

T & L UPDATE

BFFF TECHNICAL AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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British Frozen Food Federation

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FOREWORD

Welcome to the New Year edition of the T&L!

The T&L continues to reflect the wide range of topics of potential interest to BFFF members. However as always there are some topics that are clearly subject to a great deal of activity and hence change.

The obesity debate will not go away! Numerous topics cover this area and members should review their approach as the debate intensifies. We have included only a small selection of the relevant articles on sugar/ added sugar/ taxation and the way forward to reduce consumption. We have tried to reflect the different views on the debate but members need to be aware that this area continues to develop with further announcements planned by the UK government on childhood obesity strategy in 2016.

Whilst the new Sentencing guidelines have been well trailed by BFFF and others it is worth a review of the topics on this subject as this will affect your business. We all hope that with even the best systems for food safety /health and safety we will not end up in a position where we need to understand the detail of fines for our business. However the change in size of the potential fines will need a reassessment of the investment /risk equations members use. It will be a different playing field going forward. Helpfully the BFFF will be holding our seminar on the subject on February 9th.

You will also note the evolving complexity of the Scottish system of controls. There are a number of topics that reflect the differences from the English and Welsh systems designed to reflect the different priorities of the devolved administration in Scotland. For members involved in more than one of the UK's member countries the playing field looks increasingly complex.

BFFF is currently undertaking a review of Into the Light.; and following the publication of our most recent Assured Advice on 'Labelling for Wholesalers Supplying Mass Caterers', we can now progress with this review.

For a copy of this or any other pieces of assured advice, or to get involved with any of our Primary Authority Schemes (at no additional cost), please contact crystalholmes@bfff.co.uk

BFFF now involved with the newly set up BRDO's Trade Facilitation Panel, which is designed to remove red tape and make it easier to do business. The first meeting took place in November, and we will be keeping members updated with information on this topic.

The European Commission is in the process of developing a Good Hygiene Practice Guide in relation to fresh fruits and vegetables at production. The BFFF Technical Expert Group was asked for their views on the draft document, and a specific point relating to berries that will be frozen, which was fed back to the EC via the Food Standards Agency.

BFFF is also involved in the BRC Storage and Distribution standard technical review which has just commenced. The standard is used extensively within the UK to verify supply chain standards both within retail and food service supply chains. We were asked to submit comments in December and hope to see a second draft early in the New Year.

If you wish to be kept informed with updates of meetings, or information on any of the above items, please contact martinforsyth@bfff.co.uk and we will add you to the relevant Member Interest Group.

As we develop our information on technical matters your feedback on the T&L or the other food safety communications would be appreciated using either of the e-mail addresses above.

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

We do hope that you find T&L 81 a valuable read.



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ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

EFSA PUBLISH FORECAST OF FUTURE CONSULTATIONS

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have published a forecast of anticipated future consultations and timescales.

The draft planner of upcoming consultations aims to facilitate stakeholders contributions to EFSA's scientific work. The information provided in the planner is indicative and subject to change in line with EFSA's calendar.

Consultations are only confirmed when launched on the EFSA website.

The draft planner contains anticipated consultations on:

- Enzymes;
- GMOs;
- Dietary Reference Values;
- Pesticides.



The planner can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/nzjy2w6>

QUALITY OF WATER FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION AMENDMENT

The European Commission has published a Press Release concerning the recent amendment to the drinking water directive (Directive 2015/1787) which introduces new requirements regarding water monitoring.

Member States can now decide, on the basis of a risk assessment, which parameters to monitor, given that some drinking water supply zones do not pose any risk for finding hazardous substances. They can also choose to increase or reduce the frequency of sampling in water supply zones, as well as to extend the list of substances to monitor in case of public health concerns.

The amendment Directive entered into force on 27 November 2015 and Member States have 2 years to apply the new provisions.

The amendment directive can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/o6uagzt>



ANALYTICAL AND METROLOGY

UPDATE OF BFFF ACTION ON DEGLAZED WEIGHT

BFFF have asked the Technical Expert Group to respond with the details of the glaze methodology used as a review was taking place at EU level. A number of responses were received and anonymised and passed back. As expected, there was a wide range of techniques used. This illustrated the usefulness of the review planned to take place.

We have now had a response from Seafish who have been leading the sector review together with DEFRA as the lead government department in this area.

"At the Commission expert group meeting the proposal regarding use the of WELMEC and CODEX was withdrawn due to lack of support from some Member States and for the moment, it is difficult to envisage when a new, revised proposal, will be again ready for vote. However, the UK still needs to establish just what methodology is in use to establish the UK position for when the Commission eventually puts forward a further proposal and this delay gives us more time to do this and receive any further information on methodology.

"I have also had further discussion with the National Measurement Office and together with DEFRA we now intend to hold a stakeholder meeting on the determination of glazed net weight in February or March next year. This will allow the NMO and DEFRA to present their findings and intended way forward with CODEX, WELMEC and the Commission."

In light of this development can you please note our thanks for the information so far supplied.

Proposed actions:

- Interested members to continue to feedback methods used if you have not already done so
- This project will be placed on the agenda for the Technical Expert group meeting in January, with a proposal to place this project on hold unless there is feedback to the contrary
- In the interim period continue to use existing methodologies and be aware of the lack of guidance in this specific area for enforcement officers
- We will keep you informed of developments regarding the meeting planned for next year but this area is unlikely to develop quickly

If you would like to be kept up to date on this subject, please contact martinforsyth@bfff.co.uk and you will be added to the member interest group.

ANIMAL WELFARE

ANIMAL HEALTH & WELFARE FRAMEWORK 2015-17

Defra and the Animal and Plant Health Agency have published an updated framework providing support to local authorities carrying out their legal duties under animal health and welfare legislation.

The framework incorporates the full range of animal health and welfare work carried out by local authorities, with the exception of licensing of animal establishments. Local authorities are expected to use this risk based approach to provide the best services they can to meet the needs of their community and national priorities.

The aim of the Framework is to ensure effective, accountable, consistent and coordinated delivery of animal health and welfare services throughout England and Wales, whilst recognising the different delivery landscapes in both Administrations.

The Framework for 2015-2017 can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/odm8ykdl>



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

CBI PUBLISH REPORT 'WHY THE EU IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS'

The Confederation of British Industry's (CBI) have published a report 'Choosing our Future, why the EU is good for business but how it should be better'.

The report contains the views of business leaders from all sectors and sizes around the country and it sets out both what EU membership means to them, but also how it should reform.

The report outlines how the EU has opened up huge opportunities for firms enabling them to grow and create more jobs across the UK. Business benefits from access to a single market of 500 million people; a single set of rules to comply with; access to the skills needed to grow; and open global markets through EU trade deals.

The CBI has also set out an ambitious reform agenda and has been vocal, amongst our European counterparts, in making the case for a more outward-looking, competitive and balanced EU. It must improve by regulating less and better; extending the single market; protecting the interests of non-Eurozone countries; and doing even more to open up global markets.

The report is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/pyozxu3>



SINGLE MARKET STRATEGY TO BOOST OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS

On Wednesday 28 October, the European Commission has presented a roadmap to deliver on President Juncker's political commitment to unleash the full potential of the Single Market and make it the launchpad for Europe to thrive in the global economy.

The Single Market is designed to allow goods, services, capital and people to move more freely. It offers opportunities for professionals and businesses and a greater choice and lower prices for consumers. It enables people to travel, live, work and study wherever they wish.

However, these opportunities do not always materialise, because single market rules are not known, not implemented or simply jeopardised by unjustified barriers. The Single Market needs to adapt to reflect today's realities: innovative ideas and new business models must find their place too.

The actions decided include: ensuring consumers buying services or products in other EU Member States do not face diverging prices, sales conditions, or delivery options; facilitating use of digital technologies throughout the company lifecycle, as well as facilitating cross-border mergers and divisions; and a proposal to improve insolvency rules to ensure viable businesses have a second chance.

For more information on this, please see: <http://tinyurl.com/ovzqoht>



CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS & FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

FSA RADIOACTIVITY REPORT PUBLISHED

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published the annual Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) report, which shows that the level of man-made radioactivity to which people in the UK are exposed, remained below the EU legal limit during 2014. No food safety concerns were identified.

The key findings of the report are:

- The total radiation dose to members of the public in the UK is significantly below the EU annual dose limit of 1 millisievert for all exposures.
- The exposure of consumers to radioactivity in 2014 was similar than in 2013 for the majority of nuclear sites.
- In 2014, the highest doses the public received were Sellafield (0.22mSv), Capenhurst (0.17mSv) and Amersham (0.14mSv), as opposed to last year when the location with the highest dose was Amersham (0.22mSv). The increase in the ranking of Sellafield compared to last year was established following a re-assessment of exposure pathways in 2014, including an observed increase in seafood consumption. The doses received around Amersham and Capenhurst are mainly result of direct radiation from sources on the sites.
- In 2014, habit surveys were carried out at Berkeley, Oldbury, Hartlepool and Sellafield in England. The results were used to improve the assessment of doses to the members of the public near nuclear licensed sites.
- Between April 2014 and March 2015, 383 contaminated particles were found in the Cumbrian coastlines originating from Sellafield by an ongoing survey programme which started in 2006. (An increase from 117 particles in the previous year.) These were removed by the site operator. The increase in the number of finds is due to the improvements in the detection capability of the mobile survey units that are used. A recent report by Public Health England describes the assessed health risks from the consumption of seafood (including those to commercial fishermen) from radioactive particles in the vicinity of the Sellafield site. Based on currently available information, it is concluded that the overall health risks to both seafood consumers and commercial fishermen are very low.
- Following the Fukushima accident in Japan in 2011, food import controls from that country were introduced, and further revised during 2012. Monitoring at UK ports of entry showed little or no radioactivity in food.
- Sampling for freshwater fish affected by the 1986 Chernobyl accident ceased in upland lakes in 2014 following a risk-based review by the FSA.



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

AMENDMENT TO RECYCLED PLASTICS REGULATION

Commission Regulation (EU) 2015/1906 of 22 October 2015 amending Regulation (EC) No 282/2008 on recycled plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with foods was published in the Official Journal of the EU, L278/11, 23/10/2015.

This Regulation amends Article 6(1) of Regulation (EC) No. 282/2008 on the authorisation of recycling processes to include reference to Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 which is the appropriate procedure for authorisation of plastic recycling.

This Regulation entered into force on 26 October 2015, and can be viewed here: <http://tinyurl.com/psrruq2>

FOOD SAFETY AND ZONOSIS

BFFF PUBLISHED MANAGEMENT OF LISTERIA GUIDANCE

BFFF are delighted to announce the publication of the BFFF 'Guide to the Management of Listeria in Food Processing'.

The new guide applies to food businesses involved in the production and preparation of ready to eat (RTE) and ready to defrost and eat (RTDE) foods.

Listeriosis is potentially, a very harmful infection which, although relatively uncommon compared to [E.coli](#) and Campylobacter, causes more deaths than both of them put together in the UK. The purpose of the guidance is to help all businesses but most particularly small businesses understand the actions that they should be taking to proactively manage and reduce, as far as possible, the incidence of Listeria spp. and in particular the pathogen Listeria monocytogenes in the materials, processes and products in their control.

The guidance has sections that cover:

- Details about the Listeria bacteria and its growth conditions
- The regulatory framework and guidance to its implementation
- Management and monitoring for the prevention of L. monocytogenes
- Environmental control and monitoring of water, hygiene and temperature
- Raw material and supplier management
- Sample Analysis and the appropriate actions if sampling reveals Listeria
- What to expect if your premises are a suspected source of an outbreak

The guidance was developed by the BFFF Technical Expert Group and we would like to thank them for their contributions in providing expert and practical advice offered for the benefit of our members.

The guidance is available to download from the BFFF Technical Guidance page here: <http://tinyurl.com/q7862jy>



WHO CLASSIFIES PROCESSED MEAT AS CARCINOGENIC

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has taken the step of classifying processed meat as carcinogenic, which now means that ham, bacon and salami are classified in the same category as alcohol, tobacco, asbestos and arsenic as having a definitive link established between consumption (or exposure) and an elevated risk of cancer. This of course does not mean that processed meat consumption is as likely to cause cancer as these other substances merely that it is included in the same category of causative agents.



According to WHO experts, there is sufficient evidence to draw a link between the consumption of processed meat products and cancer. For example, they argue that consuming 50 grams of processed meat a day is likely to increase the risk of bowel cancer by 18%.

The WHO said unprocessed red meats, including beef, pork and lamb, also increase the risk of cancer, classing them as "probably carcinogenic to humans".

However, not all experts are in agreement with the findings. Harald zur Hausen, a renowned cancer researcher and Nobel Prize winner, said that while it is true that frying, grilling and curing red meat leads to the release of chemical substances, the same can be said of fish and poultry. In his view, the WHO should have differentiated between the different types of meat more.

The WHO findings have been heavily criticized by experts all around the world meaning it is not likely to have a great impact on either governmental policies or consumer behavior.

The report is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/q6q8ge9>

FSAI ISSUE Q&A IN RESPONSE TO CANCER IN MEAT REPORT

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland has produced a Q&A in response to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) report of cancer in meat.

This follows the publishing of the results of the IARC evaluation of the risk of developing cancer from the consumption of red meat and processed meat.

The Q&A features information to explain who the IARC are and what they do, what is meant by 'red meat', 'processed meat' and explain the meaning of carcinogen. It also answers questions like:

- What types of cancer is linked to processed meat consumption?
- Is there any cancer risk associated with poultry or fish intakes?
- Should I avoid red meat altogether?
- What is moderation?



The full Q&A is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/jxpyzas>

CAMPDEN BRI HACCP PRACTICAL GUIDE PUBLISHED

The 5th edition of Campden BRI's long-established HACCP practical guide has been published.



Through focused industry and international standards, as well as a result of high profile incidents, approaches to HACCP continue to develop.

Reflecting developments in HACCP and food safety management, the 5th edition of HACCP: A practical guide (Guideline 42) describes the principles of HACCP and provides clear practical guidance on their application.

Also newly published is the 3rd edition of the associated HACCP auditing standard – which defines the requirements that a food operation needs to meet in order to obtain third party recognition of its HACCP system.

HACCP: A practical guide 5th edition is available from: <http://tinyurl.com/zfl4oxj>

HACCP auditing standard 3rd edition is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/ombpzdck>

CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REPORT ON ACRYLAMIDE



The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has announced that the latest Chief Advisor's Science Report has been published. The new report entitled "seeking and acting on independent expert advice on food chemicals" is the second in a regular series of science updates and the major topic discussed is acrylamide.

The report includes background information on acrylamide such as which foods it is found in, exposure from food, the key health effects and risk assessment.

The report also discusses European Commission Recommendation (2013/647/

EU) setting 'indicative values' for acrylamide. Two case studies are also included in the Report.

The report discusses how the FSA has reacted to concerns relating to acrylamide and summarises the work being undertaken to understand more about acrylamide such as:

- Supporting manufacturers' initiatives to reduce acrylamide;
- Conducting and publishing monitoring data;
- Undertaking research such as consumer behaviour affecting acrylamide from home cooking;
- Supporting industry led projects to develop new varieties of crops that form less acrylamide when cooked;
- Producing advice for consumers on minimising acrylamide.

The report can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/qer2ems>

RESEARCH RESULTS PUBLISHED: ACRYLAMIDE IN THE HOME

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published new research which examines how cooking habits in the home can influence the levels of acrylamide that form in food.

The levels of acrylamide that people consume are usually estimated using dietary survey data and laboratory-cooked samples. These often fail to fully take account of consumer behaviour and the new research has been designed to address this gap in knowledge.

The report indicates that consumers often don't follow manufacturer's instructions and this could lead to higher levels of acrylamide for some people. The findings show that domestic ovens are not entirely reliable when it comes to setting temperature. Consumers were also found to have a low awareness of the risks of acrylamide.

The research will be used to inform the FSA's acrylamide advice and action, particularly with regard to home cooked foods. It will also inform the UK's position in wider discussions at an EU level on how best to reduce consumer exposure to acrylamide from all sources.

The research can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/hmg9jzx>



FSA SCIENTIFIC REPORT ON POTASSIUM SALT REPLACERS



The FSA Chief Scientist's Report on Acrylamide also discusses potassium salt replacers and Department of Health concerns over the impact that increased potassium intakes could have on the health of vulnerable population groups.

The SACN has been asked to assess the potential benefits of potassium-based replacements while the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) has been asked to advise on possible adverse effects on increased potassium intakes.

The report can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/qer2ems>

FSA PUBLISH LATEST SURVEY OF CAMPYLOBACTER

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published the first set of results from its second survey on fresh shop-bought chickens.

The results for the first quarter of testing, from July to September 2015, show a decrease in the number of birds with the highest level of contamination from the same months last year. These most heavily contaminated birds are the focus of the current target agreed by the industry, which is equivalent to no more than 7% of chickens at retail having the highest levels of contamination. Research has shown that reducing the proportion of birds in this category will have the biggest positive impact on public health.

The new data shows 15% of chickens tested positive for the highest level of contamination, down from 22% in July to September 2014. Campylobacter was present on 76% of chicken samples, down from 83% in the same months of last year.

The results for the first quarter show:

- 15% of chickens tested positive for campylobacter within the highest band of contamination*
- 76% of chickens tested positive for the presence of campylobacter
- 0.3% of packaging tested positive at the highest band of contamination
- 6% of packaging tested positive for the presence of campylobacter

*More than 1,000 colony forming units per gram (cfu/g).

These units indicate the degree of contamination on each sample.

In this first quarter, 1,032 samples of fresh whole chilled UK-produced chickens and packaging have been tested. The chickens were bought from large UK retail outlets and smaller independent stores and butchers. The new survey commenced sampling in July 2015.

The FSA has been testing chickens for campylobacter since February 2014 and publishing the results as part of its campaign to bring together the whole food chain to tackle the problem. Campylobacter is the most common cause of food poisoning in the UK, making an estimated 280,000 people ill every year.

The report of results is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/znlg8y>



BEUC CRITICISE USE OF CHEMICALS TO CURB CAMPYLOBACTER

The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) strongly disapproves of the use of chemicals to wash bacteria from chicken sold in Europe.

Campylobacter is the most common cause of food poisoning in the EU, affecting an estimated 200,000 people annually. In its strategy to tackle this bacterium, the European Commission is suggesting a food hygiene limit for campylobacter and wants to make sure Member States check that businesses comply with it.

The strategy also aims to allow slaughterhouses to wash poultry carcasses with the chemical substance peroxyacetic acid (PAA). This follows a request by the United States' Department of Agriculture that the EU approves the use of this chemical wash which is widely used in US poultry plants.

BEUC applauds action to control campylobacter but deplores opening up the possibility that chicken is rinsed in chemicals such as PAA. Before Member States discuss the campylobacter strategy, BEUC urges the EU to safeguard its 'farm to fork' approach on food safety.

The priority should be to prevent the contamination of poultry by harmful bugs on the farm. Measures include farm workers using dedicated clothing and footwear to avoid bringing bacteria into poultry houses. 'Poultry washes' are fairly inefficient and relying on them could distract farmers and abattoir staff from preventive measures.

BEUC have produced a letter to member states, which can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/q73s6cj> and also a Q&A document on this topic, available here: <http://tinyurl.com/ntjkavy>

APHA PUBLISH UPDATE ON H5N1 OUTBREAK IN FRANCE

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has published a preliminary outbreak assessment for highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 in poultry in France.

France has reported two outbreaks of avian influenza in poultry both in the Dordogne. In the first, a mixed goose and duck fattening commercial premises, an increase in mortality was reported three young geese and samples tested positive. However the strain was identified as H5N2 HPAI rather than H5N1.

In a further premises samples were taken as part of the EU poultry surveillance programme, and tested positive for H5 serology, but the N subtype has not been determined yet. Disease control measures have been implemented at both premises, including 3km protection and 10km surveillance zones in line with Directive 2005/94/EC.

The updated outbreak assessment can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/oa3vrlh>



FSA LETTER TO AUTHORITIES ON REVIEWED SFBB PACK FOR CATERERS

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has written to Enforcing Authorities to inform them of the need to be aware of the revised version of Safer Food Better Business, which became available from 2 November 2015 on the FSA website and which should be brought to the attention of food business operators.

Significant changes that have been made to the pack include;

- Complete refresh and re-brand of the SFBB Caterers pack;
- New safe method on managing food allergens in the Management Section of the pack, and emphasis on allergens where applicable throughout the pack;
- New section on managing food waste in the Cleaning Section;
- New safety point on not defrosting chicken under running water and a link to more information on Campylobacter on the FSA website;
- Additional information on barbequing and shellfish labelling requirements; and
- Additional information for suppliers and contractors in relation to food fraud.

The Letter to Enforcing Authorities can be seen here: <http://tinyurl.com/nf75964>



**Safer food
better business**

FOOD SECURITY, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

FOOD AUTHENTICITY NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED

The first Newsletter of the Virtual Network for Food Authenticity Analysis has been published.



Their website (www.foodauthenticity.uk) was launched in July 2015 and is being developed into the resource recommended in Chris Elliott's Review into the Integrity and Assurance of Food Supply.

The project was set up by Defra and is there to provide the tools to check for mislabelling and food fraud, and help to ensure that the UK has a resilient network of laboratories with fit for purpose testing to check for food authenticity.

This first edition of the Newsletter contains an account of the Management Committee who will oversee the development of the Network and will guide the content of the website. There is also a quick overview of what you can get out of the website so that you can get what you need from it. There are also articles from FERA and CIEH/TiPSiP about other initiatives with a direct interest in food authenticity.

The Newsletter can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/py692tt>

NGO STUDY ON SEAFOOD FRAUD



The Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) Oceana has published DNA analysis results showing that, on average, 30% of seafood served in Brussels restaurants did not correspond to the species ordered by the consumer. The campaign group argues that seafood fraud and mislabeling can often involve illegal or unsustainable fishing products.

According to the study, the top 3 fraudulent species are:

- Bluefin tuna which was substituted with bigeye tuna or yellowfin tuna in 95% of cases
- Common sole which was substituted with another cheaper flatfish species in 11% of cases
- Cod which was substituted with one of seven different species, most often being Pangasius or saithe, in 13% of cases

The full results sheet is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/oamfnhm>

CAMPDEN TRACEABILITY IN THE FOOD AND FEED CHAIN GUIDELINE PUBLISHED

Although regulations, international standards and commercial standards require traceability systems, none is prescriptive in the way it is achieved. Legal requirements focus on external traceability of suppliers and customers (the one step back and one step forward approach), whereas industry good practice also includes industry process traceability.

The second edition of Campden BRI's Traceability in the food and feed chain: general principles and basic system requirements (Guideline 60) outlines the general principles and basic system requirements for the design and implementation of a traceability system – with special reference to external and internal traceability.

Also available is the associated Traceability auditing standard which documents the requirements of a traceability management system that has been developed following the principles of the guideline.

Traceability in the food and feed chain: general principles and basic system requirements is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/n9sulqs> and the Traceability auditing standard can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/qyhbnj4>

BEUC PUBLISH REPORT ON 'DISHONEST MEAT LABELS'

Meat products sold in the European Union are often found to contain less meat than mentioned on the label, and sometimes an altogether different variety, according to a report of European Consumer Organisation Europäischer Verbraucherverband Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs (BEUC).

In the report, titled "Close-up on the meat we eat - Consumers want honest labels", the consumer watchdog stated that several additives are being pumped into meat, including water and sulphites in mince beef.

This continues the focus on meat products since the horse meat scandal of 2013. Europe's food has been under scrutiny since horse meat was passed off as beef in processed meat products. As a result, millions of meat products had to be recalled from retail shelves in the EU.

BEUC director Monique Goyens said: "Consumers should be able to trust the label on the food they buy. If we are serious about rebuilding confidence in meat, EU member states need to beef up controls and make sure labels are complete and accurate."

BEUC allegedly found cases where labels did not declare the use of added water or the percentage of meat.

BEUC also found that products carried illegal food additives and did not declare mechanically-separated meat. Several brands had also resorted to the fraudulent practice of using other species as a substitute.

The consumer watchdog recommended EU authorities conduct frequent and stringent monitoring, as well as focus their efforts on tackling food fraud.

The BEUC report is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/hyjbvh5>

FSS PUBLISH FOOD SURVEILLANCE BENCHMARKING REPORT

A report by ICF International, commissioned by Food Standards Scotland (FSS), compares the systems currently in place in Scotland with the countries which are considered to have the most effective food surveillance systems in the world, particularly in relation to food fraud and authenticity.

This research project is the first stage in addressing one of the recommendations from the Expert Advisory Group, under the chairmanship of Professor Jim Scudamore, established in the wake of the Horsemeat incident in 2013:

Recommendation 12: The New Food Body should consider how to improve the use and collation of information across food standards and food safety to ensure Scotland has a world recognised surveillance system in place.

In summary, the report found that Scotland has the key components of an effective food fraud surveillance system. However, there is scope to make the system stronger.

- Strategic planning could be enhanced, by looking more systematically at emerging and long-term risks.
- Develop a horizon-scanning strategy for food fraud that works closely with industry sectors and research institutions, focussing on food subsectors of high economic importance to Scotland.
- Adopt a more systematic approach to building skills and capability for food fraud surveillance and investigation.
- Strengthen FSS's capacity to coordinate food fraud surveillance and investigations.
- Strengthen information gathering to make more effective use of information sources that are presently under-used in surveillance, such as trade and industry data, and social media.
- Safeguard access to high quality laboratory services by encouraging better joint working among private and public laboratories in Scotland so that resources, results and access to technology are shared more effectively.
- Ensure FSS continues to develop and support collaboration with stakeholders and the Food Standards Agency to secure access to EU stakeholders as well as other member states.

The publication of this report is one of many actions taken in response to the recommendations of the Expert Advisory Group. This includes the establishment of FSS's New Food Crime and Incidents Unit which is responsible for surveillance and detection of fraud and deliberate non-compliance within the food chain in Scotland.

The full report can be downloaded for free, from: <http://tinyurl.com/na5hn6h>

IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

TTIP 11TH ROUND TALKS BRINGS PROGRESS

The EU and US have finished the 11th round of talks on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Negotiators discussed all three pillars of what could be the biggest bilateral trade agreement in history, meaning market access for EU and US companies, regulatory cooperation and trade rules. The goal of the agreement is to slash trade taxes and facilitate trade between the two blocks with an aim to boost economic growth, create more job opportunities and modernise rules governing global trade.

In concrete terms the EU and the US have made substantial progress on market access for EU and US companies in all three areas meaning: tariffs, services and public procurement. Second tariff offer was exchanged, so both sides now arrived at a comparable level of proposals in terms of tariff line coverage which would facilitate further talks. Both sides have also exchanged proposals on product-specific rules of origin and discussed public procurement with a view to exchange market access proposals on public procurement in February 2016.

Both sides also intensified discussions on regulatory cooperation and rules areas. In terms of regulatory cooperation, the discussions are led by the regulators from the EU and the US. The Commission regulators met with a number of US regulatory agencies including National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Federal Communication Commission, Food and Drug Administration, Occupational Health and Safety Administration and Environment Protection Agency. These meetings also provided an opportunity to clarify main principles of regulatory cooperation:

- Any cooperation is possible only if the level of protection for consumers stays the same or improves. This is not only true in TTIP, but for all other EU trade agreements, as announced in the new trade strategy by Commissioner Malmström.
- Any form of regulatory cooperation will not change or affect the EU regulatory and democratic process

In line with a new, more responsible trade strategy, the EU also tabled its proposal for sustainable development, including labour and the environment and also discussed rules for trade facilitation, competition, energy and raw materials and others. As usual, the negotiators listened to presentations of stakeholders and civil society representatives and debriefed them on the progress of the talks.

The European Commission, in line with its enhanced transparency policy, has published an extensive progress report, available here: <http://tinyurl.com/omg75z9>

TRANSATLANTIC TRADE INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP IMPACT ON SME'S

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has published an Opinion (own-initiative opinion) on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and its impact on small and medium enterprises (SME's) C383/34, 17/11/2015.

At its 509th plenary session held on 1-2 July 2015, the EESC considered a number of general points, including;

- The importance of SMEs on both sides of the Atlantic;
- The EU and its SMEs;
- SMEs in the US: more structured enterprises;
- The importance of TTIP for SMEs;
- The international development of SMEs;
- The current role of SMEs in the transatlantic trade and investment market;
- The main barriers faced by SMEs.



The EESC asks the Commission, the European Parliament and other competent authorities to introduce an 'SME chapter' as a permanent chapter in current and future trade negotiations in which the interests of EU SMEs will be taken into account in order to deploy the potential benefits in different regions and markets.

The Opinion can be found in the Official Journal here: <http://tinyurl.com/gqxs7j5>

NEW RED MEAT LEVY DISTRIBUTION SCHEME PROPOSED



The red meat levy boards in England, Scotland and Wales have submitted a briefing document to Ministers in England, Scotland and Wales outlining an alternative option for the distribution of red meat levy income.

This alternative, developed jointly by the three organisations, would take into consideration the scale of economic activity undertaken by the red meat industry in each country, rather than only where the animal is slaughtered.

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) and Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC) have been in talks for some time considering how changes could be made to the current system.

At present, levy is collected at point of slaughter regardless of where animals spent their lives and where value has been added to beef cattle, sheep and pigs.

Under the potential new system, animals that have spent part of their lives in different countries would have the levy apportioned across those different countries.

The levy boards have also agreed to look at new ways of working in partnership on activity where there is mutual benefit, such as supporting export market access work in countries where there is potential to sell pig meat, sheep meat and beef from across Britain.

More information can be found on the AHDB press release here: <http://tinyurl.com/h9wfh56>

FOOD LEVIES HOLDING BACK SCOTTISH PRODUCERS

Food Secretary Richard Lochhead has slammed the UK Government's decision to reject the Scottish Government's request for food levy raising powers to be devolved to Scotland.

The decision, which Mr Lochhead says, makes a mockery of the UK Government's claim that Scotland will have the most powerful devolved Parliament in the world, could potentially damage Scottish producers and constrain the food sector's ambition to develop new domestic and international markets.

Mr Lochhead has called on the UK Government to urgently think again so that an end can be brought to the current anomalies such as those levies paid by our sheep farmers going to promote English lamb and the scandalous situation of our fishing levies being used to promote frozen Norwegian fish to the UK market.

The Food Secretary's statement can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/zsacgzv>



IMPORTS OF POULTRY FROM CANADA AND THE USA

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1884 of 20 October 2015 was published in the Official Journal of the EU, L276/28, 21/10/2015. This regulation amends Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 798/2008 as regards the entries for Canada and the United States in the list of third countries, territories, zones or compartments from which poultry and poultry products may be imported into or transit through the Union in relation to highly pathogenic avian influenza outbreaks in these countries.

Canada has reported the completion of cleaning and disinfection measures following stamping-out on holdings in the Province of Ontario where HPAI outbreaks were detected in April 2015. Therefore dates are indicated when the affected areas in this Province that were placed under veterinary restrictions in relation to those outbreaks, were considered free of HPAI, and imports into the Union of certain commodities originating from those areas are authorised.

In addition, the United States has reported the completion of cleaning and disinfection measures following the stamping-out of poultry on holdings in the States of Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota where HPAI outbreaks were detected between April and June 2015. Dates are indicated when the affected areas in those States that were placed under veterinary restrictions in relation to those outbreaks may again be considered free of HPAI, and imports into the Union of certain commodities originating from those areas should accordingly again be authorised.

This Regulation entered into force on 24 October 2015, and can be found in the Official Journal here: <http://tinyurl.com/qaos76w>

THE TRADE IN ANIMALS AND RELATED PRODUCTS (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT REGULATIONS 2015

The Trade in Animals and Related Products (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2015, SI 2015 No. 401 were laid before the Scottish Parliament on 23 November 2015 and come into force on 8 January 2016.

The Regulations amend the Trade in Animals and Related Products (Scotland) Regulations 2012 to transfer the functions of the enforcement authority, not including border inspection posts, to the Scottish Ministers in relation to aquatic animals and aquaculture animal products.

The Regulation is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/olppge8> .

LABELLING AND GENERAL FOOD LAW

A FRENCH CONSUMER GROUP CALLS FOR THE FIVE-COLOUR LABEL

The French consumer group CLCV has called for the rapid adoption of the proposed five-colour nutritional front of pack label by the country's food manufacturers and retailers following a vote on the health bill by the French Senate.

The measure, contained in the new health bill, has now passed through both houses of the National Assembly but can only take effect when a decree is issued setting out in detail the form of the label. The consumer group, CLCV, has called on the government to press ahead with introduction of the label as soon as possible.

On the opposite side, the French food industry association, ANIA, is still adamantly opposed to what it sees as a simplistic system. The bill must now go to an inter-Parliamentary committee to try to reach a compromise.

The Front of pack scheme, adopted in the UK is similar and is currently under scrutiny at EU level. The question is whether the French proposal will suffer the same fate.

FSA LETTER TO AUTHORITIES ON BREACHES OF PROVISIONS ON 'USE-BY' DATES

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has written to Enforcing Authorities regarding policy clarification in relation to enforcement action in cases of breaches of provisions on 'use by' dates.

The question of enforcement powers relating to food which is discovered in food businesses following expiry of the 'use by' date has been raised and the FSA has had discussions with Defra and in various discussion threads on the Knowledge Hub. The paper attached as an Annex to the letter provides policy clarification.



It clarifies that both Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) and Trading Standards Officers (TSOs) have the relevant authority to take action in situations where a breach of the regulations is discovered. It explains that it remains an offence to place food on the marked with an expired 'use by' date and if such food is discovered it must automatically be deemed unsafe. The paper also provides some examples to assist enforcement officers, including:

- Retail display of food with expired 'use by' date;
- Changing 'use by' date at retail;
- Changing 'use by', freezing and altering FBO details on the pack;
- Delicatessen slicing cooked ham;
- Caterer reheating pies;
- Caterer holding foods with expired 'use by' dates in fridge to be used as ingredients in cooked products;
- Caterer holding foods with expired 'use by' date in the freezer;
- Wholesaler holding frozen products with expired 'use by' dates to be stripped of packaging before being sold on still frozen but with best before dates.

The letter can be read here: <http://tinyurl.com/gr9s6c3>

FSS LAUNCH 'LOOK AT THE LABEL' CAMPAIGN

Food Standards Scotland (FSSS) has launched an awareness raising campaign encouraging consumers to spend a little longer looking at food labelling.

Some of the country's biggest supermarkets are supporting the #lookatthelabel campaign, which encourages people in Scotland to make safer, healthier and more informed choices when buying food and drink.

#Lookatthelabel aims to increase understanding of the importance of 'use by' dates, colour-coded nutrition labelling, storage advice and allergen information.

Fewer than one-third of adults (28%) report that they always check the nutrition content of food. The Front of Pack colour-coded labelling, which has been adopted by the majority of the UK's major food retailers, provides nutritional information to help consumers make healthier choices.



With only one-fifth (22%) of Scots using product packaging for finding out information about food safety, and a third (32%) having experienced food poisoning, understanding the information on food labels is, according to Geoff Ogle, Chief Executive of Food Standards Scotland, one important way consumers can reduce the risk of food poisoning.

For more information, go to: <http://tinyurl.com/pmhq4ut>

WARNING OVER NEW 'USE-BY' DATE GUIDELINES

Food businesses will need to be extra diligent over how they handle ingredients and products with 'use-by' dates following a note from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has issued to enforcement officers.

Whilst this note does not have the full status of official guidance the points made in the document are likely to particularly affect businesses providing end-of-day products to charities if they fall into the perishable food category.

Not only are enforcement officers being urged to confiscate any product that is found beyond the 'use by' date, but the use of such products will be treated as an automatic offence, in which the food is deemed to be unfit.

The British Sandwich Association has some issues with the notes contents.

The key issues are as follows:

Ingredients: Under current rules, a food business can freeze an ingredient for future use and, thereby, extend the 'use-by' date, provided it is done in advance of the date expiring. However, unless this process is fully documented in future, the original 'use-by' date will be taken as still valid. The documentation (which could include a label) to enable the shelf-life to be extended must show details of not only when and how the product was frozen, but must also demonstrate that it was defrosted and used within the scope of the original date. For example, if the product was frozen 2 days in advance of the Use By date, only 2 days life can be given after defrosting.

Charities: Where perishable foods, such as sandwiches or ingredients, are given to charities at the end of their manufacturer's shelf-life, the new guidance requires them to be relabelled with a use-by date. In order to extend the manufacturer's date the business or charity must be able to prove scientifically that it is safe to extend the shelf-life given "a worst case scenario". This means that testing must take account of factors such as possible temperature fluctuations in the onward supply chain.

Where the scientific evidence exists to allow a product to be relabelled with a new 'use-by' date, the label must include the name and address of the new Food Business Operator/Charity as well as instructions for use.

BFFF is working on an assured advice document for members on this subject and this is currently being assessed by the BFFF Technical Expert Group. This assured advice will reflect these points when published. If you would like to be kept informed regarding this subject please let Crystal know at crystalholmes@bfff.co.uk

More information on this can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/h5w8l6c>

NEW 'FREE-FROM' BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE PUBLISHED

The British Retail Consortium (BRC) along with the Food and Drink Federation (FDF) have produced a best practice document on 'free-from'.

The best practice document tries to clarify a grey area and formalises the type of risk assessment best practice would suggest is carried out.

There was concern that allegedly parts of 'catering' have been misinterpreting the use of 'does not contain' to infer 'free-from' in final consumed product. Nowhere in the document does the phrase 'does not contain' appear and the catering area is lacking some detail. However the document is a useful step forward in the risk assessments used for allergen management.

The 'free-from' document can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/no2eeny>



NUTRITION, ADDITIVES AND HEALTH

PHE PUBLISH REPORT ON SUGAR REDUCTION

An evidence review of a broad range of measures to reduce the nation's excessive sugar consumption has been published by Public Health England (PHE).

The review, Sugar reduction: the evidence for action, concludes that a range of factors, including marketing, promotions, advertising and the amount of sugar in manufactured food, is contributing to an increase in sugar consumption. A correspondingly broad range of measures is needed in response.

The evidence review shows that action to reduce sugar consumption levels could include, but is not limited to, reducing:

- the volume and number of price promotions in retail and restaurants
- the marketing and advertising of high sugar products to children
- the sugar content in and portion size of everyday food and drink products

The review also suggests consideration of a price increase, through a tax or a levy, as a means of reducing sugar intake, though this is likely to be less effective than the three measures set out above.

This of course has not been made clear by media reports following publication.

Other conclusions from the review include setting a clear definition of high sugar foods; adopting the government buying standards for foods and catering services; delivering accredited training on diet and health to all who work in catering, fitness and leisure sectors; and continuing to raise awareness of practical steps to reduce sugar consumption.

The full report, along with the annexes, can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/puxn47g>

SUGAR TAX PETITION AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Sustain and Jamie Oliver have set up a petition to try and introduce a tax on sugary drinks. This comes after health experts showed concern about sugars contribution to weight gain and type-2 diabetes.

Experts believe a tax of 7p per can of soft drink could generate £1 billion per year, which could be used towards preventative strategies in the NHS and schools around childhood obesity and diet-related disease.

The Government have since published the following response:

“The Government has no plans to introduce a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages.

“The Government has committed to a tax lock to avoid raising the cost of living and to promote UK productivity and economic growth, however, the Government keeps all taxes under review, with decisions being a matter for the Chancellor as part of the Budget process.

“The causes of obesity are complex, caused by a number of dietary, lifestyle, environmental and genetic factors, and tackling it will require a comprehensive and broad approach. As such, the Government is considering a range of options for tackling childhood obesity, and the contribution that Government, alongside industry, families and communities can make, and will announce its plans for tackling childhood obesity by the end of the year.”

The petition, debate and government response can all be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/pjj865v>



FINLAND TO PUT AN END TO CONFECTIONARY TAX

Finland is to scrap a tax on confectionary and ice cream from 2017 after the European Commission complained about the tax, saying it unfairly favors Finnish producers.

Finland imposed the tax of €0.95 per kilo in 2011 in an effort to curb sugar consumption and it brings in about €109 million a year.

The tax was selective in that it applied to chocolate but not chocolate-coated biscuits or biscuits at all. It was said the tax unfairly benefited other product categories that were also high in sugar.

This development demonstrates that fat taxes can be challenged on the grounds of fair competition and that these challenges can be successful. This case could give further evidence for opponents of 'fat taxes' in other EU countries.

FDF SURVEY: CONSUMERS UNCONVINCED BY SUGAR TAX

Only four in ten Britons think introducing a tax on sugar-sweetened soft drinks would be effective in tackling obesity, according to an independent poll of GB adults by Populus for the Food and Drink Federation.

The survey interviewed a sample of over 2,000 British adults. Even fewer think a ban on supermarket price promotions, for example, buy-one-get-one-free offers, would be effective.

Over two thirds of the 2,005 consumers polled think a tax on sugar-sweetened soft drinks would:

- Penalise the majority of people who consume soft drinks responsibly (67% agree)
- Increase substantially year-on-year (67% agree)
- Inevitably lead to taxes on other foods (78% agree)

Ian Wright CBE, Director General of the Food and Drink Federation, said:

"Instead of presuming to speak for the British public as some health campaigners have done, we've asked consumers directly whether they think a sugar tax would be effective at tackling obesity. The public's instincts mirror what the facts are telling us – that there isn't evidence that a tax would make any difference to obesity. Last month, Public Health England, which called for a new tax on top of the 20% VAT charged on soft drinks, conceded that there was no long-term data showing it would work.

BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION CALL FOR OBESITY TO MADE NATIONAL PRIORITY

The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) calls for obesity to become a national priority, stating that 54% of women aged 34 to 44 were overweight or obese in 2013, as were almost two-thirds of those aged 45 to 54.

The CMO's new published report urges Government to include obesity in its national risk planning.

The British Heart Foundation (BHF) joined eighteen other organisations to form a national alliance. This calls on the Government to implement a range of ambitious policies to tackle the UK's growing obesity crisis. These include:

Robust restrictions on unhealthy food marketing, including a 9pm watershed for TV advertising of junk food

Independent set of incremental reformulation targets, backed by regulation for industry to reduce the sugar, saturated fat and salt in our foods

The government should introduce a 20 per cent tax on sugary drinks

The Obesity Stakeholder Group represents a range organisations including the UK Health Forum, Diabetes UK, Cancer Research UK, Children's Food Campaign, the Royal College of General Practitioners, The Jamie Oliver Food Foundation and the British Medical Association.

The report can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/j872cky>

DEBATE HEATING UP ON THE NEED FOR NUTRIENT PROFILES

A long standing debate within the EU since 2006 is moving slowly to more discussion. The Nutrition and Health Claims regulation adopted in 2008 called for the establishment of nutrient profiles.

Following the publication of the Roadmap (see: <http://tinyurl.com/p2uwtjx>) which will consider whether to remove the nutrient profiles from the Regulation on Nutrition and Health Claims, several stakeholders and decision-makers expressed their opinion on the issue.

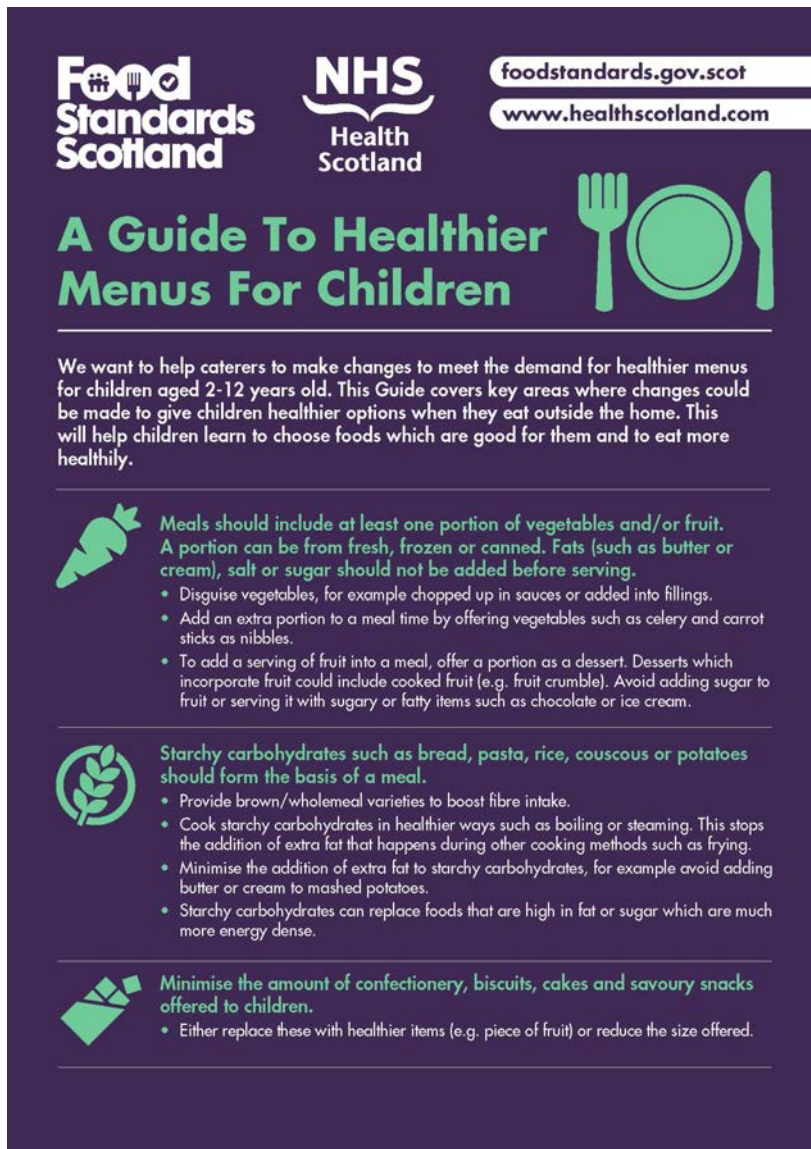
On the industry side, Nestle has encouraged the European Commission to set nutrient profiles as quickly as possible arguing it will promote product innovation. The European Heart Network and the European Consumer Organisation also joined the call for a quick proposal on the profiles.

The EU Health and Food Safety Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis made clear that he would like to set the nutrient profiles but that he has difficult discussions with other services of the Commission.

On the opposite side, the Italian centre-right MEP, Elisabetta Gardini, claimed this week that she opposes the WHO nutrient profiling, highlighting MEPs have recently voted to withdraw the nutrient profiles.

While Commissioner Andriukaitis made clear he was in favour of the profiles, it is still unclear who is blocking the process in the Commission and whether the profiles will be published. While many stakeholders are calling on the EU to set the profiles, there is a strong opposition from the European Parliament.

FSS LAUNCH HEALTHY CATERING GUIDE FOR CHILDREN'S MENUS



The poster features logos for Food Standards Scotland, NHS Health Scotland, and the websites foodstandards.gov.scot and www.healthscotland.com. It includes an illustration of a plate with a fork and knife. The text is organized into sections with icons: a carrot for vegetables, a leaf for starchy carbohydrates, and a fork/knife for confectionery. Each section contains specific advice and bullet points for healthier catering options for children.

Food Standards Scotland **NHS Health Scotland** foodstandards.gov.scot www.healthscotland.com

A Guide To Healthier Menus For Children

We want to help caterers to make changes to meet the demand for healthier menus for children aged 2-12 years old. This Guide covers key areas where changes could be made to give children healthier options when they eat outside the home. This will help children learn to choose foods which are good for them and to eat more healthily.

-  **Meals should include at least one portion of vegetables and/or fruit. A portion can be from fresh, frozen or canned. Fats (such as butter or cream), salt or sugar should not be added before serving.**
 - Disguise vegetables, for example chopped up in sauces or added into fillings.
 - Add an extra portion to a meal time by offering vegetables such as celery and carrot sticks as nibbles.
 - To add a serving of fruit into a meal, offer a portion as a dessert. Desserts which incorporate fruit could include cooked fruit (e.g. fruit crumble). Avoid adding sugar to fruit or serving it with sugary or fatty items such as chocolate or ice cream.
-  **Starchy carbohydrates such as bread, pasta, rice, couscous or potatoes should form the basis of a meal.**
 - Provide brown/wholemeal varieties to boost fibre intake.
 - Cook starchy carbohydrates in healthier ways such as boiling or steaming. This stops the addition of extra fat that happens during other cooking methods such as frying.
 - Minimise the addition of extra fat to starchy carbohydrates, for example avoid adding butter or cream to mashed potatoes.
 - Starchy carbohydrates can replace foods that are high in fat or sugar which are much more energy dense.
-  **Minimise the amount of confectionery, biscuits, cakes and savoury snacks offered to children.**
 - Either replace these with healthier items (e.g. piece of fruit) or reduce the size offered.

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) and NHS Health Scotland have launched a healthier catering guide to help restaurants, cafes and takeaways improve their children's menus.

It's aimed at caterers to help them make changes to their menus to encourage children aged 2 to 12 years old to choose foods which are good for them and to eat more healthily. The guide asks food outlets to make simple changes such as including at least one portion of fruit and vegetables in every meal, and replacing sugary drinks with water or milk.

FSS is also providing advice for small catering businesses by publishing a further 8 simple catering sheets tailored for different types of establishments to help them improve their cooking practices to provide healthier options.

A guide to healthier menus for children is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/nez4d9k>

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT OBESITY INDICATOR STATISTICS PUBLISHED

Scotland's Chief Statistician has released Obesity Indicators statistics. The publication reports the latest figures for indicators selected to monitor progress of the Scottish Government's Prevention of Obesity Route Map.

The main findings were:

- Overweight and obesity - In 2014, 65% of adults aged 16 and over were overweight, including 28% who were obese. Levels of overweight and obesity increased between 1995 and 2008, but have remained relatively stable since then.
- Proportion of adults overweight or obese, 1995-2014 - Since 1998, the proportion of children at risk of overweight (including obesity) fluctuated between 29% and 33% (31% in 2014).
- Diabetes - At the end of 2014, there were 276,430 people diagnosed with diabetes in Scotland recorded on local diabetes registers. Of all cases, 88.3% (244,050) were type 2 diabetes. Prevalence of type 2 diabetes continues to increase steadily.
- Physical activity - Sixty three% of adults aged 16 and over met the current moderate/vigorous physical activity (MVPA) guideline. There has been no significant change to this proportion since 2012.
- 76% of children met physical activity recommendations (including school-based activity). This is a statistically significant increase compared to 71% of children in 2008 and 2009.
- Diet - The percentage of food energy contributed by added sugars (14.5%) remains higher than the Scottish Dietary Goal of less than 11% of food energy.

In recent years, the volume of sales of regular soft drinks has reduced, while sales of confectionery, biscuits, cakes and pastries have remained relatively unchanged.

The full statistical publication is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/zszqw83>

REPORT CONCLUDES NEED TO SET LIMITS ON TRANS FATS

The European Commission has adopted a report on trans fats (TFA) in food and in the overall diet of Europeans. This issue is a worldwide concern as the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have notably adopted a decision last June to remove partially hydrogenated oils from foods within three years.

The Commission's preliminary report suggests that setting a legal limit for industrial TFA content would be the most effective measure in terms of public health, consumer protection and compatibility with the single market. The way in which such legal limit could be technically put into practice would require further investigation. The report notes that there are food products with high industrial TFA content available on the European market and there are public health gains to be reaped by reducing intake.



Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the EU and a high intake of TFA seriously increases the risk for heart disease - more than any other nutrient on a per calorie basis. Although average intake in the EU has been reported below national and international recommended levels, this cannot be said for all groups of population.

This report analyses how effective different EU wide measures could be on the potential health benefits for consumers but also the potential burdens for food producers. The options that were investigated included mandatory labelling of TFA, setting legal limits of TFA content in food and voluntary approaches to food reformulation. So far, TFA labelling is not well understood by consumers and increases the complexity of identifying healthier food choices. The effectiveness of voluntary approaches to food reformulation could be limited as it would clearly depend on the scope of industry participation and the coverage of food products on the market.

The Commission will shortly launch a public consultation and carry out an impact assessment to collect more information and build on the analysis provided by today's report. This process will inform the Commission's policy decision in the near future.

The report is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/o23gohf>

FSS RECOMMENDS NEW SCOTTISH DIETARY GOALS

The Food Standards Scotland (FSS) Board has agreed to advise the Scottish Government that the Scottish Dietary Goals should be updated to reflect the recent recommendations from the independent Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) on carbohydrate and health.

The proposed revised goals are:

- to reduce sugar to 5% of total energy
- to increase dietary fibre intake to 30g per day
- to maintain total carbohydrate at 50% of total energy with no more than 5% total energy from sugar



The purpose of the goals is to fix the direction of travel for dietary improvement, underpin Scottish dietary policies and provide a benchmark for monitoring dietary progress at the population level.

FSS recognises the challenge of meeting the Scottish Dietary Goals which is highlighted by the publication of the FSS Situation Report: The Scottish Diet: It Needs To Change.

The report collates and presents current evidence to provide information for policymakers, stakeholders including the food and drink industry, health professionals and consumers to highlight the scale of the challenge and the need for change if Scotland is to realise the vision of a healthier, more prosperous nation. The report also recognises the need for collective action to address the problem.

The FSS Situation Report can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/zuul7ut>

EFSA RE-EVALUATION OF ADDITIVES



The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published a call for food additives usage level and/or concentration data for a range of additives used in food and beverages intended for human consumption.

A programme for the re-evaluation of food additives that were already permitted in the European Union before 20 January 2009 has been set up under Commission Regulation (EU) No 257/2010. This Regulation also foresees that food additives are re-evaluated whenever necessary in light of changing conditions of use and new scientific information.

For efficiency and practical purposes, the re-evaluation should, as far as possible, be conducted by grouping food additives according to the main functional class to which they belong.

The deadline for the submission of data is 31st May 2016. The additives subject to this call (Batch 4) include mono and diglycerides of fatty acids, alginates, pectins, celluloses, glutamates and modified starches. Individual food manufacturers and food manufacturer associations are invited to submit data on usage levels of these additives in food and beverages in the format provided.

To see more about the batch 4 additives, or to submit data, please go to: <http://tinyurl.com/pzrx99d>

NDA SCIENTIFIC OPINION ON VITAMIN C

The European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA's) Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies (NDA) has published the following Scientific Opinion on the substantiation of a health claim relating to Vitamin C and contribution to the normal function of the immune system pursuant to Article 14 of Regulation (EC) No. 1924/2006 on health claims:

The scope of the application was proposed to fall under a health claim referring to children's development and health. The target population is up to three years of age.

The Panel concluded that a cause and effect relationship has been established between the dietary intake of vitamin C and contribution to the normal function of the immune system.

In order to bear the claim, follow-on formulae should comply with the criteria for the composition of follow-on formulae as laid down in Directive 2006/141/EC; nutritionally complete foods for special medical purposes intended for use by infants and nutritionally complete foods for special medical purposes other than those intended for use by infants should comply with the criteria for the composition of these foods as laid down in Directive 1999/21/EC; processed cereal-based foods for infants and young children should comply with the criteria for the composition of these foods as laid down in Directive 2006/125/EC; and other foodstuffs intended for infants and young children should provide at least 15% of the reference values for the nutritional labelling of foods intended for infants and young children as laid down in Directive 2006/141/EC. Such amounts can easily be consumed as part of a balanced diet.

The Scientific Opinion is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/obluu5c>

MEPS MEETING ON ORGANIC FOODS



The European Parliament has published a Press Release regarding a meeting held on 18 November 2015 to discuss organic foods.

Parliament's science and technology unit organised a meeting with experts on 16 November to discuss the benefits of organic food.

In general, the experts agreed that although more research is needed to assess the concrete nutritional benefits, consumers of organic foods are generally more health-minded.

The Press Release can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/owj8pg9>

EFSA GUIDANCE ON FOODS FOR SPECIAL MEDICAL PURPOSES

The European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA's) Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies (NDA) has published a Scientific Opinion providing scientific and technical guidance on foods for special medical purposes in the context of Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 609/2013.

The guidance presented in the document is to assist in the preparation and presentation of well-structured dossiers. It presents a common format for the organisation of the information and outlines the information and scientific data which could be included in the dossier, as well as the key issues which should be addressed in the dossier in order to assess the extent to which a food product notified as FSMP falls under the scope of Regulation (EU) No 609/2013, under the proposed use.

The Scientific Opinion is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/jkbxa27>

PROCESSING AND RETAIL

COMMISSION PROPOSES MODERN DIGITAL CONTRACT RULES

Delivering on its Digital Single Market strategy, the Commission has presented two proposals to better protect consumers who shop online across the EU and help businesses expand their online sales.

One of the Digital Market Strategy's pillars is to ensure better access for consumers and businesses to online goods and services across Europe. E-commerce is growing, but its full potential remains untapped both for businesses and consumers in Europe: only 12% of EU retailers sell online to consumers in other EU countries, while three times as many (37%) do so within their own country. Similarly, only 15% of consumers purchase online from another EU country, while roughly three times as many (44%) do so from their own country.

The Commission has adopted two proposals: one on the supply of digital content (e.g. streaming music) and one on the online sale of goods (e.g. buying clothes online). The two proposals will tackle the main obstacles to cross-border e-commerce in the EU: legal fragmentation in the area of consumer contract law and resulting high costs for businesses – especially SMEs – and low consumer trust when buying online from another country.

All of the information on the Digital Market Strategy, along with country factsheets can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/zne44cq>



REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT AND OFFICIAL CONTROLS

BFFF SENTENCING GUIDELINES SEMINAR

BFFF are holding a seminar on 9th February 2016, at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry to inform businesses how the new guidelines will affect them.

New Sentencing guidelines for Health and Safety, Corporate Manslaughter, Food Safety and Hygiene and Environmental Offences have now been published and come into force in the courts on the 1st February 2016.

The most notable feature of the Guidelines is that fines are now intrinsically linked to the turnover of the defendant company. For larger companies, fines may rocket from hundreds of thousands into the millions of pounds.

Our seminar, aimed at Managing Directors, Financial Directors, Board Directors, Health and Safety Specialists and Senior Managers of our members' businesses will provide awareness of:

- The new sentencing process, responsibilities and applicable fines
- Case study examples of the new fine structure applied to previous cases
- How to mitigate the risks within your business

Delegates will have the opportunity to question legal specialists, prepare for the effects of the guidelines, and learn how to best protect businesses and employees for the future.

If you would like to attend the event, please email crystalholmes@bfff.co.uk for a booking form.



NEW SENTENCING GUIDELINES

The Sentencing Council's 'Health and Safety Offences, Corporate Manslaughter and Food Safety and Hygiene Offences – Definitive Guideline' has been published and aims to ensure a consistent, fair and proportionate approach to sentencing organisations or individuals convicted of corporate manslaughter, health and safety and food safety and hygiene offences.

They have been produced by the independent Sentencing Council for England and Wales, and will come into force in courts on 1 February 2016, although offences before this date will be sentenced according to this guideline. The guidelines are available at www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk.

The Guideline was prompted by repeated concerns that the criminal courts lacked consistency in their sentencing approach, often resulting in fines that were disproportionate to the financial resources of offenders and/or undermining the seriousness of offences, the new Guideline seeks to give a clear framework to courts.

The Guideline sets out sentencing ranges that seek to reflect the very different levels of harm and culpability which may arise in these types of offences and sends a stark message that non-compliance will be met with very stiff financial penalties. Whilst the Guideline may be highly unpopular, it is likely to provide a greater degree of predictability that has been lacking for decades.

The most notable feature of the Guideline is that fines are now intrinsically linked to the turnover of the defendant company. For larger companies, fines may rocket from hundreds of thousands into the millions of pounds and fines measured in the millions may become the norm.

The level of fines imposed will be tied to turnover. Large businesses are classed as those with a turnover of £50 million or above, Medium between £10m and £50m, Small between £2m and £10m and Micro less than £2m. BFFF responded to the consultation on the draft guidelines and expressed concern that businesses in our industry can have high turnovers but relatively low profits; and we are happy to see that this has been reflected in the published guidelines. They now state that when finalising a sentence: "The profitability of an organisation will be relevant. If an organisation has a small profit margin relative to its turnover, downward adjustment may be needed."

The Guideline is clear - the fine must be sufficiently substantial to have a real economic impact and bring home to management and shareholders the need to comply with legislation.

It has been noted that a reduction in culpability may be obtained if the business can prove their attempts at compliance. This could be through using industry level guidance, training regimes or even through being actively involved in a Primary Authority Scheme.

For more information on how to join the BFFF's Primary Authority Scheme, which covers Health & Safety, Fire Safety, Food Safety, Labelling & Composition, Weights & Measures and Fair Trading, contact crystalholmes@bfff.co.uk

APPROVAL OF STANDALONE COLD STORES ADVICE PUBLISHED

BFFF have been working with the FSDF, FWD and our Primary Authority partners in Wakefield to produce assured advice on the approval of standalone cold stores. The advice is intended to help operators of wholesale cold stores and local Environmental Health Officers determine whether a particular cold store should be approved or registered under hygiene rules. There has been some alleged inconsistency in the way that the current rules are applied across different Local Authorities.

Wholesale businesses that are signed up to our Wakefield Primary Authority Scheme will be able to rely on the guidance and can be confident that their Local Authority will not ask them to do anything different as assured advice provides legal protections.

BFFF Members who are not participants in our PA scheme can still use the advice but will not have the legal protection and can still be asked to become approved even if the advice provides them with an exemption from approval.

The Approval of Standalone Cold Stores Assured Advice can be found under the hygiene section on the BFFF Technical Guidance webpage, here: <http://tinyurl.com/q7jk2uc>

FSA PUBLISH FOOD LAW PROSECUTIONS DATABASE

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published a live map which links an FSA and local authorities' database of successful food standards, food hygiene and food safety related prosecutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The database gives details of local authority food hygiene and food safety prosecutions outlining where and how food businesses have breached regulations. This data is supplied on a voluntary basis by local authority officers.

The new map is being published to highlight the number and type of successful fines levied.

Rod Ainsworth, Director of Regulatory and Legal Strategy at the FSA, said: 'We want businesses to understand how important it is not to flout the rules which are there to protect public health. If they do then both we and local authorities will take action against them. Publication of this information also lets local authorities share intelligence to get a better understanding of where and how food hygiene and safety breaches occur.'

The live database is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/oy9qy7y>



DEFRA PUBLISH ENFORCEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

Defra has published its enforcement policy statement that sets out the general regulatory principles and enforcement tools used by Defra and its regulatory agencies.

The policy statement explains the options and tools Defra have available to enforce against those who break the law. It sets out what considerations are taken into account when choosing which sanction(s) to apply.

The effective use of enforcement powers in regulation is important to secure compliance with the law and, where necessary, to ensure that those who have not complied may be held to account. Defra see enforcement as part of the toolbox to achieve their strategic priorities and outcomes.

The Enforcement Policy Statement is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/zy3fb8d>



ANTI-SLAVERY TRANSPARENCY IN SUPPLY CHAINS

The Home Office has published a new guide 'Transparency in Supply Chains: A Practical Guide' following the Modern Slavery Act 2015 receiving royal assent in March.

The Act requires businesses with a turnover of £36 million or more to produce an annual slavery and human trafficking statement and the guide provides information and support on how to do this. If an organisation has taken no steps to do this, their statement should say so.

The measure is designed to create a level playing field between those businesses, whose turnover is over a certain threshold, which act responsibly and those that need to change their policies and practices. However, the Government wants to encourage businesses to do more, not just because they are legally obliged to, but also because they recognise it is the right thing to do.

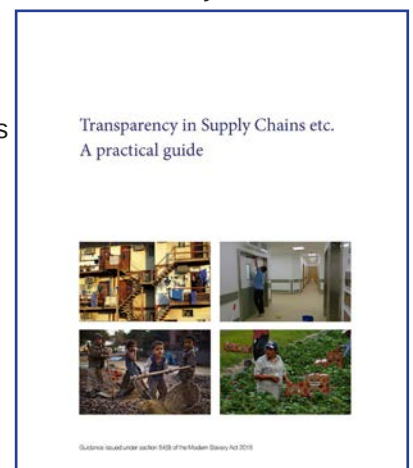
One key purpose of this measure is to prevent modern slavery in organisations and their supply chains. A means to achieve this is to increase transparency by ensuring the public, consumers, employees and investors know what steps an organisation is taking to tackle modern slavery.

Those organisations already taking action can quickly and simply articulate the work already underway and planned. Organisations will need to build on what they are doing year on year. Their first statements may show how they are starting to act on the issue and their planned actions to investigate or collaborate with others to effect change.

A focus on tackling modern slavery not only protects vulnerable workers and helps prevent and remedy severe human rights violations, it can bring a number of business benefits too. These could include:

- protecting and enhancing an organisation's reputation and brand;
- protecting and growing the organisation's customer base as more consumers seek out businesses with higher ethical standards;
- improved investor confidence;
- greater staff retention and loyalty based on values and respect; and
- developing more responsive, stable and innovative supply chains

The guidance can be accessed at www.gov.uk/government/publications



REPORT RECOMMENDS ESTABLISHMENT OF 'CONSUMER SCOTLAND'

Scotland should have a new statutory body to champion Scottish consumers, according to an expert report published.

An independent Working Group on Consumer and Competition Policy, set up by the Scottish Government, recommends that a new body provisionally called Consumer Scotland, should:

- Work to develop a coherent consumer strategy that empowers, informs and protects consumers, making it easier for people to get help when they need it
- Speak up for consumers at local, national and European levels
- Improve co-ordination across the enforcement landscape
- Work with businesses to help build effective and fair relationships with their customers
- Raise the profile of competition concerns in Scottish markets.

The Scotland Bill will transfer powers over consumer advocacy and advice, and elements of competition policy, to the Scottish Parliament.

The report is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/zmjmt4j>

FSA PUBLISH FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION 2014-15

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published official statistics on food law enforcement by local authorities across the UK for the year 2014/15.

The information provided by local authorities and compiled by the FSA, gives a detailed breakdown of enforcement activity across the country.

The figures for 2014/15 show a continuing trend of increasing compliance levels across the UK.

David Hart, Head of Local Authority Enforcement and Policy Unit, said: 'I am pleased to see that the figures this year show business hygiene compliance levels are continuing to improve with 93.0% now broadly compliant with hygiene law - this equates to having a food hygiene rating of 3, 4 or 5. The improvement in broad compliance levels was seen in all four countries.'

In Wales the improvement has been more pronounced, increasing over the past three years to 94% from 88% in 2012/13.

For Northern Ireland, the returns covered only the first three quarters of 2014/15. This was agreed, in view of the need for local authorities to focus on preparations for the local government reorganisation, effective from 1 April 2015.

The trend for local authorities to target food hygiene and standards activities at higher risk establishments, rather than carrying out due interventions at lower risk establishments, has continued across the UK. There was a slight reduction in interventions overall - down by 0.8% on the number reported in 2013/14. And there was a further reduction in local authority professional staffing levels - down 3.9% on 2013/14 levels.

The statistics in the report will help the FSA consider how best to support its local authority partners.

All of the data and statistics are available to view here: <http://tinyurl.com/gt9lpyx>



SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PRIMARY AUTHORITY CONSULTATION



The Scottish Government has published responses to the Primary Authority consultation.

Thirty-eight responses to the consultation were received. The majority of respondents represented Businesses and Industry Associations (15), and Local Authorities and Related Organisations (15). The remainder of responses came from Professional Bodies (3), Public Bodies (2), the Third Sector (1) and Individuals (2).

Following analysis of the consultation responses it is clear that while there is broad agreement in some areas, such as proposed scope, there are mixed views amongst respondent groups on other aspects of primary authority partnerships such as powers to direct and dispute mechanisms. Respondents also highlighted the importance of being as consistent with the UK scheme, where possible, and ensuring effective cross border arrangements.

For the full list of questions and responses are available here, on the Scottish Government's response: <http://tinyurl.com/oso8w2f>

ANNUAL REPORT ON UK MULTI-ANNUAL NATIONAL CONTROL

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has announced that it has published its annual report on progress towards implementation of the UK Multi-Annual National Control Plan (MANCP).

The UK MANCP details the roles, responsibilities and strategies of the different authorities and organisations involved in enforcement of and monitoring compliance with feed and food law, animal health and welfare rules and plant health requirements in the UK. The Food and Veterinary Office of the European Commission will use the report to plan audits of UK control arrangements.

The report will also be used to contribute to a report from the Commission to the European Council and European Parliament on the overall operation of official controls across the European Union.

The report, which is based on data collected for 2014, shows that overall level of compliance in all sectors in the UK was satisfactory when assessed against expectations.

The Annual UK MANCAP Report can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/nfqnkce>

FOOD LAW PRACTICE GUIDANCE PUBLISHED

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published a revised Food Law (England) Practice Guidance (October 2015).

This Practice Guidance is issued by the FSA to assist competent authorities with the discharge of their statutory duty to enforce relevant food law. It is non-statutory, complements the statutory Code of Practice, and provides general advice on approach to enforcement of the law where its intention might be unclear.

The Food Law Code of Practice 2015 can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/puqdh07> and the Food Law Practice Guidance (England) 2015 is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/qbg3b5t>

AMENDMENTS TO BORDER INSPECTION POSTS AND VETERINARY UNITS

Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2015/1997 of 5 November 2015, amending Decision 2009/821/EC, as regards the lists of border inspection posts and veterinary units in Traces (Trade Control and Expert System) was published in the Official Journal of the EU, L291/6, 07/11/2015.

TRACES is a web-based system run by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection that makes it easier for importers and exporters to provide health certification and track consignments of animals or animal products. The Decision amends the list of border inspection posts in various countries, notably in the UK two inspection centres at the border inspection post at the airport at Heathrow have been replaced by one new inspection centre, and the border inspection post at the port at Falmouth has been suspended.



In addition, some border inspection posts have been approved for other categories of animals and products for human consumption. Annexes I and II to Decision 2009/821/EC, and consequently TRACES, have been amended in accordance with the Annex to this Decision.

The amendments can be found in the Official Journal here: <http://tinyurl.com/oghagy7>

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT & CSR

WRAP PUBLISH FOOD FUTURES REPORT

A new WRAP report outlines risks to the UK food system over the next ten years if we don't embrace a business unusual approach to the way we manufacture, sell and consume food.

The 'Food Futures' report, which will be launched at WRAP's annual conference today, assesses 15 topics in the UK food system from farm to fork and outlines recommendations for actions by industry and government.

Increasing global demand for food and the pressure on the environment of meeting that demand, using traditional methods and ingredients, is unlikely to be sustainable. Ensuring the UK has a diversified, sustainable supply of protein is one of the defining challenges of the 21st century. Two topics discussed in the report: new commercial models for sustainable aquaculture and alternative feeds and proteins offer significant potential to overcome this challenge.

Some of the risks and opportunities identified in the report that affect the whole industry, are external including climate risks to food resilience and deep environmental and societal challenges like reducing food waste or tackling diet-related ill health. Whilst for the food chain the ability to realise future opportunities will depend on building skills to meet future food challenges, new supply chain collaborations and how quickly the benefits of new digital technology opportunities can be realised.

Three key trends that will shape the food system and reframe these issues are; increasing challenges to food system resilience; an explosion in data-enabled technology and the alignment of public health and environmental sustainability agendas.

The 'Food Futures' report is available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ns4hcls>

EU ACTION PLAN FOR THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The European Commission adopted an ambitious Circular Economy Package, which includes revised legislative proposals on waste to stimulate Europe's transition towards a circular economy which will boost global competitiveness, foster sustainable economic growth and generate new jobs.

The Circular Economy Package consists of an EU Action Plan for the Circular Economy that establishes a concrete and ambitious programme of action, with measures covering the whole cycle: from production and consumption to waste management and the market for secondary raw materials. The annex to the action plan sets out the timeline when the actions will be completed.

The proposed actions will contribute to "closing the loop" of product lifecycles through greater recycling and re-use, and bring benefits for both the environment and the economy.

The revised legislative proposals on waste set clear targets for reduction of waste and establish an ambitious and credible long-term path for waste management and recycling. Key elements of the revised waste proposal include:

- A common EU target for recycling 65% of municipal waste by 2030;
- A common EU target for recycling 75% of packaging waste by 2030;
- A binding landfill target to reduce landfill to maximum of 10% of all waste by 2030;
- A ban on landfilling of separately collected waste;
- Promotion of economic instruments to discourage landfilling ;
- Simplified and improved definitions and harmonised calculation methods for recycling rates throughout the EU;
- Concrete measures to promote re-use and stimulate industrial symbiosis - turning one industry's by-product into another industry's raw material;
- Economic incentives for producers to put greener products on the market and support recovery and recycling schemes (e.g. for packaging, batteries, electric and electronic equipment, vehicles).

Links to all of the aforementioned documents can be found on this page: <http://tinyurl.com/otwdpda>

DEFRA PUBLISH RESPONSE TO CIRCULAR ECONOMY CONSULTATIONS

The UK government's response to three Commission consultations on the Circular Economy, barriers to waste markets and changes to waste laws have been published by Defra.

The UK government chose to submit a joint response for the public consultations on the:

- Circular Economy
- functioning of Waste Markets in the European Union

The third consultation, aimed at Member States, asked for detail on the technical workings of existing waste legislation.

These responses that were sent to the European Commission summarise the UK government's views on the topics covered by the consultations, but do not set out any new policies.

The UK response on the circular economy and on the functioning of waste markets is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/nfg9uqe>

UK STATEMENT ON SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL

Defra has published the summary of progress made over the last 12 months by organisations signed up to sourcing sustainable palm oil.

The statement covers how organisations in the UK are meeting their various commitments to source sustainable palm oil. This is the third update since the commitments were made.

This update includes information explaining the achievements of the past year for each organisation signed up to the statement.

The sustainable palm oil: three years on progress report can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/jqrdusz>



GREENPEACE HIGHLIGHT REVIEW OF FISHERIES QUOTA ALLOCATIONS



Greenpeace is arguing that Defra has failed to implement Article 17 of the EU's reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), which emphasises transparency and environmental, social and economic criteria in the allocation of fishing quota.

If Defra had implemented the reforms, Greenpeace argues, small-scale fishing vessels which are generally more environmentally-friendly and create thousands more jobs in coastal communities than large industrial boats, would be receiving a fair proportion of the quota.

Inshore, low-impact, boats represent almost 80% of the English and Welsh fishing fleet, yet receive a mere 6% of the fishing opportunities, with the vast majority given to large environmentally-destructive industrial ships and foreign-owned vessels.

Despite the requirements of Article 17, as well as a Conservative manifesto commitment to fishermen and coastal economies, DEFRA has simply not changed the way it distributes quota. Instead DEFRA has maintained an 'opaque' process from the 1990s which continues to give around 95% of fishing quota to industrial boats, at the expense of local, low impact, fishermen.

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

WORLD CLIMATE CHANGE DEAL AGREED

A historic new global climate agreement has been struck at the United Nations conference on climate change in Paris.

The deal takes a significant step forward to reducing emissions. For the first time ever 195 countries, including the world's largest emitters, have now committed to act together to combat climate change and be held equally accountable.

It marks a clear turning point towards a sustainable and low carbon future. Countries will now have to come together regularly to review their climate plans and collectively ensure that the necessary action is being taken to tackle climate change.

The deal sets out a clear long-term goal of net zero emissions by the end of the century, showing that the world is committed to decarbonising. Progress against this goal will be independently assessed in 2018 and every five years thereafter.

Countries will also be legally obliged to make new post-2030 commitments to reduce emissions every 5 years, from 2025. For the first time, all countries will be held accountable by independent review for acting according to their pledges.

The European Commission statement on the climate agreement is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/pfmfk8s> and the UN final agreement can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/zo3nbrr>

WRAP SECOND INTERIM REPORT ON COURTAULD COMMITMENT 3

The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) has published the second interim report of Courtauld Commitment 3.

The voluntary agreement was set up in 2005 to support businesses in improving their overall performance, and reduce their environmental impact. Phase 3 runs for three years from 2013 to 2015 with targets measured against a 2012 baseline across three areas: household food and drink, manufacturing and retail and packaging.

Activity by signatories has helped achieve a considerable reduction in traditional grocery ingredient, product and packaging waste in the manufacturing and retail operations of participants, down 80,000 tonnes against the 2012 baseline. This shows strong progress towards the target standing at 3.2% after the first two years, against the overall 3% target by 2015 for the agreement. Progress remains well ahead of the packaging target, despite a backdrop of growing sales (up by more than 5% for signatories who reported sales data).

The second interim report is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/qh69gj8>



TECHNOLOGY AND NOVEL FOODS

GLAVONOID RULING ALLOWS WEIGHT LOSS USE

More products tackling visceral fat are likely to be developed, following a European Commission ruling on the use of the liquorice root extract Glavonoid.

That is the claim by Kaneka Pharma Europe, which developed the novel food ingredient, and has secured extended use approval from the EC.

Besides being used in food supplements and beverages based on milk, yoghurt, fruit and vegetables, as accredited by its Novel Food status since 2011, Glavonoid can now also be applied in foods intended for medical purposes and energy-restricted diets for weight reduction.



Kaneka says that Glavonoid has been shown to both increase the body's fat burning ability and to decrease fat development. In addition, it says, Glavonoid may also optimise cholesterol and blood glucose levels.

More information on this is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/p5dmkpn>

EU PARLIAMENT VOTE ON NATIONAL GMO BANS PROPOSAL



The European Parliament has published a Press Release regarding a Commission proposal which would enable any EU member state to restrict or prohibit the sale and use of EU approved GMO food or feed on its territory.

The Commission has suggested that this proposal should be modelled on another EU law, on GMOs intended for cultivation, which entered into force in early April 2015. This allows member states to ban the cultivation of EU-approved GMOs on their territory.

The draft proposal has been rejected by the European Parliament on the basis that it might prove unworkable or that it could lead to the reintroduction of border checks between pro- and anti-GMO countries. The European Parliament calls on the Commission to table a new proposal.

The European Parliament has also published an article entitled "Eight things you should know about GMOs". The article discusses which crops are involved, who is involved in approving GMOs, what is approved or pending approval and the implications of the MEPs rejection of national bans on commercialisation. The article also includes an infographic on GMOs in the EU.

The article and infographics are available here: <http://tinyurl.com/hz2fkq3>

EU PARLIAMENT VOTE ON EU NOVEL FOODS REGULATION



The European Parliament has published a Press Release regarding its vote on the proposal on Novel Foods.

The proposal which was approved by 359 to 202 votes with 127 abstentions, would subject novel food to a safety evaluation and authorisation at the EU level. As requested by MEPs, the proposed rules would also cover food from cloned animals until specific legislation on cloning is adopted, as well as a new definition of nanomaterials and restrictions on animal testing.

The Press Release provides information on the categories of novel foods covered under the proposal. The proposal still has to be approved by the Council of Ministers before it can enter into force.

The press release is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/pmo75jv>

Q&A ON NEW REGULATION ON NOVEL FOODS

The European Commission has published a fact sheet of questions and answers on the agreed new Regulation on novel foods.

The new Regulation increases the efficiency of the authorisation procedure by creating a centralised authorisation system for applicants, enables a quicker delivery of safe, innovative food to market and removes unnecessary barriers to trade, whilst ensuring a high level of food safety.

The fact sheet answers a number of questions such as:

- What are the conditions for authorisation?
- Do novel foods need to be labelled?
- What are nanomaterials and what are the conditions for their use in food?
- Are insects covered by the new Regulation?
- Are there any applications in the pipeline and will they be affected by the new rules?

The new rules will apply two years from the date of entry into force of the new Regulation.

The Q&A can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/palkfo6>



MEMBER BENEFIT

Primary Authority Scheme

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

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

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

Fair Trading
Food Safety
Health and Safety

Fire Safety
Food Standards (Labelling & Composition)
Weights and Measures

Health & Safety and Fire Safety Advice

- Working in a Coldstore – Advice for Employees
- Work At Height Equipment Guidance For Cold Stores
- Rest Breaks for Cold Store Workers
- Health Surveillance for Cold Store Workers
- Guidance on Raynaud's Phenomenon
- How to Assess Head Protection for Cold Store Workers
- Selecting Staff for First Aid Training
- Overtime Risk Assessments
- Provision of Defibrillators in the Workplace
- Fire Safety Induction Training
- Hot Work Permits and Instructions
- Choosing a Fire Assembly Point

Food Safety & Standards Advice

- FIC Date of Freezing – Distance Sales
- FIC Star Marking on Prepacked Foods
- FIC Date of Freezing and Lot Coding for Meat etc.
- FIC Use of Designation 'formed' to Accompany the Name of Food
- FIC Responsibility of Information When Producing Under License
- FIC Outer Case Labelling for Prepacked Foods
- FIC Labelling Requirements for Wholesalers Supplying Mass Caterers
- Approval of Standalone Cold Stores



If you have any queries about the scheme please contact:



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Email: martinforsyth@bfff.co.uk

Food Safety
Food Standards (Labelling & Composition)
Weights and Measures
Fair Trading



Crystal Holmes
Tel: 01400 283090
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General Enquiries



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Health and Safety
Fire Safety



SENTENCING GUIDELINES SEMINAR

Tuesday 9th February 2016
Ricoh Arena, Coventry CV6 6GE
9.30am - 12.30pm

PRICE: £99 + VAT per member delegate
£125 + VAT per non-member delegate

New Sentencing guidelines for Health and Safety, Corporate Manslaughter, Food Safety and Hygiene and Environmental Offences have now been published and come into force in the courts on the 1st February 2016.

The most notable feature of the Guidelines is that fines are now intrinsically linked to the turnover of the defendant company. For larger companies, fines may rocket from hundreds of thousands into the millions of pounds.

In Partnership with:



Our morning seminar, aimed at Managing Directors, Financial Directors, Board Directors, Health and Safety Specialists and Senior Managers of our members' businesses will provide awareness of:

- The new sentencing process, responsibilities and applicable fines
- Case study examples of the new fine structure applied to previous cases
- How to mitigate the risks within your business

Delegates will have the opportunity to question legal specialists, prepare for the effects of the guidelines, and learn how to best protect businesses and employees for the future.

BOOKING FORM

I / We would like to attend the BFFF Sentencing Guidelines Seminar on Tuesday 9th February 2016 at the Ricoh Arena, Coventry CV6 6GE

Company _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

Email _____ Website _____

DELEGATE NAME	JOB TITLE	EMAIL ADDRESS	MOBILE No.

Booked by _____ Signature _____

Please Fax your completed booking form to 01400 283098 or Email: crystalholmes@bfff.co.uk

Payment can be made by cheque, BACS, Credit Card (Fee applies)

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