

T & L UPDATE

BFFF TECHNICAL AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

MARCH 2018 - ISSUE 93



British Frozen Food Federation

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

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

CONTENTS

TECHNICAL SEMINAR 2018

Technical Seminar Success	5
---------------------------	---

ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

EFSA Harmonised Approach to Food Safety Uncertainty	6
EC Announce Funding to Fight Animal Diseases	6
SCoPAFF Phytopharmaceutical Meeting Report	6
Guidance on Processing Applications for Regulated Products	7
EU Approved EDA Guidance for Cheese	7
REFIT Summary of General Food Law Regulation	7

ALLERGENS

Introduction of Peanut and Egg into Infant Diet	8
New Technique Improves Gluten Detection	8
Allergen Risk Assessment for Dried Herbs & Spices	8
No Valid Test to Detect Food Intolerance	9
Call for New Allergen Rules in Australia	9

ANIMAL WELFARE

Latest Update on Avian Influenza	10
MEPs Urge Action to Protect Bee Population	10
EFSA Update Animal Health and Welfare Work	10
Update on Controlling Bovine TB Risk from Badgers	10
African Swine Fever Update	11
Plans for Increased Testing in Fight Against Bovine TB	11
Welfare of Meat Chickens and Meat Breeding Chickens	11
Defra Warns Against Feeding Scraps to Pigs	12
Bluetongue Virus in Europe Update	12
Defra Publish Fish Health Checks Guidance	12
Consultation on Draft Animal Welfare Bill	12

BREXIT

Mandate to Begin Negotiations on Transitional Arrangements	13
EU Withdraw Bill Incompatible with Devolution	13
Inquiry Opens on Brexit and Trade in Food	13
Call for Clarity on Brexit Ports and Borders Plans	13

BREXIT CONT.

Secretary of State Vision on Future of Farming	14
Letter to Businesses on Brexit Implementation Period	14
EC Notification on Implications of Brexit for Food Law	14
DEXEU Update Fact Sheets on EU Withdrawal Bill	14
Scotland Opposed to Livestock Export Ban	15

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION & TRAINING

£900k Food Manufacturing Hub for Scotland	15
UK Meat Levy Boards Announce Joint Activities	15
Welsh Food Industry Receives £3m Training Boost	16
Food and Drink Sector Council Meet for First Time	16

ADDITIVES, CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS & FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

EFSA Publish Risk Assessment of Pesticides	17
Calcium Sorbate (E203) Removed from Approved List	17
Tighter Bisphenol A Regulations Published	17
Food Contact Plastics Regulations Amended	17
FSA Publish Update on Food Contaminants Policy	18

FOOD SAFETY AND ZOOSES

Russell Hume Enters Administration Following Investigation	18
Call for Review Amid FSA Meat Plant Investigation	19
First Prosecution in N.I. for Failure to Display FHR	19
Call for Public Investment in Food Safety Research	20
EU Auditors to Examine Food Safety Policy	20
Listeria Monocytogenes Contamination of RTE Foods	20
FSS Publish Campylobacter in Scotland Report	21
Opinion on Increasing Permitted Aflatoxin Levels in Peanuts	21
FSAI Report on Food Complaints in 2017	21
FSS Campaign to Reduce the Risk of Food Poisoning	22
Food Manufacturers Warned over Poison-Resistant Rats	22
Decline in Enforcement Orders in Ireland for 2017	22

CONTENTS

FOOD SECURITY, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Poultry Tops Global Food Safety Watch List	23
Food Factory CCTV has 'Substantial Limitations'	23
List of UK Applications for EU Protected Food Name Status	24
Warning of Meat from Unstunned Slaughter	24
Marking System to Combat Counterfeit Goods Created	24

GLOBAL STANDARDS

BRC GS Lift Bureau Veritas Suspension	25
Study Finds Free-From Food Seen as Healthier	25

IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Customs Declaration Service to be Phased In Aug 2018	26
Approval of Modernisation of EU Trade Defence Rules	26
Guidance on Certificate Requirements for Exporting	26
BRC Highlights Importance of Maintaining Trade Deals	27
Industry Dissatisfied About GCA Decision	27
Government Rejects Calls to Extend Remit of GCA	28
Gov. Response to Consultation on Trade White Paper	28

REGULATORY

Soft Drinks Industry Levy Notes Laid Before Parliament	29
Use of Sweeteners in Fine Bakery Wares Amended	29
New Novel Food Regulations Come into Force	30
Public and Private Drinking Water Regulations	30

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Sugary Drinks Could be Banned in NHS Buildings	30
IGD Guides to End Confusion Over Traffic Light Labelling	31
FSA Survey Highlights Consumers Sugar Fears	31
FDF Guidance on Comparative Nutrition Claims	31
Scotland Relaunches 'Eat Better Feel Better' Campaign	32
Tesco Healthy Living Partnership with UK Charities	32
PHE Launch Campaign Targeting Children's Snacking	33
Government Response to Childhood Obesity	33
Draft Dietary Reference Values for Sodium	33
PHE Clarification on Calorie Campaign	33

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT & CSR

Unilever Discloses Palm Oil Sources	34
Scotland Challenges UK on Deposit Return Scheme	34
Second Phase of Fisheries Discard Ban Enters Force	34
Updated Guidance for Businesses on Storage of Oil	34
FDF Sector Annual Sustainability Report	35
Environment Agency Updated Structure Chart	35
Call for UK Plastic Bottle Deposit Return Scheme	35
MSC Strengthen Assurance Model and Fishery Certification	35
Actions on Use and Disposal of Plastics	36
EC Launch Strategy to Tackle Plastic Waste	36
5p Charge for Plastic Carrier Bags to be Extended	37
25 Year Environment Plan Published	37
Surplus Food Fund of £500,000 Launched	37

TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH

Sir John Kingman - Chair of UK Research and Innovation	38
Trials on Biological Sensors to Detect Food Spoilage	38

FOOD SAFETY REPORTS

RASFF Updates	39
FSA Food Incidents	40
FSA Reinforced Checks	40

CONSULTATIONS

Recent Consultations	41
----------------------	----

BFFF TECHNICAL EXPERT GROUP

Agenda for Meeting on 10th January 2018	42
---	----

FOREWORD

Welcome to the latest 'new and improved' edition of the BFFF Technical and Legislative update!

From this edition onwards, you will slowly start to see changes to the T&L both to content and format. As a starter for ten, feedback from members showed us that whilst the T&L is well liked, certain subject matters are proving more useful than others and some areas could benefit with further improvements to make them even clearer/easier to understand.

You'll see that some sections have been reviewed and renamed where subject matter often overlapped and new sections have been introduced to ensure we are reporting on those areas most relevant to you. We also recognised that it was often hard to read some of the regulatory articles especially those referring members to consultations. Therefore, you will now no longer have to read through those articles to decide if a consultation is relevant to you – you will find a new 'Consultations' summary section at the end of the T&L listing recent consultations you may be interested in with handy links to the relevant documents and deadlines clearly displayed.

In addition to the main sections, on an alternate basis we will also be focussing in on two key areas: Food Safety and Food Fraud. Recognising that some members may not have access to some very useful sources of information in these areas, we will now bring it to them! - please turn to the end of the T&L to see the first focus section on Food Safety which I am sure you will find useful.

We are also pleased to confirm the revised version of the 'Gold Book' is now available for members on the BFFF website. For the first time, the Guide has also been given Primary Authority Advice status, and provides both contextual information on the regulatory framework and advice specifically designed to ensure regulatory compliance.

Another success over the last month has been the launch of the Major Incidents MIG. We had an overwhelming number of requests to join and our processes were quickly put to the test with the recent FSA meat operations investigations. As with anything new, there will always be room for improvement but so far, feedback has been excellent showing us that this is something members really wanted. If you haven't joined yet, then just drop us an email and we'll get you added!

I do hope you find this edition a valuable read. As always, your feedback would be most welcome as it's only with your help that we can make the T&L even better!

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



Denise Rion
Technical Manager
deniserion@bff.co.uk

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



Martin Forsyth
Head of Technical
martinforsyth@bff.co.uk

TECHNICAL SEMINAR SUCCESS

Nearly 100 members and guests enjoyed the first ever BFFF technical seminar held at the Birmingham Metropole Hotel on February 22nd. There was a really top class agenda of relevant topics from a first class set of experts.

The speakers were consistently excellent and this was confirmed by immediate feedback from the event. Members went away with some great ideas as to how to protect and improve their businesses.

There were so many highlights it is difficult to summarise them all!

As well as useful insight into the Brexit process from Julie Robinson of Roythornes solicitors, Rod Ainsworth from the Food Standards Agency gave us real information on enhanced registration/segmentation of businesses and better assurance. He even spoke about money and who might pay! Elspeth Macdonald for Food Standards Scotland followed this up with a first class summary of the approach taken towards a comprehensive compliance spectrum approach as well as confirming Scotland is too fat and what the Scottish government approach is to this issue. Erica Sheward from the Office for Product Safety and Standards Regulatory Delivery told the audience about the relaunch of the Primary Authority scheme and the positive benefits for members.

There were lots of great ideas emerging from the second session on Food fraud and risk assessment. Eoghan Daly really set a great scene of the overall dangers of doing nothing and costs to business today. Brendan McIntyre opened everyone's eyes to thinking like a criminal- unfortunately some of the examples are not written down so you had to be there! Stephen Whyte of Qadex gave us the solutions and where modern technology can help and even more usefully where it cant. Finally Martin Ford of Greencore gave us an example of their control systems which really set a practical standard to aspire to.

Opening the third and final part of our seminar, our sponsor Air Liquide showed us examples of case studies and true innovation in the cryogenic gas sector. Ed Haynes from FERA explained the tricky science but real implications of Whole Genome Sequencing both in the UK and USA. Matthew Sharman then really scared us all with a clear explanation of why there is no such thing as 0 in the laboratory and what will happen when consumers get hand held devices to 'test' products themselves!

We looked forward to having the nutrition and the obesity challenge laid out for us by Victoria Targett of PHE but she was unable to join us but her slide pack will be available for attendees. However Chris Wells from Leatherhead Research showed manufacturers their blueprinting approach showed how this can work in real life examples.

The event was rounded off to a high standard by our key note speaker Laura Sandys the Deputy Chair of the Food Standards Agency. In her first presentation to industry since her appointment Laura laid out her views on how to build trust between all parties in the food chain but especially with consumers. The aim is to create an international reputation for the UK regulatory system as a key element of UK food import/export.

Laura spoke without slides, but like Rod before her offered an interesting and thought provoking view of life after Brexit and how consumers will engage with their food going forward

There was great organisational support from all the BFFF staff, our sponsor Air Liquide and our moderator Vince Craig who kept the event running smoothly.

The pressure is now on to top this for next year and following the feedback we have a few ideas so watch this space!



ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

EFSA DEVELOP HARMONISED APPROACH TO FOOD SAFETY UNCERTAINTY

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has developed a harmonised approach to assessing and taking account of uncertainties in food safety, and animal and plant health. It hopes this approach will improve the transparency of the resulting scientific advice and make it more robust for decision-making.

EFSA will implement the new approach in 2 stages. - the guidance will apply from autumn 2018 in general scientific areas, but it will be phased in later in the light of experience for regulated product areas such as pesticides, food additives and food contact materials. EFSA will consult on practical guidance for communicating the results of uncertainty analysis later in 2018.

The new guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybxu83pa> along with the scientific opinion on the principles and methods behind the guidance, which can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yca7ry8m>



EUROPEAN COMMISSION ANNOUNCES FUNDING TO FIGHT ANIMAL DISEASES

The European Commission has announced funding of more than EUR140m for 2018 to help European Union (EU) member states in the fight against animal diseases.

The funding will support 134 veterinary programmes designed to eradicate, control and monitor diseases such as bovine tuberculosis, rabies, bovine brucellosis, African swine fever and lumpy skin disease.

The largest portion of the allocated budget, 34% – nearly €50m – will be invested in projects fighting bovine tuberculosis. Britain will benefit from the largest payment for this task, at €20m, sharing the rest of the budget with another four countries – Spain (€13.3m), Ireland (€9.7m), Italy (€3.5m) and Portugal (€1.4m). Meanwhile, Spain tops the overall list receiving 16.8% (€23m) and Madrid has been tasked by the Commission with stabilising seven out of the 11 diseases for which it has been allocated EU funds.

The UK is overall a significant beneficiary, receiving 14.8% (almost €21m) of money to fight not only bovine tuberculosis, but also prion diseases, avian influenza in poultry and wild birds and salmonella. Meanwhile, more than 18% (or nearly €26m) will be spent on overcoming diseases across the EU - Salmonella continues to be a concern EU-wide and remains a priority for 24 out of 28 EU countries.

Out of the 28 EU countries, Lithuania currently appears to have the lowest exposure to livestock disease. As such, in 2018, the Baltic state will receive only €18,000 in EU money for two diseases – TSE (€12,000) and avian influenza (€6,000).

SCOPAFF PHYTOPHARMACEUTICALS NOVEMBER MEETING REPORT PUBLISHED

The Summary Report of the SCoPAFF, section on Phytopharmaceuticals – Residues, held on 21st–22nd November 2017 has recently been published. The Committee discussed, amongst other items:

- Setting of MRLs for various pesticide residues;
- Maximum residue levels for chlorate (SANTE/10684/2015);
- Honey guidance – State of play;
- EFSA Guidance Document on the Residue Definition for Risk Assessment;
- Procedures for routine MRL setting under Regulation (EC) No 396/2005;
- Initial information concerning Brexit.

You can read the report in more detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybnm8anm>

EFSA PUBLISH GUIDANCE ON PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR REGULATED PRODUCTS

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have published administrative guidance which sets out the principles they follow when processing applications for regulated products (excluding pesticides and the re-evaluation of food additives).

The guidance forms part of EFSA's continuous efforts to support applicants throughout the life-cycle of their applications. It enhances the transparency of the procedure and ensures that a coherent, sound, systematic and efficient process is carried out in compliance with each piece of sectorial legislation. The document describes:

- the general workflow of applications;
- the key steps of the scientific risk assessment process;
- the mechanism for suspending, restarting or extending an assessment, the conclusion of the scientific risk assessment process and the publication of the scientific output.

EFSA regularly updates administrative guidance to take account of amendments to legal acts, changes to guidance documents, and experience gained in the handling and assessment of applications. It receives around 500 mandates on applications for regulated products every year.

The guidance can be viewed in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8oo2nkz>

EU APPROVES EDA GUIDANCE FOR CHEESE

The European Union has approved two sets of guidance in relation to cheese- The European Dairy Association (EDA) guidance for 'cheese as raw material' and the 'Good Manufacturing Practice Guidelines for Processed Cheese' – produced by Assifontes, the organisation for the processed cheese sector.

Both guidelines, which are the result of over ten years work from EDA cheese experts, will be translated into all 23 official EU languages which underline the global leadership of the EU cheese and processed cheese industry when it comes to safety and quality

The two guidelines will be published in the near future on EU Commission's official food hygiene guidance platform.



REFIT EVALUATION SUMMARY OF THE GENERAL FOOD LAW REGULATION PUBLISHED

The Commission recently published an Executive Summary of the General Food Law Regulation (EC) No 178/2002. The summary assessed whether the legislative framework introduced by the General Food Law Regulation is 'fit for purpose' and some of the key findings of the evaluation included:

- That overall, the General Food Law Regulation has achieved its core objectives of high protection of human health and consumers' interests and the smooth functioning of the internal market;
- That no systemic failures have been identified;
- The systematic implementation of the risk analysis principle in EU food law has overall raised the level of protection of public health;
- The creation of EFSA has improved the scientific basis of EU measures;
- There is now better traceability of food and feed in the entire agri-food chain;
- Identifying that shortcomings such as national differences in the implementation and enforcement of the EU legislative framework still exist.

The summary can be viewed in full here along with links to all important related documents: <https://tinyurl.com/yctetvly>

ALLERGENS

STATEMENT ON THE INTRODUCTION OF PEANUT AND HEN'S EGG INTO THE INFANT DIET

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) and the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) have published a joint statement outlining the assessment undertaken by the joint SACN-COT working group on the timing of introduction of peanut and hen's egg into the infant diet before 6 months of age in the UK.

The paper summarises the findings of the working group and provides consensus advice to government.

Results indicated that there were insufficient data to demonstrate that early introduction of peanut or hen's egg into the infant diet reduced the risk of developing food allergy to any greater extent than introduction from around six months.

However, the deliberate exclusion of peanut or hen's egg beyond six to twelve months of age may increase the risk of allergy to the same foods

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



NEW TECHNIQUE IMPROVES GLUTEN DETECTION

The number of gluten-free food options in the stores has been growing steadily over the past years; a development largely pushed forward by consumer demand for foods that consumers believe 'work for me', whether this is based on science or otherwise.

However, current tests for gluten are not finding all of the substance in foods, resulting in some products being labelled 'gluten-free' when they really are not. This mislabelling can cause serious health consequences for those with coeliac disease and gluten-sensitivities.

Now researchers report that they have developed a gluten detector that has the potential to detect and quantify different sources of gluten faster than those currently on the market. They have developed an immunological assay based on floating gate transistors.

Their test is in a device that includes tiny microchannels for a sample to move through. If a sample contains gluten, the substance can bind to one of three capture agents, which can be antibodies or a DNA-based aptamer, that specifically latch onto gluten proteins from certain sources. This binding causes a shift in the voltage read-out of the transistor and can provide a chemical fingerprint that tells researchers whether the gluten was from barley or wheat, for example.

You can read about this development in more detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc9sbrgg>

GUIDANCE ON ALLERGEN RISK ASSESSMENT FOR DRIED HERBS AND SPICES

The Seasoning and Spice Association has published guidance on an allergen risk assessment model for dried herbs and spices. The objective of the guidance is to provide members with a systematic way of assessing the need for precautionary allergen labelling in herbs and spices once an issue has been identified; or following a positive test result.

The guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ydct7wpy>

NO SCIENTIFICALLY VALID TEST TO DETECT FOOD INTOLERANCE

There is no scientifically valid test to detect food intolerance, according to the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) in Ireland.

HPRA said products being promoted as food intolerance tests cannot diagnose such conditions and advised people not to act on their results without advice from a doctor or registered dietitian. It warned that attempting to self-diagnose a suspected food intolerance using a test kit alone could result in a delay in identifying and treating other medical conditions.

HPRA also emphasised the 'clear distinction' between food intolerance and food allergies.

"A negative food intolerance test result does not mean that someone is not allergic to that food. Confusing a negative food intolerance test result with a food allergy could pose serious risks if a person then goes on to consume that food type and to have a subsequent reaction."

Dr Lorraine Nolan, chief executive at HPRA, said the only valid way to diagnose intolerance is to eliminate foods following clinical advice and reintroduce a suspected food on a phased basis to determine if symptoms return.

"Food intolerance is a term that has emerged to describe various unpleasant conditions such as indigestion and bloating that can occur after eating certain foods. People should not rely on the results of these test kits on their own regardless of how they are labelled and promoted. Any examination relating to a person's ability to digest or 'tolerate' foods should be made in careful consultation with a doctor or dietitian. It should not be based on these tests alone as to do so could lead to a misdiagnosis or the removal of important nutrients in the diet. Removing a range of foods from your diet without expert advice on how this should be managed can result in nutritional deficiencies among vulnerable populations and impaired growth in children which can have important long-term health consequences" she said.

The authority said it had reviewed products on the market to examine validity due to increased availability in recent years. The review of medical devices referred to as food intolerance tests included the most commonly used such as immunoglobulin G (IgG) tests which are based on a blood sample or those based on hair and saliva samples. It found the tests will not diagnose intolerance to a certain food type but will detect previous exposure to a food. It also looked at kits that can be used in the home such as those available via the internet and those offering a postal based service.

RESEARCHERS CALL FOR NEW ALLERGEN RULES IN AUSTRALIA

Allergen labelling regulations in Australia need a complete overhaul, claims a new report, which argues the current voluntary use of 'may contain traces' statements are not adequately protecting consumers.

The study, conducted by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) in Melbourne and published in the Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health found that the risk of life-threatening anaphylaxis attacks from unlisted ingredients in prepackaged food is 'worryingly common'.

The work examined reports of anaphylaxis in Australasia from consumption of packaged food products with or without precautionary allergen labelling (PAL), where the known allergen triggers were not a listed ingredient. To do this, the researchers invited Members of the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy to complete a questionnaire. They were asked to tell MCRI whether they had seen any patients over the past three months reporting anaphylaxis following ingestion of a packaged food where the suspected food allergen was not a listed ingredient.

The questionnaire uncovered the following results:

- There were 14 reports of anaphylaxis to packaged foods (where the suspected allergen was not a listed ingredient)
- Of those reactions 50 percent were reported from foods which did not have a PAL statement

The study's lead author, Dr Giovanni Zurzolo, Postdoctoral Fellow from MCRI and Victoria University pointed out that PAL labelling is currently voluntary – with some but not all packaged foods labelled with a variety of advisory warnings. "Therefore, there is no effective way to currently determine whether or not an unlabelled product (foods without PAL) is safe for consumption by the food allergic community."

The authors suggest that 'permissive labelling' that would highlight safe and suitable foods for allergy-affected individuals, and not just for foods which should be avoided, would be a better option.

Senior author Professor Katie Allen said the findings of this study show that allergy consumers are taking significant risks in eating pre-packaged food. "Our study showed that anaphylaxis to undeclared allergens is not rare and it did not appear to depend on whether the product was labelled with precautionary advice. Current PAL practices do not assist consumers in selecting foods which are safe for consumption. Improvements in the regulation of food labelling are required to give consumers the right information to help them to make, safe choices", Professor Allen said.

ANIMAL WELFARE

LATEST UPDATE ON AVIAN INFLUENZA

The latest updates on avian influenza in winter 2017 to 2018 are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8ddtscw>

Public Health England advises the risk to public health from H5N8 and H5N6 avian influenza is very low and the Food Standards Agency has said the disease poses no food safety risk for UK consumers.

To-date there have been no detections in poultry or kept birds in the UK. The only outbreak in commercial poultry was detected in the Netherlands a number of weeks ago and was swiftly controlled with no secondary spread.

However, after H5N6 bird flu was identified in wild birds in two separate locations - South Dorset (confirmed on 12 January) and Warwickshire (confirmed on 18 January) Defra introduced an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone in England on 18th January. This means it is a legal requirement for anyone who keeps poultry or captive birds in England to follow strict biosecurity measures, whether they have commercial flocks or just a few birds in a backyard flock.

There have been six findings in wild birds in England, but none in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, despite widespread testing of wild birds. All these findings are within or very close to areas identified with high concentrations of wild waterfowl and water birds. For further information, please see the latest veterinary outbreak assessment on Avian Influenza in the UK and Europe which can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/zndjqem>

MEP'S URGE ACTION TO PROTECT EU BEE POPULATION

The European Parliament issued a press release on 23rd January 2018 on a draft resolution concerning measures needed to protect the EU bee population. The resolution which was approved by Parliament's Agriculture Committee by 38 votes to one against, calls for a 50% increase in funding, a new support scheme for EU beekeepers and a ban on harmful pesticides, including neonicotinoids. They have also recommended measures to develop safer alternatives to pesticides for farmers, proposals to give advanced warning of spraying periods to avoid harming bees and measures to halt imports of fake honey.

The press release can be read in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybxegg7n>



EFSA PUBLISH UPDATE ON ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE WORK

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published an update on the work of the Scientific Network for Risk Assessment in Animal Health and Welfare (2015-2017).

The overall objectives of the EFSA Scientific Network for Risk Assessment in Animal Health and Welfare is to enhance cooperation in Member States (MS) and EFSA, to build mutual understanding of risk assessment principles of Animal Health and Welfare and to provide increased transparency in the current process among MS and EFSA. It is expected to promote harmonisation of risk assessment practice and methodologies and reduce the duplication of activities by identifying and sharing current priorities.

The update can be viewed in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/yb4xca4e>

DEFRA AND APHA UPDATE ON CONTROLLING BOVINE TB RISK FROM BADGERS

In January and again in February, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) updated information on what the UK government is doing to control the risk of bovine TB from badgers.

The most recent update added the publications for surveillance in wildlife in England 2016 to 2017, introducing licensed badger controls in the Low Risk Area (England), revising guidance for licensing badger control areas and a strategy for achieving Bovine Tuberculosis Free Status for England: 2018 review. A summary of badger control monitoring during 2017 and the Chief Veterinary Officer's advice on the outcome of the 2017 badger culls had also been added in January.

The full collection of information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9d6ywus>

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER UPDATE

Cases of African swine fever (ASF) are still very common in Russia, despite the country's continued ban on EU pork exports to the market, imposed since January 2014 following a handful of cases in Poland and Lithuania.

Russia, where the ban was imposed on live pigs, pork and pig products over fears of importing ASF-infected meat and livestock, has notified the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) of around 2,800 ASF cases of domestic pigs and 90 cases in wild boars between July 2017 and 30 January 2018. Outbreaks have also been reported since 2015 in western Ukraine and Moldova. The Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania continued to report cases between 2015 and 2017, with Latvian and Polish cases ongoing, and these countries are where the EU and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have been concentrating their anti-ASF efforts.

Steps taken have included: the adoption and revision of specific sustainable legislation for setting up regionalisation of health controls across EU national borders; EU financial support for surveillance, emergency and preventive measures; deployment of a community veterinary emergency team (CVET) in hotspots; EU audits of outbreaks; and training of veterinary officials.

In Ukraine, veterinary authorities have established livestock movement controls, wildlife monitoring, and controls and monitoring containment zones, and have destroyed potentially infected animal products. In 2017, Ukraine made 11 weekly reports on ongoing outbreaks of ASF to the OIE, signalling that nearly 18,000 animals were currently susceptible to the disease, 623 had died from the disease and another 9,400 had been slaughtered, with their carcasses being destroyed. Although dealing with a smaller number of affected animals, Moldova is also implementing control measures, with one outbreak occurring on 28th January.

Officials from the OIE and EFSA have both confirmed that there is a constant, real risk of ASF reintroduction in the EU from non-EU countries.

African swine fever can be persistent, remaining viable for long periods in blood and being infectious for three to six months in uncooked pork products. Moreover, no vaccine has yet been created.

DEFRA PLANS FOR INCREASED TESTING IN FIGHT AGAINST BOVINE TB

Following a consultation which ran from July to September 2017, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have announced that routine tests for Bovine TB every six months are to be introduced for all cattle herds in the High Risk Area – mainly the South West and parts of the Midlands. Annual tests will however be preserved for herds that have gone five or more years without disease, and farms accredited under the Cattle Herd Certification Standards (CHeCS) scheme.

The consultation was the latest in a series aimed at introducing enhanced TB control measures in cattle that will, when combined with measures to address the TB risk posed by badgers, increase the probability of achieving national official TB freedom by the target date of 2038. The proposals set out in the consultation fell into the following broad categories:

- Streamlining and simplifying TB testing in the High Risk Area, based on default six-monthly routine herd testing
- Compensation arrangements
- TB testing costs for herds subject to more frequent testing
- Increased use of private vets to enhance the control of TB
- Sales of TB-restricted cattle
- Minor changes to the TB Order

The summary of responses to the consultation can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybu9nydw>

WELFARE OF MEAT CHICKENS AND MEAT BREEDING CHICKENS

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have recently published the outcome to a consultation on the welfare of meat chickens and meat breeding chickens. The document summarises the responses received to the consultation on a new statutory Code of Practice for the welfare of meat chickens and meat breeding chickens, for England, and sets out the actions Defra will now take. The consultation ran from 11th August 2017 and closed on 6th October 2017. An updated draft code of practice was placed in Parliament on 9th January 2018 and if no objections are raised, the Code of Practice will come into force in March 2018.

The consultation outcome can be viewed in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9douduo> along with the updated code of practice which can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9284rfm>

DEFRA WARNS AGAINST FEEDING KITCHEN SCRAPS TO PIGS

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) recently issued a reminder to pig keepers warning them not to feed kitchen scraps to pigs due to African swine fever risk. Keepers are being reminded that it is illegal to feed catering waste of any description or domestic food waste to farm animals in the UK, including pigs kept as pets, as some of the outbreaks of African swine fever in Europe have been attributed to wild boar or domestic pigs consuming contaminated pork or pork products.

The UK suffered the consequences of pigs being fed illegal waste food in the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001. That outbreak is thought to have originated from pigs being fed catering waste containing the virus, which came from outside the UK. The outbreak resulted in the destruction of more than 10 million cattle and sheep and cost the UK many millions of pounds.

There has never been a case of African swine fever in the UK and it does not affect humans, but it is potentially fatal to pigs. If the disease were to reach the UK it could have a devastating effect on our export market and would also mean the humane culling of pigs on infected premises to prevent further spread.

Further information and useful links can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7xbgmvx>



BLUETONGUE VIRUS IN EUROPE UPDATE

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have published research and analysis on a preliminary outbreak assessment and updated situation assessment for bluetongue virus in Europe.

France has now reported more than 50 new cases of BTV-4 particularly in the Haute Savoie, Ain and Saone et Loire regions. No animals (cattle, sheep nor goats) were exhibiting clinical signs, however, the new findings of BTV-4 in several regions, alongside the likely source of disease which is presumed to be imported animals from Corsica which entered France during the vector free season in early 2017, means that disease is unlikely to be eradicated now and instead a BTV-4 / BTV-8 restriction zone has been put in place across the whole of mainland France.

The UK vector season, particularly in the South of England, has not yet come to a close as egg bearing female midges were still being detected in vector surveillance traps up to December 2017 and the weather has been relatively temperate since then. Therefore, the advice is that all animals must be correctly vaccinated against BTV-4 and BTV-8 or be naturally immune to both virus serotypes, prior to leaving the restriction zone.

The report can be viewed in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9vvyhux>

DEFRA PUBLISH FISH HEALTH CHECKS GUIDANCE

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have recently published updated guidance for fish suppliers and fishery owners on fish health checks. The Guidance has been revised throughout to provide greater clarity to fish suppliers and fishery owners and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc5pjpyx>

DEFRA COMMITTEE CONSULTATION ON DRAFT ANIMAL WELFARE BILL

The Environment Food and Rural Affairs select committee recently set up an inquiry welcoming stakeholder views on a draft Animal Welfare Bill.

The Bill has two main provisions: to reflect the principle of animal sentience in domestic law and to increase the maximum sentences for animal cruelty from 6 months to 5 years in England and Wales. It will also give the courts the tools they need to deal with abhorrent acts of animal cruelty.

The animal sentience provisions do not apply to policies which have been devolved to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland but the devolved administrations have the ability to take the same steps should they wish.

The deadline for Defra's consultation on the Bill was 31 January 2018 but the draft bill can still be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y89kdynt>

BREXIT

EC MANDATE TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS ON TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The European Commission issued on 29th January 2018 a press release announcing a decision by the General Affairs Council (Article 50) to allow negotiations to begin on possible transitional arrangements following the United Kingdom's orderly withdrawal from the European Union.

These negotiating directives set out additional details on possible transitional arrangements. These include, in particular, the following:

- The United Kingdom will continue to participate in the Customs Union and the Single Market (with all four freedoms);
- All existing Union regulatory, budgetary, supervisory, judiciary and enforcement instruments and structures will apply, including the competence of the Court of Justice of the European Union;
- The United Kingdom will be a third country as of 30 March 2019;
- The transition period needs to be clearly defined and precisely limited in time. It should not last beyond 31st December 2020

The press release can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7o6lgnm>

EU WITHDRAWAL BILL INCOMPATIBLE WITH DEVOLUTION

The Scottish Government has begun preparations to introduce an EU Continuity Bill to prepare Scotland's laws for Brexit after UK Government legislation was called "incompatible with the devolution settlement" by a cross-party Holyrood committee.

The Scottish Government is opposed to leaving the EU but must prepare for that eventuality. The government also has an obligation to plan for the Scottish Parliament deciding not to give legislative consent to the EU Withdrawal Bill if necessary amendments to protect devolution are not made.

In a joint letter from Minister for Scotland's Place in Europe Michael Russell and Minister for Parliamentary Business Joe Fitzpatrick to Scottish Parliament Presiding Officer Ken Macintosh they explained that the Scottish Government is developing a Continuity Bill for Scotland and, if necessary, will introduce it in the Scottish Parliament in February.

The letter can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/yb6dcr3f>

INQUIRY OPENS ON BREXIT AND TRADE IN FOOD

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs committee published a notification that an inquiry has been opened to examine how a potential trade deal could affect farmers, food processors and consumers. The chair of the committee stressed that it is vital that future trade arrangements allow farmers and food processors to compete effectively and welcomed views on the steps that the Government and agri-food sector need to take to enable farmers and processors to sell more of their produce at home and abroad.

The inquiry can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycjretse>

CIEH CALLS FOR CLARITY ON BREXIT PORTS AND BORDERS PLANS

Following the warning from Maritime UK that there will be permanent traffic jams around Dover if no transition agreement is reached with the EU following Brexit, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) has again called on the Government to clarify its position on ports and borders post-Brexit.

Maritime UK, the organisation representing the shipping industry and ports, declared that there would be 20-mile long permanent traffic jams from Dover if no transition arrangement can be reached. They state that the potential gridlock raises significant questions over food imports to the United Kingdom, and increases the urgency for the UK Government to set out how trade with the EU, and frictionless borders, will continue with the UK outside the Single Market and Customs Union.

Further detail can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybw6tjh5>

SECRETARY OF STATE SETS OUT VISION ON THE FUTURE OF FARMING

A full transcript of the speech made by the Secretary of State, Michael Gove, on Farming for the Next Generation was published on 5th January 2018. At the Oxford Farming Conference, held on 3rd – 5th January 2018 he set out his vision on the future of our farming industry focussing on taking back control of the CAP after Brexit and the reforms necessary, post Brexit.

You can read the transcript here: <https://tinyurl.com/y994ostg>

LETTER TO BUSINESSES ON BREXIT IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

Secretary of State for Exiting the EU David Davis, Chancellor Philip Hammond, and Business Secretary Greg Clark have written to businesses setting out the UK's ambitions for an implementation period following Brexit.

In the joint letter, the three Cabinet Ministers outline the Government's commitment to providing businesses with the certainty and clarity they need to plan ahead and make it clear that during the implementation period, the UK's and the EU's access to one another's markets should continue on current terms, meaning there will only be one set of changes at the end.

The letter states that the period's duration should around two years, will based on the existing structure of EU rules and regulations and will need to remain common to both parties during the period to ensure continuity.

It also reiterates that businesses needn't worry about falling outside the scope of this period as every business, small or large, will be able to go on trading with the EU as it does today until it's time to make any changes necessary for the future partnership.

Plans are also in place to work together with the EU to ensure the UK remains covered by international agreements, including free trade agreements, and third, EU citizens will continue to be able to come and live and work in the UK, with no new barriers to taking up employment.

The letter can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9fhboqh>

COMMISSION NOTIFICATION ON IMPLICATIONS OF BREXIT FOR FOOD LAW

The European Commission on 1st February published a notice regarding the withdrawal of the UK from the EU and the implications in relation to EU Food Law. Once the UK withdraws from the EU on 30 March 2019, 00:00h (CET), all Union primary and secondary law will cease to apply to the UK, unless a ratified withdrawal agreement establishes another date.

After the withdrawal date, the UK becomes a 'third country' and the notice serves to remind food business operators of the legal repercussions which need to be considered when placing food on the EU-27 market (i.e. when the food then becomes 'imported') (Subject to any transitional arrangement).

The document highlights the impact on a number of different areas:

- food labelling and food information, health and identification marks
- food ingredients, food composition, contaminants and residue limits; food contact material
- requirements for food business operators and authorisation holders, or their representatives, to be established in the EU; submission of EU authorisation requests through an EU member state
- food production rules/food hygiene rules, food irradiation, organic production
- certificates for organic production

You can view the notification in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/yawt7cja>

DEXEU PUBLISH UPDATED FACT SHEETS ON EU WITHDRAWAL BILL

The Department for Exiting the European Union (DEXEU) have recently published updated factsheets on Information regarding various aspects of the Withdrawal Bill, which is designed to ensure that the UK exits the EU with maximum certainty, continuity and control

The factsheets can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/ydxwh72g>

SCOTLAND OPPOSED TO LIVESTOCK EXPORT BAN

The Scottish Government has warned Westminster that it will not ban livestock exports, amid rumours that the UK's environment secretary, Michael Gove, plans to outlaw the controversial practice.

The Scottish Government's rural economy secretary Fergus Ewing warned a ban on livestock exports would cause substantial harm to local farmers and disadvantage agriculture.

"The UK Government appears to be ready to ban all live exports of livestock. So let me be absolutely clear, this is one UK-wide framework the Scottish Government will not be participating in. I will not support anything that creates further challenges or difficulty for our farming sector or puts Scottish agriculture at a disadvantage. Any such move would potentially do substantial harm to our quality livestock sector, not least farming in the Western Isles, Shetland and Orkney, as well as trade with Northern Ireland. The Scottish Government will therefore not support the banning of live exports of livestock, but will remain committed to the welfare of all animals during transport, adhering to the current rigorous standards which apply – standards and regulations provided by the EU, that are already world-class and protect us all through animal, plant and chemical health measures, enabling our produce to be traded around the world." he said

There are some big ramifications in a hypothetical scenario that would see Scotland continue to export livestock while the rest of UK did not. Such a decision could create a trade barrier at the Scottish border, potentially scuppering export deals with the EU and foreign countries like the US and Australia.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION & TRAINING

GOVERNMENT GREEN-LIGHTS GBP900K FOOD MANUFACTURING HUB FOR SCOTLAND

Food and drink firms are soon to benefit from a new GBP900,000 manufacturing hub in the west of Scotland, after receiving consent from the local council.

Baker Street Food & Drink Enterprises in Greenock will include six manufacturing units ranging from 45m² to 95m², designed for small and medium-sized food and drink businesses. The investment for the project is derived from the Scottish government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund and was made public in March 2017.

The building will include shared office space, storage units, research areas and boardroom facilities for its tenants, as well as shower and change areas. A business growth programme to support the businesses will also be provided, as well as potential match-funding support for machinery and equipment.

Development at the site is due to begin this summer, with a completion date of early 2019.

UK MEAT LEVY BOARDS ANNOUNCE JOINT ACTIVITIES

The red meat levy bodies in England, Scotland and Wales have announced a GBP2m programme of joint activities over the next 12 months.

An agreement by the Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), Hybu Cig Cymru, (HCC) and Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) will see a range of activity delivered via a three-way collaboration starting in 2018.

The agreement follows 12 months of talks between the three bodies after the parameters of the fund were set out by government ministers early in 2017 and sees the AHDB setting aside a ring-fenced sum of £2m to support the programme of activities benefiting cattle, sheep and pig levy payers in Scotland, Wales and England.

The levy bodies have agreed that, effective from the financial year 2018/19, the new joint fund will focus on international shows and export events; market access; Brexit preparation; meat and health, animal health and the environment; and research.

The ring-fenced fund is expected to boost the international presence and access for meat from Britain in key overseas markets, with a particular focus on preparing the red meat sector for the potential challenges and opportunities that are likely to follow Brexit.

In the meat and health, animal health and environment category the three organisations will concentrate on collaborating on positive messaging to counteract negative messages, while work on antimicrobial resistance is expected to dominate the research investment.



WELSH FOOD INDUSTRY RECEIVES GBP3M TRAINING BOOST

Food and drink companies based in Wales are to benefit from a GBP3m technical and staff development training fund from the Welsh Government. The Food Skills Cymru funding package will launch on April 1 and will run until 2023. It is expected to support 650 businesses in the first three years.

Run by training and qualifications provider Lantra, the fund will include accredited and non-accredited training, as well as bespoke support for companies and will be available to all businesses in the food supply chain, excluding retailers.

The Welsh cabinet secretary for energy, planning and rural affairs Lesley Griffiths said: “Our detailed action plan for the industry sets out our vision of growing the scale of the sector, strengthening its brand and markets, and doing all these things in a sustainable way. Central to this is the ability to attract and retain a talented workforce and drive up skills within the industry. This fund demonstrates our commitment to developing the skills of the industry and I am confident it can, and will, continue to grow to form an important backbone of the Welsh economy.”

This latest round of funding from the Welsh government comes almost a year after it launched a £21M programme to fund research into food and drink production, safeguarding thousands of jobs. The programme, Project Helix, was designed to provide funding and support for small and medium-sized food manufacturers to help boost production and reduce food waste.

More information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7gf75s9>

FOOD AND DRINK SECTOR COUNCIL MEET FOR FIRST TIME

Leading figures from across the food and drink sector have formed a new partnership with government to boost productivity and make the industry more resilient, sustainable and competitive.

Meeting for the first time on 29th January, the Food and Drink Sector Council agreed priorities for the next 12 months, including a focus on boosting skills, agricultural productivity, improving the nation’s nutrition and building on emerging proposals to establish a sector deal. The Council will set up expert working groups to develop recommendations for industry and government on each of its priorities.

The new group is made up of leading industry figures from agriculture, manufacturing, retail, logistics and hospitality sectors and its work to boost productivity will mean industry will be better placed to take advantage of emerging global opportunities to access more markets and boost exports as we leave the European Union.

Speaking following the meeting, Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

This first meeting of the Food and Drink Sector Council marks a significant step forward in supporting this vital industry, which is already worth over £110 billion to the UK economy. This ambitious partnership between government and industry will secure the UK’s position as a global leader in sustainable, affordable and high-quality food and drink. Increasing productivity will also benefit consumers and businesses, creating jobs and providing a real boost to our economy.

The Food and Drink Sector Council was first announced in the Industrial Strategy white paper, which sets out the government’s long-term plan to build a Britain fit for the future through a stronger, fairer economy.

More about the Food and Drink Sector Council can be found here: <http://tinyurl.com/y7srvpq7>



ADDITIVES, CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS & FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

EFSA PUBLISH RISK ASSESSMENT OF PESTICIDES

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published on 29th January 2018 a Technical Report on a scientific risk assessment of pesticides in the European Union. The report summarises the input that EFSA has provided to the European Commission in the context of the REFIT process of the EU pesticides legislation and responses to questions about the scientific assessment of pesticides.

It provides a number of reflections about the process for the scientific assessment of plant protection products in the EU, including considerations about the strengths of the current system and areas for possible improvement. The technical report can be viewed in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7mqdz5s>

CALCIUM SORBATE (E203) REMOVED FROM APPROVED FOOD ADDITIVE LIST

Due to a lack of genotoxicity data Calcium Sorbate (E203) has now been removed from the Approved Food Additive List.

E203 is widely used in the food industry as an antifungal and antibacterial preservative and can be found in a variety of food products including frozen pizzas, cheese, processed cheese spreads and slices, fillings and toppings, dessert sauces, margarine, soup concentrates, and yoghurt... to name but a few! Members would therefore be wise to check their product formulations and seek suitable alternatives.

In 2015 EFSA delivered a Scientific Opinion on the re-evaluation of sorbic acid (E 200), potassium sorbate (E 202) and calcium sorbate (E 203) as food additives. The opinion stated that as there was a lack of genotoxicity data on calcium sorbate the Authority was not able to confirm the safety of calcium sorbate as a food additive and concluded that it should be excluded from the group ADI defined for sorbic acid and potassium sorbate. As no additional data has been provided it has now been considered appropriate to remove calcium sorbate (E 203) from the Union list of approved food additives.

Commission Regulation (EU) 2018/98, which entered into force on 12th February 2018, can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y93josv5> and amends Annexes II and III to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council and the Annex to Commission Regulation (EU) No 231/2012 as regards calcium sorbate (E 203).

This removal will become directly applicable in all Member States from 12th August 2018.

TIGHTER BISPHENOL A REGULATIONS PUBLISHED

The Commission has recently published a new Regulation that significantly tightens the restrictions on the use of BPA in food contact materials. It lowers the regulatory limit (specific migration limit or 'SML'), which is the amount allowed to migrate from the plastic material into food while keeping it safe, and extends this restriction to coating materials, which are used to line food and drink cans.

The new Regulation also extends the ban from 2011 on the use of BPA in baby bottles by prohibiting the use of BPA to manufacture infant 'sippy' cups as well as the migration of BPA from coated materials containing food intended for infants and children 0–3 year olds.

The new Regulation will apply from 6 September 2018 and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yb3qqedq>. The commission have also produced a useful document on this rather complicated subject, in the format of questions which can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7uaaczw>

FOOD CONTACT PLASTICS REGULATIONS AMENDED

Commission Regulation (EU) 2018/79 of 18 January 2018 amending Regulation (EU) No 10/2011 on plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with food was published in the Official Journal of the EU L14/31, 19/01/2018.

Annex I of Regulation (EU) No 10/2011 is amended to reflect the most recent scientific opinions for the use of certain substances. The Regulation entered into force on 7 February 2018 and is directly applicable in all Member States.

Plastic materials and articles complying with Regulation (EU) No. 10/2011 as applicable before the entry into force of this Regulation may be placed on the market until 8 February 2019 and remain on the market until exhaustion of stocks.

The updated regulation can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/yb3pw2nn>

FSA PUBLISH UPDATE ON FOOD CONTAMINANTS POLICY

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) published on 19th December 2017 an update on rapidly developing policy on food contaminants covering salient issues that have recently been discussed at European Commission working group meetings and Standing Committees. Subjects included:

- Pyrrolizidine alkaloids – the Commission proposed that risk management actions are undertaken in order to reduce possible risks to consumers and various regulatory measures including setting maximum levels for various foods;
- Ergot alkaloids – the Commission started discussions on appropriate risk management actions and one of the proposals is to set maximum levels for various cereal-based products
- Ochratoxin A – the Commission has initiated discussion on maximum levels for foods which currently do not have a maximum level such as sunflower seeds, herbs, tea and herbal infusions and cocoa powder;
- Erucic acid – reviewed levels for vegetable oils and fats, infant and follow-on formulae, mustard oil and mustard – for stakeholder consultation;
- Acrylamide – the Commission has worked on guidance on the application of the new legislation and discussions are expected to start on a future monitoring recommendation for gathering data mainly on acrylamide levels in foods not within the scope of the Regulation. Discussions are also taking place to consider whether maximum levels could be set for certain types of food;
- Perchlorate - the Commission is looking at setting maximum levels to replace the current levels for intracommunity trade;
- Seaweed monitoring recommendation - the proposed Commission Recommendation on the monitoring of metals and iodine in seaweed.

Further detail can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8r2y8va>

FOOD SAFETY AND ZOOSES

RUSSELL HUME ENTERS ADMINISTRATION FOLLOWING FSA INVESTIGATION

Meat supplier Russell Hume has turned on the Food Standards Agency (FSA) as it emerged it had entered administration, with directors claiming “impossible trading conditions” following an FSA investigation.

In a joint statement, Russell Hume’s directors said: “Unfortunately, the FSA’s action created impossible trading conditions for us and, after careful reflection, we have decided the best thing for the company and its creditors is to put Russell Hume into administration.”

The directors claimed that the FSA investigation was “out of all proportion”.

“We will continue to work with the FSA with regards to the issues it raised, but we still feel its action has been out of all proportion to the concerns it says it has identified. Had it worked more closely with us in the crucial early stages of the situation, then more than 300 jobs might not have been lost. The fact that its investigations have become industry-wide and a number of other firms have also had issues, strongly suggests there is a lack of clarity in the industry and in current FSA guidelines.”

The directors also pointed to the company’s previously unblemished record. “Prior to this, we had a long, unblemished record for supplying quality meat products. We would like to thank our customers for their support, but above all our loyal and hard-working staff, some of whom have been with us a great many years. They were all an integral part of our success, and we are very sorry the Russell Hume story should have ended in such a sudden and devastating way. Our thoughts today are with them and their families.”

Russell Hume operates across seven sites in England and Scotland, with 302 employees. Administration proceedings are expected to result in the loss of 266 jobs across the business.

RUSSELL HUME
MEAT, GAME & POULTRY SPECIALISTS

CIEH CALL FOR URGENT REVIEW AMIDST FSAS MEAT PLANT INVESTIGATIONS

Responding to the news that the meat and poultry supplier, Russell Hume, was under investigation from the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) expressed its extreme concern and called for the FSA not only to provide clarification for consumers but also to carry out an urgent review of 'FSA approved premises'.

After inspections covering all Russell Hume sites in Britain, the FSA had announced that the company was 'unable to demonstrate compliance with food hygiene rules' at its locations, and had been forced to stop all products from leaving their sites. The FSA also instructed Russell Hume to withdraw all of their affected products from the supply chain, impacting heavily on a range of major clients such as Wetherspoons.

At the time, Head of Policy at the CIEH, Tony Lewis, said: "This is deeply worrying, and it is essential that the FSA comes out and provides clarification about what exactly has been going on regarding Russell Hume. The public has been kept in the dark about the extent of the problem, and the statements made by the respective parties simply do not add up. It now transpires that Russell Hume has been under investigation for 12 days, and the public will want to know what the FSA has been doing in that timeframe. Can the FSA now guarantee that no unsafe meat has already entered the food chain from this source?"

The FSA must put consumers first and properly explain the situation and their actions. We need to know the full range of products affected and the extent of distribution across the UK. We also want to see an urgent independent review of processes and procedures surrounding FSA approved premises in light of these events and the 2 Sisters scandal. These incidents demonstrate the importance of robust, regular and unannounced, inspections of these kind of establishments by competent environmental health experts. "

The enforcement action preventing Russell Hume from processing and distributing meat products was later lifted at their Liverpool site after assurances that their food safety management system met the legal requirements were satisfied. However, other sites were not allowed to restart production.

On 1st February the FSA announced that it was expanding the investigation and undertaking an industry wide review of meat cutting premises and cold stores.

Shortly after this announcement, details of further unconnected investigations emerged - the recall of meat products by Muscle Food, following an unannounced inspection by the FSA of their supplier, DB Foods and the voluntary withdrawal by Fairfax Meadow of some of their products from customers in the catering trade.

It was announced recently that Russell Hume had entered administration claiming "impossible trading conditions" following the FSA investigation.

Through the Major Incidents Member Interest Group (MIG), the BFFF ensured members were kept up to date with ongoing developments. Information circulated to this new MIG is, as always, available on request. Should you not already be a member of the Major Incidents MIG and want to join then please do contact us and we can ensure you are added to the list; contact deniserion@bfff.co.uk

FIRST PROSECUTION IN N.I. FOR FAILURE TO DISPLAY FOOD HYGIENE RATING

A Belfast restaurant has become the first business in Northern Ireland to be prosecuted for failing to display a valid food hygiene rating sticker.

PGMB Ltd, the proprietor of Café Fish, 340 Lisburn Road, was fined £250 and ordered to pay £120 legal costs, for failure to display a valid food hygiene rating sticker as required by Sections 7(1) and 10 (1) of the Food Hygiene Rating Act (Northern Ireland) 2016. At the time of the offence the premises was rated one, indicating "major improvement necessary" to comply with the food hygiene requirements.



The court heard that Belfast City Council officers visited Café Fish on a number of occasions and repeatedly advised the owner of the need to display the rating before instigating legal proceedings.

Mark O'Neill, senior food safety advisor at the Food Standards Agency, said: "This ruling sends a clear message to businesses that if they fail to display their food hygiene rating action will be taken, whether that be the serving of a fixed penalty notice or prosecution in a court of law. The display of hygiene ratings is about helping consumers to make informed choices about where they eat. By failing to display their rating food businesses are breaking the law".

The premises currently has a hygiene rating of four indicating a "good" level of compliance with hygiene requirements and a valid food hygiene rating sticker is now being displayed.

CALL FOR PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN FOOD SAFETY RESEARCH

Authorities from all 28 EU Member States, Iceland and Norway have called for more public investment in food safety research. The Advisory Forum, which advises the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on scientific issues, also stressed the benefits of increased interaction between funders, EU agencies and national partners and called for the formation of partnerships in food safety such as European Joint Programmes, European Research Infrastructure Consortia (ERICs) and other initiatives.

At the first Risk Assessment Research Assembly (RARA), which brought together national research organisations, funders and policy makers, participants registered 48 research ideas matching food safety risk assessment areas of priority for research identified by Member States and EFSA as part of the EU Risk Assessment Agenda (EU RAA).

These included determination of allergen thresholds (clinical studies), with immune-chemical measurements of allergens in foods; Model for the survival of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) in aged cheese; Strengthen microbial Next Generation Sequencing in Europe and a rapid risk assessment tool for introduction of zoonotic and foodborne diseases.

Bernhard Url, EFSA's executive director, said there is a compelling case for public funding in food safety research.

"We must not forget that research and innovation among and within Member States ultimately feeds into the risk assessments that we carry out at an EU level, which are the basis for public health policies in Europe. The first RARA is a great opportunity for researchers to share their proposals, discover others working on similar projects, and meet with funding bodies that can help turn their ideas into reality" he said.

EU AUDITORS TO EXAMINE FOOD SAFETY POLICY

An EU-wide audit of food safety policy, with particular focus on chemical hazards, has been announced by the European Court of Auditors (ECA). The auditors will examine whether the EU's food safety model is "soundly based" and whether it works to keep food products consumed in the EU safe, particularly from chemical contamination.

Food safety can be put at risk by three types of hazards: physical, biological and chemical. However, the focus of the audit will be to look at the systems in place to prevent chemical hazards. These are poisonous substances that occur naturally or are added during food production or handling.

The ECA has highlighted items such as cleaning agents, pesticides and certain metals. It said that while there are checks to ensure that chemicals, such as pesticides in farming, are used lawfully, it was concerned about the residues that could remain at later stages in the food supply chain.

The ECA will interview staff at the European Commission and relevant EU agencies and consult food industry stakeholders. They will visit three member states – the Netherlands, Italy (Liguria) and Slovenia – during the investigation and an audit report is due to be published in late 2018.

This report will form part of a series by the ECA on various aspects of the food chain. The series has already looked at food waste (published in January 2017), and is investigating animal welfare (currently underway) and organic food (planned for 2018).

The ECA said that EU food safety policy took an integrated approach, covering the entire food chain, from animal feed, animal health, plant protection and food production to processing, storage, transport, import and export, as well as retail sales.

LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES CONTAMINATION OF RTE FOODS

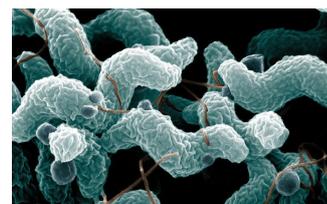
A new report from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) reveals that Listeria cases have increased among people over 75 and women aged 25-44. The scientific opinion on Listeria monocytogenes and risks to public health covers the period 2008-2015. EFSA's experts conclude that the higher incidence of listeriosis among the elderly in this period was probably linked to the increased proportion of people aged over 45 with underlying health conditions, such as cancer and diabetes.

The rise in consumption of ready-to-eat foods and an improved monitoring system in some Member States is also thought to have contributed to this trend. Quantitative modelling suggests that more than 90% of invasive listeriosis is caused by ingestion of RTE food. It suggests that measures should be taken to raise awareness among all stakeholders in the food chain, including vulnerable groups and those supplying food to vulnerable groups, caterers, RTE producers, and authorities, about the potentially increasing problem of L. monocytogenes in RTE foods.

The report can be accessed in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6uoe4w9>

FSS PUBLISH CAMPYLOBACTER IN SCOTLAND REPORT

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) have recently published a report on Campylobacter in Scotland, which compares strains isolated from livestock with those from human infections. It shows that, while Campylobacter is still the most common cause of foodborne illness, there has been a 3-7% reduction in the number of infections attributed to chicken over the last 3 years.



FSS commissioned the University of Aberdeen to compare clinical strains of campylobacter from the Grampian area with strains isolated from chickens, cattle, sheep, pigs and wild birds. This was used to determine the proportion of infections in Scotland from these potential sources.

The proportion of cases attributed to chicken decreased from 55-75% to 52-68% when compared to data collected between 2012-2015.

These findings will assist Food Standards Scotland in developing a new campylobacter strategy for Scotland. The strategy will consider how a continued decline of campylobacter cases from chicken can be achieved. It will also identify opportunities to work with other organisations to reduce the risks from sources other than chicken which may be caused by environmental exposure.

The research can be viewed in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/yd54bn7o>

EFSAS OPINION ON INCREASING PERMITTED AFLATOXIN LEVELS IN PEANUTS

The European Food Safety Authority have published a report on the 'Effect on public health of a possible increase of the maximum level for 'aflatoxin total' from 4 to 10 µg/kg in peanuts and processed products thereof, intended for direct human consumption or use as an ingredient in foodstuffs'

Aflatoxins are mycotoxins produced by two species of *Aspergillus*, a fungus found especially in areas with hot and humid climates. As aflatoxins are known to be genotoxic and carcinogenic, exposure through food should be kept as low as possible. Aflatoxins can occur in foods such as groundnuts, tree nuts, maize, rice, figs and other dried foods, spices, crude vegetable oils and cocoa beans, as a result of fungal contamination before and after harvest. Several types of aflatoxins are produced naturally. Aflatoxin B1 is the most common in food and among the most potent genotoxic and carcinogenic aflatoxins. It is produced both by *Aspergillus flavus* and *Aspergillus parasiticus*. Aflatoxin M1 is a major metabolite of aflatoxin B1 in humans and animals, which may be present in milk from animals fed with aflatoxin B1 contaminated feed.

Using the cancer potencies estimated by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) in 2016, the panel estimated that raising the maximum level could increase the risk of aflatoxin-induced cancers for consumers of peanuts and peanut-based processed products by a factor of 1.6 to 1.8.

The panel recommended that a full risk assessment be carried out in light of the elevated aflatoxin levels observed in some food commodities originating from European countries. The last full risk assessment by the CONTAM Panel was carried out in 2007.

The full report can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybty75nb>



FSAI REPORT ON FOOD COMPLAINTS IN 2017

The Food Standards Authority of Ireland (FSAI) reports that, in 2017, it handled more than 3,400 consumer complaints, a 6% increase compared with 2016. Of these, 1,233 were complaints about unfit food; 896 were about hygiene standards; 808 were about suspected food poisoning; 183 concerned incorrect information on food labels; and 103 were about non-display of allergen information. Specific examples are described, including insects, glass and chewing gum in foods.

The report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc2werq6>

FSS CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE THE RISK OF FOOD POISONING

FSS launched in January, a campaign to reduce the risk of food poisoning by raising awareness of '20 Kitchen Crimes'. The campaign encourages good food safety practices in the home and includes an online quiz which allows people to check which 'kitchen crimes' they are committing. There is also a downloadable toolkit to access campaign materials.

It highlights that, on average, people in Scotland are committing 9 out of 20 common 'kitchen crimes' which could lead to food poisoning. Furthermore, it is estimated that there's around 43,000 cases of foodborne illness in Scotland annually, with 5,800 GP visits and 500 people needing hospital treatment and more than half (56%) of people are not concerned about food hygiene at home.

More detail about the campaign can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y76pbc8z>

FOOD MANUFACTURERS WARNED OVER POISON-RESISTANT RATS

Food manufacturers face a new generation of mutant rats resistant to conventional poison, according to the British Pest Control Association (BPCA). The BPCA referred to findings in a new study by the University of Reading, commissioned by the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use. It found that the rats carried a genetic mutation that made them resistant to conventional poisons.

According to the BPCA the study highlights the fact that resistance is growing in rat species across the country. Rats without the genetic mutation are being killed off by poison, so the resistant species are taking their place, leaving a growing population of resistant pure-breds. This poses a significant risk to public health if their population is left unchecked, in both urban and rural environments.

The BPCA argue that the rise could be due to amateurs such as home and business owners either doing it themselves, or employing unqualified individuals to try to resolve their rat problems.

"Professional use-only rodenticides are often more successful, but most are subject to strict legislation, so it has become more important than ever before to make sure infestations are treated by experts" they stated.

The University of Reading study can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8pl6c2d>

The UK code of best practice from the Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use (CRRU) may also be of use to members and can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybf3b3dv>



DECLINE IN ENFORCEMENT ORDERS IN IRELAND FOR 2017

The number of enforcement orders served on food businesses in Ireland for breaches in food safety legislation declined by over a third (35%) in 2017 compared to 2016 according to a recent report by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI).

Between 1st January and 31st December 2017, food inspectors served sixty four closure orders, one improvement order and four prohibition orders on food businesses throughout the country. Enforcement orders are served on food businesses only when a serious risk to consumer health has been established or where there are a number of ongoing serious breaches of food legislation.

More information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yd7da435>

FOOD SECURITY, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

POULTRY TOPS GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY WATCH LIST AS 2017 ENDS

A recently issued report by The Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera) has shown that food integrity issues involving poultry meat and poultry products grew 56.6% year-on-year internationally in the fourth quarter of 2017. 'The Rise of Food Transparency – The Challenge of Change' featured research by HorizonScan on the top global food integrity issues affecting food manufacturers.

Poultry meat and poultry products topped the list compared to the same period in 2016, despite a drop of 42.8% in reported issues related to the area compared with the previous quarter.

Salmonella in chicken accounted for 49% of reported issues, while pesticides in eggs – such as the fipronil scandal in August last year – made up 20.6% of poultry-related food safety issues.

Nuts, nut products and seeds saw the second-largest rise in reported issues, up 28.6% compared with 2016 and up 77.3% from the third quarter of last year.

Aflatoxins caused most issues: 32.5% in hazelnuts and 29.9% in pistachios.

Herbs and spices saw the biggest drop in reported issues year-on-year, down 19.8% whilst issues related to seafood products dropped 2.9% compared with the fourth quarter of 2016 and were down 15.5% compared with the previous quarter last year.

According to Fera, a number of food integrity issues could be attributed to the increasing complexity of the food supply chain

“For today’s food companies, supply chain is in the crossfire of multiple and conflicting demands. The food industry has had to contend with a large number of new regulations and standards in the past few years and there’s more to come, with Brexit just around the corner. Executives of food companies also have to consider the impact of shifting consumer demand and the stricter regulatory framework with respect to food integrity across their entire value chain, from product development and design to quality control, product consumption or return.” the organisation stated in the report.

Fera’s report also identified the global trends and market forces affecting the food industry. These were climate change; population growth; a growing middle class; ageing population; urbanisation; and technologies progressing.

The full report can be downloaded from Fera’s website here: <http://tinyurl.com/ybnkwnoz>

FOOD FACTORY CCTV HAS ‘SUBSTANTIAL LIMITATIONS’

CCTV in food factories has ‘substantial limitations’, a leading lawyer has claimed.

There are many reasons why CCTV is implemented at plants, such as checking for health and safety incidents or fraudulent activity. However, Dominic Watkins, partner global regulatory compliance and investigations at DWF Law, said that while CCTV could seem like a “wonderful idea” in principle, it was not a “great golden ticket” in practice.

He said that although CCTV had benefits, such as retrospectively checking incidents, there could be pitfalls:

A CCTV system could be time-consuming and expensive to implement and monitor, argued Watkins. “It requires someone to be doing that remote viewing and requires cameras to be in the right places,” he argued. “If you are using it for a form of surveillance, you need to inform your staff that you are doing it. He also went on to say “If someone is doing something they are not supposed to be doing, there is a pretty good chance that they know the CCTV is there and there is a good chance they won’t be doing it on the CCTV.” He argued that CCTV should be used as part of a holistic approach, which should include people monitoring and managing on the factory floor.

Meanwhile, the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) said several of the requirements of the Data Protection Act would come into play whenever an employer wished to monitor workers. That means organisations using CCTV must justify its use and ensure it is proportionate and necessary and on this basis the ICO recommend that organisations carry out a privacy impact assessment to ensure these criteria are met.



DEFRA PUBLISH LIST OF UK APPLICATIONS FOR EU PROTECTED FOOD NAME STATUS

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has recently published an updated list of applications currently being considered for the EU protected food name scheme.

The scheme highlights regional and traditional foods whose authenticity and origin can be guaranteed. Food or drink products which are designated under the scheme are given legal protection against imitation throughout the EU. The updated list can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/pzc9n5d>

WARNING OF MEAT FROM UNSTUNNED SLAUGHTER ENTERING BRITISH FOOD CHAIN

According to official figures released by the FSA, sheep slaughtered without being stunned first has doubled in the past six years to more than three million. As a result, many people in Britain are eating halal meat without realising it.

The growing demand for sheep meat and “an enhanced religious observance” are reasons for the increase, according to government ministers.

Former president of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Alexander Trees, Baron Trees said the UK is “moving backwards” on its animal welfare commitments during a Lords debate on the issue.

Environment Minister Lord Gardiner replied back to Lord Trees, saying the government is “very clear” on “respect” towards the rights of Jewish and Muslim communities to consume meat according to their religious beliefs. However, he said: “The Government would prefer all animals to be stunned before slaughter.”

But the British Veterinary Association (BVA) has said that slaughter without stunning “unnecessarily compromises” the welfare of animals at the time of death and have labelled the figures a “grave concern” to the veterinary profession, calling for all livestock to be stunned before slaughter.

Animal welfare organisations, including the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) and the government’s own Farm Animal Welfare Committee believe that non-stunned slaughter needs to end. Leading charity Humanists UK has also called on the government to expand its definition of the “welfare needs of animals” by explicitly including pre-stunning of animals at time of slaughter stating that the current legal approach to religious slaughter is “incoherent”.

Denmark banned non-stun slaughter as the country’s government said “animal rights come before religion” in 2014. However, the growth in the halal market in particular does represent huge market potential for British farmers. In 2015, the global halal spend was \$1.2 billion, and 16.6 percent of the total food expenditure. By 2021 this figure is expected to rise to \$1.9 billion.

MARKING SYSTEM TO COMBAT COUNTERFEIT GOODS CREATED BY RESEARCHERS

A secure marking system for combatting pirated pharmaceuticals and foodstuffs has been developed by researchers at the University of Copenhagen. The pattern, measuring only a few millimeters, can be embedded into glass or milled into metal.

Researchers have taken out a patent on the system and are currently fine-tuning scanning solutions to make it ready for manufacturers to use in a year.

According to the researchers the system which deploys three rare earths among other things, is based on randomness, which makes it unable to be hacked or tampered with. As soon as a customer asks that an authorized dealer checks up on a piece of merchandise that was meant to be marked using the system, the dealer can access a manufacturer database to check its authenticity. The probability of two products having the same ‘fingerprints’ – the same digital key – is so minuscule, that in practice, it can only be described as non-existent.

An optical authentication system based on lanthanide luminescence is used. The authentication system is a hardware reader, image analysis, authentication software and ‘physical keys’. Physical keys are made in a polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) thin film from random patterns of taggants (markers) - these are zeolites doped with europium(III), terbium(III) or dysprosium(III) ions.

These taggants can be imaged following selected excitation. Upon each excitation wavelength, a unique random pattern emerges, and the digitized and combined pattern forms the unique digital key. This form of excitation-selected imaging ensures by using at least two lanthanide(III) ion dopants, the random patterns cannot be copied, because the excitation selection will fail when using another emitter.

Every food product or blister pack of pills etc. could feature a unique key. All physical keys are read and digital keys are stored in a database allowing each product to be uniquely identified throughout the supply chain.

GLOBAL STANDARDS

BRC GS LIFT BUREAU VERITAS SUSPENSION

BRC Global Standards recently announced that they have lifted the suspension on Bureau Veritas Certification Holding SA .

BRC Global Standards have worked closely with Bureau Veritas and their accreditation bodies UKAS, ENAC and PCA, and having responded with corrective actions Bureau Veritas will now be allowed to undertake BRCGS audits on a phased basis, from 12th February 2018, based on geographic location of clients.

The action started in December and applied to BRC Global Standards for Food Safety; Packaging and Processing Materials; Storage and Distribution and Agents and Brokers.

Bureau Veritas may now do BRC Global Standards audits in Argentina, Denmark, France, Italy, Poland, Spain, Thailand, Vietnam and UK with systems and training improvements being assessed. However, the firm will not be permitted to do audits for new clients until the suspension is lifted.

Suspension for specific standards and regions will be lifted once evidence has been presented to BRC Global Standards to demonstrate certification processes are being operated satisfactorily and are robustly controlled.

BRC GS stated that Bureau Veritas has taken the opportunity of the suspension to do additional refresher training and review processes for the management of BRC GS audits.

Karen Betts, BRC Global Standards compliance manager, has been working with Bureau Veritas and accreditation bodies, UKAS, ENAC and PCA, to review certification processes. This is to ensure additional safeguards to protect integrity of the BRC Global Standards scheme.

Bureau Veritas will be subject to additional surveillance by BRC Global Standards and accreditation bodies in the short term but they may issue accredited certificates once the accreditation bodies have completed their process to lift suspension of accreditation.

The BRC GS compliance team will review audit reports, timeliness of them and certification.

Sites will be contacted by Bureau Veritas to confirm whether it is able to do the audit. These locations may need to make arrangements with an alternative BRC Global Standards accredited certification body where Bureau Veritas is not permitted to do it.



FREE-FROM FOODS ARE SEEN AS HEALTHIER FINDS STUDY

Free-from labelled foods seem healthier, with GM-free and palm oil-free labels having the strongest effect, according to a study of almost 2000 French, Swedish, British and Polish individuals.

The researchers, from Switzerland's ETH Zurich and the Brussels-based European Food Information Council, wanted to find out how various free-from labels - lactose-free, gluten-free, GM-free and palm oil-free - shape perceptions of foods.

They found that products bearing a free-from label were considered healthier than products without such a label, with the strongest effects occurring for labels indicating that products were free of GMOs and free of palm oil. However, the more nutritionally informed an individual was, the smaller the 'health halo' effect was.

You can read about the findings in more detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/yd6trvsh>



IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

CUSTOMS DECLARATION SERVICE TO BE PHASED IN FROM AUGUST 2018

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) will begin a phased launch of the Customs Declaration Service (CDS) in August 2018. CDS will replace the existing Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) system, with all declarations taking place on CDS from early 2019.

CHIEF currently processes declarations to facilitate the international movement of goods between the UK and non-EU countries. CHIEF will continue to run for a time to aid the transition to CDS.

CHIEF is one of the world's largest and most sophisticated electronic services for managing customs declaration processes, but it's nearly 25 years old and can't be easily adapted to new requirements.

The decision to replace CHIEF with CDS was made before the EU referendum, however CDS will be scaled to handle any potential increases in the volume of declarations that may result from the UK's exit from the EU.

HMRC is currently building and testing CDS with industry, software providers and Community System Providers (CSPs). CSPs operate computerised inventory systems that control the physical movement of import and export freight at UK ports and airports. Importers, exporters or their agents will be informed by their software provider when they need to provide the additional information in order to start making declarations on CDS.

Further information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7xrvhpc>

Members can be kept informed about CDS by sending their name and email address to communications.cds@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk to register for email updates. The updates will provide regular information on CDS and any preparations you may need to make ahead of CDS going live.

PROGRESS IN APPROVAL OF MODERNISATION OF EU TRADE DEFENCE RULES WELCOMED

On 23rd January, the international trade committee of the European Parliament endorsed the political agreement reached between the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament on 5th December 2017 on the modernisation of the EU's trade defence instruments.

Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström said: "Today's resoundingly positive vote means that the EU is one step closer to having the necessary tools to tackle unfair trading practices quickly and effectively. Together with the recently-agreed changes to our anti-dumping methodology, the EU's toolbox of trade defence instruments will be even better suited to deal with global challenges. I now look forward to the speedy adoption of this decision by plenary of the European Parliament. The EU stands for open and rules-based trade, but we must ensure that others do not take advantage of our openness. The EU stands ready to defend its industry and workers from unfair competition."

The changes to the EU's anti-dumping and anti-subsidy regulations will make the EU's trade defence instruments more adapted to the challenges of the global economy: they'll become more effective, transparent and easier to use for companies. In some cases, they will also enable the EU to impose higher duties on dumped products.

The new rules will enter into force once the European Parliament and the Council conclude the respective ongoing approval procedures.

You can read more about the political agreement on the Commission press release here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8domc26>

DEFRA UPDATE GUIDANCE ON CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS FOR EXPORTING



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have published updated guidance on the certificate requirements when exporting food, drink and agricultural products. This update includes the addition of the link to the Soft Drinks Industry Levy guide and changes the title to include 'drink'.

From January 2018, exporters of certain drinks with added sugar might have to pay a levy but they can claim a credit for any exported drinks they pay the levy on.

The updated guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/z26pd6l>

BRC REPORT HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING TRADE DEALS

New evidence from the BRC shows the importance to UK consumers of maintaining the benefits of trade deals the EU has negotiated with other countries.

As a member of the EU, the UK currently benefits from zero or low rate tariffs on various imports from trade deals that the EU has negotiated with third countries. From the day after the UK leaves the EU, on 30 March 2019, it will no longer be covered by these international agreements, so imported goods will be subject to higher tariffs and potential customs barriers. For consumers this means higher prices.

Using import data from UK retailers, the BRC has identified the countries where negotiating replica trade agreements will make the most difference to ensure prices don't rise immediately on exit. These deals are particularly important for the price of food and clothing for UK shoppers. For instance, in the event of a no deal, the tariff on clothing from Turkey, a major supplier to the UK, could rise from zero to 12 per cent, and fish from Iceland from 3.4 to 11 per cent.

Andrew Opie, Director of Food & Sustainability at the British Retail Consortium said: "While securing a deal with the EU to enable tariff-free trade to continue remains the priority, the deals the EU has negotiated with countries around the world also contribute to the choice and affordability of goods that UK shoppers purchase every day. People need reassurance from Government that these deals will be transferred in time to ensure that UK consumers don't lose out. New or higher tariffs inevitably mean consumers would face higher prices in their everyday shop, as staple products such as fruit, vegetables, fish, and clothing would be hardest hit. Price increases of any scale would add to the burden of hard-pressed consumers whose finances are already being squeezed by inflationary pressures. Now that an agreement has been reached to move the negotiations on to trade, the focus must be on securing the continuity of free trade with Europe, alongside replicating these existing agreements with countries outside of the EU. These are the crucial next steps that Government needs to take to avoid a cliff-edge situation on Brexit day and to deliver a fair Brexit for consumers."

The full report 'The Bilateral Trade Deals That Matter to Consumers' can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9o2js5w>

INDUSTRY DISSATISFIED ABOUT GCA DECISION

The government decision not to extend the remit of the Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA) has provoked mixed views from suppliers, with some dissatisfied with the outcome. Traidcraft Exchange claimed it left farmers exposed to unfair buying practices, such as last-minute cancellation of orders.

This was backed by Sustain, who said: "It means farmers and growers, here and overseas, will not be protected from abusive practices from buyers. This makes it harder for them to invest, or to ensure that the environment, animals and workers are protected."

The National Farmers Union (NFU) said the measures showed a positive direction of travel to protect the rights of farmers, but did not think they went far enough.

"The evidence within the GCA's consultation shows that we have an imbalance of power within our UK supply chains," said NFU president Meurig Raymond. "But the measures that have been announced to address this do not go far enough and it's an opportunity missed. This, for us, is the beginning of a journey to improve the supply chain for our members. Dairy farmers already have contracts. What we'd like to see is minimum standards in those milk contracts to ensure that farmers are protected against unfair clauses, such as those requiring exclusivity, unbalanced variation of terms and short-notice price changes. And while we praise the step towards standardising sheep carcase classification, we still have multiple concerns as to transparency within the sheepmeat sector that will need addressing."

However, Dairy UK welcomed the news that there would be an opportunity to extend the remit of the GCA to other retailers. It also said it was supportive of the £10M fund to help farmers and producers.

"We are pleased that the government has decided not to extend the remit of the GCA down the supply chain," a spokesman said. "Dairy UK has long pointed out that doing so would be impractical in terms of implementation, would lack an available funding model and would seriously detract from successfully focusing on the relations between suppliers and retailers." It issued a warning on plans to introduce milk contracts, as any legislation would have to meet the requirements of the EU dairy package and could also cause "competitive distortions" within the UK milk market.

However, Kerry McCarthy, Labour MP for Bristol East and a member of the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs select committee, which pushed for an extension of the GCA's remit said: "There is clearly more that needs to be done to address imbalances in the relationship between suppliers and supermarkets, to ensure that farmers can get a decent price for their produce and are treated fairly and consistently by buyers. It's particularly disappointing that the government is not prepared to extend protection to indirect suppliers. Our big supermarkets and manufacturers should not be passing market risk on to farmers either here or in developing countries, placing their livelihoods in jeopardy. We need a GCA with extended powers to ensure that everyone in the supply chain, direct or indirect, in the UK or overseas, is treated with respect."

GOVERNMENT REJECTS CALLS TO EXTEND REMIT OF GCA

The Government has rejected calls to extend the remit of the Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA) but has pledged to introduce measures to protect smaller suppliers, including a GBP10m collaboration fund.

In October 2016, the government launched a call for evidence to explore extending the remit of the GCA, following pressure from MPs on the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs select committee.

The consultation's conclusion, published on February 16th 2018 said while most submissions felt the GCA had a positive impact on the commercial relationships in the sector, a number highlighted the "unfair pressures" placed on primary producers.

One of the main concerns raised in the consultation was a "significant pattern" of unfair or unclear terms and conditions in contracts between producers and processors, slaughterhouses or manufacturers. It said this was particularly prominent in the dairy sector. The government revealed it was planning to introduce compulsory written contracts into the dairy sector in 2018, which it anticipated would be enforced by the Rural Payments Agency. It said it aimed to launch a consultation on the plans in March.

It also proposed to mandate the use of a carcass classification system in England, which would require slaughterhouses to follow a standard grid for the classification of sheep carcasses, while payment per carcass would be made in a more "transparent manner".

It said the plan was for the licensing and monitoring in abattoirs to be carried out by the Rural Payments Agency. This would need secondary legislation and an impact assessment, which would be launched in May 2018.

Another concern raised by the consultation, it said, was the lack of bargaining power of many small farmers. During 2018–2019, the government would begin to make available up to £10M of funding, through the Rural Development Programme for England, it added. This fund would be intended "to support projects that enable farmers and growers to improve their efficiency and competitiveness, access new markets and strengthen their position in the supply chain through co-operation".

Late payments formed another topic raised by the consultation. The government report said: "Late payments have no place in an economy that works for all." The report added that the Small Business Commissioner would be taking on this issue.

The consultation also revealed concerns about the lack of transparency across the supply chain, with the report saying: "While information on farmgate prices is freely available, there is much less information on prices applied at the downstream stages of the groceries supply chain – in particular in the manufacturing, processing and foodservice sectors." It said it would work with the Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board and other industry bodies to consider if dissemination of data could be improved in the short term to improve risk management and business planning.

The government added that it would look into contractual good practice in the beef and dairy sectors, and it responded to concerns raised that some retailers could currently or in the near future hit the £1bn turnover limit to be covered by the GCA. The Competition and Markets Authority said it would review this information on an annual basis. Christine Tacon, the GCA, urged retailers to think about what action they need to take to ensure they become Code-compliant.



GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON TRADE WHITE PAPER

The Department for International Trade (DIT) have recently published the Government's response to the consultation on a Trade White Paper: Preparing for our future UK trade policy.

The paper welcomed views from respondents on all aspects of the developing approach and sought views in particular on:

- the commitments to an inclusive and transparent trade policy
- the approach to unilateral trade preferences
- the approach to trade remedies

Responses to the questions were analysed and collated into themes around these key principles. After summarising respondent views, the government then set out their response. Note, the paper does not contain a full list of received responses, and the views set out in the paper are not attributed to individual respondents or groups of respondents.

The response can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7jyo5eh>

REGULATORY

SOFT DRINKS INDUSTRY LEVY EXPLANATORY NOTES LAID BEFORE PARLIAMENT

The Soft Drinks Industry Levy Regulations 2018 (Explanatory Notes) were made on 15th January, laid before the House of Commons on 17th January and will come into force on 6th April 2018. In addition, the Soft Drinks Industry Levy (Enforcement) Regulations 2018 (Explanatory Note) has been laid before Parliament and will also come into force on 6th April 2018. These regulations will enable HMRC to use a range of enforcement powers for the purposes of preventing and tackling evasion in relation to the Soft Drinks Industry Levy.

The Soft Drinks Industry Levy Regulations 2018 can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9xkmh3g> along with the accompanying explanatory notes: <https://tinyurl.com/yc784stv>

The Soft Drinks Industry Levy (Enforcement) Regulations 2018 can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc9t7uze> along with the accompanying explanatory note: <https://tinyurl.com/ybmfq57b>

HM Revenue & Customs have also updated guidance on the Soft Drinks Industry Levy to include a link in the 'How and when to register' section to allow food business operators to sign up to register for the Soft Drinks Industry Levy. The updated guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybz2c9jg>

ADDITIVES REGULATION ON USE OF SWEETENERS IN FINE BAKERY WARES AMENDED

On the basis of information provided by the Member States, the Commission has concluded that Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008, which lays down a Union list of food additives approved for use in food and their conditions of use should be amended to remove the use of the following sweeteners in fine bakery products for special nutritional uses:

- E 950 Acesulfame K
- E 951 Aspartame
- E 952 Cyclamic acid and its Na and Ca salts
- E 954 Saccharin and its Na, K and Ca salts
- E 955 Sucralose
- E 959 Neohesperidine DC
- E 961 Neotame
- E 962 Salt of aspartame-acesulfame
- E 969 Advantame

The use of sweeteners in 'fine bakery products for special nutritional uses' was authorised by the European Parliament and Council Directive 94/35/EC. The food 'fine bakery products for special nutritional uses' covered 'foods for persons suffering from carbohydrate metabolism disorders (diabetes)' regulated by Council Directive 89/398/EEC. This Directive established a common definition for 'foodstuffs for particular nutritional uses' and provided that specific provisions could be adopted as regards food for persons suffering from diabetes, a category of food falling within the definition of foodstuffs for particular nutritional uses.

However, the scientific basis for setting specific compositional requirements for those foods was lacking. Furthermore, Regulation (EU) No 609/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council abolished the concept of 'foodstuffs for particular nutritional uses', including that of food for persons suffering from diabetes.

Therefore, the authorisation of those sweeteners in 'fine bakery products for special nutritional uses' in accordance with Article 7(c) of Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 is seen to be no longer justified and those products are not to be continued to be marketed. However, in order to allow economic operators to adapt to the new rules, a transitional period will apply during which fine bakery products for special nutritional uses containing any of those sweeteners may continue to be marketed.



NEW NOVEL FOOD REGULATIONS COME INTO FORCE

Since the 1st of January this year the new Novel Food Regulation 2015/2283 is applicable in all Member States of the European Union, revoking the previous legislation that had been in force for 20 years.

A novel food is considered to be any food that was not used for human consumption to a significant degree within the European Union before 15 May 1997, the date when the first regulation on novel food came into force. In addition, a novel food should fall into a defined category, ranging from food produced using a new production process to uncommon plants or animals. Examples of novel foods include agricultural products from third countries, such as chia seeds, or food derived from new production processes, such as UV-treated food.

As soon as a food – or an ingredient of the food - is classified as 'novel', it requires a premarket authorisation.

Apart from adding several additional novel food categories, the new regulation did not bring any fundamental changes to the definition of novel food and the requirement of a premarket authorisation has also remained.

However, previously an operator had to be individually authorized by the European Commission to place a novel food on the European market for the first time. This process was characterised as a long, uncertain, time-consuming and expensive procedure.

In the case that the novel food an operator was planning to use was already authorised to be marketed by someone else, the operator had to notify a member state that the food he wished to put on the market was 'substantially equivalent' to that specific novel food. The requirement of 'substantial equivalence' was assessed on composition, nutritional value, metabolism, intended use and the level of undesirable substances contained therein. These facts needed to be supported by scientific evidences available and generally recognised or on the basis of an opinion delivered by a national food assessment body. All those steps certainly implied additional costs and time.

The review of the novel food Regulation has considerably simplified this system. From now on, all novel foods that have been authorised in the past are included in the Union positive list and can be marketed as such or used in foods, by any food business operator. The only additional requirement is that the authorised conditions of use, labelling and post-market requirements, and any other specifications indicated therein are fulfilled.

This change under the new Regulation gives the opportunity to all food business operators, and in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), to boost their innovation and competitiveness, without having to build an expensive and time-consuming 'notification dossier' each time they want to use a novel food already authorised.

Finally, the key principle of a positive list, already applicable in other fields of the European food law, such as health claims or food additives, now also applies to novel foods. As a result, whenever a food business operator wants to place a novel food on the market- as such or as an ingredient - he would be subject to the specific process of premarket authorisation only if the novel food is not included in the Union list.

More information can be found here, including a link to the new regulations themselves: <https://tinyurl.com/yabcq7e7>

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DRINKING WATER REGULATIONS

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) published on 12th January 2018 the summary of responses received following a consultation on the plans to update the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2016 ('public regulations') and the Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016 ('private regulations'), which only apply in England. The changes will bring the Regulations in line with the Drinking Water Directive which was updated to reflect WHO principles for the risk based sampling and analysis of drinking water supply.

You can read the summary of responses here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc4d7urz>

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

SUGARY DRINKS COULD BE BANNED IN NHS CANTEENS, SHOPS & VENDING MACHINES

Hospitals and suppliers have been warned that if they do not take action to reduce sales of sugary drinks in NHS canteens, shops and vending machines by the end of March 2018, a ban will be introduced in 2018 instead. The NHS is taking action on sugar, with almost two-thirds of NHS trusts (141 of 232) now signed up to a voluntary scheme to reduce sales of sugary drinks to 10% or less of sold beverages. Some NHS Trusts have gone further and have introduced their own bans on sugary drinks. The CEO of NHS England, Simon Stevens, said he wants 2018 to be the year when the tasty, affordable and easy option for patients, staff and visitors is the healthy option.

IGD PRODUCE GUIDES IN BID TO END CONFUSION OVER TRAFFIC LIGHT LABELLING

The Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) has produced two new guides which aim to put an end to consumer confusion over traffic light health labelling and help them make healthy choices. This follows a survey showing that 46% of consumers found front-of-pack labels difficult to read and interpret. This, it considers, is due to 'widespread consumer ignorance' over reference intakes, calories and portion size.

The Guides contain messages for businesses to use when talking to consumers about nutrition labels. The messages have been developed to help people effectively use and understand nutrition labels and to support the use of the messages there is also a messaging toolkit which contains tools and images.

The guides can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybxqa3v6>

Meanwhile, the Local Government Association (LGA) has called for traffic light labelling on food and drink to become mandatory after Brexit.

European Union legislation currently regulates food and drink labelling, meaning the UK Government can only make recommendations to industry. In 2013, the Department of Health introduced a voluntary traffic light scheme, but the LGA said they are only displayed on two thirds of products sold in the UK.

Councils, which have responsibility for public health, say the traffic light system should become a legal requirement for all products once EU laws are transferred into British law after Brexit.

The LGA, which represents 370 councils in England and Wales, said a mandatory system would give consumers at-a-glance information that enables them to make healthy choices.

FSA SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS CONSUMERS SUGAR FEARS

Consumer fears about sugar content have been flagged up in the latest Food Standards Agency (FSA) shopper survey.

The FSA's Biannual Public Attitudes Tracker quizzed 1,989 adults in England, Wales and Northern Ireland on their attitudes towards food safety issues in the UK.

Sugar emerged as a major concern to respondents, with just over half saying they were worried about the amount of sugar in their food. This replaced food price (46% of respondents) as the number one food issue of concern for the first time since the survey began in 2010, up 15%. Also identified as concerns were food waste (48%) and animal welfare (43%).

Food poisoning was a concern to three in 10 respondents, while chemicals from the environment – such as lead – in food were highlighted by a similar proportion. Just over a quarter said food additives were a major concern and just over a third of respondents identified food hygiene when eating out as a food safety issue they worried about. The report also gauged the public's attitude towards the FSA. It found more than three-quarters of respondents were aware of the FSA, while seven in 10 who said they were aware trusted the agency to do its job.

Three-quarters of consumers also said they trusted that food was labelled accurately, while almost the same number trusted the authenticity of ingredients, as well as the origin and quality of food. Findings also demonstrated that 44% of respondents trusted that people who produced and sold food had their best interests at heart.

To read the full report, click here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7877czs>

FDF GUIDANCE ON COMPARATIVE NUTRITION CLAIMS

The Food and Drink Federation (FDF) published on 22nd January 2018 guidance on making comparative nutrition claims in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods.

The document provides detailed best practice guidance on the requirements and appropriate wording for comparative nutrition claims to be used in the labelling and advertising of food and drink products. It also includes a flow diagram of the comparative claim process including the selection of the food category for comparison, factors to consider, sampling the marketplace and source of nutritional information and recording the information. The guidance also describes non-permitted comparative nutrition claims, but does not cover non-nutrition comparative claims, such as '30% more fruit'

The Deputy Director of Healthy Behaviours at the UK Department of Health, Tim Baxter, has welcomed the new guidance. He said businesses may find it helpful when considering the requirements of the legislation and in providing accurate information on their product packaging, although only the courts can offer an authoritative interpretation of the law.

The guidance can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8ocnarf>

SCOTLAND RELAUNCHES 'EAT BETTER FEEL BETTER' HEALTHY EATING CAMPAIGN

Sports stars have helped relaunch the Scottish Government's Eat Better Feel Better campaign – telling primary school children about their favourite snacks and the benefits of healthy eating.

Eat Better Feel Better provides parents with tips to make healthy choices easier for their children and to show how quick, easy and cost-effective it can be to swap snacks that are higher in sugar and salt with more balanced options.

The revamped Eat Better Feel Better website which can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yaoka43g#> offers a selection of recipes and healthy snack ideas to inspire busy parents to try some new food choices.

The Scottish Government will also be running a Facebook competition, encouraging people to share images of their own 'snack heroes' for the chance to win a selection of sporting prizes. More information can be found on the [@EatBetterScotland](#) Facebook page.

TESCO HEALTHY LIVING PARTNERSHIP WITH BHF, CANCER RESEARCH AND DIABETES UK

The British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research UK and Diabetes UK have come together with Tesco to help tackle some of the UK's biggest health challenges.

The partnership, "Little helps for healthier living", brings together the skills and expertise of some of the UK's biggest health charities with the scale and reach of Tesco to help lower the risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer and Type 2 diabetes.

A key starting point will be to establish the UK's leading workplace health programme, providing the Tesco workforce with healthy deals and discounts, free health checks, and a growing focus on supporting the mental health of colleagues.

The four organisations have pledged to share the findings from their work across the wider UK health community to help accelerate progress towards national and international public health goals. The aim is to bring about a measurable improvement on the health of the nation, by developing Little Helps that make a big difference to shopping baskets all over Britain.

Over the next five years, the new partnership will help to encourage and support sustainable, measurable changes in behaviour, through a series of targeted activities and campaigns aimed at reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer and Type 2 diabetes. These will include:

- Developing the UK's leading workplace health programme for Tesco's 300,000 UK colleagues;
- Aligning communication campaigns in store and online with national health campaigns;
- Training Tesco pharmacists to help them better support customers in the prevention and management of cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes;
- Sharing anonymised sales information to help develop insight on health policy and public health programmes;
- Fundraising for more health research – innovative and engaging fundraising initiatives that help customers and colleagues raise money for the three charities.



PHE LAUNCH CAMPAIGN TARGETING CHILDREN'S SNACKING

Public Health England (PHE) is helping parents take control of their children's snacking by launching the first Change4Life campaign promoting healthier snacks.

This is because half of children's sugar intake, currently around 7 sugar cubes a day, comes from unhealthy snacks and sugary drinks, leading to obesity and dental decay. Each year children are consuming almost 400 biscuits; more than 120 cakes, buns and pastries; around 100 portions of sweets; nearly 70 of both chocolate bars and ice creams; washed down with over 150 juice drink pouches and cans of fizzy drink.

On average, children are consuming at least 3 unhealthy snacks and sugary drinks a day, with around a third consuming 4 or more. The overall result is that children consume 3 times more sugar than is recommended.

The new Change4Life campaign encourages parents to look for '100 calorie snacks, two a day max' to help them purchase healthier snacks than the ones they currently buy.

More information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7tqzh6x>



GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO CHILDHOOD OBESITY

The Department for Health and Social Care published on 11th January 2018 a policy paper on the government's response to the conclusions and recommendations in the House of Commons Health Select Committee's report on childhood obesity.

The report covers areas including the soft drinks industry levy, reformulation, discounting and price promotions, advertising and the out-of-home sector and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8u76vqb>

DRAFT DIETARY REFERENCE VALUES FOR SODIUM

EFSA published on 21st December 2017 the outcome of a public consultation on the Scientific Opinion of the EFSA's NDA Panel on Dietary Reference Values for sodium (intermediate draft) and related protocol.

The report summarises the outcome of the public consultation, and includes a brief summary of the comments received and how they were addressed. The protocol has also been published.

The outcome of the consultation can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yct4q3fu> along with the protocol: <https://tinyurl.com/ycwld5x4>

PHE CLARIFICATION ON CALORIE CAMPAIGN

PHE published on 28th December 2017 a news item concerning clarification of recent media coverage on its upcoming calorie campaign. The government dietary recommendations on how many calories the population should consume in a day to maintain a healthy weight have not changed. The recommendation is still that women should aim to consume 2,000 calories a day from food and drink, men should aim for 2,500.

The news article can be read in further detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/yb3nuol7>

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT & CSR

UNILEVER DISCLOSES PALM OIL SOURCES

Unilever has taken a pioneering stance on its palm oil supply chain by being the first consumer goods company to publish in full a dossier of all the suppliers and mills that it sources from, in a rare industry move designed to show the company's commitment to transparency. This is a radical step in palm oil supply chain transparency with Unilever considering the full disclosure a 'milestone' in its journey towards a more sustainable palm oil industry.

The industry at large is often plagued by concerns about deforestations, human rights and child labour abuses, as well as other environmental impacts like endangering orangutans and the palm oil industry is often in the spotlight for the wrong reasons.

Unilever has taken serious steps in the last few years since establishing its Sustainable Palm Oil Sourcing Policy five years ago and then relaunching it in 2016 as palm oil sustainability issues became much more pressing. And this latest move positions the company at the forefront of change and could put pressure on some of the other big players in the palm oil supply chain to follow suit.

You can read more about this move here: <https://tinyurl.com/ya3yptor>

SCOTLAND CHALLENGES UK GOVERNMENT OVER DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME

Scotland will push ahead with a deposit return scheme for drinks containers and is calling on the UK Government to match its ambition, Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham has said.

Ms Cunningham has already pledged that Scotland will back the EU's vision to phase out single use plastics by 2030 and urged the UK Government to do the same – "Brexit or no Brexit."

Earlier this month, the Scottish Government became the first UK administration to announce plans to ban the use of plastic cotton buds, one of the items most often washed up on beaches.

Speaking at Scotland House in London, Ms Cunningham told an audience of business and environmental leaders she was disappointed the UK Government's long-awaited 25 Year Environment Plan failed to commit to a deposit return scheme.

Ms Cunningham said "The Scottish Government is responsible for the environmental protection of around ten per cent of Europe's coastline so we have a particular duty to demonstrate leadership. But, of course, discarded plastics are having a growing impact on land as well as at sea. We believe a deposit return scheme for drinks containers has a vital role to play in protecting our environment and wish to co-operate with the UK government, and other devolved administrations, to deliver the best possible scheme for everyone. The time for action is now, and I urge the UK Environment Secretary, Michael Gove, to join us in this important endeavour."

SECOND PHASE OF FISHERIES DISCARD BAN ENTERS FORCE

From 2nd January, fishermen targeting certain fish in the North Sea must land everything they catch as the next phase of the discard ban for demersal species entered into force. The existing ban for cod, whiting and saithe has been extended to include more vessels in the North Sea. Fishermen targeting saithe in North Western Waters, including the Irish Sea, will be required to land it for the first time.

The discard ban, also known as the landing obligation will encourage sustainable fishing by ending the wasteful practice of throwing dead fish overboard. It has been gradually introduced to allow time for fishermen to adapt to the new rules.

The UK is leading the way in championing sustainable fishing, and the latest phase of the discard ban will help put an end to the wasteful practice of throwing fish back, dead, overboard. Together with careful quota management, the discard ban will help the UK create a profitable fishing industry and safeguard our marine environment.

DEFRA & EA PUBLISH UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR BUSINESSES ON STORAGE OF OIL

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Environment Agency have published updated guidance for businesses on storage of oil. The guidance advises how to store oil, design standards for tanks and containers, where to locate and how to protect them, and capacity of bunds and drip trays and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc2dhrjt>

FDF PUBLISH SECTOR ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

The Food and Drink Federation (FDF) has published its annual sustainability progress report, outlining the progress made by members to deliver its Ambition 2025. The publication of this report is accompanied by the public launch of FDF's Sustainability Resource Hub, an online platform providing information on various sustainability tools that was previously only available to member companies.

The report shows that progress was made towards each of FDF's environmental ambitions, including further reductions in CO2 emissions from manufacturing operations, down 51% in 2016 compared to the 1990 baseline. It is accompanied by case studies from FDF member companies Bettys & Taylors, Britvic, Coca-Cola European Partners, Mars, Matthew Algie, Mondelez International, PepsiCo, Pladis, and Warburtons.

The Hub contains information on voluntary certifications, collaborative platforms and practical tools available to businesses looking to further their sustainability agenda. The project is a key deliverable on FDF's ambition on sustainable supply chains. FDF hopes it will help businesses identify relevant and credible mechanisms to increase and maintain the resilience of their supply chains, both independently and in collaboration with other stakeholders.

The progress report can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/c35r4k>

More information about the Sustainability Resource Hub can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yawgpx5v>

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PUBLISH UPDATED STRUCTURE CHART

The Environment Agency have published an updated structure chart which shows their organisation structure at a high level, including some of their management team for national and area teams. A map of their operational areas is also available.

You can access both documents here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8mdtado>

CALL FOR UK PLASTIC BOTTLE DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME

The UK Government published on 22nd December 2017 a statement that the UK needs a deposit return scheme for plastic bottles.

The Environmental Audit Committee also called for the provision of free drinking water in public premises, and the need to make producers financially responsible for the plastic packaging they produce and to phase in a mandated 50% recycled plastic content in plastic bottles, to be achieved by 2023 at the latest.

You can read the statement in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9s6npry>



MSC STRENGTHEN ASSURANCE MODEL AND FISHERY CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The Marine Stewardship Council will release in 2018 the widely consulted changes to its Fisheries and Chain of Custody certification requirements, launch new initiatives to strengthen the organisation's assurance model, and initiate a process for the review of its Fisheries Standard.

Through its world-class certification program, the MSC pursues its vision for oceans to be teeming with life and seafood supplies safeguarded for the future. Over the last 20 years, the MSC has helped incentivise responsible stewardship of global fisheries - delivering real change on the water from the Arctic to the Indian Ocean, and forged partnerships in support of healthy oceans.

The MSC is determined to remain a leading catalyst for improved fisheries management, contributing to the sustainable use of our oceans and supporting food security and livelihoods in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. As part of its commitment to ensuring the effectiveness of its assurance system, in June 2017, the MSC announced that it would initiate a governance-level working group to monitor actions being taken to provide a high level of assurance that certifications against the MSC standards are robust, independent and impartial. This group met in October 2017 and as a result of its recommendations the Board has decided to review several elements of the MSC's assurance systems in 2018.

More information can be found on the MSC website here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycuxrgt5>

ACTIONS ON USE AND DISPOSAL OF PLASTICS

The Environment Agency published on 12th January 2018 a press release announcing that £750,000 would be made available for a new, dedicated team to tackle plastics pollution in the South West of England.

The announcement follows a pledge to eliminate avoidable waste and crack down on plastics as part of the government's 25-year environment plan launched on 11th January 2018.



You can read the press release in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybtegm5m>

The Secretary of State for the Environment, Michael Gove, also recently invited WRAP to facilitate a series of cross-sector discussions to inform how the UK could respond and reduce the environmental damage caused by the way we use and dispose of plastic.

In an open letter to key stakeholders, chief executive Marcus Gover reported back on the outcomes of the meetings and put forward a comprehensive set of outline proposals for how we can work together to tackle the problem of plastic waste.

The open letter can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycr9qqmt>

EU COMMISSION LAUNCH STRATEGY TO TACKLE PLASTIC WASTE

The first-ever Europe-wide strategy on plastics, was adopted on January 16th, as a part of the transition towards a more circular economy. According to a Commission press release, it will “protect the environment from plastic pollution whilst fostering growth and innovation, turning a challenge into a positive agenda for the Future of Europe”.

The press release goes on to say, “there is a strong business case for transforming the way products are designed, produced, used, and recycled in the EU and by taking the lead in this transition, we will create new investment opportunities and jobs. Under the new plans, all plastic packaging on the EU market will be recyclable by 2030, the consumption of single-use plastics will be reduced and the intentional use of microplastics will be restricted.

Under the new strategy, the European Union will:

- Make recycling profitable for business - New rules on packaging will be developed to improve the recyclability of plastics used on the market and increase the demand for recycled plastic content. With more plastic being collected, improved and scaled up recycling facilities should be set up, alongside a better and standardised system for the separate collection and sorting of waste across the EU. This will save around a hundred euros per tonne collected. It will also deliver greater added value for a more competitive, resilient plastics industry.
- Curb plastic waste - European legislation has already led to a significant reduction in plastic bag use in several Member States. The new plans will now turn to other single-use plastics and fishing gear, supporting national awareness campaigns and determining the scope of new EU-wide rules to be proposed in 2018 based on stakeholder consultation and evidence. The Commission will also take measures to restrict the use of microplastics in products, and fix labels for biodegradable and compostable plastics.
- Stop littering at sea - New rules on port reception facilities will tackle sea-based marine litter, with measures to ensure that waste generated on ships or gathered at sea is not left behind but returned to land and adequately managed there. Also included are measures to reduce the administrative burden on ports, ships and competent authorities.
- Drive investment and innovation - The Commission will provide guidance for national authorities and European businesses on how to minimise plastic waste at source. Support for innovation will be scaled up, with an additional €100 million financing the development of smarter and more recyclable plastics materials, making recycling processes more efficient, and tracing and removing hazardous substances and contaminants from recycled plastics.
- Spur change across the world - As the European Union does its own homework, we will also work with partners from around the world to come up with global solutions and develop international standards. We will also continue to support others, as we have done with the clean-up of the Ganga River in India.

Subject to Better Regulation requirements, the Commission will present the proposal on single-use plastics later in 2018. The Commission will launch the work on the revision of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive and prepare guidelines on separate collection and sorting of waste to be issued in 2019. You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/ydz2l2q5>

5P CHARGE FOR SINGLE USE PLASTIC CARRIER BAGS TO BE EXTENDED

Defra published on 11th January 2018 an update to information for consumers and others regarding the 5p carrier bag charge which was introduced in England on 5 October 2015.

The update relates to plans in relation to small retailers, following publication of 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' and states the intention to extend the scheme so that small retailers also charge for bags. Initially this will be on a voluntary basis, before compulsory use is considered.

More detail can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybs73jjw>



25 YEAR ENVIRONMENT PLAN PUBLISHED

Defra and The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP published on 11th January 2018 a policy paper, 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment', which sets out how Government aims to improve the environment within a generation. The plan contains targets in a number of areas including:

- Clean air;
- Clean and plentiful water;
- Thriving plants and wildlife;
- Reducing the risks of harm from environmental hazards;
- Using resources from nature more sustainable and efficiently;
- Enhancing the beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment;
- Mitigating and adapting to climate change;
- Minimising waste – including a pledge to eliminate avoidable waste;
- Managing exposure to chemicals;
- Enhancing biosecurity.

You can read the policy paper in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/yb5koag7>

SURPLUS FOOD FUND OF GBP500,000 LAUNCHED

A fund of GBP500,000 has been made available to help redistribute surplus products from food businesses to people in need in England. Provided by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, it will be available to not-for-profit organisations and will be administered by sustainability body Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP).

Grants will be awarded with the aim of significantly increasing the amount of food redistributed. Organisations that supply surplus food from food businesses – either directly to those in need or to other surplus food redistributors – can apply, and WRAP said it expected individual grants to range from £20,000-£75,000.

The funding is on offer for projects to help overcome barriers to increasing redistribution. This can cover training in areas such as IT or food safety skills for those involved in supplying and distributing surplus food.

Charities will also be able to apply for help with infrastructure, such as packing, labelling facilities, freezer capacity or refrigerated vehicles, as well as technology to facilitate logistics between commercial donors and recipients.

Peter Maddox, director of WRAP, said: "This fund will make a huge difference to many organisations in England, and those who use their services. We're particularly looking for new routes and fresh partnerships to get more surplus food to people in need. I'm keen to see expressions of interest that will increase redistribution from food manufacturers and businesses not already redistributing food, or which can significantly improve and increase existing redistribution chains."

TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH

SIR JOHN KINGMAN APPOINTED CHAIR OF UK RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Business Secretary Greg Clark has announced that Sir John Kingman will take up the role of permanent chair of UKRI in April this year. Sir John has been interim chair since May 2016 and his appointment follows a fair and open competition.

With a combined budget of more than £6 billion, UKRI will be a major voice for research and innovation in the UK and globally, helping implement the government's ambitious Industrial Strategy.

Boosting research and development (R&D) is key to the Industrial Strategy and the government has committed to the biggest ever increase in R&D investment to 2.4% of GDP by 2027, which could increase public and private R&D investment by as much as £80 billion over the next 10 years.

Commenting on his appointment, Sir John said:

"I am thrilled to have been selected to be chair of UK Research and Innovation. This is a moment of exceptional opportunity - and responsibility - to make best possible use of the very large increases in science and innovation funding committed in the Industrial Strategy. In 18 months as interim chair, robust foundations have been laid for the new organisation: we have recruited a superb chief executive and executive team; a formidable Board; and exceptional new talent into key leadership roles at the research councils. It is a huge privilege to be given the opportunity to continue."

As announced in May 2016, in the government's higher education and research white paper, 'Success as a Knowledge Economy', UKRI will be established as a single, strategic body that will bring together the 7 Research Councils, Innovate UK and the research funding from Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

UKRI will ensure that the UK maintains its world-leading research and innovation position by creating a system that maximises the contribution of each of the component parts and creates the best environment for research and innovation to flourish.



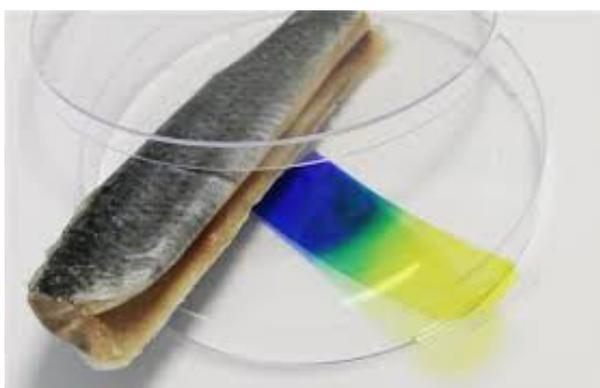
TRIALS ON BIOLOGICAL SENSORS TO DETECT FOOD SPOILAGE

US researchers from Clemson University in South Carolina are developing intelligent packaging with biological sensors that can detect food spoilage. The packages would use 'cell-to-cell communication', called quorum sensing communication between cells, which in turn uses signaling molecules (autoinducers) to detect food that's beginning to spoil.

Researchers will identify autoinducers present in packaged foods and design a biosensor that can monitor the development of microbes that can cause food spoilage.

Current methods used to detect food spoilage on the market include labels or materials that change colour when they detect ammonia or sulphur from the breakdown of proteins in meat. However, using labels or materials that change colours are limited in use, not a direct indicator of spoilage and usually signal when it is too late to be useful.

The project has received a \$100K grant from the US Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.



FOOD SAFETY REPORTS

RASFF

Updated on a monthly basis, the table below provides members with a rolling yearly update of results from the FSA's Early Warning System (EWS) for food and feed. Note: this system is based primarily (but not exclusively) on analysis of the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) information issued by EU Member States for imports of food and feed.

			RASFFs issued during the last:			
Product	Country of origin	Hazard	1 year	6 months	1 month	Comments (s) = serious risk (ud) = undecided
Egusi melon (watermelon)	Turkey	Aflatoxin B1	6	3	2	Three in May 2017 all from Germany and all (S), One in Oct 2017 from Germany (S) and Two in Jan 2018 both from Germany (S)
Goji berries	China	Pesticide residues	12	10	1	One in May 2017 (UD) and One in June 2017 (UD) both from Czech Republic and One in Sept from Czech Republic (UD), Two in Oct 2017 both from The Netherlands [1] (S) [1] (UD) and Five in Nov 2017 all from The Netherlands [3] (S) [2] (UD), One in Dec 2017 from The Netherlands (S) and One in Jan 2018 from The Netherlands (S)
Groundnuts	USA	Aflatoxin B1	10	6	1	One in Mar 2017 from The Netherlands (S) and One in Jun 2017 from Bulgaria (S) and Two in July 2017 from The Netherlands both (S), One in Sept 2017 from The Netherlands (S) (food), One in Oct 2017 from UK (UD) and Three in Nov 2017 all from The Netherlands and all (S) and One in Jan 2018 from The Netherlands (S)
Sunflower meal	Ukraine	Moulds	2	2	2	Two in Jan 2018 both from Poland both (NS)

Product	Country of origin	Hazard	Comments (s) = serious risk (ud) = undecided
Fish	Spain	Mercury	2 - 1 Italy (s), 1 Spain (s)
Oysters	France	Norovirus	3 - All Italy (s)

New signals from sources other than RASFF information, including food & feed from the EU:

Potential emerging risks based on non-RASFF sources, and identified as being of particular interest in January 2018:

Fera

Issues concerning Bananas & plantains

18/Jan/2018. Notified by The United States. Salmonella may be present in banana leaves. Country of Origin – Thailand. Company - O-Cha Food Pack Co Ltd, 225, 11 Thepparak Street, Km 22, Bang Saotong, Samut Prakan, Thailand

Highlights concerning Tree nuts (shelled or unshelled)

17/Jan/2018 - Following the release of a food recall by the FDA and added to HorizonScan in early January concerning Salmonella in frozen shredded coconut from Vietnam, the product has now been linked to a Salmonella outbreak in the USA. The bacteria causing these illnesses have been identified as Salmonella I 4,[5],12:b:- and Salmonella Newport, and traceback evidence suggests that the Coconut Tree brand Frozen Shredded Coconut (the product in the original recall) is the likely source. There have been no deaths reported at this point in time, but at least 25 people have fallen ill in the outbreak so far, with 6 requiring hospital treatment.

Highlights concerning Oilseeds

16/Jan/2018 A re-emerging issue has appeared for sesame seeds from India found to not have a health certificate/certified analytical report attached. This issue has been picked up throughout the past year, with RASFF alerts being released by the UK, Poland, and Italy.

Highlights concerning Feedstuff

15/Jan/2018 Nutriad have released the 2017 maize mycotoxins survey for Poland. The survey included 81 maize samples from across Poland and 100% were contaminated with DON and 94% with ZEN. Unexpectedly, 72 % of the samples contained FUM. None of the samples were contaminated with OTA.

Highlights concerning Meat and meat products (excluding poultry)

08/Jan/2018 The Netherlands has reported its first outbreak of the novel Salmonella strain S. Bovismorbificans. Between October 2016 and March 2017 54 cases were seen. Following an investigation, the most likely source of the outbreak has been suggested as uncooked ham products.

PASS

Safe Food Advocacy Europe (SAFE) has repeated calls for a legal acrylamide limit after tests on brands of potato crisps showed “alarmingly” high levels of the carcinogenic substance.

FSA Latest Summary of Food Incidents

The FSA has published a summary of food incidents handled between July and September 2017, where an alert has been issued by the FSA to recall products from sale.

Over the three month period, 32 food notices were issued, of which 18 were allergy alerts, with the top four undeclared allergens being milk, gluten, peanuts and soya. Four food alerts were issued relating to physical contamination, two relating to chemical contamination and eight which involved poor food hygiene or microbiological risk.

The information published describes the overall details of the incident, the level of risk to consumers and what action we, industry and local authorities took and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ydey8sx7>

FSA Latest Reinforced Checks Data

Below is a link to a list of companies exporting to the European Union currently made subject by the European Commission to re-enforced checks (those with the statuses ‘Active’, ‘Imposing checks’ or ‘New’ in the re-enforced checks part of the TRACES system): <https://tinyurl.com/y79mfvzh>

Note: It is possible that certain companies who have recently been made subject to checks and have yet to have a check carried out on them may not be on this list.

Re-enforced checks are required under Article 24 of the Veterinary Checks Directive where checks on a consignment of imported food have exposed a serious or repeated infringement.

CONSULTATIONS

Consultation	Purpose	Link	Deadline
EC - Public Consultation on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain	To collate any views and experiences with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • underlying industry studies and information on which EFSA's risk assessment/scientific advice is based; • risk communication; and, • the governance of EFSA, in particular the involvement of the EU Member States (MS) in the EU risk assessment system. 	https://tinyurl.com/y7xaqwue	20th March 2018
Defra - Consultation on the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Laying Hens	To seek views on a new statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Laying Hens, for England.	https://tinyurl.com/y8vnn8k6	9th March 2018
Defra - Consultation on a New Statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Pigs	To seek views on a new statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Pigs, for England.	https://tinyurl.com/y9tax4q9	9th March 2018
EFSA - consultation on draft guidance for the risk assessment of nanoscience and nanotechnology applications in the food and feed chain.	The new document takes account of scientific developments that have taken place since publication of the previous guidance in 2011, particularly studies that offer new insights into exposure assessment and hazard characterisation of nanomaterials	https://tinyurl.com/y7toxn4x	4th March 2018
FSA - consultation on Contaminants in Food (England) Regulations 2013	Post implementation review. Views requested as to whether the general objectives have been met and whether there have been additional costs or benefits	https://tinyurl.com/yaorga6q	9th March 2018
European Commission consultation on actions to halt the decline of bees and other pollinators	Commission is looking to develop a European initiative on pollinators and calls on scientists, farmers and businesses, environmental organisations, public authorities and citizens to contribute.	https://tinyurl.com/y9cyp6yy	5th April 2018
FSA consultation on the qualifications required to be a public analyst, food analyst or food examiner	Post implementation review (PIR) of Food Safety (Sampling & Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2013. Within the draft report, there are a series of questions that the FSA would welcome responses to.	https://tinyurl.com/ydz9cjks	5th March 2018
EFSA Consultation - Sugars in Food	EFSA are seeking feedback on the approach it plans to take for its upcoming assessment of dietary sugars. The aim of the assessment is to establish a cut off value for intake of "free" sugars that is not associated with adverse health effects.	https://tinyurl.com/y82scs72	4th March 2018



British Frozen Food Federation Technical & Legislative Expert Group

Meeting of the Technical and Legislative Expert Group
To be held at 10am on Wednesday 10th January 2018
The George Hotel, Stamford

1. Apologies and Welcome
2. Minutes of previous meeting
3. Action Points & Matters arising
4. Items for discussion - see list following
5. Items to discuss if time – see list following
6. Items for information – see list following
7. Items carried forward – see list following
8. Contact with other organisations
9. Projects
10. Any other business
11. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 11th April, at The Belton Woods Hotel, Grantham

Agenda Item 4 – Items for discussion

- 4.1 TXG Meetings - format and expectations going forward
- 4.2 FSA - ROF and supporting regulator under PA (2018_01_M)
- 4.3 FSA/FSS Efficacy of Recalls & Withdrawals Project - delivery and call to join working group 2 (2018_01_AJ)
- 4.4 FRPERC project – shelf life of frozen food (2018_01_AB)
- 4.5 Peas Please (2018_01_E, 2018_01_AE)
- 4.6 WRAP & Date Coding Guidance (2018_01_S)
- 4.7 Gold Book Update (no paper)
- 4.8 Technical Seminar Update (no paper)
- 4.9 Primary Authority (no paper)

Agenda Item 5 – Items to discuss if time

- 5.1 Appeals system for BRC v8 (no paper)
- 5.2 'Nutrition' and PHE updates (2018_01_D, 2018_01_Q, 2018_01_W, 2018_01_AD)
- 5.3 Acrylamide (2018_01_A, 2018_01_R, 2018_01_AI)
- 5.4 HPAI Outbreak Assessment Updates (2018_01_Y, 2018_01_AG)
- 5.5 Major Incidents MIG (no paper)

Consultations:

- 5.6 Endocrine Disruptors (2018_01_P, 2018_01_AF) (consultation deadline 31/01)
- 5.7 Draft Bill on Animal Welfare (2018_01_AH) (consultation deadline 17/01)
- 5.7 BRC Food Safety v8 (2018_01_U) (Consultation closed. Working group meeting 11/01)

Agenda Item 6 – Items for Information

- 2018_01_B - Meat working group notes
- 2018_01_C - Recent Business expert panel (food standards and labelling)
- 2018_01_F - PAS 96 2017 Publication
- 2018_01_G - Temperature Conditions During Transport of Meat - enforcement of regulation delayed
- 2018_01_H - AMR Commission workshops and Parliament Report
- 2018_01_I - 2016 RASFF annual report
- 2018_01_J - Temperature Conditions During Transport of Warm Meat
- 2018_01_K - Hormone in Brazilian Meat Allegation
- 2018_01_L - New BfR Publication
- 2018_01_N - Latest Campylobacter Results
- 2018_01_O - Meat Hygiene Research Programme Review
- 2018_01_T - EFSA Microbiological Risk Assessments
- 2018_01_V - INCPEN meeting notes
- 2018_01_X - NEW version of IFS Logistics - IFS Logistics 2.2 launched
- 2018_01_Z - Seafish Updates
- 2018_01_AC - Trade Facilitation Expert Panel meeting notes

Agenda Item 7 – Items Carried Forward

Standing agenda items awaiting further development:

- 7.1** Glaze Methodology
- 7.2** Whole Genome Sequencing
- 7.3** Salt in Scampi Challenge – New PHE contact made.
- 7.4** BRC Audit Optimisation Initiative Project – ongoing - next meeting 12/01
- 7.5** GFSI

Agenda Item 8 – Contact with other Organisations

- Vicki Coulton - PHE -Salt reduction Project Lead.
- The Anaphylaxis Campaign
- Jeff Allder -Defra -Food Waste Prevention Team
- David Moon – WRAP
- Nicholas Dolder - Dods Group
- Malcolm Mills – Barbour

Agenda Item 9 – Projects

- 9.1** Gold Book – see item for discussion
- 9.2** Shelf Life Project – no further progress

Agenda Item 10– Any Other Business

- 10.1** Future Guest Speakers - Suggestions invited.

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



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