

T & L UPDATE

BFFF TECHNICAL AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

JUNE 2015 - ISSUE 78



British Frozen Food Federation

Registered Office: Warwick House, Unit 7, Long Bennington Business Park, Main Road, Long Bennington, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG23 5JR

Tel: 01400 283090 Fax: 01400 283098 Websites: www.bfff.co.uk www.coolcooking.co.uk

CONTENTS

ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

Trade Mark Reforms	5
EU Commission Communication on Better Regulation	5
ATQs for Certain Fishery Products to Union Processors	5
High Level Forum for Better Functioning Food Supply Chain	6
How EU Legislation gets Created	6

FOOD SAFETY AND ZOOSES

2nd Edition of ACT e-Newsletter Published	11
Global Food Safety Conference 2015 – Executive Summary	12
Food Standards Agency's Chicken Challenge	13
Campylobacter Update	13
Foodborne Viral Infections	14
FSA Annual Report of Incidents	14

ANIMAL WELFARE

FSA Review of Welfare Standards at Slaughterhouses	7
Fly-grazing Act Comes into Force	7

FOOD SECURITY, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

EU Food Fraud Network Activity Report	15
---------------------------------------	----

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

IGD Academy Newsletter for Business Development	8
What Businesses want from new Government	8
BRC Global Standard for Agents and Brokers Achieves UKAS Accreditation	8

IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Commission Report on the Benefits of TTIP for SMEs	15
BPEX Pig and Poultry Pocketbook Published	16
UKTI Guide to Selling Goods and Services in China	16
Thailand IUU Yellow Carded	16

CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS & FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

Perchlorate Monitoring in Food	9
Perchlorate in Fruit and Veg Opinion Re-Published	9
Microplastic Particles in Food	10
Endocrine Disruptors: Industry Accused of Delaying tactics	10
Acrylamide in Food is a Public Health Concern	11

LABELLING AND GENERAL FOOD LAW

Updated FSA Guidance on Allergen Labelling	17
WTO Rules against US over CoOL	17
Mechanically Separated Meat Update	18
FIC Compliant QUID Calculator	18
Dual Weight Indications for Frozen Glazed Products Update	18
Origin Labelling	19
Date of Freezing Update	19

CONTENTS

NUTRITION, ADDITIVES AND HEALTH

EFSA Re-Evaluation of Chlorophylls and Chlorophyllins	20
EFSA Opinion on Extracts of Rosemary E 392	20
EFSA Evaluation of Ascorbate as Food Additives	21
Subsidies needed for Healthy Food	21
Obesity: WHO Publish New Data on Obesity in Europe	21

RESEARCH

Broccoli's Superpowers are Growing Stronger	29
Glucosinolates in Cruciferous Vegetables	29

PROCESSING AND RETAIL

Scotland Call for UK Wide Deposit Return Scheme	22
Reduction in Consumption of Carrier Bags	23
Seafish Corporate Plan	23
CMA Receives Super-Complaint from Which?	24
CMA 'What are Super-Complaints?' Guidance	24
The Retail Industry: Statistics, Policy and Key Economic Indicators	25
ASA Publishes Annual Report 2014	25

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT & CSR

Environmental Liability – Polluter Pays Principle	30
Persistent Organic Pollutants	30
MEPs Comment on Global Security	30
Land Use Change Proposal	31
French Supermarkets Required to Give Unsold Food to Charity	31
Implications of Climate Change for Fish Production	31
PROFEL: Highlights Contribution of Frozen to Reducing Food Waste	32
Pesticides and Bees: Call for Data	32
Retailers' Waste Management Shows the Way to Environmental Sustainability	33

REFRIGERATION

HCFC Phase-out – Information for Operators	26
--	----

TECHNOLOGY AND NOVEL FOODS

EU's Policy on GMOs	33
Application for Approval of Chia Seeds	34
Commission Authorises 17 GMOs for Food/Feed Uses	34
Genetically Modified Organisms: List of Current Consents	35
Eating Insects: Cultural and Individual Experiences	35

REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT AND OFFICIAL CONTROLS

FSA Welcomes Prosecutions	26
Business Secretary outlines Enterprise Bill	26
Consultation on Drinking Water (Wales) Regulations 2015	27
FSA Publishes Strategic Plan – Food We Can Trust	27
Approval of Standalone Cold Stores	28
FSA Board Meeting Online	28
CTSI Urges Government to Rethink Trading Standards Structure	28

FOREWORD

Welcome to the latest Technical and Legislative Update from the British Frozen Food Federation! It is designed to keep you current on all of the latest regulatory developments, the activities of the National and European Regulators as well as the latest available scientific research, technological developments, guidance and codes of practice.

As a service here for the benefit of the Technical Professionals working in the Frozen Food Sector we want to hear if there is anything you would like to see included in future editions - drop me a line: sudakin@bfff.co.uk, we want to hear your views.

BFFF have continued to actively challenge the EU Commission's ruling that frozen meat, meat preparations and unprocessed fish must have a 'frozen on' date labelled that corresponds to the date that the material from which it was made was first frozen. Defra have been really supportive of the frozen sector an effort to change this Commission view and the unfair demonisation of frozen food. We developed a legal opinion commissioned from Roythornes Solicitors and a policy paper indicating the considerable potential trade impact of the policy. As part of our influencing strategy we also engaged with the European Commission, sympathetic Member States and other Trade Associations in the UK and across Europe ahead of a key Working Group Meeting on 10th June.

At the working group meeting Defra again presented the arguments and on this occasion was supported by 4 other Member States and crucially the position was unopposed by the others. BFFF are disappointed that the Commission continues to maintain that the date of freezing for meat and fish remains the date of first freezing of the fish as caught and frozen at sea or carcass as first frozen. However, we are delighted that the Commission has finally conceded that, in the case of meat preparations and some unprocessed fishery products, where the meat is combined with other ingredients that the date of freezing should be the date of freezing of the meat preparation and does not have to be the date of freezing of the meat ingredient.

A form of words is now being drafted (by Defra) to clarify the new Commission position which I understand is intended to be the basis of a Commission communication - we will of course share this with you when it is finalised.

Enjoy T&L 78 and if you have any queries please do contact me sudakin@bfff.co.uk



Crystal Holmes
Technical Assistant
crystalholmes@bfff.co.uk

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.



Su Dakin
Technical Manager
sudakin@bfff.co.uk

ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

TRADE MARK REFORMS

The European Commission published on 21 April 2015 a press release (which is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/oj52qao>) concerning the provisional political agreement on the trade mark reform package reached by the European Parliament, EU Council and European Commission.

The agreed measures are aimed at making trade mark registration systems all over the EU more accessible and efficient for businesses in terms of lower costs, increased speed, more predictability and greater legal certainty.

The trade mark package concerns two legal instruments:

1. The 1989 Directive (now codified as 2008/95/EC) approximating the laws of the Member States relating to trade marks;
2. The 1994 Regulation (now codified as 207/2009/EC) on the Community trade mark

A Q&A style factsheet has also been published and can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/ppn4ppf>



EU COMMISSION COMMUNICATION ON BETTER REGULATION

The European Commission has published its Better Regulation package. The main document, the communication on “Better regulation for better results – an EU agenda”, stresses its commitment to focus on the things that really need to be done by the EU and making sure they are done well. The communication can also be accessed through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/k85zc3c>

At first sight it seems that, far from simplifying the process, the Commission is actually further complicating it by adding in additional Impact Assessments, advisory bodies, and a new and potentially cumbersome “Regulatory Scrutiny Board” to replace the former Impact Assessment Board, but the structure seems to echo the UK approach on this with its Better Regulation Executive and the activities of the Better Regulation Delivery Office BRDO.

In addition to the Communication outlining the key general principles of Better regulation, the Commission has published a set of other documents, including guidelines and a toolbox, that explain the detail of how Better Regulation should be applied in day to day practice when preparing new initiatives and proposals or managing existing policies and legislation; which can be accessed through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/obcqu4>

The Guidelines on Better regulation apply immediately to all new regulatory proposals and a transitional period will apply until the end of 2015 for a number of initiatives which are already well advanced (the initiatives to which this applies have not been identified).

ATQS FOR CERTAIN FISHERY PRODUCTS TO UNION PROCESSORS FROM 2016

EU Council Regulation 1220/2012 on “autonomous tariff quotas” (ATQs) reaches the end of its validity on 31 December 2015.

The Regulation allows the importation of quotas of fish raw material for processing at zero or reduced tariff rates. This is in order to guarantee the predictability and continuity of the supply of raw materials for processing facilities in the EU.

The European Commission is preparing a proposal to replace the current ATQ Regulation, and will present this to the Council by mid-2015. The Commission is therefore seeking to collect the views of the Member States and EU organisations producing, processing or marketing fishing and aquaculture products.

For more information or to submit your views, please contact i_bartolo@seafish.co.uk

ANIMAL WELFARE

FSA COMPLETES REVIEW OF WELFARE STANDARDS AT SLAUGHTERHOUSES

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has completed a programme of unannounced inspections of all slaughterhouses in Britain, to ensure that the businesses are meeting their obligations on animal welfare standards and that FSA teams are checking their controls appropriately.

The decision to implement the unannounced inspections was taken by the FSA when footage emerged earlier this year of apparent cruelty to animals in two slaughterhouses.

The inspections, which took place in February and March, found that animal welfare standards in 267 businesses (87%) were considered good, and 38 businesses needed improvement; with one business in England requiring urgent improvement.

EU requirements mean that businesses must appoint suitably trained animal welfare officers to ensure that there are procedures in place and they are implemented. Areas needing improvement were generally in relation to the appointment of these officers and use of the standard procedures, as well as other issues around documentation and monitoring. These issues had already been identified by official veterinarians in most premises, and enforcement action was being actively pursued.

In terms of FSA effectiveness, performance was considered good at 294 premises (96%). Improvements (mostly minor) were identified for 12 of the FSA official veterinarians/teams. The areas commonly requiring improvement were in relation to records on slaughterers and their licensing, and the need for increased physical checks and better recording of these checks.

The FSA Board discussed the findings of the audits at a meeting on 3rd June. The full inspection results can be found in the Board paper, here: <http://tinyurl.com/o4xyplj>



FLY-GRAZING ACT COMES INTO FORCE

New laws to clamp down on people illegally abandoning horses have come into force, improving horse welfare standards across the country.

The Control of Horses Act 2015 makes changes to the law to deter people from illegally grazing or simply abandoning horses on public and private land, which is known as 'fly-grazing'.

As many as 3,000 horses are thought to be illegally fly-grazing across the country.



The changes mean horse owners who fly-graze their animals without permission can now be dealt with more quickly and effectively.

Under the previous Animals Act 1971 an abandoned horse could only be disposed of after 14 days through sale at market or public auction. The new Act means fly-grazing horses have to be reported to police within 24 hours, and owners now have four days to claim their animals.

Previously, an abandoned horse could only be disposed of through sale at market or public auction. The new law extends the options for dealing with abandoned horses, which now include private sale, gifting and rehoming.

The Control of Horses Act 2015 is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/o7ne77c>

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

IGD ACADEMY NEWSLETTER FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) Academy has produced a newsletter providing hints and tips for business development.

Each month IGD Academy trainers will pull together a selection of practical videos, webinars and articles specifically aimed at helping people working in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG).

This first issue contains:

- Top tips for effective business planning;
- Networking: 60 second learning;
- 5 Excel functions to change your life; and
- Recap: Cat Man taster session.

The first IGD Academy Newsletter is available online here: <http://tinyurl.com/par8kpb>

FSB RESEARCH REVEALS WHAT BUSINESSES WANT FROM NEW GOVERNMENT

In the first survey of small business owners to be conducted since the 2015 UK General Election, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) reveals results from 2,327 small firms. The FSB research found well over a third (35%) of the businesses questioned wanted a sustained economic recovery to be the top priority for the new Conservative Government in the next parliament.

Other important priorities for business owners were lowering the cost of doing business and ensuring growth in every nation and region of the UK, not just London and the south east.

When asked what issues they would like the Government to focus on over the next five years, well over half (53%) said they wanted Ministers to reduce the regulatory burden on business, with simplification of the tax system a close second on 51 per cent. Business owners were also clear that reforming business rates and improving the employability of young people were important benchmarks for the next five years.

As part of the survey, FSB members were also asked to say how confident they are the new Government will deliver for small businesses. Many appeared positive with half (51%) saying they are either confident or very confident. However, with over a quarter (28%) claiming to be either unconfident or very unconfident, Ministers will have to move quickly to demonstrate that they will truly do all they can to back small business.

Further information about what small businesses want from Government can be found in the FSB's Manifesto for the 2015 General Election, here: <http://tinyurl.com/nsewjpd>

BRC GLOBAL STANDARD FOR AGENTS AND BROKERS ACHIEVES UKAS ACCREDITATION

BRC Global Standards has announced that the first certification bodies have gained UKAS accreditation to the BRC Global Standard for Agents and Brokers Issue 1.

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service is the National Accreditation Body (NAB) for the UK. Its role is to determine that organisations providing conformity assessment services such as certification, testing, inspection and calibration services, are meeting a required standard of performance.

The BRC Global Standard for Agents and Brokers was published in January 2014, and covers the activities of businesses in the food and food packaging industries that buy, sell or facilitate the trade of products. The Standard also covers the activities of certification bodies providing certification under the Standard. Certification bodies must be approved by the BRC, and this entails accreditation from their NAB.

For more information, visit: <http://tinyurl.com/oyfvuur>

CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS & FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

PERCHLORATE MONITORING IN FOOD

Commission Recommendation (EU) 2015/682 of 29 April 2015 on the monitoring of the presence of perchlorate in food was published in the Official Journal of the EU, L111/32, 30/04/2015.

Following the publication of a Scientific Opinion on the risks for public health related to the presence of perchlorate in food by The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain (Contam Panel), it was recommended that there is a need for more data on the occurrence of perchlorate in food in Europe, especially for vegetables, infant formula, milk and dairy products, to further reduce the uncertainty in the risk assessment.

It has been recommended that Member States should, with the active involvement of food business operators, perform monitoring for the presence of perchlorate in food, and particularly in:

- (a) fruits, vegetables and processed products thereof, including juices;
- (b) foods for particular nutritional uses intended for infants and young children as defined in Regulation (EU) No 609/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- (c) dried herbs and spices; tea; herbal and fruit infusions;
- (d) beverages, including drinking water.

In addition, the Recommendation also sets out the method of analysis and the limit of quantification (LOQ) for certain foods.

The Commission Recommendation 2015/682 can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/py5wxvx>

PERCHLORATE IN FRUIT AND VEG OPINION RE-PUBLISHED

EFSA has re-published its scientific opinion on the risks to public health from perchlorate in food, particularly in fruit and vegetables. Adopted in September 2014, the opinion has been revised because of a technical error. EFSA's experts have re-assessed dietary exposure to perchlorate using corrected data on perchlorate levels in food and taking into account more recently available occurrence data.

Perchlorate is a contaminant present in the environment naturally and as a result of human activity. The use of natural fertilisers and perchlorate contaminated irrigation water may lead to substantial concentrations in leafy vegetables.

EFSA's experts established a tolerable daily intake (TDI) of 0.3 micrograms per kilogram of body weight per day, based on the inhibition of thyroid iodine uptake in healthy adults. The TDI is an estimate of the amount of a substance that people can consume on a daily basis during their whole life without any appreciable risk to health.

EFSA estimated chronic and 'short-term' exposure to perchlorate. A single exposure to perchlorate at levels found in food and water is unlikely to cause adverse effects on human health, including the more vulnerable groups of the population. Overall, chronic dietary exposure to perchlorate is of potential concern, in particular for high consumers in the younger age groups of the population with mild to moderate iodine deficiency. Exposure to perchlorate may be of concern for infants breast-fed by iodine-deficient mothers. The re-assessment of dietary exposure did not affect these overall conclusions.

The re-published opinion can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/oaxat85>



MICROPLASTIC PARTICLES IN FOOD



BfR

The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has requested the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) for a scientific opinion on the occurrence of microplastic and nanoplastic particles in food, especially in seafood.

The term microplastic is used for small plastic particles of different origins, sizes and chemical composition. The exact sizes of microplastics have not been uniformly defined in the relevant literature, they mostly range from 0.001 mm to less than 5 mm.

Risiken erkennen – Gesundheit schützen

Basically, two types of microplastics are distinguished, primary and secondary microplastic. Primary microplastic is specific produced industrially in the form of plastic-based granulates or pellets. Secondary microplastic occurs through chemical and physical ageing and degradation processes in products such as plastic bags and plastic bottles. As far as can be ascertained, secondary microplastic is the main source of entry into the environment.

Currently, the BfR does not have any reliable data on the chemical composition, particle size or concentration of microplastic particles in food. Due to a lack of robust data, a health risk assessment of the consumption of food contaminated with microplastic particles is presently not possible. The BfR has requested the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) for a scientific opinion on the occurrence of microplastic and nanoplastic particles in food, especially in seafood.

We will keep you updated on the EFSA Opinion once it has been formed.

ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS: INDUSTRY ACCUSED OF DELAYING TACTICS

On 20 May, Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) and the journalist Stephane Horel published a report accusing corporate lobby groups of mobilising on endocrine disruptors (EDCs). It shows how chemical trade associations and firms are alleged to have managed to prevent restrictions from being imposed on EDCs.

In particular, the report points the finger at lobby groups representing the chemical industry, pesticides producers, and the plastics sector including CEFIC (European Chemical Industry Council), ECPA (European Crop Protection Association) and major European corporations such as BASF and Bayer who have been particularly active in countering possible regulation of EDCs.



The report also shows that some officials within the European Commission itself have been obstructing the process. In July 2013 the Secretariat-General of the Commission decided to undertake an impact assessment – which was sought by industry. This is alleged to have resulted in a substantial delay: the scientific criteria to define EDCs will not be ready before 2017, 4 years after the legal deadline set by the Parliament.

The way the chemical industry apparently sought to influence and delay the setting of criteria for EDCs has been also revealed in internal documents from the European Commission and EFSA. Published ahead of the DG SANTE conference on 1 June on endocrine disruptors, they reveal the internal wrangling between different Commission directorates which have failed to set the criteria in due time. The emails demonstrate how the then Chief Scientific Adviser Anne Glover, was used by DG Enterprise "to control" DG Environment.

The publication of the report adds to the already existing pressure applied by both MEPs and campaign groups on the Commission to publish its report on EDCs as soon as possible. The report could have a negative impact on the public opinion regarding industry's position on the issue, and business lobbying in general.

The report can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/q4pgrfd>

ACRYLAMIDE IN FOOD IS A PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN

Following a comprehensive review, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published its scientific opinion on acrylamide in food. Experts from EFSA's Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain (CONTAM) have reconfirmed previous evaluations that acrylamide in food potentially increases the risk of developing cancer for consumers in all age groups. This conclusion has not changed since the draft opinion was made available for an open public consultation in July 2014.



Evidence from animal studies shows that acrylamide and its metabolite glycidamide are genotoxic and carcinogenic: they damage DNA and cause cancer. Evidence from human studies that dietary exposure to acrylamide causes cancer is currently limited and inconclusive.

Since acrylamide is present in a wide range of everyday foods, this health concern applies to all consumers but children are the most exposed age group on a body weight basis. The most important food groups contributing to acrylamide exposure are fried potato products, coffee, biscuits, crackers, crisp bread and soft bread.

EFSA's Scientific Opinion on acrylamide in food can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/nmyzaaa>

FOOD SAFETY AND ZOOSES

2ND EDITION OF ACT E-NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have introduced the Acting on Campylobacter Together (ACT) e-newsletter. The ACT e-newsletter is a regular bulletin bringing together information on the government and industry-wide campaign to tackle campylobacter from farm to fork.

Tackling campylobacter is the FSA's top priority. They have set a clear expectation that poultry producers, processors and retailers take action to reduce levels of campylobacter in chicken. Some of these projects are captured in the e-newsletters.

The new 2nd Edition covers:

- Campylobacter Abattoir Campaign
- Investigating impact on bird colonisation status at slaughter
- FSA visit to broiler chicken farms
- A potential silver bullet
- Developments at 2 Sisters Food Group
- Retail survey on levels of campylobacter on chicken

ACT
**Acting on
Campylobacter
Together**

The above issues can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/k6d8pex> and you can sign up to the ACT e-newsletters here: <http://tinyurl.com/nafyzfc>

In addition to the ACT newsletter, the Meat Trade Journal have joined with the FSA to produce a webinar exploring ways to tackle campylobacter across the food chain. The webinar is available by signing up here: <http://tinyurl.com/nfyn83>

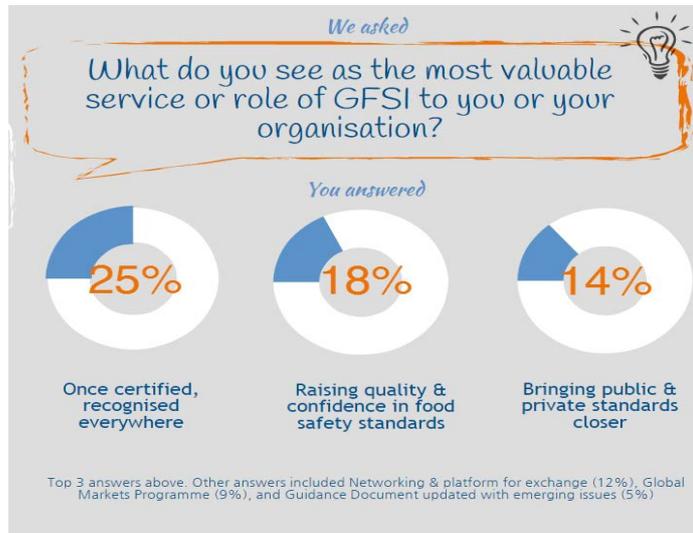
GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY CONFERENCE 2015 – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) has released the Global Food Safety Conference 2015 Executive Summary. You can find session recaps, key quotes and takeaways as well as delegate feedback and conference photos.

This 14th edition of the Global Food Safety Conference was about taking the responsibility of collaborating efficiently in order to provide safer food to seven billion consumers around the world. The conference was an opportunity to share best-practice amongst industry leaders. The GFSC 2015 Executive Summary will hopefully serve as a tool for businesses translate the GFSI approach into a daily reality.

The Executive Summary of the GFSC 2015 is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/phb5h6d>

Below is the feedback from food safety stakeholders.



FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY'S CHICKEN CHALLENGE



The Food Standards Agency (FSA) urged the public to take up the 'Chicken Challenge' as part of Food Safety Week.

The 'Chicken Challenge' aimed to help people cut their chances of getting campylobacter food poisoning.

They wanted consumers to promise to store raw chicken separately from other food, not to wash raw chicken, wash everything that's touched raw chicken and cook it properly.

The FSA aims to halve the levels of food poisoning from campylobacter by the end of 2015. This could mean 100,000 fewer people getting sick.

More information on the challenge can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/on783hc>

CAMPYLOBACTER UPDATE

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has recently published the final set of results from its year-long survey of campylobacter on fresh retail chickens. Campylobacter is the biggest cause of foodborne illness in the UK and commonly found on poultry. Despite it being a priority for the FSA the industry has struggled to find the interventions to reach the agreed targets.

The target, published in January 2011, was to reduce the numbers of most contaminated birds from 27% to 10% by 2015. A banding approach classified the levels of contamination, with samples grouped into 3 bands according to whether the Campylobacter counts in chicken were above or below a set level (i.e. <100 cfu/g, 100-1,000 cfu/g, and >1,000 cfu/g). More information on the targets are on the FSA website at: <http://tinyurl.com/nw7r42v>

The results for the full year in the latest round of sampling show:

- 19% of chickens tested positive for campylobacter at levels greater than 1000 cfu/g
- 73% of chickens tested positive for the presence of campylobacter
- 0.1% (five samples) of packaging tested positive at the highest band of contamination
- 7% of packaging tested positive for the presence of campylobacter

A full analysis of the survey results, including the publication of the raw data and the full year results for smaller supermarkets and retailers, is being carried out by the FSA and will be published later in the summer.

A new survey is planned to start this summer and once again sample fresh whole chickens.

A Campylobacter Joint Working Group has identified a range of interventions spanning the agricultural chain to retail sale, however many of these are only now being fully implemented so continued testing will help the FSA to measure their impact. Find out more about the activity of the JWG : <http://tinyurl.com/ppeyhhr>

A 2009 FSA survey on Campylobacter in chicken identified that Campylobacter loading is significantly reduced by freezing. The survey found only 14% of frozen samples were Campylobacter positive, and where they were enumerated the counts were below 150 cfu/g, suggesting that the public health risk from frozen chicken is much lower than from chilled.

More recent surveys including the current one expressly excluded the sampling of frozen poultry.

Indeed the FSA 2013 refreshed campylobacter strategy included proposals for retail and catering to recognise that frozen poultry is lower risk and to promote its use.



FOODBORNE VIRAL INFECTIONS

In the Food Standard Agency's (FSA) Foodborne Disease Strategy tackling *Campylobacter*, which is the biggest cause of foodborne illness, is identified as the number one priority.

There are also, however, Virus's which are on an increasing trajectory and rightly attracting more focus. The number of laboratory confirmed cases of Norovirus doubled between 2006 and 2012 to 14,500 in 2012.

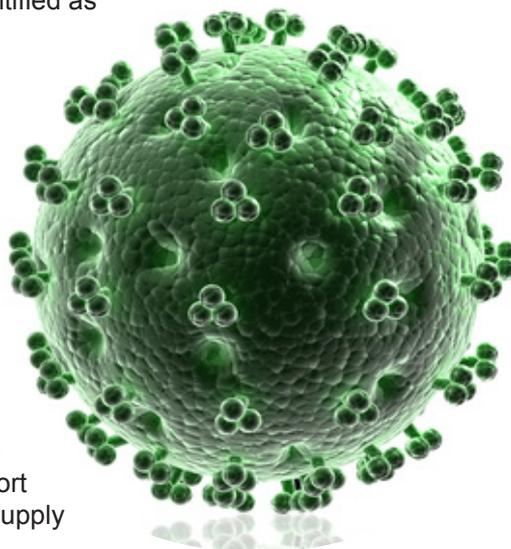
Since January 2013, more than 1,440 cases across 12 European countries have been potentially linked to a single outbreak of hepatitis A virus currently being associate with frozen imported berries and emerging evidence suggests that a significant cause of hepatitis E infections are being acquired due to consumption of undercooked pork products

The Advisory Committee of Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF) have recently completed the first significant review and published a report into the presence and significance of food borne virus's in the UK food supply since 1998: <http://tinyurl.com/p27svts>

The focus of the report is on the primary viral infection risks in the UK including from Hepatitis A, Hepatitis E and Norovirus. There is also focus on particular food groups potentially contaminated at source such as bivalve shellfish, pork products and fresh produce and the group reviewed data on risks associated with infected food handlers.

Key recommendations include the need for research into analytical methods that can quantify the level of viable viral contamination in food and how much is required to cause illness: the need to improve routine surveillance by Government Agencies and the development of reliable methodologies for whole genome sequencing so that outbreaks can be tracked and attributed with greater ease; more research on the effectiveness of sewage water treatments; shellfish depuration and disinfection treatments and produce decontamination post-harvest.

Sir Guy Poppy, the FSA's new Chief Scientific Advisor took the opportunity in his very first scientific report to review the science and evidence on foodborne virus's and outline the FSA research plans in this area: <http://tinyurl.com/ouw9lyy>



FSA ANNUAL REPORT OF INCIDENTS PUBLISHED

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published its latest Annual Report of Food Incidents.

It shows that in 2014, the FSA were notified of, investigated and managed 1,645 food, feed and environmental contamination incidents in the UK. The overall number of incidents was similar to those seen in recent years. However, in most categories, the numbers of incidents differ considerably from year to year.

The four largest contributors to the total number of recorded incidents in 2014 were:

- microbiological contamination (24%)
- veterinary medicines (13%)
- environmental contamination (12%)
- natural chemical contamination (9%)

The full report can be found via this link: <http://tinyurl.com/opwhmsa>



ANNUAL REPORT OF INCIDENTS

REPORT
2015

FOOD SECURITY, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

EU FOOD FRAUD NETWORK ACTIVITY REPORT

The European Commission published on 29 April 2015 a Food Fraud Network Activity Report for 2014.

In 2014, interaction on 60 cases took place through the Network. Alleged violations were mostly related to labelling non-compliances (for instance with regard to durability dates, addition of water or ingredients), falsified certification and/or documents and substitution, such as replacement of a higher value species with a lower value species.

Meat products are the category of foodstuffs for which the majority of exchanges took place through the Network in 2014, followed by fish products and honey. Importantly, however, statistical conclusions related to potential "food fraud" cases in Europe cannot yet be drawn from these data given that Member States may also exchange information outside of the Food Fraud Network and that cases which do not have a cross-border dimension, i.e. which occur at purely national level, are not exchanged via the Network.

The Food Fraud Network Activity Report for 2014 can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/nn7hyvo>



IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

COMMISSION REPORT ON THE BENEFITS OF TTIP FOR SMES

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) has significant potential for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), according to a report presented by EU Trade Commissioner Malmström on 20 April.

The report presents the results of a survey of SMEs carried out in 2014 on challenges they face when exporting to the United States. It also uses newly available data to look at the scale of exports by EU SMEs to the United States.

"SMEs stand to benefit most when we reduce non-tariff barriers and cut red tape. We are working on that in the EU Single Market and here we can see why it is so important to do the same thing in the TTIP negotiations," Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs said.

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



BPEX PIG AND POULTRY POCKETBOOK PUBLISHED

The 2014 edition of the Pig and Poultry Pocketbook has been launched.

The Pocketbook contains the latest facts and figures about the pig industry and similar information for the poultry sector.

Areas covered include;

- pig numbers;
- the supply chain;
- slaughtering and production;
- prices (pigs and feed);
- imports and exports;
- consumption; and
- carcase classification.



The Pocketbook can be downloaded from the BPEX website here: <http://tinyurl.com/o5grxk2>

UKTI GUIDE TO SELLING GOODS AND SERVICES IN CHINA

UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) has published 'New Landscapes of Doing Business in China', an authoritative guide to doing business in China.

Aimed mainly at Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), it has all the information in one place for firms wishing to do business in this dynamic fast-growing economy.

The guide was launched at a seminar at the offices of King and Wood Mallesons in London. China experts provided insights for UK-based companies looking to win business with China.

The guide gives useful information and points of contact to those best placed to assist business in opening up the opportunities and winning business. The market can be accessed by:

- selling goods online
- working with a distributor or agent
- opening an office in the country

The guide was written in collaboration with a number of experts. These were from Bank of China, Deloitte, HSBC, King and Wood Mallesons, the China Britain Business Council, UKTI and UK Export Finance (UKEF) among others.

The UKTI publication can be accessed for free through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/pd725xa>

THAILAND YELLOW CARDED ON I.U.U.

Thailand has been notified as possibly being identified as a non-cooperative country in fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The "yellow card" was shown to Thailand via Commission Decision 2015/C 142/06 published on 29/04/15. In the Decision, the European Commission states that dialogue with Thailand has been in ongoing since 2011, but it remains dissatisfied with progress towards fishery control and monitoring measures and sanctions.

South Korea and the Philippines have been deemed to have shown sufficient progress against IUU fishing and their yellow cards have been withdrawn.

Commission Decision 2015/C 142/06 is available from: <http://tinyurl.com/pk8e7nt>



LABELLING AND GENERAL FOOD LAW

UPDATED FSA GUIDANCE ON ALLERGEN LABELLING

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published an updated version of its technical guidance notes on allergen labelling and information requirements under Regulation (EU) No. 1169/2011 (FIC).

This guidance is designed to help food businesses provide information to customers who need to avoid certain ingredients because of a food allergy or intolerance. It includes the new allergen information rules (EU FIC), general advice and information on food allergy and intolerance, specific voluntary best practice guidance on cross-contamination labelling for pre-packed foods and additional guidance on distance selling.

The FSA guidance can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/m6luuhs>

Additionally, there are a number of useful downloadable resources and documents which can be accessed via Resources for allergen information page (here: <http://tinyurl.com/oq6pvpl>) You can also see other resources that provide advice on food allergy, including Safer Food, Better Business (SFBB) and a number of commercial guidance notes.

INGREDIENTS

Water, Carrots, Onions, Red Lentils (4.5%) Potatoes, Cauliflower, Leeks, Peas, Cornflower, **Wheat**flour, Cream (**milk**), Yeast Extract, Concentrated Tomato Paste, Garlic, Sugar, **Celery** Seed, Sunflower Oil, Herb and Spice, White Pepper, Parsley

ALLERGY ADVICE

For allergens, see ingredients in **bold**

WTO RULES AGAINST U.S. OVER COOL

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has thrown out the US appeal against its ruling over mandatory country of origin labelling.

The long-running dispute concerned the extra burden of record keeping imposed on exporters of meat and livestock to the US, which Canada and Mexico, who were leading the fight against the regulation, said gave the US an unfair advantage in the market.

The WTO had already ruled that the US was placing too much of a burden on exporting countries but the US has argued that changes it had made to the rules had made them fairer.

However, this week the Appellate Body of the WTO rejected the US arguments against the panel's findings and said that the panel's conclusions that the amended CoOL measure increased the record-keeping burden for imported livestock.

The Appellate Body rejected US arguments that the panel's conclusions were based on "incorrect hypothetical" scenarios that were not based on actual, or the most common, trade situations.

The Canadian meat and livestock sectors are celebrating the victory, as are some sections of the US industry, who were concerned about the damage the regulations might do to the cross border trade with Canada and Mexico.

However, now all parties are waiting to see how the US will react to the ruling and whether further amendments will be made.

There are also concerns that the US could now be subject to punitive retaliatory sanctions from Canada and Mexico.

The implications of the ruling by the WTO will also have ramifications around the world for other countries and blocs that want to implement compulsory country of origin labelling, including the EU.

More information can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/opp7jyp>



MECHANICALLY SEPARATED MEAT UPDATE

As part of a multi trade association team led by British Poultry Council (BPC) and including the Food and Drink Federation (FDF) and the British Meat Processors Association (BMPA), BFFF has contributed to the drafting of a paper for the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to protect the understanding that Baardered poultry wishbone meat, turkey neck meat and pork button bone meat is not MSM and to encourage the Commission to review the definition of MSM and allow good quality material currently considered as MSM to be classified as meat.

The document is now close to being finalised. The FSA is aware of the work of the Group and have indicated their support of its approach and contents. We are also aware that the Commission is currently drafting new guidance on MSM so a paper to inform their thinking now, is very timely.

If you would like more information on any of the above please contact sudakin@bff.co.uk



FIC COMPLIANT QUID CALCULATOR

BFFF have established that the 1996 FSA Quid Guidance is still relevant in the context of the Food Information to Consumers Regulation No. 1169/2011 (FIC) in a recent Business Expert Group meeting with Regulators.

Andy Mackay, member of the Nation Enforcement Focus Group, suggested that the Enforcement Group could update the guidance to reflect FIC and revalidate its relevance.

With regard to the method of calculation of Quid the BExG recognised that best practice would be to use the target weight of a product rather than the normal weight, and the guidance does also suggest that the variability in a process should be taken into account.

Andy Mackay suggested that although using target weight would be best practice over nominal weight, from an enforcement point of view TSO's would not be too bothered which approach was used. He also sent BFFF the QUID calculator which is available through the link below.

The Quid Guidance Notes and calculator are available under labelling section on the BFFF website, here: <http://tinyurl.com/q7jk2uc>

DUAL WEIGHT INDICATIONS FOR FROZEN GLAZED PRODUCTS UPDATE

The European Commission have opined that it is not legally permitted to label the total weight (including glaze) on frozen food sold to the consumer and caterers alongside the mandatory net weight. BFFF (and Defra) believe that this is gold plating and there is no rule to suggest this information cannot be given on a voluntary basis. The Commission ruling is creating issues across Europe and has the potential to disrupt trade in fishery products.

Whilst we recognise that over-glazing is an issue within the fish sector that needs to be addressed, BFFF are working very closely with Seafish to develop an approach that will allow an indication of total weight to facilitate the aspects of trade where it is essential, whilst making over glazing less attractive.

Seafish are developing guidance on how to give Net Weight and Total Weight indications that are unambiguous and give a clear indication of the levels of glaze.

Defra having listened to the industry views and arguments will seek a concession from the Commission to allow the labelling of total weight on the outer cases of product that may be destined for sale to a caterer.

There are indications that the Commission is sympathetic to the issues in the catering supply chain, whilst maintaining that products available to consumers at Retail must on have a Net Weight indication.

If you would like more information on any of the above please contact sudakin@bff.co.uk



ORIGIN LABELLING

The European Commission has published two long-awaited reports on origin labelling as requested by the Council and the European Parliament in FIC. Gratifyingly both reports, that were initially due to be released by the end of last year, conclude that the benefits from new mandatory labelling requirements do not outweigh the costs and that voluntary labelling rules seem to be the most suitable solution.



The two reports concern:

- The first report (full and executive summaries are available) looks at the feasibility of different options for mandatory origin labelling for dairy products and minor meats (notably horsemeat, rabbit meat and meat from game and birds)
- The second report explores the need for consumers to be informed on the origin of unprocessed foods, single ingredient products and ingredients that represent more than 50 % of a food.



The reports coincide with a World Trade Organisation (WTO) judgement which ruled against the US in a trade dispute with Argentina on measures affecting the importation of animals, meat and other animal products from Argentina and concerns the burden of Country of Origin rules placed on third countries exporting to the US.

A summary of the case can be found on the WTO website: <http://tinyurl.com/qcadyyv> and on page X

DATE OF FREEZING UPDATE

BFFF have continued to actively challenge the EU Commission's ruling that frozen meat, meat preparations and unprocessed fish must have a 'frozen on' date labelled that corresponds to the date that the material from which it was made was first frozen.

Defra have and continue to support BFFF in our efforts to change the Commission's view despite a lack of support to date from other EU member states in meetings. BFFF commissioned a legal opinion from Roythornes Solicitors and sent Defra an updated policy paper based on providing an alternative legal premise and indicating the considerable potential trade impact.

We have also worked closely with other Trade Associations who are in support of our policy position to share it as widely as possible and get other MS supporting the UK. The position paper was sent to the European Commission for their consideration at the Working Group Meeting of 10th June.

At the working group meeting Defra again presented the argument that the first date of freezing of the food, should be the date that the food in the form in which it is provided to the consumer was first frozen. On this occasion Defra was supported by 4 other Member States and crucially the position was unopposed by the others.

BFFF are disappointed that the Commission continues to maintain that the date of freezing for meat and fish remains the date of first freezing of the fish as caught and frozen at sea or carcass as first frozen.

However, we are delighted that the considerable effort put into our influencing strategy on this point has yielded some success. The Commission has finally conceded that, in the case of meat preparations and some unprocessed fishery product, where the meat is combined with other ingredients that the date of freezing can be the date of freezing of the meat preparation and does not have to be the date of freezing of the meat ingredient.

A form of words is now being drafted to clarify the current Commission position which I understand is intended to be the basis of a Commission communication.

If you would like more information on any of the above please contact sudakin@bff.co.uk

NUTRITION, ADDITIVES AND HEALTH

EFSA RE-EVALUATION OF CHLOROPHYLLS AND CHLOROPHYLLINS

The European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA's) Panel on Food Additives and Nutrient Sources added to food (ANS) published on 7 May 2015 a Scientific Opinion on the re-evaluation of chlorophylls (E 140(i)) as food additives.



Chlorophylls (E 140(i)) were previously evaluated by Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) in 1969 and the Scientific Committee on Food (SCF) in 1975 and 1983 and, in relation to special medical purposes, for young children in 1996. Neither of the Committees established a numerical Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI).

The Panel considered that the toxicological studies available for chlorophylls were limited and did not comply with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidelines or current regulatory requirements, and therefore did not allow for an ADI to be established. The Panel concluded that the available database for chlorophylls was inadequate for risk assessment.

However, chlorophylls are natural dietary constituents, which are present at relatively high concentrations in a number of foods. In addition, the exposure resulting from the use of chlorophylls as food additives is lower than the exposure to chlorophylls from the regular diet. Therefore, the Panel concluded that, at the reported use levels, chlorophylls are not of safety concern as regards their current use as food additives.

EFSA's ANS Panel has also published a Scientific Opinion on the re-evaluation of chlorophyllins (E 140(ii)) as food additives. Chlorophyllins are obtained by saponification of a solvent extract from sources, such as grass, lucerne, and nettle, that could not be regarded as edible plant material or food for humans. Chlorophyllins represent 90 % of the colouring matter in the food additive E 140(ii).

Considering the available data on chlorophylls (E 140(i)), the Panel concluded that chlorophyllins are not metabolites of chlorophylls in humans and owing to their differences in physico-chemical properties, it was not possible to support read-across for toxicity data between these two compounds. The Panel considered that it is necessary to carefully review the definition and identity of E 140(ii) in order to adequately characterise the food additive E 140(ii) as used in the market.

The Scientific Opinion for chlorophyll is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/ouvozuy> and for chlorophyllins is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/nwv9rlf>

EFSA OPINION ON EXTENSION OF USE OF EXTRACTS OF ROSEMARY E 392

The European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA's) Panel on Food Additives and Nutrient Sources (ANS) Panel published on 7 May 2015 a Scientific Opinion on the extension of use of extracts of rosemary (E 392) in fat-based spreads.

A refined exposure assessment was carried out based on the maximum permitted levels (MPLs) authorised in Annex II of Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 for extracts of rosemary (E 392) and the extension of its use in fat-based spreads at the levels proposed by the applicant of 30 mg/kg and 100 mg/kg (for the use in fat emulsions with a fat content less than 80 % where content of polyunsaturated fatty acids is higher than 15 % w/w of the total fatty acid, and for the use in fat emulsions with a fat content less than 80 % where content of fish oil or algal oil is higher than 2 % w/w of the total fatty acid, respectively). This was not covered by the previous re-evaluation of the safety of extracts of rosemary (E 392) as a food additive performed by EFSA in 2008.

The Panel noted that the foods for which extracts of rosemary (E 392) were requested to be extended to were very specific and not available in the FoodEx food nomenclature; in particular, information regarding the content of polyunsaturated fatty acids and the content of fish oil or algal oil was not available. Therefore, in the assessment, only the consumption of fat emulsions with a fat content less than 80 % was taken into account at the two proposed levels of 30 and 100 mg/kg.

The Panel concluded that, since the two additional uses for rosemary extracts in fat-based spreads would not change the estimated exposure to the food additive compared with the already approved permitted uses in any part of the population, the conclusions made in 2008 regarding safety remained valid. The Panel therefore considered that it was unlikely that there was a safety concern with the current permitted uses together with the additional proposed extension of uses compared with the current permitted uses alone. The Panel recommended that a refined exposure assessment was carried out to decrease the existing uncertainties arising from its conservative estimates based on current MPLs.

The Scientific Opinion can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/nguwtxs>

EFSA RE-EVALUATION OF ASCORBIC ACID, SODIUM ASCORBATE AND CALCIUM ASCORBATE AS FOOD ADDITIVES

The European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA's) Panel on Food Additives and Nutrient Sources (ANS) Panel published on 6 May 2015 a Scientific Opinion on the re-evaluation of ascorbic acid (E 300), sodium ascorbate (E 301) and calcium ascorbate (E 302) as food additives.

The use of ascorbic acid and its salts as food additives have been evaluated by the joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives, JECFA. Ascorbic acid and its salts have very low acute toxicities, and short-term tests in animals showed little effect, and even so only at high doses. The Panel concluded that there is no genotoxicity concern for ascorbic acid, sodium ascorbate or calcium ascorbate. Long-term carcinogenicity tests with ascorbic acid did not show any chronic toxicity, even at high doses, and also showed no signs of carcinogenicity.

The Panel concluded that, given the fact that adequate data on exposure and toxicity were available and no adverse effects were reported in animal studies, there is no safety concern for the use of ascorbic acid (E 300), sodium ascorbate (E 301) and calcium ascorbate (E 302) as food additives at the reported uses and use levels and there is no need for a numerical ADI for ascorbic acid and its salts.

The Panel concluded that the maximum limits for the impurities of toxic elements (lead, mercury and arsenic) in the EC specification for ascorbic acid and its salts (E 300–302) should be revised in order to ascertain that ascorbic acid and its salts as food additives will not be a significant source of exposure to those toxic elements in food. The Panel also concluded that the EC specifications for ascorbic acid should be amended to include a maximum limit for iron; specifications for sodium ascorbate should be amended to include a maximum limit for sulphates, iron, copper and nickel; and specifications for calcium ascorbate should be amended to include a maximum limit for 4-hydroxy-5-methyl-3(2H)-furanone, iron, copper and aluminium.

The Scientific Opinion is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/nda67r8>

TAXATION NECESSARY TO OFFSET RISING COST OF HEALTHY LIVING

The price of fruit and vegetables in the UK has tripled in the past 30 years, while the price of cakes and biscuits has gone down. This pattern is repeated across the developing world which could be fuelling the global obesity crisis.

A report by the independent UK think-tank ODI compared food prices, consumption of healthy and unhealthy foods and obesity levels in five countries – the USA, UK, Mexico, China and Korea, over the past thirty years.

It found that as energy-dense processed food became cheaper and healthy foods rose in price, the obesity crisis has spiralled.

Using data from various studies, the researchers found the price of fruit and vegetables has risen substantially since 1990, by 2-3% a year on average, or by 55-91% between 1990 and 2012. Meanwhile, four of the six processed products showed significant falls in prices.

The study's authors have called for taxation on energy-dense foods and subsidies for healthier foods, pointing to Mexico, which introduced a 'sin tax' in 2013, as an example of an emerging country stealing the march on high income countries.

The authors said that this was the first study which compared the changing costs of foods from different food groups across a sample of developed and developing countries.

The full ODI Report can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/q5v2byz>





World Health Organization

On 6 May, the World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Office for Europe presented the results of an obesity forecast exercise at the European Obesity Conference in Prague (the projections are not publicly available yet). Dr Joao Breda, Programme Manager for Nutrition, Obesity and Physical Activity said that unless immediate action is taken, the proportion of adults who are overweight or obese in Europe will rise by 2030.

These projections are the result of a forecast exercise conducted by the UK Health Forum and present a bleak picture of an obese future for many countries in Europe, if action is not taken. The figures predict for instance that 89% of Irish men and 77% of Greek men will be overweight by 2030. Countries with projected steep rises in obesity include the UK, Greece, Spain, Sweden, Austria and the Czech Republic and even in countries usually recording a lower prevalence of obesity, such as Sweden, obesity rates are predicted to rise sharply.

Commenting on the projections, Dr Laura Webber of the UK Health Forum said that "although there is no silver bullet for tackling the epidemic, governments must do more to restrict unhealthy food marketing and make healthy food more affordable".

Impact and recommendations: The study should be used with some caution as it was relatively small and was based on nationally available data that may not reflect the latest WHO estimates which are under further development but yet provide a bleak picture that could drive the EU and Member States to engage more actively against obesity.

More information on this can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/nfmwnhg>

PROCESSING AND RETAIL

CALL FOR UK WIDE DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME

The Scottish Environment Secretary Richard Lochhead is due to meet his UK Government counterpart Liz Truss in London to discuss the potential for a deposit return scheme for drinks bottles and cans across the UK to reduce litter and improve recycling.

Mr Lochhead recently welcomed a report published by Zero Waste Scotland, which explored the role that such a scheme could play in reducing litter, complementing local authority recycling services, and improving the recycling of these materials and their value.

He will ask the Secretary of State to give this similar consideration in England, and is also writing to his counterparts in Wales and Northern Ireland to invite them to do likewise.

Speaking ahead of his meeting with Ms Truss, Mr Lochhead said:

"A scheme like deposit return has the potential to be very beneficial for the environment – reducing litter and boosting the recycling of these materials and their economic value to our communities. As we have seen with carrier bag charging, attaching a value to something can be very effective in helping us make small but important changes."

The recycle and reward pilot projects report can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/p7y4usv>

AMENDMENT TO DIRECTIVE REGARDING REDUCTION IN CONSUMPTION OF LIGHTWEIGHT CARRIER BAGS

Directive (EU) 2015/720 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2015 amending Directive 94/62/EC as regards reducing the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags was published in the Official Journal of the EU, L115/11, 06/05/15.

The Directive requires Member States to take measures to achieve a sustained reduction in the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags. The measures taken by Member States must include either or both of the following:

- The adoption of measures ensuring that the annual consumption level does not exceed 90 lightweight plastic carrier bags per person by 31 December 2019 and 49 lightweight carrier bags per person by 31 December 2025 or equivalent targets set in weight. Very lightweight plastic carrier bags may be excluded from national consumption objectives;
- The adoption of instruments ensuring that by 31 December 2018, lightweight plastic carrier bags are not provided free of charge at the point of sale of goods or products, unless equally effective instruments are implemented. Very lightweight plastic carrier bags may be excluded from those measures.



From 27 May 2018 Member States must report on the annual consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags when providing data on packaging and packaging waste. By 27 May 2016 the Commission must adopt an implementing act laying down the methodology for the calculation of the annual consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags.

By 27 May 2017 the Commission must:

- Adopt an implementing act laying down the specifications of labels or marks to ensure EU wide recognition of biodegradable and compostable plastic carrier bags and to provide consumers with correct information about the composting of such bags;
- Present a report to the European Parliament and to the Council, examining the impact of the use of oxo-degradable plastic carrier bags on the environment and present a proposal;
- Assess the life cycle impacts of different possibilities to reduce the consumption of very lightweight plastic carrier bags and present a proposal.

Other amendments include definitions of the types of plastic bags covered by the Directive.

This Regulation entered into force on 26 May 2015 and Member States must implement the provisions by 27 November 2016.

The directive can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/qzsq7ba>

SEAFISH CORPORATE PLAN

The Seafish Corporate Plan for 2015 to 2018 has been published and is now available to view online.

The Plan sets out the organisation's delivery promise for the next three years to support a profitable, sustainable and socially responsible future for the seafood industry. The programme of work has been developed in partnership with the organisation's three Sector Panels and has been approved by the Board.



As part of Seafish's commitment to delivering in partnership with stakeholders, the Corporate Plan will be taken out to industry at a series of engagement events to be held across the UK this summer. Details are available on the Seafish website here: <http://tinyurl.com/pownfng>

CMA RECEIVES SUPER-COMPLAINT FROM WHICH?

The Competition Markets Authority (CMA) has received a super-complaint from Which? in respect of perceived concerns about misleading and opaque pricing practices in the grocery market.

Which? has identified 3 potential areas of concern that it would like the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to investigate:

- confusing and misleading special offers
- a lack of easily comparable prices due to the way unit pricing is being done
- shrinking pack sizes without any corresponding price reduction



Which? is also concerned about the impact of supermarket 'price match' schemes on consumer decision-making.

The CMA will now consider the issues raised in the super-complaint in order to establish whether any element, or combination of elements, in the relevant market is or appears to be significantly harming the interests of consumers. It will publish a response to the super-complaint within 90 days.

Possible outcomes include:

- recommending the quality and accessibility of information for consumers is improved
- encouraging businesses in the market to self-regulate
- making recommendations to government to change the legislation or public policy
- taking competition or consumer enforcement action
- instigating a market investigation or market study
- a clean bill of health

The above list is not exhaustive and it should also be noted that a super-complaint could generate more than one outcome depending on the issues raised.

The CMA is currently inviting interested parties to provide any evidence which may be useful to its assessment. More details, and the opportunity to provide evidence, are available through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/qe8aqph>

Industry body the British Retail Consortium (BRC) said it did not accept the implications of the complaint.

"The examples set out are very specific in nature and are not in any way indicative of broader systemic problems across the retail industry," said the BRC's Tom Ironside.

"With thousands of products and special offers in store every day, errors may from time to time occur. However, these are rare in nature and are resolved quickly by the retailer concerned," he said.

However, he said the BRC would "examine closely the content of this super-complaint".

CMA 'WHAT ARE SUPER-COMPLAINTS?' GUIDANCE

The Competition Markets Authority (CMA) has published a short guide on super-complaints and who can make them.

"A super-complaint, as defined by section 11(1) of the Enterprise Act 2002 (EA02), is a complaint submitted by a designated consumer body that 'any feature, or combination of features, of a market in the UK for goods or services is or appears to be significantly harming the interests of consumers'."

This document summarises what super-complaints are, who can make them to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and the actions that can be taken following a complaint.

The guide can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/pab3m5z>

THE RETAIL INDUSTRY: STATISTICS, POLICY AND KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Key data on the retail sector on the UK has been published by the House of Commons Library. The briefing paper also discusses Government policy and pressures facing the industry.

The retail sector involves spending by consumers in shops and online. Supporting the retail sector, the wholesale sector involves those businesses that supply shops.

The retail industry contributed £180 billion to UK economic output in 2014, 11% of the total.

In March 2015, consumers in the UK spent around £34 billion. For every £1 spent in the retail sector (online and in shops), 42p was spent in food stores and 41p was spent in non-food stores and 11p on automotive fuel. The remainder was spent in other types of retailers, such as market stores or mail order catalogues.

The sector has come under pressure in recent years in a number of ways, including from the growth and evolution of supermarkets, online retailing and the recent recession.

The full briefing paper on Retail statistics is available on free download from this page: <http://tinyurl.com/p577477>

The average weekly value of internet sales in Great Britain was £801.8 million in April 2015. The amount spent online accounted for 12.2% of all non-fuel retail spending. The value of internet sales in April 2015 were 13.1% higher than the same month a year ago.

Most of the value of retail sales online is made up by stores without a physical presence.

The average weekly value of sales in food stores was £2.91bn in April 2015 and £3.12bn for non-food stores.

The value of sales in food stores in the three months to April 2015 was 0.4% lower than in the same period last year but 4.3% higher for non-food stores.

The full briefing paper on economic indicators can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/kshsnh9>

ASA PUBLISHES ANNUAL REPORT 2014

The Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) has published the ASA and CAP (Committee of Advertising Practice) Annual Report 2014: Having more impact, being more proactive.

The report reveals the steps the ASA and CAP are taking to have more impact and be more proactive as part of the ambition to make every UK advert a responsible advert. The Report highlights the work the ASA is undertaking to respond to consumer and societal concerns around advertising, taking into account the following areas in 2014:

- Understand society's concerns about adverts;
- Support advertisers;
- Have more impact;
- Be more proactive;
- Raise awareness.

The ASA and CAP Annual Report can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/q6ysvx2>



REFRIGERATION

HCFC PHASE-OUT – INFORMATION FOR OPERATORS

Since 1st January 2010 it has been illegal to use virgin HCFCs to service refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) equipment.

It has previously been legal to use recycled and reclaimed HCFCs to service RAC equipment. From 01 January 2015 this has no longer been the case. It will be illegal and an offence to use any HCFC gas to top-up or maintain RAC equipment. The most commonly used gas that is included in this ban is HCFC-22, often known as R22.

Existing equipment that contains HCFCs can legally continue to be operated after 1st January 2015, but you cannot add additional HCFC gas to the system to maintain its function.

Businesses must act now to ensure that any business-critical systems are prepared for the phase-out. From 1st January 2015 these systems will need to be able to operate with alternatives to HCFC. BFFF recommends that businesses consult their RAC contractor for advice on the alternatives available that best suit their system.

Further information on the phase out of HCFCs can be found on the BFFF website, under refrigeration, here: <http://tinyurl.com/q7jk2uc>



REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT AND OFFICIAL CONTROLS

FSA WELCOMES PROSECUTIONS

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published a news item welcoming the successful prosecutions of a turkey abattoir in Essex and a dairy farmer in Cornwall. In the first case, an abattoir licensed to slaughter turkeys, operated its premises in October last year without any official staffing controls in place, which meant that the legally required ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections, which ensure the producer is upholding consumer safety, were not carried out on a number of slaughtered turkeys. The company was fined £3,500 for the offence and a further £2,100 for the full sum of costs and a victim surcharge.

In the case of the dairy farmer, he was found to be selling raw cow's drinking milk without being registered to do so by the FSA. He was sentenced to a conditional discharge for a period of three years and has been ordered to pay £2,700 in prosecution costs, plus a victim surcharge.

For more details of the above two prosecutions, can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/k7bzc64>

BUSINESS SECRETARY OUTLINES ENTERPRISE BILL

New measures to support entrepreneurs and job creation have been set out in Sajid Javid's first speech as Business Secretary.

As part of its long-term economic plan, the government will cut red tape for business by at least £10 billion over the next 5 years in a new Enterprise Bill that will back business to create jobs.

Another central measure in the Enterprise Bill will be the creation of a Small Business Conciliation Service to help settle disputes between small and large businesses, especially over late payment practices. Small firms are owed over £32 billion in late payments, but many of them are not aware of their rights or are reluctant to launch legal challenges. This service will build on the existing suite of measures to tackle poor payment practices.

The bill will also support businesses through the extension and simplification of Primary Authority. This scheme allows a business to get advice on regulation from a single local council and this advice must then be respected by all other councils - reducing the time and cost to businesses of having to obey different rules.

A script of the Business Secretary's first speech is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/qjvfrzm>

CONSULTATION ON DRINKING WATER (WALES) REGULATIONS 2015

The Food Standards Agency has launched a consultation on the Natural Mineral Water, Spring Water and Bottled Drinking Water (Wales) Regulations 2015.

The consultation will be of most interest to producers and consumers of natural mineral water, spring water and bottled water. Also, it may interest enforcement officers responsible for the enforcement of the regulations in this sector.

The purpose of the consultation is to give stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the draft Natural Mineral Water, Spring Water and Bottled Drinking Water (Wales) Regulations 2015 and to provide information on the costs and benefits detailed in the Impact Assessments for:

- i. the consolidation of regulations, including the removal of a fortification requirement that is no longer scientifically justified and a more proportionate enforcement regime
- ii. clarification of EU Regulations on permitted treatments for spring water
- iii. radiation monitoring requirements

The consultation can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/p972uw> and there is also a feedback questionnaire: <http://tinyurl.com/nkk99mn>



FSA PUBLISHES STRATEGIC PLAN – FOOD WE CAN TRUST

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published its Strategic Plan setting out how they will work over the next 5 years, to deliver the goals of the FSA Strategy 2015-20.

The FSA Strategy 2015-20 reinvigorates its pledge to put consumers first, while recognising there are growing challenges around food safety, affordability, security and sustainability.



The Plan makes clear the FSA's purpose and responsibilities, and the roles and responsibilities of others, in meeting these. It sets out how they plan to work with the food industry, local authorities and other parts of government, and with scientists, consumer and community groups and other stakeholders.

The plan also outlines the approaches that the FSA will take when carrying out its work. These include:

- using science, evidence and information both to tackle the challenges of today, and to identify and contribute to addressing emerging risks for the future
- using legislative and non-legislative tools highly effectively to protect consumer interests and deliver consumer benefits – influencing business behaviour in the interests of consumers
- being genuinely open and engaging, finding ways to empower consumers both in policy making and delivery, and in their relationship with the food industry
- making sure that all are highly capable, effectively supported and consistently choose to make outstanding contributions to protecting, information and empowering consumers

The Strategic Plan can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/np8yd6z>

APPROVAL OF STANDALONE COLD STORES

BFFF has been working with the Federation of Wholesale Distributors (FWD) and the Food Storage and Distribution Federation (FSDF) to seek clarity from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) on whether standalone cold stores should be registered or approved by their local authority.

In a meeting with FSA on 30 April, the trade associations were reassured that the current policy has not changed and FSA have stated that as far as they are concerned there should be no difference in enforcement approach by Local Authorities regardless of whether the cold store is approved or registered.

BFFF now intend to continue to work with FWD and FSDF to develop a Q&A document to accompany guidance that the FSA is currently updating to provide clarity for wholesale Members.

If you would like more information on any of the above please contact sudakin@bfff.co.uk

FSA BOARD PAPERS PUBLISHED

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) published on 22 May 2015 the agenda and papers for the open board meeting held on 3 June 2015.

The agenda included discussion on:

- Update on new audit arrangements in FSA approved meat establishments within the UK;
- Animal welfare update; and
- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee annual report.

All board papers are available and the meeting can be watched online through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/mjzkosb>

CTSI URGES GOVERNMENT TO RETHINK TRADING STANDARDS STRUCTURE



The Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) has written to the newly appointed consumer minister Nick Boles MP to call for urgent action to save trading standards services.

CTSI is proposing a new vision of larger, strategic trading standards authorities to replace the current structure of 200 local authority services, which in the face of more budget cuts to come they believe is no longer sustainable.

Leon Livermore, CTSI's chief executive, said: "Evidence is pointing to a trading standards system that has been heading for a crisis for many years now. Fantastic and essential work continues to be done by trading standards professionals all over the country, but it is no longer possible to paper over the cracks as they are getting deeper, and wider; since 2009 the number of trading standards staff has halved, and we know that more cuts are coming. The variation in the depth of these cuts has created a postcode lottery of protection which is not acceptable.

"We are putting forward a vision of strategic trading standards authorities larger than the current units which recognise the contribution trading standards services can make in supporting economic growth, preventing crime and improving health. These larger services will ensure that the best use is made of available resources by pooling staff and creating economies of scale to ensure all consumers in the UK are adequately protected and businesses receive the support they need.

"The current delivery model for trading standards service is broken. We are urging the government to face the facts and act fast – before it is too late. To this end we have written to the new consumer minister Nick Boles calling for an urgent review on the future of the service – we look forward to his response."

The full letter to government can be access at the foot of this page: <http://tinyurl.com/pu2rnro>

RESEARCH

BROCCOLI'S SUPERPOWERS ARE GROWING STRONGER

Broccoli's 'superfood' status has been elevated, following findings from the Institute of Food Research (IFR) claiming a new variety could reduce low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol.

The findings following trials carried out on 130 people, who included 400g a week of a new strain of broccoli in their diets.

The new strain was developed using conventional breeding techniques to contain up to three times more of the naturally occurring compound glucoraphanin, which converts to sulforaphane. The Beneforté strain of broccoli is now on sale in UK supermarkets, IFR said.

After 12 weeks of including Beneforté in their diets, LDL cholesterol levels in the subjects dropped by an average of 6%. Elevated levels of LDL cholesterol are linked to an increased risk of heart disease.

Further information on this is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/p4mq7fr>



GLUCOSINOLATES IN CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES FOLLOWING THERMAL PROCESSING

The link between the consumption of fruit and vegetables and improvement in health has long been known, and has been shown to have a major impact in improvements in cardiovascular health as well as reducing the potential of developing cancers. As well as being a good source of vitamins and minerals plant materials also contain other compounds which may be beneficial to health.

One of these groups of chemicals is glucosinolates (GI), sulphur containing organic compounds. These compounds are unstable and broken down by an enzyme called myrosinase, producing isothiocyanates, which are chemicals that have been shown to have anti-cancer properties and inhibit cell proliferation.

In a study carried published in LWT, the effect of different cooking techniques on the bioavailability of GI breakdown products from cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and Brussel sprouts) after being prepared by a variety of different techniques including boiling, blanching and steaming.

The study showed that in general the reduction in the availability of GI breakdown products was effected by two main factors, thermal decomposition and leaching. Leaching of these nutrients was clearly evident when the samples had been prepared by boiling or blanching as the level of GI breakdown products was much reduced when compared to steaming.

Thermal degradation was also shown to have an effect, as vegetables which had been boiled showed lower levels of GI breakdown products than for blanched vegetables. This was most likely due to must denaturation of the myrosinase enzyme, reducing the breakdown of GI into useful by-products.

The study can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/qfmshnr>



SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT & CSR

ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITY – POLLUTER PAYS PRINCIPLE

The European Commission published on 27 April 2015 the Judgement of the General Court of the EU in Case C-534/13, Italian Ministry of Environment (Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare) and others v Fipa Group Srl, Tws Automation Srl, Ivan Srl in relation to the decision regarding whether the 'polluter pays' principle is compatible with the precautionary principle and the principles that preventive action should be taken and that environmental damage should be rectified at source as a matter of priority.

The decision was made that Directive 2004/35/EC on environmental liability, with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage, must be interpreted so as not to preclude national legislation. This means that in cases where it is impossible to identify the polluter of a plot of land or the person who should adopt remedial measures, this does not permit the competent authority to require the owner of the land (who is not responsible for the pollution) to adopt preventative and remedial measures. The land owner is required merely to reimburse the costs relating to the measures undertaken by the competent authority within the limit of the market value of the site, and determined after those measures have been carried out.

The judgement is available to view here: <http://tinyurl.com/pzxtqza>

PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

Council Decision (EU) 2015/633 of 20 April 2015 on the submission, on behalf of the European Union, of a proposal for the listing of additional chemicals in Annex A to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants was published in the Official Journal of the EU, L104/14, 23/4/2015.

Persistent organic pollutants (POPs) are organic compounds that are resistant to environmental degradation through chemical, biological, and photolytic processes. Because of their persistence, POPs bioaccumulate with potential significant impacts on human health and the environment.

The decision has been made that the Union will submit a proposal for the listing of perfluorooctanoic acid and its compounds in Annex A to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the Commission will communicate the proposal.

Annex A can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/njafsn8>

MEPS COMMENT ON GLOBAL SECURITY

The European Parliament voted on a non-legislative resolution on 30 April, stating that the EU should use the Milan Expo 2015 (taking place from 1st May to 31 October 2015) to encourage sustainable agronomic practices, promote fairness in the supply chain, and fight food waste and malnutrition.

Parliament called on both the European Commission and EU member states to use the Milan Expo as an opportunity to push for solutions to these pressing global challenges.

The MEPs said that to meet the food security challenges, EU needs to:

- encourage more efficient agronomic practices and more sustainable agriculture resource management,
- increase transparency and fairness in the food supply chain, and
- promote rational use of scarce resources and invest more in research, to increase yields while reducing the environmental impact.

For more information on the Milan Expo, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/kavjq7t>



LAND USE CHANGE PROPOSAL

The European Parliament reported on 28 April 2015 that it has had a second reading of the EU proposal relating to biofuels and indirect land-use change (ILUC). The compromise will impose a limit on the use of food-based biofuels while starting the transition to advanced biofuels. The proposal states that first-generation biofuels (from crops grown on agricultural land) should account for no more than 7% of energy consumption in transport by 2020.

EU member states will have to set a national target, no later than 18 months after the EU directive enters into force, for the share of advanced biofuels, e.g. those sourced from certain types of waste and residues and new sources such as seaweed, in total transport consumption.

More information on this can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/q3oe3jl>

FRENCH SUPERMARKETS REQUIRED TO GIVE UNSOLD FOOD TO CHARITY

French legislation was voted in on 21st May 2015 which requires supermarkets to donate all unsold, edible food to charity in a bid to cut food waste.

The result was welcomed by campaigners who have nonetheless warned that most food waste comes from higher up the supply chain and that food manufacturers need to be more involved in reducing waste.

According to the new legislation – put forward by Socialist MP Guillaume Garot and voted unanimously by the French Parliament – supermarkets larger than 400m² will have to sign a contract with a charity to facilitate the donations, while food not fit for human consumption will be composted or used as animal feed.

A 2013 Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report confirmed that most waste occurs not at the retail or consumer stage, but that 54% of food waste was lost during production, storage and transport.

For food companies wishing to identify and redistribute waste in their supply chain, FareShare will be launching a toolkit with a step-by-step guide. BFFF are also working on a good practice guidance document on giving food to charities as part of the activity of the Food Hygiene Business Expert Group.

More information on FareShare Surplus Food Summit can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/nbufub6>

IMPLICATIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE FOR FISH PRODUCTION



A paper to United Nations (UN) has highlighted implications of climate change for fish production.

Scientists need to better understand the impacts of climate change on aquaculture if we are to meet future seafood demand says a paper submitted by WorldFish to UN climate talks.

It is believed that aquaculture, in view of its relative resilience, adaptability and the diversity of species raised, may be better equipped to respond to increasing temperatures and other impacts of climate change than other forms of agriculture. For these reasons, it is often seen as a good alternative source of livelihoods and nutrition for many in the developing world.

However, in order to make the case for greater investment and supporting national policies, there is an urgent need for evidence that highlights aquaculture as a climate-smart adaptation and mitigation alternative.

The paper, Climate Change and Aquatic Animal Disease, by WorldFish senior scientist Chadag Mohan, highlights the risks of increased fish disease as a result of climate change and calls for a mapping of the potential risks and the identification of suitable adaptation and mitigation intervention strategies. It is submitted as part of the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change and Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS).

The paper also highlights increased salinity and seawater intrusion as an issue with recommendations to invest in breeding programs for salinity adaptation. It also recommends a holistic approach which considers all forms of agriculture in order that the most climate smart systems can be recommended.

The paper, Climate Change and Aquatic Animal Disease, is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/pqf25ab>

PROFEL: HIGHLIGHTS CONTRIBUTION OF FROZEN TO REDUCING FOOD WASTE

PROFEL, the European Association of Fruit and Vegetable Processing Industries, organized on 23 April a conference entitled "Preserved Vegetables: ultimate solution to food waste".

They called upon policymakers to acknowledge the contribution of frozen and canned vegetables in reducing food waste: extended shelf-life, portion control, etc.

Many EU decision-makers and stakeholders, such as FoodDrinkEurope, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), EuroCommerce and the DG Sante, represented by Anne-Laure Gassin, attended the conference.

The Commission still refuses to commit to the publication of its long-awaited Communication on sustainable food systems, despite pressure from the Parliament, NGOs and the industry.

The PROFEL press release promoting frozen, can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/qye8mda>



PESTICIDES AND BEES: CALL FOR DATA

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have published a news story asking national authorities, research institutions, industry and other interested parties to submit new information relevant to the evaluation of the risks posed to bees by three neonicotinoid pesticides applied as seed treatments and granules.

The call for data complies with the decision taken by the European Commission in May 2013 to put in place measures to restrict the use of clothianidin, thiamethoxam and imidacloprid. For example, their use as a seed or soil treatment and for pre-flowering applications was prohibited on crops attractive to bees and for cereals other than winter cereals.

The Commission said at the time that within two years it would initiate a review of any new scientific information, for which this is the first step in this process. Interested parties are urged to submit information on the effects, exposure and risks of the three substances as regards bees (honeybees, bumble bees and solitary bees), when used as seed treatments and granules. This can include:

- Literature data, including grey literature and data from other relevant research activities;
- Study reports, such as acute laboratory studies, chronic toxicity studies, residues data, and field studies;
- National evaluations and/or monitoring data.

More information can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/pmk636c>

Comments are invited by 30 September 2015 and should be sent directly to neonic.opencall@efsa.europa.eu



RETAILERS' WASTE MANAGEMENT SHOWS THE WAY TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

As a contribution to the discussion on circular economy, EuroCommerce, together with the European Retail Round Table, has released a report showing how retailers are reducing waste in their operations.

Three years ago, 26 members committed to the Retail Waste Agreement which called on companies to carry out at least two awareness-raising initiatives on waste reduction by the end of June 2014.

The report sets out a large number of case studies, including initiatives taken by retailers across Europe, aimed at highlighting what they are doing, and alerting consumers to simple ways of avoiding throwing away food.

The initiatives, launched by retailers across Europe, included a consumer awareness-raising campaign, an initiative on commercial and responsible operation, and a framework for food surplus donation.

This report is intended to be useful in informing the forthcoming discussions on the Commission's circular economy strategy, which will be launched in late 2015 and will focus on addressing a range of issues including waste.

The report can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/o2skpn4>

TECHNOLOGY AND NOVEL FOODS

EU'S POLICY ON GMOS

The European Commission published on 22 April 2015 a press release on a proposal that has been adopted to allow more freedom for Member States to decide on the use of EU-authorized GMOs for animal (feed) or human (food) consumption.

The Commission proposes to amend the Regulation on genetically modified food and feed, to allow Member States to adopt national decisions restricting or prohibiting the use in food or feed of GMOs, after they have been authorised at EU level (opt-out measures). The current authorisation system, based on science and the labelling rules ensuring consumer choice, will not be amended. This legislative proposal will now be sent to the European Parliament and the Council to run its ordinary legislative course.

Two related fact sheets were published by the Commission on 22 April 2015;

- Fact Sheet: Questions and Answers on EU's policies on GMOs
- Fact sheet: Review of the decision-making process on GMOs in the EU: Questions and Answers

The press release can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/paheduy>

The Q&A fact sheet can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/otyyc83> and the review of the decision-making process is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/okhka5u>



APPLICATION FOR OPINION ON CHIA SEEDS

A company has applied to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) for chia seeds to be approved for use in the European Union (EU) under the simplified approval procedure.

The company is requesting an opinion from the FSA on the 'equivalence' of its chia seeds, which are grown in particular regions of South America, with the chia seeds marketed by The Chia Company that are grown in Australia.

The European Novel Foods Regulation includes a simplified approval procedure for when a company believes its novel food is substantially equivalent to a food that is already on the market. In such a situation, the applicant can submit a notification to the European Commission after obtaining an opinion on equivalence from an EU member state – in this case the UK.



Chia is a summer annual herbaceous plant belonging to the mint family. It grows from a seedling to develop lush green foliage before it produces long flowers which are either purple or, less commonly, white. These flowers develop into seed pods to produce chia seeds. Although chia is grown commercially in several Latin American countries and Australia, the seeds have not been consumed to a significant degree in Europe.

The applicant's chia seeds will be used in the same products as those for which approval has been granted for The Chia Company's seeds (bread products, breakfast cereal, fruit, nut and seed mixes and bread and 100% packaged chia seeds).

The request for comments closed on 2nd June. Comments will be passed to the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP) before it continues with the assessment of this novel food ingredient.

The Chia Seed application can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/qhobft4>

COMMISSION AUTHORISES 17 GMOS FOR FOOD/FEED USES

The European Commission has published a press release detailing the adoption of 10 new authorisations for GMOs in food/feed use and 7 renewals of existing authorisations as follows;

- 10 new authorisations: MON 87460 maize, MON 87705 soybean, MON 87708 soybean, MON 87769 soybean, 305423 soybean, BPS-CV127-9 soybean, MON 88302, oilseed rape, T304- 40 cotton, MON 88913 cotton, LLCotton25xGHB614 cotton
- 7 renewals: T25 maize, NK603 maize, GT73 oilseed rape, MON 531 x MON 1445 cotton, MON 15985 cotton; MON 531 cotton and MON 1445 cotton



The authorisations are valid for 10 years, and any products produced from these GMOs will be subject to the EU's labelling and traceability rules. The list of authorised GM plants and the precise scope of their authorisation is available in the EU register of GM food and feed.

The Official Journal containing the GMO authorisations and renewals is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/phq2p2t>

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS: LIST OF CURRENT CONSENTS



Defra have published a list of sites with consent for deliberate release of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) for any other purpose than for placing on the market.

The list of sites with active consents for GMOs is to be released for research and development purposes under part B of Directive 2001/18/EC (deliberate release of GMOs for any other purpose than for placing on the market).

The list of sites can be accessed through this link: <http://tinyurl.com/pvzlm9x>

EATING INSECTS: CULTURAL AND INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES

Although insects are not traditionally eaten in Western countries, other regions around the world have long considered them acceptable on the menu. A recent paper published in the journal Food Quality and Preference provides new insight into the way cultural background and individual experience may influence acceptance or rejection of edible insects. Study results show that overcoming existing negative perceptions of insects as food must be addressed if they are to be accepted by consumers who are not familiar with them.

In this cross-cultural qualitative study, researchers from University of Wageningen, Netherlands, and Kasetsart University, Thailand, analysed participants' perceptions, expectations and preferences of various insect-based food items. In order to compare how this cultural exposure affected participant acceptance of eating insects, participants were recruited from the Netherlands, where insects are not ordinarily consumed, and Thailand, where they are frequently consumed. 29 participants from the Netherlands and 25 participants from Thailand were divided into 8 focus groups based on their previous level of individual experience of eating insects, i.e. 4 groups of 'eaters' (2 Dutch groups and 2 Thai groups) and 4 groups of 'non-eaters' (2 Dutch groups and 2 Thai groups).



Preparation methods and appearance of the finished product had a strong influence on participants' expected 'liking' and 'willingness to try' attitudes towards a product. In general, reducing the visibility of the insect; i.e. coated or ground insects, increased Dutch participants and Thai 'non-insect eaters' willingness to taste them.

When the appearance of a product prompted negative visual associations, the participants were also less willing to taste the product. For example, participants commented that muffins containing mealworms (a type of insect larvae) looked rotten; therefore, participants' attitude scores to the muffins were very low.

More information on the outcomes of the study can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/phqkfxn>

There is also guidance available covering the use of insects for food security, here: <http://tinyurl.com/otxmwc7>



For further information or to download a copy of this newsletter, please visit www.bfff.co.uk.



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