPTAKE OF SUSTAINABLE FISH

Independent research commissioned by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) reveal a growing gap between supermarkets when it comes to offering their customers ecolabelled sustainable seafood choices and protecting ocean environments. At the same time, the availability of MSC certified fish is better than ever with a million tonnes of MSC certified cod caught last year.

Since 2010, Sainsbury's has been top of the table in terms of numbers of products stocked, with 163 MSC-certified seafood products for the last financial year. The retailer's product numbers are almost twice its closest competitor, Waitrose, which is in second place with 79 certified seafood products and more than three times the number of products stocked by M&S.

Despite a growing demand for demonstrably sustainable seafood, Tesco has stalled with the number of MSC ecolabelled products on its shelves going from 17 in 2010 to 18 in 2014. Morrison's commitment to certified sustainable seafood has dropped from 12 to 8 and Asda has similarly fallen from 27 to 21 certified sustainable products over the same period.

Find out more on the MSC website: <http://tinyurl.com/oj7xmew>

FISHERIES DISCARD BAN HAS STARTED

From 1 January fishermen targeting pelagic quota species such as mackerel and herring will have to land all the quota fish they catch, helping bring an end to practice of throwing fish back overboard.

This obligation follows three years of hard-fought negotiations led by the UK government in Europe and is the first phase of the introduction of the wider 'discard ban'. Previously fishermen had been required to discard some of their catch before they landed at ports, leading to up to a million tonnes being thrown back into European waters. While the practice was discouraged a ban was never formally agreed by Member States until the UK took the lead to secure significant reforms to the Common Fisheries Policy in Europe, including:

A ban on discarding fish;

- a legally binding commitment to fishing at sustainable levels; and
- decentralised decision making, allowing Member States to agree the measures appropriate to their fisheries.

The ban will first apply to pelagic species including blue whiting, boarfish, herring, horse mackerel, mackerel, Norway pout, sandeel and sprat. It will also include by-catch of quota species, such as cod and whiting, and any quota fish that are below the minimum landing size.

The Marine Management Organisation's (MMO) guidance for fishermen is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/o4stfjv>. This outlines which fish come under the new landing obligation, what fishermen have to do with them on board, and which can be sold for human consumption.

The European Commission's guidance is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/q37nelo>

A ban on the discarding of demersal fish (e.g. plaice, cod and hake) will be introduced between 2016 and 2019.



COURTAULD RESULTS: PACKAGING DOWN & REDISTRIBUTION UP

The first year results of the Courtauld Commitment Phase 3, has been released by WRAP. The results shows an approximate 4.5% reduction of the carbon impacts of packaging, while food waste prevention efforts have led to 80% more food being redistributed.

Signatories' efforts to reduce packaging, increase recycled content and use different packaging materials has contributed to a significant reduction in the carbon impact of packaging, which is down by around 4.5%, well ahead of the 2015 target of zero increase.

While there has been little change in the overall manufacturing and retail waste against a 3% reduction target, signatories report an increase in recycling and recovery, with less material going to sewer or for disposal. Signatories have also reported a substantial increase in the volumes of unsold food redistributed for human consumption; almost doubling from 21kt to 38kt.

To ensure the target is met, a concerted effort by signatories is required to focus their activities on the implementation of more waste prevention and resource efficiency measures. WRAP will be working with signatories to help them target their activity to achieve the most effective results. One aspect of this is the sharing of good practice. WRAP has also published a series of case studies illustrating some of the changes introduced by signatories

Progress against the household food waste target is not collected yearly but will be available for final year reporting.

More information can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/luekcyk> and the case studies are available here: <http://tinyurl.com/nxkng3y>

DEFRA STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL

Defra announced in December 2014 that it has published a Statement on the summary of the progress made over the last 12 months in sourcing sustainable palm oil.



This second update includes information from each organisation which signed up to the statement explaining their achievements in the past year. It also provides information on government procurement of sustainable palm oil, advice for government procurers and businesses on sourcing sustainable palm oil, monitoring UK progress towards 100% sustainable palm oil, and the labelling of palm oil in food products.

The UK statement on sustainable palm oil – 2 year progress report is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/n6cx472>

TECHNOLOGY AND NOVEL FOODS

EU PUBLISHES FIRST INSECT FOOD SAFETY GUIDE

For the first time, the EU has published food safety guidelines for insects destined for human consumption. They have been created in response to the likelihood of insects being widely consumed in Europe.

Hazards per species of insect, including cultivation conditions and additional processing, are outlined in the guide that has been produced by the Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) in Belgium.

The guidelines are the first step in the possible development of a regulated sector. But, to guarantee the food safety of entomophagy on a large scale in Europe, more research into the microbial and chemical safety of insects for human consumption is needed.

FASFC suggested that safety could be controlled through good hygiene at the rearing and processing stages. However, a heating step before consumption would be necessary, as would labelling products with appropriate storage and preparation information to consumers. Labelling should also include information for consumers allergic to seafood or dust mites.

FASFC guidance on insects for human consumption can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/oj7xmb3>



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