

T & L UPDATE

BFFF TECHNICAL AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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British Frozen Food Federation

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FOREWORD

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

Following positive feedback regarding the changes we introduced in the last edition we have now built on that further to bring you, as promised, a new focus section on Food Fraud. Please turn to the end of the T&L where you will find handy links to reports from the National Food Crime Unit, the Joint Research Council and also from the EU. Whilst these reports don't detail every 'incident', in combination they should serve to raise awareness of new trends in food criminality not just here in the UK but worldwide.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those who provided feedback on our very first Technical Seminar. We were overwhelmed with the number of positive comments not just about the quality and the content but also on the organisation of the day as a whole. Along with learning about emerging science and gaining FSA and FSS insight, it was clear that food fraud was one of the areas that delegates found most useful which can only further reinforce our focus on this area in this edition.

Of course, there is always room for improvement and our thanks also extends to those of you who fed back suggestions as to how we can make next years event even better. Whilst we've already started to plan for the 2019 Technical Seminar, any comments or suggestions you would like to make would still be most welcome. Similarly, if you didn't make this year's event then please do let us know the reasons why and perhaps next year's event will be the one for you!

As always, whilst we cannot cover everything in the T&L we've tried to include those articles which we feel are most interesting and informative. These include information from EFSA on the *Listeria Monocytogenes* outbreak which concluded that frozen corn is the likely source of the outbreak, the latest information from a variety of sources on the UK obesity crisis and the government's plans to introduce a Deposit Return Scheme for single-use drinks containers.

BFFF T+L continue to work on many other projects which may not necessarily be covered here but can be found in our Technical Group papers. The agenda from our latest Technical Expert Group meeting is available for your information at the back of this edition. Here you will see just how wide a variety of subjects the group discusses and monitors in the interests of the whole membership. At this month's meeting we were lucky enough to be joined by Lynne Regent CEO of the Anaphylaxis Campaign who gave a very informative and interesting presentation on Allergens including the latest developments on thresholds and thoughts on the use of precautionary warnings. Remember, any technical papers issued to the group are available for all members so if you would like a copy of any then please do let us know.

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

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



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



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ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

EFSA COULD PUBLISH CONFIDENTIAL DATA AS PART OF REVAMP

As part of a revamp of the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) risk assessment process, confidential data could be published if deemed essential to protecting public health, according to draft regulation aimed at boosting transparency and trust in science.

EFSA confirm that Intellectual Property rights and data exclusivity will be guaranteed in line with existing EU law, and confidential information will be protected "as long as this is duly justified". However, confidential information could be disclosed in two cases, it said. When urgent action is essential to protect public health, animal health or the environment and when the information is part of the conclusions of the EFSA opinion and relates to foreseeable health effects.

The draft regulation will create a common European register of commissioned studies and guarantee that companies applying for a product authorisation submit all relevant information and don't hold back studies with unfavourable results.

Studies should be made publicly available in an electronic format on the EFSA website with the possibility to search, download and print them. There would also be automatic and immediate access to all safety related information submitted by industry in the risk assessment process.

The Commission proposal revises eight pieces of sectoral legislation, bringing them in line with the general food rules and strengthening transparency in the area of GMOs, feed additives, smoke flavourings, food contact materials, food additives, food enzymes and flavourings, plant protection products and novel foods. It will also increase EFSA's budget by €62,5 million euros a year.

The proposal, which covers the whole agri-food chain, will also apply to ingredients and products that have already been authorised by EFSA. It will also allow the Commission to ask EFSA to commission studies to verify submitted evidence if needed, as well as controls and audits to ensure that laboratories are compliant with the relevant standards. However, there is a caveat – anyone wanting to quote and use the data will need to ask permission to do so from the company that has provided EFSA with the data.

The Commission said the proposals will give citizens greater access to food safety information submitted to EFSA by industry and involve member states' scientists more closely in approval procedures

Before becoming law, it must go to members of the European Parliament and member states for approval. The Commission hopes to see it adopted by mid-2019.

COMMISSION TO BAN UNFAIR TRADE PRACTICES

In a bid to help farmers and small and medium-sized businesses get fairer treatment the European Commission is planning to ban unfair trade practices in the food supply chain.

Targeting the more damaging unfair trading practices, the Commission wants to see sanctions imposed by authorities if any new rules are breached. For example, smaller farmers often lack bargaining power to get their products to consumers and are therefore at a big disadvantage in the market, unable to compete on fair terms, particularly when compared to large operators who have more sway. By setting minimum standards and reinforcing the enforcement, it's hoped that operators will be able to compete on fair terms, thereby contributing to the overall efficiency of the chain.

The unfair trading practices to be banned include late payments for perishable food products, last-minute order cancellations, unilateral or retroactive changes to contracts and forcing the supplier to pay for wasted products.

Other practices will only be permitted if subject to a clear and unambiguous upfront agreement between the parties. For example, a buyer returning unsold food products to a supplier; a buyer charging a supplier payment to secure or maintain a supply agreement on food products; a supplier paying for the promotion or the marketing of food products sold by the buyer.

Under the Commission's proposal, Member States would need to designate a public authority to enforce the new rules and punish infringements. This enforcement authority will be able to investigate complaints that have been filed confidentially or anonymously from trading partners.

However, despite welcoming the move, with the directive only covering SMEs suppliers, several key organizations around Europe are questioning its limited scope. They claim a better approach to fighting unfair trading practices would be to make new rules applicable to all players in the supply chain, regardless of their size.

The Commission's proposal will be submitted together with an impact assessment to the two co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council, where Member States' governments are represented.

EUROPEAN MINISTERS AGREE CONCLUSIONS ON THE FUTURE OF CAP

European Agriculture and Fisheries Ministers have adopted the Presidency conclusions on a common vision for the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). These will guide the Commission as it prepares the CAP legislative proposal.

The CAP is the longest serving EU policy and aims to provide affordable, safe and high quality food, ensure a fair standard of living for farmers, preserve natural resources and respect the environment.

More information, including a video of the debate can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/yb55jzsd>

ADDITIVES, CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS & FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

GERMANY PLANS TO BAN GLYPHOSATE USE

The German Agriculture minister, Julia Kloeckner has announced she is in the process of finalising regulations that would bring about a ban on the use of the popular but controversial herbicide glyphosate in household gardens and impose stringent limitations on its commercial use in parks and sports facilities. Exemptions will only be in areas where heavy machinery cannot feasibly be used.

There has been a debate around the safety of glyphosate for some time now but in autumn 2017 the European Commission's Appeals Committee voted to renew the chemical's licence for a further five years. Germany voted in favour at that time. The proposal was narrowly backed by the European Parliament.

EFSA REPORT ON PESTICIDE RESIDUES IN ORGANIC VERSUS CONVENTIONAL FOODS

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have recently published a report which provides the results of an ad-hoc data extraction and comparison of the monitoring results on organic and conventionally produced food samples.

According to Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed, European Union Member States, Iceland and Norway monitor pesticide residue levels in food samples and submit the monitoring results to EFSA.

This latest ad-hoc data extraction focussed on samples taken in the framework of the EU-coordinated control programmes in the reference period 2013, 2014 and 2015 (for a total of 28,912 conventional and 1,940 organic food samples).

Overall, 44% of the conventionally produced food samples contained one or more quantifiable residues, while in organic food the frequency of samples with measurable pesticide residues was lower (6.5% of the organic samples). The MRL exceedance rate for conventional and organic food amounted to 1.2% and 0.2% of the samples tested, respectively.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7gpef2k>

UK HOSPITALITY PUBLISH INTERIM GUIDANCE ON ACRYLAMIDES

UK Hospitality (formed by the merger of Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers (ALMR) and the The British Hospitality Association (BHA)) have recently published interim guidance to help catering businesses identify and implement measures to reduce acrylamide levels in food in accordance with the new EU Regulation which came into force on 11th April.

The Regulation requires food businesses to identify potential sources of acrylamide and demonstrate that they have taken appropriate action to reduce the levels of acrylamide to be as low as reasonable achievable - the so called ALARA approach.

The interim guidance has been developed in conjunction with industry, along with input from the FSA, the FSS and other key stakeholders including the BFFF.

A decision was taken by UKHospitality to provide interim guidance for industry rather than issuing it as final guidance on the basis that we are still awaiting EU guidance to the regulation. Members should note therefore that this guidance will undoubtedly change, something which UKHospitality are keen to point out.

The interim guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9wym8rw> along with a recent press release here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybu7oj62>

IMPLEMENTING REGULATION ON PESTICIDES MRLS PUBLISHED IN OFFICIAL JOURNAL

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/555 of 9 April 2018 has been published in the Official Journal of the European Union. This Implementing Regulation concerns a coordinated multiannual control programme of the Union for 2019, 2020 and 2021 to ensure compliance with maximum residue levels of pesticides and to assess the consumer exposure to pesticide residues in and on food of plant and animal origin.

The regulation can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y73l9qcl>

PESTICIDES QUARTERLY MONITORING RESULTS PUBLISHED

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have recently published the Quarter 3 2017 report: pesticide residues monitoring programme. HSE working under Defra's authority has official responsibility to organise a monitoring programme of UK food for pesticide residues. The programme is made up of a risk-based national rolling programme of surveys and also includes participation in EU-wide monitoring.

981 samples of 30 different foods were surveyed and 27 of the samples were found to contain residues above the legal MRL. These results were in beans with pods, infant formula, okra, oranges, potatoes, prepared fresh fruit, raspberries, rice, speciality dried beans, speciality fruit and yogurt.

The report can be viewed in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8zj6gv5>



ALLERGENS

GOVERNMENT CHEMIST'S ALLERGEN DETECTION WORKSHOP

A joint Defra, Food Standards Agency, Food Standards Scotland and Government Chemist workshop was held at LGC on 28th February 2018. The event focused on the detection of allergens in spices and herbs using a multi-discipline approach. The workshop was attended by over 20 delegates from Public Analyst laboratories, industry and regulating bodies.

The event was organised by the Government Chemists team as part of a cross government (BEIS, FSA, FSS and Defra) knowledge transfer project

The workshop included a talk on the industry perspective into the challenges posed for manufacturers by cross contamination. There were also three sessions covering the complementary techniques developed in response to the cumin and paprika cases in 2015.

The immunoassay tests which initially detected allergenic contamination (initially believed to be almond) in cumin and the subsequent preparation of reference materials needed for further investigation were also covered along with an overview of mass spectrometry and methods for the detection of close species.

The sessions provided practical information required to enable participants to carry out or commission similar analytical tests.

If you would like to know more about the techniques covered in this workshop, or the work of the Government Chemist, you are invited to contact:

Government Chemist

Queens Road

Teddington

TW11 0LY

Email Government.Chemist@lgcgroup.com

PROBIOTIC PEANUT ALLERGY TREATMENT

Prota Therapeutics, developer of oral immunotherapies to treat food allergies, has partnered with Chr. Hansen, the Danish food ingredients producer, to assess LGG in a clinical trial to develop a treatment for peanut allergy.

However, the medicine could take some time to hit the shelves. It will be approximately three years for the phase three clinical study, which is followed by discussions with the US FDA. After which, Prota intends to submit a Biologics License Application to the FDA.

Numerous studies have highlighted the therapeutic potential of specific bacteria in preventing and treating metabolic, gastrointestinal and other diseases. Investigating particular bacteria for the treatment of food allergies is an area that has recently gained momentum.

NEW STUDY SHEDS LIGHT ON NON-COELIAC GLUTEN AVOIDANCE

New research conducted at the Australian Research Council Industrial Transformation Centre for Functional Grains at Charles Sturt University, has shown that people who avoid gluten in their diets, often avoid other food types such as dairy and eggs and are more likely to experience frequent adverse physiological symptoms after food consumption.

The research sought to uncover why the popularity of gluten-free diets has risen so much amongst those who do not have medical gluten sensitivities. It involved an online study which weighted its demographic data against information held by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to gain an accurate representation of gluten avoidance within the population.

The popularity of gluten-free diets has gained traction over the last decade, to a point where up to 20 percent of the population is estimated to be engaged in gluten avoidance behaviors. This far exceeds the estimated prevalence of gluten-related disorders, such as coeliac disease, suggesting that people are choosing to go gluten-free for a range of reasons which may not be medical in nature.

ANIMAL WELFARE

£1.1M FOOD BUSINESS INVESTMENT SCHEME FOR WELSH SLAUGHTERHOUSES

Lesley Griffiths, the Welsh Government's (WG's) Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, has recently announced a new £1.1 million Food Business Investment scheme package of grant aid for small and medium sized slaughterhouses in Wales.

The package of support will enable these businesses to invest in improvements to ensure their resilience and their ability to continue to provide slaughtering facilities often in remote areas.

The grant aid will include both capital investment and provide advice on animal welfare, business improvement and technical matters. Welfare friendly infrastructure and facilities will be supported and also the installation and upgrading of CCTV monitoring systems.

The details of the grant scheme will be developed over the coming months, in consultation with the industry to ensure the support meets the needs of the sector. It will be launched before the summer recess.

EFSA ISSUE TECHNICAL REPORT ON RISK TO BEES FROM NEONICOTINOID PESTICIDES

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) recently issued a technical report on the evaluation of three neonicotinoid pesticides active substances - clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam which are applied as seed treatments and granules, and the risk they present to bees.

The European Commission requested EFSA to undertake a review of the new data relevant to the uses under consideration taking into account in particular, the new relevant data collected in the framework of the open call for data organized by EFSA in 2015 and any other new data from studies, research and monitoring activities. EFSA established a specific methodology for the evaluation of the available data.



The technical report can be read in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycyk4vj>

DEFRA UPDATE ON AVIAN INFLUENZA

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have updated the preliminary and updated outbreak assessments reports for avian influenza (bird flu) in Europe and in the UK. The update added the latest situation assessment report for highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N6) in UK and Europe and highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N8) in Europe.

Overall, taking into account the declining number of findings of H5N6 HPAI in wild resident waterbirds and that migration is well underway, it is considered that the risk of further outbreaks of H5N6 in wild birds in the UK is declining but given the latest findings, the risk level is maintained at present at high. The presence of H5N8 in southern Europe poses a very low risk to wild birds in the UK. The updated reports can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycvx3paz>

DEFRA UPDATED GUIDANCE ON AVIAN INFLUENZA, FOOT AND MOUTH AND BLUETONGUE

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have recently updated their guidance notes on how to spot and report Avian influenza (bird flu), Foot and Mouth Disease and Bluetongue. Links to photos showing clinical signs of each of the diseases have been added.

The updated Avian Influenza guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9db8xjb>

The updated Foot and Mouth guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7xr2tzg>

The updated Bluetongue guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y84bfyaz>

COMMISSION PUBLISH REPORT ON PROTECTION OF FISH AT TIME OF KILLING

The European Commission have published a report to the European Parliament and Council on the possibility of introducing certain requirements regarding the protection of fish at the time of killing.

Farmed fish are covered by Council Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing. However, only the general provision in Article 3(1) is applicable to farmed fish, i.e. "animals shall be spared any avoidable pain, distress or suffering during their killing and related operations".

To assist with the preparation of this report an independent study report by a selected external contractor was commissioned in 2016, the aim of which was to gather information on current animal welfare practices in European aquaculture in particular as regards the slaughter of farmed fish, and to analyse the extent that fish welfare issues remain unresolved.

The commissioned study report findings showed that the industry as a whole is gradually improving fish welfare with the increasing use of more humane methods such as electrical stunning, the phasing out of others such as CO2 stunning, and the adoption of private standards. However, improvements are still needed in order to increase welfare of some fish species.

At this stage, the Commission considers that the evidence suggests that it is not appropriate to propose specific requirements on the protection of fish at the time of killing. It also concludes that if further guidance is required, this would be best achieved at Member State level.

The Commission considers it essential to develop further stakeholder dialogues in order to favour specific initiatives and projects in this field that could be mutually beneficial both from an economic and animal welfare point of view. Therefore, the Commission has formulated a more systematic and visible format for this dialogue, through the EU Platform on Animal Welfare. The primary objective of this platform is to allow interested parties (animal welfare organisations, scientists, veterinarians, farmers, food processors, food retailers, etc.) an opportunity to express their concerns, share knowledge and resources to build common activities.

The report can be viewed in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8qw2ox7>

DEFRA PUBLISH NEW WELFARE CODE FOR MEAT CHICKENS

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have recently updated the statutory guidance for meat chicken keepers on how to meet the needs of their animals and improve animal welfare. The Code includes guidance to reflect new legislation including specific provisions on staff training, stocking density and follow-up at slaughterhouses. The updated code also provides more detailed guidance on biosecurity, leg health and enriching the environment for chickens.

It can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y826v2lt>

DEFRA PUBLISH STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING BOVINE TB FREE STATUS IN ENGLAND

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have published a policy paper outlining a review into the next phase of their strategy for achieving Officially Bovine Tuberculosis Free (OTF) status in England by 2038.

The review will be led and overseen by Professor Sir Charles Godfray and supported by a small working group. The review is expected to finish by the end of September 2018.

The policy paper can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yahh3eeo>

As part of the strategy a consultation was opened seeking views on proposals to remove the cap on the number of areas that can be licenced by Natural England for badger culling activity. The consultation closed on 15 April 2018 and the responses received will now be evaluated and used as evidence to decide whether to remove the ten area cap. Details of the consultation which took place can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc8h7xxn>

A further consultation also sought views on proposals to introduce licensed badger control in the Low Risk Area of England. This consultation also closed on 15 April 2018 and Defra intend to publish a summary of responses in due course. Detail of this consultation can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7gbxjsz>

CCTV TO BECOME MANDATORY IN SLAUGHTERHOUSES IN ENGLAND



The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), together with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have confirmed that CCTV is to become mandatory in all slaughterhouses in England under new legislation laid in Parliament on 23 February 2018.

The legislation will come into effect from May 2018, once it passes through Parliament, at which point businesses will have six months to comply. The proposals will also give the FSA's Official Veterinarians (OVs) unfettered access to the last 90 days of footage to help them monitor and enforce animal welfare standards.

More information can be found in the following news article: <https://tinyurl.com/ya9rhmjz>

AHWBE RECOMMENDS ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FOR ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have published a policy paper in which the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England (AHWBE) recommends that, as part of the government's future farming policy, specific funds should be allocated to improve animal health and welfare in farmed animals. Ministers will take the board's recommendation into account alongside the public consultation on future farming policy. You can find more detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8k95ohg>

FSA WELCOMES ABATTOIR PROSECUTION

An abattoir boss and three slaughter men have been sentenced for causing unnecessary suffering to sheep – a move welcomed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA).

William Woodward, Company Director at the Bowood Farms abattoir was sentenced to 20 weeks imprisonment (suspended for 12 months) and given a 250 hours unpaid work community order. Mr Woodward was also disqualified under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) from having influence or control over sheep along with £5000 court costs. The prosecution said he had 'simply turned a blind eye to the animals' welfare at his slaughterhouse.

Abattoir worker Artur Lewandowski was given a 150 hours unpaid work community order, as well as an indefinite disqualification order under the AWA for control over sheep. He was also ordered to pay £100 court costs. Fellow workers Kabeer Hussain and Kazam Hussein were given 16 weeks and 18 weeks (suspended for 12 Months) along with a 250 hours unpaid work community order; both were also disqualified under the AWA of control over sheep and were ordered to pay £500 court costs.



BREXIT

CIEH DISMAYED AT COMMENTS ON POTENTIAL GRIDLOCK AT PORTS

Following comments made on the programme Question Time, by Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling MP, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), has expressed dismay at an apparent lack of understanding of the issue.

Responding to a question from the audience about the potential for miles of gridlock in and around Dover following the UK's exit from the EU, Mr Grayling intimated that this would not happen as the Government would simply stop port inspections to speed things up.

Currently, internal market arrangements mean that food being imported to the UK via the Channel ports pass through checks in about 2 minutes, provided that paperwork is correct. However, recent estimations suggest that there would be 20-mile long permanent traffic jams from Dover if no transition arrangement between the UK and EU can be reached. Furthermore, in the absence of a transition period, and subsequent trade agreement, that maintains these arrangements there is serious concern that tailbacks and delays will appear on the first day post-Brexit.

The potential for gridlock raises significant questions over inspections and food imports to the UK 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.

Tony Lewis, Head of Policy and CIEH, said:

“Mr Grayling’s comments are deeply worrying as it suggests the Government simply does not have an adequate understanding of the purpose and importance of port health inspection work. Inspections ensure that food coming into the UK is what it says it is, is safe to eat, and meets all of our standards. They are vital in maintaining food safety in our country. Simply allowing vehicles to roll through our ports unchecked is real public health risk and one that will just encourage criminality and food fraud.

“The lack of appreciation for this from the Secretary of State is exasperating, and it is time the Government started taking post-Brexit border and port health issues seriously. CIEH strongly urges the Government to engage with Port Health professionals and to work with us to ensure that appropriate protections are in place to secure public health following Brexit.”

EC PUBLISH NOTICE REGARDING PLANT HEALTH LEGISLATION POST BREXIT

The European Commission (EC) has published a notice stating that, as of the UK's withdrawal date (30 March 2019), EU plant health legislation in the field of intra-union trade in plants, plant products and other objects will no longer apply to the UK. Unless other arrangements are negotiated in the meantime, this means that, as of the withdrawal date, the introduction of plants, plant products and other objects from the UK into the EU27 will be prohibited, unless they comply with the special requirements set out in certain parts of the Council Directive 2000/29/EC.

You can read the notice in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybd575j7>

ORIGIN RULES FOLLOWING BREXIT

The Food and Drink Federation (FDF) have published a report on the potential effect on UK producers after BREXIT in relation to the EU rules on origin. The FDF observes that UK producers have built supply chains within the EU's Single Market which may fail to comply with future origin requirements.

The report can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8fljmrj>

CUSTOMS ARRANGEMENTS AT UK PORTS AFTER BREXIT

The UK Parliament issued a response to a Parliamentary question raised concerning customs arrangements at UK ports following Brexit. The Government has set out that in leaving the EU customs union, they will be guided by what delivers the greatest economic advantage to the United Kingdom and by three strategic objectives: continued UK-EU trade that is as frictionless as possible; avoiding a hard border on the island of Ireland; and establishing an independent international trade policy.

The response can be viewed in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9j4dpaj>

IMPACT OF BREXIT ON PRICE AND AVAILABILITY OF FOOD DISCUSSED

The UK Parliament EU Energy and Environment Sub-Committee have held discussions with the Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food regarding the possible impact of Brexit on the availability and price of food.

Members asked the Minister of State (Defra) what potential impact leaving the EU could have on the price and availability of food for UK consumers. Other areas covered included:

- What benefits Brexit could have for food prices and availability
- Whether the UK could produce more of its own food
- The risks and benefits of importing more food from non-EU countries
- Future tariffs on importing food from the EU
- The impact of additional border and customs checks
- Whether Brexit could increase food inequality

Further detail can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8mjctx9>

LATEST EVIDENCE PUBLISHED IN INQUIRY ON TRADE IN SUGAR POST-BREXIT

The House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee published on 13 March 2018 the latest evidence in an inquiry on trade in sugar post-Brexit. The inquiry examines how the sugar industry will be affected by Brexit and the options for an optimal trade policy surrounding sugar following-Brexit.

More detail, including the latest written evidence can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8sffg3e>

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

SCOTTISH FOOD MANUFACTURERS TO RECEIVE £250K GRANT

Manufacturers in Scotland are to benefit from a £250,000 grant made available by the Scottish government to support locally produced food and drink.

Small grants of £5,000 will be given to local food and drink producers, as well as regional food and drink networks, which traditionally have found it hard to attract funding.

The fund will be open to applicants in May and will be overseen by Scotland Food & Drink.

Rural secretary Fergus Ewing said promoting locally sourced and locally produced food was one of the Scottish government's key commitments.

"The success of those producers then helps to bolster regional economies and ensures that local food and drink continues to be produced in the area it originates from – which can be integral to a product's identity. Given the continuing lack of clarification from the UK Government regarding our position with those international trading partners, post-Brexit, it's more important than ever that we ensure a robust market at home for our regional food and drink producers" he said.

NEW MEASURES TO HELP FARMERS AND GROWERS

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) have announced a 'collaboration fund' of up to £10 million as part of a series of measures to help farmers and small producers compete and thrive alongside larger businesses in the food supply chain.



The fund will be designed in consultation with the farming industry and will work by bringing together those interested in co-operation. The groups will be supported by the funding to formally establish, develop or expand, so that farmers and growers can take advantage of new market opportunities to help their businesses thrive.

You can read more about the collaboration fund in the government press release here: <https://tinyurl.com/yaqagczr>

FSS TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR PUPILS TO GAIN FOOD SAFETY QUALIFICATION

Food Standards Scotland is providing £50,000 to match the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland's (REHIS) contribution to expand the delivery of the Elementary Food Hygiene Course. This will provide up to 10,000 secondary school pupils with the resources to complete the training in 2018.

This will be the fourth year of support from Food Standards Scotland which has allowed nearly 40,000 pupils to gain skills and knowledge to apply food hygiene in a catering or hospitality setting.

The REHIS Schools Food Hygiene Initiative is available to all secondary schools in Scotland for pupils aged between 13 and 18. It provides pupils with a national qualification, which will be of use to them and future employers, and helps Scotland meet the SQA Curriculum for Excellence, Health and Wellbeing (Food and Health) experiences and outcomes.

Elsbeth Macdonald, Food Standards Scotland's Deputy Chief Executive, said: "The REHIS Food Hygiene Course is invaluable for anyone in - or aspiring to be in - catering and hospitality. We are delighted to continue supporting Scotland's school pupils in obtaining this qualification which will serve them well in future, whether they are providing safe food in the home or within the food and drink industry."

LEATHERHEAD AWARDED UKAS ACCREDITATIONS

Leatherhead Food Research has been awarded UKAS accreditation for the evaluation of challenge testing, including inoculation of specified organisms, specified storage and recovery of specific organisms; and has added microwave ovens to its UKAS-accredited cooking instruction techniques.

In a recent press release, Chris Wells, MD of Leatherhead said "Challenge testing is a powerful tool providing scientific evidence of food safety. Developing safe and nutritious products is the overarching goal shared by all of our members and clients. UKAS assessments are known for their rigour, so this accreditation gives added assurance that our offering meets the highest standards".

In 2017, Leatherhead became the first and only provider of UKAS accredited cooking instructions techniques. The latest addition means that they are now UKAS accredited for testing in microwave ovens, gas and electric thermal ovens, electric fan ovens, gas and electric hobs, gas and electric grills and deep fat fryers.

You can read the press release in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9hxefln>

FOOD SAFETY AND ZOOSES

EFSA REPORT ON LIKELY SOURCE OF LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES OUTBREAK

On 22 March 2018, the European Food Safety Authority issued a Report on a multicountry outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* which has affected Austria, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and the UK.

Since Dec 2015, *L. monocytogenes* serogroup IVb, multi-locus sequence type 6 (MLST 6) has been associated with 32 cases across Finland, Austria, Denmark, Sweden and the UK resulting in a total of six deaths. Four EU Member States reported seven new confirmed cases since the last European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) assessment in December, two of which were fatal. Fifteen cases were detected from different parts of Finland between 2016 and 2018 and the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) in Finland said one MLST6-case reported eating unheated frozen corn. It therefore recommended people who fall into listeriosis risk groups should heat all frozen vegetables as cooking at temperatures higher than 65°C would kill the bacteria.



The rapid outbreak assessment concluded that frozen corn is the likely source of the outbreak. Investigations point towards frozen corn packed in Poland and processed and produced in Hungary. The report recommends further investigations to identify the exact point of contamination in the food chain.

Food business operators in Poland, Finland, Sweden and Estonia have withdrawn and recalled the implicated products. Of course, until the root source of contamination is established and control measures implemented, new cases may occur as the listeriosis incubation period is long (up to 70 days), frozen corn has a long shelf-life and product bought before the recall may still be consumed.

More information and a link to the report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y88uz6m7>

LISTERIA IN SOUTH AFRICA UPDATE

The manufacturer of Tiger Brands products has 'refused to take responsibility' for an outbreak of listeriosis in South Africa, saying that consumer safety was of 'paramount importance' to the company. It does admit that, in February, 'low levels' of Listeria were detected at the Enterprise food production facility in Polokwane, but says that the affected products were quarantined and production halted. More than 900 cases of Listeria have been reported, with 180 deaths. Tiger Brands has said that there is 'no direct link or correlation' between its products and the deaths but has recalled all its ready-to-eat meat products from stores.

Share price in the company saw a 7% drop in the wake of the announcement, although it is reported to have made some recovery. BBC News reports that several African states have banned processed meats from South Africa, following a link between polony and the outbreak of listeriosis. Supermarkets Shoprite, Pick n Pay, Spar and Woolworths have removed polony from their shelves, along with bacon, sausages and other processed meat products. However, it is still unclear as to what will happen to the recalled products. It is thought that they will be collected up and incinerated to prevent further health hazards.

Tiger Brands is awaiting results of its own tests but the Department of Health has blamed the company for a delay in the investigation. Since the outbreak began, food companies have been asked to submit samples of their products for testing, but 'there was nothing forcing them to do so'.

FSA INVITES USERS TO TEST NEW WEBSITE

The FSA have issued an invitation for users to test its new, developing website. The FSA is keen to receive feedback on their work so far, with their aim being to make information easier to find and the website easier to use.

Over the past year the FSA has been working to:

- Redesign the website to be more engaging and easier to use.
- Overhaul the consumer and business guidance so that key information can be found.
- Develop a new contact service, so that queries/reports get to the right team/department.
- Develop a new food and allergy alerts service.
- Build the website so that it works on a phone, tablet or computer.
- Launch the new Food Hygiene Rating service later in the year – the system will make it faster for consumers to find the FHRS rating of a business, and also help businesses display their food hygiene rating on their own websites and apps.

Further detail including a link to test the website can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybx4t7hv>

REPORT OF UK NATIONAL CO-ORDINATED FOOD STANDARDS SAMPLING PROGRAMME

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have recently published a summary report of the findings of the National Co-ordinated Food Standards Sampling Programme for 2016-17. 2016/17 priorities included meat country of origin labelling, allergens, meat speciation, counterfeit wines and spirits, food supplements and various chemical contaminants.

2,857 food samples were taken as part of the sampling programme. In addition to priorities that are identified at the beginning of each sampling programme, some are considered in the year as the need arises. These are typically prompted by incidents and by intelligence on emerging risks and for developing policy. The samples taken over the years have been targeted at areas of known or suspected risk. Samples have also been taken to provide data for policy negotiations at EC meetings, to inform the UK position.

The FSA has invested approximately £9.5million in supporting Enforcement Authorities (EAs) to undertake risk-based sampling and surveillance of food over the past 6 years, which covered the costs of sample collection and analysis. The programme has contributed to the FSA's Strategic Outcome that 'Food is safe and what it says it is'.

You can find the summary report here: <https://tinyurl.com/y73x58hr>



FSA AND FSS REVIEW OF MEAT PROCESSING PLANTS

In the wake of non-compliance issues identified at various meat cutting plants the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Food Standards Scotland announced on 1st March 2018 that they would be undertaking an industry wide review of meat cutting premises and cold stores. The review encompasses:

- Legislative framework and guidance;
- Policy, procedures, and process relating to delivery of official controls;
- Respective roles and responsibilities of all actors in the meat supply chain - including all food businesses, regulators, assurance and standards bodies;
- End to end process from approval to withdrawal – whole food chain approach; and
- Incidents management process

Members of the BFFF Major Incident MIG have been kept up to date regarding these investigations. If you haven't joined already then just drop Denise an email to ensure you receive the latest information as it released on Deniserion@bff.co.uk

FSA WALES PUBLISHES REPORT ON FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) in Wales has published a report on the review of the implementation and operation of the statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and the operation of the appeals system in Wales.

This report, the first of the required three-year reviews, shows that 84% of food businesses are displaying their food hygiene rating. This is compared to just 21% in 2012. It also reveals that 65% of food businesses now have the highest food rating of 5 which is "very good". Research findings provide evidence that since the introduction of the Scheme, recognition amongst consumers has continued to rise, from 43% in 2012 to 89% in 2017.

You can view the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7ubckg3>

FURTHER REDUCTION IN CAMPYLOBACTER LEVELS

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have published details of the results on Campylobacter testing by the top nine retailers across the UK (covering October to December 2017) which shows a further reduction in the levels of contamination.

The figures show that on average, across the market, 4.5% of chickens tested positive for the highest level of contamination (>1000 colony forming units per gram) compared with 5.14% for the previous quarter (July-Sept 2017). This is also consistent with previous research which shows a lower level of contamination over the cooler months of the year.

The full detail of the testing can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9x7vlf4>



FSA MARCH BOARD MEETING AGENDA AND PAPERS ISSUED

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) published on 2nd March 2018 the agenda and papers for the open board meeting which was held 14 March 2018. Amongst the topics for discussion were:

- an update on the FSA's science work
- the FSA Science Council Chair's report
- the Raw drinking milk (RDM) programme
- the FSA's international strategy

All the documents can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/ydyk5ts3>

EFSA GUIDANCE ON REPORTING ZOOSES DATA

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have recently published Guidelines for reporting 2017 prevalence sample-based data in accordance with SSD2 data model. These guidelines are specifically aimed at guiding the reporting of information under the framework of Directive 2003/99/EC. Directive 2003/99/EC lays down the EU system for monitoring and reporting of zoonoses and zoonotic agents in the EU Member States.

The guidelines can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8vrwqrc>

EFSA PUBLISH SUMMARY REPORT ON AMR IN ZONOTIC BACTERIA

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have published an EU Summary Report on antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic and indicator bacteria from humans, animals and food in 2016.

The report highlights some emerging issues and confirms antimicrobial resistance as one of the biggest threats to public health, mainly by reducing the effectiveness of treatment options. Among the new findings, based on data from 2016, are detection of resistance to carbapenems in poultry, an antibiotic which is not authorised for use in animals, and of ESBL-producing Salmonella Kentucky with high resistance to ciprofloxacin in humans, which was reported for the first time in four countries.

The summary report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc2hcyda>

FOOD SECURITY, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

EU MOVES TO BAN 'DUAL FOOD'

The European Commission is moving to make it illegal for manufacturers to sell inferior versions of well-known brands to customers in certain Eastern European countries ('dual foods') and is providing a methodology for testing multinational brands to help identify the real culprits.

This is part of the New Deal for Consumers and will update the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive in order to make explicit that national authorities can assess and address misleading commercial practices involving the marketing of products as being identical in several EU countries if their composition or characteristics are significantly different.

Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, has previously said the EU needs to clamp down on this practice.

"I will not accept that in some parts of Europe, people are sold food of lower quality than in other countries, despite the packaging and branding being identical," he said. "We must now equip national authorities with stronger powers to cut out any illegal practices wherever they exist."

Brussels has also discussed how consumer organisations will also be given the right to launch collective action on behalf of consumers and fines could be increased to up to 4 percent of a company's annual turnover if they have infringed the rights of customers.

DEFRA ANNOUNCE NEW TRACEABILITY LIVESTOCK INFORMATION SERVICE



The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Animal and Plant Health Authority (APHA) have announced the development of a new Livestock Information Service to give farmers and processors accurate information about animals and their movements.

The new service is due to be available from 2019 and will provide the foundation for high quality farm to fork traceability post Brexit. Electronic IDs will allow the identification and tracking of animal movements - initially dairy cows, cattle, sheep, pigs and goats. It will also provide the means for industry and Government to be better-placed to respond in the event of a disease outbreak.

You can read more about the service here: <https://tinyurl.com/ydz9rk39>

EP RESOLUTION ON TRACEABILITY OF FISHERY PRODUCTS IN RESTAURANTS AND RETAIL

The European Parliament resolution of 12th May 2016 on traceability of fishery and aquaculture products in restaurants and retail (2016/2532(RSP)) has been published in the Official Journal of the EU, C76/40 28/02/2018.

The European Parliament calls on the Member States to strengthen national controls, including on non-processed fish for restaurants and the catering sector, in an effort to tackle fraud and identify the stage in the supply chain where fish is mislabelled.

It is concerned by the substitution of high-quality species with lower-quality counterparts and calls on the Commission and the Member States to study what measures could be put in place to improve the traceability of fishery and aquaculture products such as identification of species by DNA sequencing (DNA barcoding). It supports the creation of a working group to harmonise the implementation of traceability in all Member States and the setting-up of an external structure enabling the certification of voluntary claims for fishery and aquaculture products on the EU market. This would support a strong traceability system, from landing to consumption, which would give confidence to consumers and, in turn, decrease commercial dependency on imported fishery and aquaculture products, thereby strengthening the EU market.

You can read the resolution in full detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycfq5t48>

DRAFT IMPLEMENTING REGULATION ON COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING

In January the European Commission published a draft implementing regulation detailing how companies, if they so choose, should label national origins of ingredients in foodstuffs. They proposed that if a Country of Origin of a primary ingredient differs from its given country of origin/place of provenance then it could be stated in one of six ways.

The consultation closed February 1st 2018 with 143 responses received. Feedback can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y87a63mb>

Whilst the general consensus seems to be that it is a step in the right direction there are concerns that it is still too flexible and vague. A number of concerns and uncertainties have been raised for example its voluntary nature, the fact that it still allows use of 'EU', 'non-EU' or 'EU and non-EU' and also that manufacturers would be allowed to decide on geographical level of precision – the regulation would allow for them to simply state that main ingredient originates from another country than the food itself.

The regulation will apply from 1 April 2020 (if adopted). However, foods placed on market or labelled prior to the date of application would be allowed to be marketed until stocks were exhausted.

GLOBAL STANDARDS

FAO HELPS BOLIVIAN FARMERS PRODUCE SUSTAINABLE COCOA

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is helping Bolivian farmers produce sustainable cocoa. The UN agency is supporting a cooperative in the country that includes 48 members and 1,300 producers. It provides technical support, facilitates access to new markets and brokers agreements with the Bolivian government to protect the interests of small cocoa farmers.

Farmers grow an estimated 70% of total organic cocoa cultivated in Bolivia and the FAO is working with a community of Andean people in Alto Beni that cultivate one of the main cocoa varieties called Criollo. The Criollo tree is native to Central and South America, the Caribbean islands and Sri Lanka. However, only 5% of the world's production is Criollo.

Once cocoa is collected, it is transported across the Andes to the factory of El Ceibo in El Alto where it is transformed into cacao powder, cocoa butter and chocolate.

Small-holder farmers plant about three or four hectares of land with cocoa seeds, while the rest (seven-eight hectares) is cultivated with rice, yucca, bananas, citrus fruits, coffee and other local products, that are then sold at local markets. However, droughts, floods, extreme humidity and new plant diseases like Monilia fungus, are threatening production of cocoa and livelihoods of farmers in the Alto Beni region.

The cooperative invests in the Agro-Ecological and Forest Implementations Program (PIAF), the technical arm of the cooperative. This program looks for sustainable and environmentally friendly solutions to diseases and challenges threatening local cocoa production and trains producers and helps them with phytosanitary management of plantations.



ISO UPDATE PRODUCT LABELLING GUIDELINES

The International Organization for Standardisation (ISO) has updated its product labelling guidelines to ensure food information contained in QR codes and RFID technology is made more accessible to the consumer.

ISO has made updates to the International guide ISO/IEC Guide 14 which take into account the emergence of product labelling technology as well as provisions for those who require assistance when inspecting label information. It also pays closer attention to the treatment of sustainability and privacy issues.

As well as QR codes, the ISO/IEC Guide also mentions the increased use of RFID tags by food makers to include product and manufacturer details as well as transmit measured environmental factors such as temperature and relative humidity. It also seeks to add sustainability-related content for recycling purposes as well as the deletion of obsolete content on purchase information bodies and purchase information systems.

The guidelines can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yaba3ksh>

GFSI AND IAF TO ENSURE HARMONISATION OF ACCREDITATION PRACTICES

The International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) are to ensure harmonisation of accreditation practices across GFSI-benchmarked food safety certification programmes.

IAF and GFSI will work together in the improvement of GFSI Benchmarking Requirements and the benchmarking process. It will contribute to the GFSI objective of reducing food safety risks by targeting equivalence between food safety management systems which ensures consumer protection and improves cost efficiency throughout the supply chain.

GFSI and its benchmarked Certification Programme Owners (CPOs) will use the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA). GFSI-recognised CPOs will require certification bodies (CBs) operating in a GFSI benchmarked food safety certification programme to be accredited by a body that has signed the IAF MLA.

IAF members include American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA), United Kingdom Accreditation Service, Comite Francais d'Accreditation (COFRAC) and Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ).

RED TRACTOR LAUNCHES FIRST TV ADS

Red Tractor Assurance (RTA) will launch its first national television advertising campaign later this year to educate customers about food standards.

It is described as a “substantial broadcast advertising campaign” and is scheduled to run in late summer and early autumn, across mainstream terrestrial and digital channels.

The focus will be on educating customers about the standards behind assured food after RTA market research reports showed shoppers were twice as likely to buy a Red Tractor product if they understood more about the standards behind it.

The Red Tractor Research found:

- 80% of primary UK shoppers want to support British farmers
- 69% are aware of the red tractor on-pack logo
- 58% say they are positively influenced by the logo
- 30% would trade up to a red tractor product if they saw the logo.

Red Tractor chief executive Jim Moseley said: “The new campaign will focus on the reassurance that Red Tractor brings to consumers through its rigorous checks against the high standards of British agriculture.”

The campaign will also appear across magazines, on-demand video, websites and social media. The exact dates of when the campaign will air are yet to be confirmed.



CODEX COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS ON CONTAMINANTS IN FOOD

The Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food published on 26th March 2018 comments from the recent 12th meeting of the Committee.

It was felt that good progress was made in some areas, however a key observation was made that when discussing the setting of maximum levels for contaminants there was an increasing pattern of country delegations fixed on their national legislation and unwilling to find a harmonized compromise.

The need for common regulatory standards was stressed to make it easier for global compliance, facilitate international trade for ingredient sourcing, and for producing-countries to manage contaminants in raw ingredients more consistently. Common standards are more effective at reducing global dietary exposure, benefiting consumers in all regions. Aflatoxins in ready-to-eat peanuts was given as a clear example where a common global standard has had significant, realistic benefits globally for producing countries and peanut supply.

The comments can be read in more detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6vsma2w>

FDA RELEASES 2017 FOOD CODE

The United States Food and Drug Administration have now published the 2017 edition of the FDA Food Code, a model regulation that provides all levels of government and industry with practical, science-based guidance and manageable provisions for reducing the known risks of foodborne illness.

The Food Code is a key component of the Federal public-health focused framework for maintaining a safe food supply. It represents FDA's best advice for a uniform system of provisions that address the safety and protection of food offered at retail and in food service, and has been widely adopted by state, local, tribal, and territorial regulatory agencies that regulate restaurants, retail food stores, vending operations and food service operations in schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and child care centres.

The 2017 Food Code provides uniform standards for retail food safety, eliminates redundant processes for establishing food safety criteria, and establishes a more standardised approach in controlling food safety hazards within a retail environment. It reflects the input of regulatory officials, industry, academia, and consumers that participated in the 2016 meeting of the Conference for Food Protection (CFP).

Collaboration with the CFP, the United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA-FSIS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention helps ensure the Food Code contains sound requirements that would prevent foodborne illness and injury and eliminate the most important food safety hazards in retail and foodservice facilities.

You can find more information here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycm7btuw>

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

HCL BRIEFING PAPER ON UK OBESITY STATISTICS

The House of Commons Library (HCL) has prepared a briefing paper on obesity statistics in the UK. It confirms that in England 61% of adults in England are either obese (26%) or overweight but not obese (35%).

It shows that men are more likely than women to be overweight or obese (66% of men, 57% of women) and levels of overweight and obesity are highest among those aged 45-74. The paper also provides statistics on obesity among children in the UK, along with data on prescriptions, surgery and international comparisons.

Click here to download the briefing paper: <https://tinyurl.com/y7uhj27h>



IRELAND'S SUGAR TAX PUSHED BACK TO MAY

The introduction of Ireland's sugar tax which had been due to come into effect on April 6th, close to the introduction of the UK's soft drinks industry levy, has been pushed back to 1st May to ensure that it does not infringe EU state aid law.

In Ireland, the tax is due to use the same two-tier system as the UK levy. For sugar-sweetened drinks with a content of 5 grams sugar or more per 100ml, a tax of 20c per litre will apply; and for drinks with 8 grams sugar or more the rate will be 30c per litre.

PHE PUBLISH LATEST NDNS RESULTS

Public Health England (PHE) has published the figures from the latest National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS), collected from 2014 to 2016.

The new data shows that sugar makes up 13.5% of 4-10 year old children's daily calorie intake and 14.1% of teenagers' (11-18 year olds); the official recommendation is to limit sugar to no more than 5%. The survey also shows that children aged 4-10 consume two-thirds of the amount of sugary drinks they did 8 years ago – down from 130g per day in 2008-2010 to 83g in 2014-2016. Teenagers' sugary drink intake is more than double that of younger children (191g) even though consumption has decreased by 30%; sugary drinks remain the main source of sugar (22%) in their diets.

The survey also confirms that the UK population continues to consume too much saturated fat and not enough fruit, vegetables, and fibre. Average saturated fat intake for adults aged 19-64 is 12.5% of daily calorie intake, above the 11% recommended maximum. Adults consume on average 4.2 portions of fruit and vegetables per day, older adults, aged 65-74 consume 4.3 portions and teenagers consume just 2.7 portions per day. Only 31% of adults (32% of older adults aged 65-74 and 8% of teenagers) meet the 5-A-Day recommendation for fruit and vegetables. Unsurprisingly average fibre intake in adults is thus just 19g per day, well below the recommended 30g per day.

PHE again urged people to follow a healthy balanced diet, based on the Eatwell Guide, which includes eating at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables per day, increasing consumption of oily fish and fibre and limiting the amount food high in saturated fat, sugar and salt. The NDNS can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8paexax> along with the Eatwell Guide which can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/jr8sl4o>

FSS CONCERNED ABOUT FALLING FOLATE LEVELS & LOW FRUIT & VEGETABLE INTAKES

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) responded to the latest NDNS results by expressing concern that they confirm that folate levels are dropping across the population. Over 90% of women of childbearing age in the UK now have a red blood cell folate concentration below the threshold, indicating a higher risk of their babies being born with neural tube defects.

FSS reiterated its call for mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid on a UK-wide basis to help address this drop in folate levels. It also welcomed the UK wide reduction in sugar intake, but added that a "wide-ranging strategy is imperative, with collective action needed from government, industry and individuals, if we are to address the consequences of Scotland's poor diet and rising obesity levels."

THE SOFT DRINKS INDUSTRY LEVY (ENFORCEMENT) REGULATIONS

The Soft Drinks Industry Levy (Enforcement) Regulations 2018, SI 2018, No. 264 were made on 27th February 2018 and come into force on 6th April 2018.

This new levy will apply to the production and importation of soft drinks containing added sugar. Following a public consultation in summer 2016 primary legislation introducing the levy was approved by parliament in the Finance Act 2017. The Regulations concern enforcement in relation to just soft drinks industry levy introduced by Part 2 of the Finance Act 2017. The regulations can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybz94t2q>

RESEARCH REGARDING ADULT RECOMMENDED DAILY CALORIE INTAKE IN N. IRELAND

The Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland (FSAI) have published new research which shows fewer men than women in Northern Ireland know their recommended daily calorie intake. According to a survey, only 15% of men in Northern Ireland know their daily calorie intake compared to 44% of women. To help tackle this, the FSA in Northern Ireland has launched a new campaign, 'Know Your Calories', to raise public awareness of the daily calorie recommendation of 2,500 kcal for men and 2,000 kcal for women.

You can read more about the 'Know Your Calories' campaign here: <https://tinyurl.com/yac9ebcv>

PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND PUBLISHES NEW DEFINITION OF 'FREE SUGARS'

Public Health England (PHE) updated on 28th March 2018 their collection of pages on sugar reduction to add a link to a new definition of free sugars which will be used to determine what is an added sugar.

This is following the recommendation from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) in its 2015 report on Carbohydrates and Health that a definition of free sugars should be adopted in order to estimate intakes of free sugars in the National Diet and Nutrition Survey.

The definition of free sugars includes: all added sugars in any form; all sugars naturally present in fruit and vegetable juices, purées and pastes and similar products in which the structure has been broken down; all sugars in drinks (except for dairy-based drinks); and lactose and galactose added as ingredients. The sugars naturally present in milk and dairy products, fresh and most types of processed fruit and vegetables and in cereal grains, nuts and seeds are excluded from the definition.

Members should note, there is little opportunity to debate or modify this definition. The use of the term free sugars has been included in past discussions with PHE in the reduction targets set for the 10 product groups currently engaged in reduction programmes. However, term free sugars is not one of the measures being currently measured. This is likely to change with future reduction programmes proposed by PHE. Thus, it would be useful to review and ask your experts for a view on the definition itself and the difficulties of calculating/measuring for your product groups.

You can find the new definition of Free Sugars here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7xnhj9o>

CALORIE REDUCTION PROGRAMME

Public Health England (PHE) recently announced that it has published a report: calorie reduction: the scope and ambition for action.

This report sets out the evidence on children's calorie consumption and the details of the calorie reduction programme.

In terms of the evidence the report includes details of:

- recommendations around calorie intakes, sources of calories and reported levels of intake
- calculated estimates for daily energy intakes and excess calories consumed by children and adults
- evidence on reformulation and portion size reduction; and public perceptions and attitudes to calories
- estimated health economic benefits of a calorie reduction programme

For the calorie reduction programme, the reports sets out:

- the overall ambition and structure of the programme
- the food categories included
- suggested mechanisms for action
- timeline and next steps for PHE

The products covered by the programme include ready meals, pizzas, meat products, savoury snack products, sauces and dressings, prepared sandwiches, composite salads and other "on the go" foods including meal deals.

It is envisaged that guidelines will be set as sales weighted averages in terms of calories per 100g of product as well as calorie or portion size guidelines for products likely to be consumed by an individual at one time. These are both likely to be set across broad product categories as has been done for the sugar reduction programme.

PHE will start working towards setting specific guidelines for the product categories included in the programme from April 2018. The aim is to publish the guidelines mid-2019 alongside a detailed analysis of baseline levels of calories in different food categories for different sectors of the food industry in the baseline year ending August 2017.

The report can be viewed in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycbxz2g8>



IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

FOOD FIRMS URGED TO LOOK OUTSIDE EUROPE TO EXPORT

Speaking at a recent dinner hosted by port operator Peel Ports Group and attended by 50 north-west food and drink producers the Department of International Trade (DIT) and the Welsh government stated that UK food and drink producers should expand trade beyond Europe and focus on shipping goods to the US and Asia.

The DIT suggested the Port of Liverpool could become the gateway to lucrative export markets for thousands of manufacturers. More than £22bn of food and drink products were shipped around the world last year and over £1.7bn from the north west alone.

Logistics group Atlantic Container Line (ACL) said the port of Liverpool had been instrumental in growing the UK's export levels in recent years. David Shaw, GM corporate documentation at ACL, said: "Eighty per cent of our transatlantic trade arriving by road comes from within an 80-mile radius of Liverpool, which really shows the density of producers in the north of England and their export potential."

INDEPENDENT CHIEF INSPECTOR OF BORDERS PUBLISHES REVISED INSPECTION PLAN

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders, David Bolt has published an updated version of his 3-Year Inspection Plan (2017-18 – 2019-20) which shows what, as at April 2018, he intends to inspect in 2018-19 and in 2019-20. Note: as David Bolt will complete his 5-year appointment as Independent Chief Inspector in April 2020 he has not included a new Year 3 (2020-21), as that will be for his successor to devise and own.

First introduced in 2016, the plan aims to provide a better sense of the overall shape and range of the Inspectorate's work programme, to show how planned inspections fitted together thematically, and to signpost when particular topics would be examined.

A space has been created within the Plan for various 'Brexit'-related pieces of work, the precise shape and timing of which are not yet fixed.

The Plan also assumes that the Inspectorate will be at or near full strength throughout the period. Staff turnover, which affects the Inspectorate as much as the areas it inspects, means this is not a given. According to Mr Bolt, over the next two years, the Inspectorate will need to continue to recruit, train and develop high-calibre and committed individuals capable of carrying out rigorous and impartial inspections and producing constructive, evidence-based reports and recommendations.

IRISH EXPORTERS COULD BYPASS THE UK TO SHIP DIRECTLY TO EUROPE

Irish meat and livestock exporters could soon bypass the UK by shipping products directly to continental Europe, in a bid to avoid increased costs and customs checks at British ports, once the UK leaves the European Union (EU).

According to the Irish Exporters Association (IEA), around 67% of Irish exporters currently make use of the UK land-bridge to access continental markets. According to data compiled by Meat Industry Ireland (MII), for Irish meat exports, this figure rises to over 90%.

However, Brexit has raised concerns that this route may become unviable. A survey by the IEA in March last year found that 57% of Irish exporters would consider shipping directly to Benelux or other continental ports, if transit times or costs of going through the UK increase.

It remains unclear what customs arrangements will be put in place between Ireland and the UK post-Brexit, although the UK's Department for Exiting the European Union stressed that nothing will change during the implementation period through December 2020, following the official Brexit date of 29th March 2019.

Freight companies have been quick to offer alternatives for Irish exporters looking to boost direct trade with Europe. Irish Continental Group (ICG), which operates Irish Ferries, will bring its new cruise ferry, the WB Yeats, into service between Dublin and the French port of Cherbourg in July this year, with 2,800 lane metres of freight capacity – enough to accommodate 165 freight vehicles.

Meanwhile, CLdN, a Luxembourg-based shipping company, introduced a new freight ferry to Europe, the MV Celine, with a capacity of 8,000 lane metres, which began operating between Dublin, the Belgian port of Zeebrugge and the Dutch port of Rotterdam, in October 2017.

GUIDANCE ON IMPORTING PLANTS, FRUIT, VEGETABLES OR PLANT MATERIAL TO THE UK

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Animal and Plant Health Authority (APHA) have issued updated guidance on importing plants, fruit, vegetables or plant material to the UK. The points of entry section has been updated to remove information on arrivals outside working hours due to new fees that came into force on 6 April 2018.

The updated guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/oj1h3e7>

ICELAND FAILS IN OBLIGATIONS CONCERNING VETERINARY CHECKS

The Judgment of the Court of 14 November 2017 in Joined Cases E-2/17 and E-3/17, EFTA Surveillance Authority v Iceland (Directive 89/662/EEC — Veterinary checks — Import restrictions — Raw and processed meat, egg and milk) was published in the Official Journal of the EU, C97/9, 15/03/2018.

The judgement found that Iceland has failed in its obligations concerning veterinary checks in intra-community trade with imports of fresh meat and meat products, raw eggs and egg products, unpasteurised milk, and milk products.

You can read the Judgement in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y86lswlj>

REGULATORY

SEA FISH (MARKETING STANDARDS) (ENGLAND, WALES & N. I.) REGULATIONS 2018

The Sea Fish (Marketing Standards) (England and Wales and Northern Ireland) Regulations 2018 (2018 No 437) were laid before Parliament on 28 March 2018 and come into force on 30 April 2018.

These Regulations introduce enforcement provisions for the marketing standards of fish and aquaculture products, which are outlined in Regulation (EU) 1379/2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products (“the CMO regulation”) and its accompanying implementing legislation.

The Regulations ensure that marketed fish complies with the relevant EU standards and provides for appropriate enforcement procedures and penalties at the national level.

The regulations can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7p8q67k>

UPDATES TO FOOD AND FEED LAW GUIDES 2018

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have published an update to their Food and Feed Guide which is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7chj8lf>

The Food and Feed Law Guide is produced by the FSA as a reference tool for food and feed legislation applicable in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Food Standards Scotland publishes its own food and feed law guide for Scotland and that is also available to download here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6uqgzhz>

FSA UPDATE TO ENFORCEMENT MONITORING GUIDANCE

The Food Standards Agency has updated the Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System Guidance (January 2018).

The Step-by-step guidance shows local authorities how to use the Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS), including uploading data, the delivery process and mapping of local authority activity/product/premises codes to the required Food Standards Agency (FSA) monitoring categories, making adjustments and identifying errors.

The guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybewcycq3>



GOVERNMENT CHEMIST PUBLISHES LATEST LEGISLATION REVIEW

The Government Chemist has recently published the third quarterly report providing information and updates on UK food and feed law and related scientific and regulatory issues from October to December 2017.

The main issues which cut across multiple areas are concerned with UK exiting the EU, a proposal endorsed by the FSA for a formal review of the UK official control laboratory system in its entirety, and new information from Codex and FAO.

The report covers a wide range of updates in technical areas. Developments in control of acrylamide content, undesirable substances in animal feed, endocrine-disrupting chemicals, and food additives are also covered. In the food hygiene area, developments about the suitability of raw eggs in food for susceptible groups are discussed.

Other topics where legislation has been updated or reviewed are for marine biotoxins, control of mercury, organic food, products of animal origin, psychoactive substances and radioactivity.

The report can be read in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y82lvvu8>

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT & CSR

DEFRA ANNOUNCE DEPOSIT SCHEME FOR SINGLE-USE DRINKS CONTAINERS

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have announced that a deposit return scheme to increase recycling rates will be introduced, subject to consultation, later this year.

The scheme will cover single-use drinks containers (plastic, glass or metal) and the consultation will look at the details of how such a scheme would work, alongside other measures to increase recycling rates. The consultation will follow the recent call for evidence by HM Treasury on taxes and charges to reduce waste from single-use plastics, so that all relevant findings can be fed into the proposals.

Similar schemes already operate in countries such as Denmark, Sweden and Germany. A deposit return scheme sees consumers pay an up-front deposit when they buy a drink, ranging from 8p in Sweden to 22p in Germany, which is redeemed on return of the empty drink container. Possible variants of a deposit return scheme include cash rewards for returning drinks containers without an upfront deposit.

This is often done through a network of 'reverse vending machines', where you insert your plastic or glass bottle or can and the machine returns your money. Once a bottle is returned, businesses are then responsible for making sure they are effectively recycled – a move that has led to a 97% recycling rate in Germany.

Plastic bottles and drinks containers have a significant impact on the environment, with discarded food and drink containers making up at least a fifth of rubbish on beaches. There are over 150 million tonnes of plastic in the world's oceans and every year one million birds and over 100,000 sea mammals die from eating and getting tangled in plastic waste.

The consultation will take into account views from producers, suppliers and consumers to ensure that any system introduced works across the country. The consultation will sit alongside a package of wider reforms of the current packaging waste system, which will incentivise producers to take greater responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products and to increase the amount of packaging they recycle.

WRAP PUBLISH COURTAULD WATER AMBITION 2025 COMMITMENT

The impact on the environment of producing food and drink, both in the UK and overseas, will be reduced under a new Water Ambition launched by sustainability experts WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme), in partnership with WWF and the Rivers Trust, as part of Courtauld Commitment 2025.

Announced on World Water Day, the Ambition has the backing of signatories to WRAP's ten-year Courtauld Commitment 2025 voluntary agreement, including major UK retailers, food and drink manufacturers & brands, businesses from within the hospitality & food service sector and trade bodies. These include ABP Food Group, Bidfood, Coca-Cola GB, the Co-op, M&S, Nestlé, Sainsbury's and Tesco.

The Courtauld Commitment 2025 Water Ambition will see UK businesses act within their own operations, and collectively in food sourcing areas, to tackle water stress and improve water efficiency.

You can read more about this new commitment here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybuc2l65>

3/4 OF CONSUMERS LIKELY TO RETURN PLASTIC BOTTLES & ALUMINIUM CANS

Nearly three quarters of British consumers (74%) would be likely to return plastic bottles and aluminium cans under a deposit return scheme (DRS) if they had to pay a deposit of just 10p on each one, according to the results of a recent national poll by YouGov.

The results of the report suggest a national DRS could be successful – where consumers pay a deposit on a recyclable container (like bottled water or soft drinks cans) and redeem it when they take the container to a secure collection point. It's hoped such a scheme would boost recycling rates, reduce recycling contamination and reduce litter.

The poll, commissioned by SUEZ, surveyed over 2,000 adults across Britain and also found that 80% of people believe there should be more public recycling bins to use in the public areas near to where they live, while only around a quarter of people said they could either “always” or “often” find a suitable recycling bin for plastic bottles (26%) or aluminium cans (25%) when they are out and about.

Nearly 40% (39%) of people admitted that they are most likely to simply put plastic bottles or cans into a general rubbish bin – where they are destined for landfill or incineration – if a suitable public recycling bin isn't handy when they are out and about.

The results of the poll were released alongside the findings of a report by national recycling company SUEZ, which suggests the most effective deposit return scheme (DRS) for Britain should only target “on-the-go” sized plastic bottles and aluminium cans to yield the best returns; have the maximum impact on litter prevention; and not risk undermining existing collection schemes.

SUEZ says the evidence provided in the report reinforces its position that the ideal deposit return scheme would:

- only target plastic (PET) bottles and aluminium cans smaller than 0.7 litres, which are typically consumed while “on-the-go” instead of at home and are a more significant cause of litter than larger bottles – with a refundable deposit of 10 pence per container
- be owned/operated by manufacturers, but provide the opportunity for local authorities to generate new revenue streams by operating redemption points and local logistics. SUEZ believes a range of secure, public redemption points is needed – not just reverse-vending machines
- would not leave local authorities out of pocket by “cannibalising” the more valuable materials (like plastic and aluminium) from existing, effective, household collection services
- allow consumers to donate their deposits to other causes or organisations, rather than redeeming them as cash – which would likely be effective at generating significant revenue for good causes suggested by the results of the YouGov poll
- only be one part of a much wider system of Extended Producer Responsibility, which would use a range of tools – such as taxation on virgin materials or incentives to use recyclable materials – to drive long-term sustainable production and consumption of goods.

The report concludes that a DRS scheme has the potential to increase recycling rates to more than 80% for both plastic bottles and aluminium cans, and that the overall value of deposits in the scheme could be over £1bn between the two materials.

David Palmer-Jones, Chief Executive Officer for SUEZ recycling and recovery UK said: “We believe bringing manufacturers and consumers together under a deposit return scheme will help the nation recycle more bottles and cans, at the same time as reducing litter and improving the cleanliness and quality of materials returned to manufacturers.”



ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT COMMITTEE CONTINUES NITRATE ENQUIRY

The UK Parliament Commons Select Committee published on 21st March 2018 news that the Environmental Audit Committee continues its inquiry into nitrate. The Committee was scheduled to hear from the Environment Agency on 21st March on the government's commitments and performance on reducing nitrate pollution and on its plans for the enforcement regime post EU-exit, including how cross-border pollution will be handled.

More detail can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc5ydx7>

BRC, WWF & SEAFOOD ALLIANCE STATEMENT ON MONITORING OF UK FISHING ACTIVITIES

Robust fisheries regulations must be adopted and implemented effectively after leaving the European Union according to a coalition of 17 supermarkets, processors and industry groups as the Government prepares new fisheries legislation.

The 17 signatories are: Asda, BirdsEye, British Retail Consortium, Co-op, Direct Seafoods, Joseph Robertson, Lidl UK, Lyons Seafoods, M&S, Morrisons, New England Seafood, Sainsbury's, Seachill, Tesco, UK Seafood Industry Alliance, Waitrose and Young's.

The current regulations and new Fisheries Bill must deliver confidence that UK seafood is sustainably and legally sourced. The group also called on UK and devolved Governments to include strong monitoring measures in the new Fisheries Bill to ensure that there is more visibility of what is happening on our fishing boats. Currently, around only 1% of UK fishing activities are comprehensively monitored at sea.

The UK Government recently reasserted its commitment to eliminating the wasteful practice of discarding dead or dying fish at sea in the 25 Year Environment Plan. The 'Landing Obligation' or 'discard ban' comes into full effect next January. However, the 17 signatories to the statement say UK Governments can do more to ensure the fishing industry is prepared to properly implement this regulation.

Further efforts are required to achieve effective uptake of currently available technology and behaviour that can improve selectivity which will allow fishing vessels to avoid species for which they have no or limited quota. In addition, improved measures are needed to provide better access to quota for such species. The alternative is to have vessels stop fishing when they exhaust their quota for so called "choke" species and that is economically unacceptable.

The signatories call for:

- Changes in fishing methods and gear to ensure more selective targeting of commercial fish species
- Improved monitoring of fishing boats, for example through technologies such as remote electronic monitoring, leading to fully documented fisheries
- Reviewing how fishing quotas can be better managed to address the problem of discarding.

ICELAND FOODS BECOME FIRST UK RETAILER TO BAN USE OF PALM OIL

Iceland Foods have become the first UK supermarket to ban palm oil from its own label products in a bid to guarantee those products are not contributing to deforestation.

Palm Oil is used in everything from lipstick to soap, toothpaste to chocolate. However, deforestation to make way for palm oil plantations in Indonesia and Malaysia destroys the habitats of orangutans. Recent studies show Bornean orangutan numbers more than halved between 1999 and 2015 with the loss of more than 100,000 individuals. All three species – Bornean, Sumatran and even the recently discovered Tanpanuli orangutan – are critically endangered.

In 2010 some of the biggest consumer goods companies in the world pledged to end their role in deforestation for palm oil. They promised to ensure that by 2020 they would not be getting their palm oil from producers that destroyed rainforests. According to Greenpeace however, they are far from achieving this.

MEPS BACK PLANS TO BOOST RECYCLING AND CUT LANDFILLING

The European Parliament published a press release following negotiations with the Council by MEPs to back plans to boost recycling and cut land fill.

The plans state that by 2025, at least 55% of municipal waste (from households and businesses) should be recycled. The target will rise to 60% by 2030 and 65% by 2035. 65% of packaging materials will have to be recycled by 2025, and 70% by 2030.

Separate targets are set for specific packaging materials, such as paper and cardboard, plastics, glass, metal and wood.

The full press release can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y9k773nu>



TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH

NEW FOOD PRODUCT SAFETY TEST GETS £57.5K FUND

The Antibody Company has been awarded a fund of £57,500 to investigate a new technique that can check food safety during the food production process.

The Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre (IBioIC) has announced the funding for the new technique, which will model antibodies bound to gold nanoparticles, as part of its Impact Accelerator Competition.

The technique would allow the production of tests that are of a higher accuracy and reduced cost, which could be used to detect issues such as contamination during food production or diseases in animals such as the bluetongue virus (BTV). It would mean testing could be conducted at the production site and results received in a matter of hours, rather than weeks, when samples are sent away to laboratories for testing.

The Antibody Company, a microenterprise based at Biocity Scotland, is to work in partnership with the University of Strathclyde on the initiative. The Antibody Company has also received the funding for six months of a post-doctoral researchers' time.

Eric Wagner, director of The Antibody Company, said: "This technique has the potential to reduce the time taken to detect contamination at all stages of the food production pipeline – not just for specialists, but for stakeholders such as farmers, of all levels of expertise. Potential problems can be identified and therefore dealt with at source in a matter of hours, whereas identification alone could previously have taken as long as multiple weeks."

UK GOVERNMENT REASSURES STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT HORIZON 2020

The Government has published a document about Horizon 2020, the EU's flagship programme for science and innovation.

This document provides an overview of the position for UK applicants following the December 2017 joint report. It also offers assurances about the UK's commitment to underwrite funding and answers questions regarding participation.

The document can be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycycvslq> along with the December 2017 joint report here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc45rdph>

More about Horizon 2020 can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8h1k3dh>



FSA STUDY ON NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR BUSINESS MONITORING

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) announced on 6th March 2018 that it has published a feasibility study on new technology that could be used by Environmental Health Officers to monitor food businesses in real time enabling them to detect food safety problems sooner. The study is part of the FSA's Regulating Our Future (ROF) programme.

The FSA in conjunction with the technology company and Cambridge City Council, completed a three-month trial that saw five businesses in the Cambridge area replace their paper-based food safety management processes with smart apps and manual temperature readings with smart wireless sensors.

All daily compliance checks are recorded using a mobile handset and the results are automatically uploaded to the cloud for storage. Through the cloud-based control centre users can access records remotely, receive alerts on any anomalies and use smart dashboards to track performance.

Further detail, including a link to the feasibility study report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybzmgh2d>

FOOD FRAUD REPORTS

NFCU QUARTERLY BULLETIN

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

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

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

Food Crime Quarterly Bulletin (February 2018 issue): <https://tinyurl.com/yato9pdl>

JRC SUMMARY OF ARTICLES ON FOOD FRAUD AND ADULTERATION

Please find below a link to the latest issued summary from the Joint Research Centre (JRC) on Food Fraud and Adulteration:

<https://tinyurl.com/y72ppr92>

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

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

EU ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EU FOOD FRAUD NETWORK AND THE AAC-AA & AAC-FF

Spain, Germany, Netherlands and Italy made the most fraudulent activity claims last year in a system to deal with fraudulent activities along the agri-food chain.

According to the 2017 annual report of the EU Food Fraud Network and the System for Administrative Assistance and Food Fraud (AAC-AA and AAC-FF) Spain made 52 claims followed by Germany with 26, The Netherlands 23 and Italy 20.

However, only around half of the requests by Spain and Germany and only three of those made by the Netherlands had responses as of last month.

The AAC system is split into two, one dealing with non-compliances classed as fraudulent (AAC-FF) and the other with any other non-compliance (AAC-AA).

In 2017, 178 cases were exchanged in the AAC-FF compared to 156 in 2016. Mislabelling was responsible for 88 cases, replacement/dilution/addition/removal in product for 88, documents 36 and unapproved treatment and/or process 28 cases.

The AAC works on a voluntary basis for cross-border non-compliances. In 2017, a total of 597 cases were exchanged in the AAC-AA. Mislabelling represented 353 cases, replacement/ dilution /addition/removal in product 162; unapproved treatment and/or process 114 and documents 54 cases. Germany (164) and Austria (135) created the most cases in the system for suspected non-compliances regarding food where there is no health risk or indication of food fraud.

Last year 775 cases were reported in the AAC-AA and AAC-FF - a significant jump from the 243 notices in 2016.

The European Commission said numbers show although there is no obligation to use the system, Member States' authorities have embraced it to request information on suspected cases of non-compliance or food fraud from counterparts in other EU countries.

Work is ongoing on the Integrated Management System for Official Control (IMSOC), which will combine current EU-managed IT systems such as TRAdE Control and Expert System (TRACES) and alert systems (RASFF/AAC and EUROPHYT).

You can view the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybk9xt4q>

CONSULTATIONS

Consultation	Purpose	Link	Deadline
Defra - The future for food, farming and the environment	Seeking views on proposals for future agricultural policy in England. Defra have commented that leaving the EU and the CAP would give the UK the chance for reform.	https://tinyurl.com/ycxak7u8	8th May 2018
HMT - Tackling the plastic problem	A call for evidence on using the tax system or charges to address single-use plastic waste. The government would also like to explore how they can also drive innovation.	https://tinyurl.com/ycuj9o6j	18th May 2018
Defra - Consultation on Potential Ban on Live Exports and Animal Welfare during Transport	Seeking views and information on all aspects of animal welfare in transport once the UK has left the EU. Defra are seeking evidence on improving animal welfare in transport, particularly on controlling live animal exports for slaughter, after the UK leaves the EU with the aim of ensuring the welfare in transport regulatory regime reflects scientific and veterinary knowledge.	https://tinyurl.com/yby6lgby	22nd May 2018
FSA - Consultation to Allow Pet Food Production in Food Establishments	Seeking views on a proposal to allow pet food production in food establishments producing food for human consumption. The proposals would allow, under certain criteria to ensure strict separation, the commercial production of pet food from animal by-products (ABPs) in businesses which also produce food for human consumption.	https://tinyurl.com/yamrduxt	30th May 2018
FSA - Consultation on the Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (England) (Amendment) Regulations (England) 2018	Seeking views on the Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.	https://tinyurl.com/ya8bxmuz	4th June 2018
PHE - UK Nutrient Profiling Model for Advertising and Non-Broadcast Media	Consultation on an updated Nutrient Profiling Model, that differentiates which food and drink products can be advertised during children's TV and nonbroadcast media programming. This consultation seeks views on the modifications made to the UK Nutrient Profiling Model, specifically its alignment with current UK dietary recommendations.	https://tinyurl.com/y9xzkf32	15th June 2018
Scottish Government - Consultation on introduction of compulsory CCTV in Scottish slaughterhouses	To seek views on the introduction of compulsory video recording of slaughter at abattoirs in Scotland in order to support the enforcement of welfare requirements by abattoir management and Food Standards Scotland. The paper provides information on the benefits of CCTV as an important complement to official physical observation and verification of practices.	https://tinyurl.com/ybx8lecy	20 June 2018



British Frozen Food Federation Technical & Legislative Expert Group

**Meeting of the Technical and Legislative Expert Group
To be held at 10am on Wednesday 11th April 2018
Belton Woods Hotel, Grantham**

- 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. Guest Speaker - 11.30-12.30pm - Lynne Regent, Chief Executive Officer, The Anaphylaxis Campaign**

Agenda Item 4 – Items for discussion

- 4.1 Allergen Update (no paper)**
- 4.2 L. mono. Outbreak linked to frozen sweetcorn (2018_02_AC, 2018_02_AD)**
- 4.3 Durability date Q+As /meat cutting plants & 2-Sisters investigations (2018_02_V, 2018_02_W, 2018_02_AE)**
- 4.4 Dairy UK paper on protection of dairy terms (2018_02_H)**
- 4.5 Technical Seminar – feedback and next year’s event (no paper)**
- 4.6 Major Incidents MIG update (no paper)**

Agenda Item 5 – Items to discuss if time

- 5.1 MSM – open letter from the Commission (no paper)**
- 5.2 Regulating Our Future (2018_02_O, 2018_02_P, 2018_02_AB)**
- 5.3 Sugars - Consultation on dietary sugars in food (2018_02_R) & PHE definition of free sugars (2018_02_AF)**
- 5.4 Alleged issues with 3rd party accredited labs (2018_02_F)**
- 5.5 BHA Industry Guide to mitigating acrylamide (2018_02_L)**
- 5.6 Voluntary Origin Rules consultation (2018_02_D)**
- 5.7 T&L publication – feedback and ideas for improvement (no paper)**

Agenda Item 6 – Items for Information

- 2018_02_A - Outbreak Assessment Report on Bluetongue virus (BTV-4) in France
- 2018_02_B - Leatherhead white papers
- 2018_02_C / 2018_02_K - Special guarantees concerning Salmonella spp. to broiler meat intended for Denmark
- 2018_02_E - Hygiene business expert group meeting notes
- 2018_02_G - Defra consultations on welfare of pigs & welfare of laying hens
- 2018_02_I - EC stakeholder notice on implications of UKs withdrawal re. Food Law
- 2018_02_J / 2018_02_T - Avian Influenza - latest updates
- 2018_02_M - Suspension of Bureau Veritas lifted
- 2018_02_N - New Bisphenol A regulations and useful Q&A info
- 2018_02_P - Removal of Calcium Sorbate (E 203) from Approved Food Additive List
- 2018_02_Q - Latest research on rodent resistance to anticoagulant rodenticides
- 2018_02_S - Transport of Warm Meat - implementation of requirements delayed
- 2018_02_U - Fitness check on General Food Law Regulation published
- 2018_02_X - Brazilian meat issue update
- 2018_02_Y - FuturePack 2018 conference
- 2018_02_Z – Consultation - Transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment model in the food chain

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
- 7.4 BRC Audit Optimisation Initiative Project – ongoing
- 7.5 GFSI
- 7.6 FRPERC project on Frozen storage of meat
- 7.7 FSA/FSS Efficacy of Withdrawals and Recalls project
- 7.8 WRAP - BFFF engagement
- 7.9 Peas Please Initiative
- 7.10 PA3 relaunch programme – due April through to July
- 7.11 BRC v8 – publication due August

Agenda Item 8 – Contact with other Organisations

- Dods Group - Lucy Singleton, Hannah French
- STS

Agenda Item 9 – Projects

- 9.1 Gold Book – completed and published electronically.
- 9.2 Shelf Life Project – no further progress

Agenda Item 10– Any Other Business

- 10.1 Future Expert Group meetings – Dates, Times, Venues, Formats (Webinars etc)

Agenda Item 11– Guest Speaker

Lynne Regent, Chief Executive Officer, from The Anaphylaxis Campaign

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