

T & L UPDATE

BFFF TECHNICAL AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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British Frozen Food Federation

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FOREWORD

Welcome to the 100th edition of the BFFF Technical and legislative update!

Thank you to all those who have helped build this publication into what it is today – a bi-monthly review of the technical and legislative environment our members operate in. An environment which certainly shows no signs of becoming less complex or easier to operate in!

With a membership base as wide as the BFFF it is always difficult to meet every need, and inevitably some things may not be relevant to you but we hope there is something for everyone and you continue to find it useful for years to come. Please do keep feeding back what more/less you want to see - your feedback is invaluable!

As well as reading the articles, don't forget to have a look at the agenda from the latest Technical Expert Group meeting at the back of this publication. Because it's this group that presents you, as members, the opportunity for immediate feedback on areas of concern/follow-up.

Uniquely, members of this Expert Group represent the whole frozen food supply chain including imports, production, wholesaling and retailing. Coming together on a quarterly basis, the group maintains scrutiny of incoming information regarding legislative and technical developments from the EU, the UK and other sources and also informs and advises the Board to assist with determining Federation policy in technical and legislative areas. They provide expertise, guidance and oversight of BFFF technical and regulatory guidance including our Primary Authority assured advice and their assessment of the impact of forthcoming legislation enables effective lobbying and influence in matters which could otherwise adversely affect members. If you would like a copy of any of the papers mentioned or an update on any of our live open projects just let me know.

Enjoy your read!



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ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

FDE PUBLISHES PRIORITIES FOR THE EU INSTITUTIONS

Food Drink Europe (FDE) recently published policy priorities for the EU Institutions for 2019 – 2024. The publication, entitled ‘Let’s step up to the plate’, outlines in a clear and concise manner the food and drink industry’s key priorities under four pillars, namely:

- For a Single Market with a Purpose
- Feeding Europe’s Economy
- Serving Consumers’ Needs
- Growing Sustainably.



The report focuses on key legislative dossiers and issues on which lawmakers will have either a direct or an indirect influence.

The printed version of the report can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y47ymll5> and an interactive version can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4sejpnw>

UN RECOGNISES UK SCIENCE EXCELLENCE IN SHELLFISH SAFETY

UK expertise and leadership in shellfish safety has been recognised by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) with the designation of the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) as a Reference Centre for Bivalve Mollusc Sanitation.

This is the first time the FAO has designated a Reference Centre in this area, providing a strong and independent recognition of UK expertise and leadership. The Reference Centre will help to support the FAO vision for a globally unified system for shellfish safety, recognising the importance of both wild caught and aquaculture production in global food security and future trade.

Ian Boyd, Defra’s Chief Scientific Advisor said:

‘High standards in animal, environmental and public health depend on continuous vigilance based on the world-leading science carried out by Defra. Formal recognition of reference laboratory status means Defra’s science is among the very best in the world.’

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) works closely with Cefas on shellfish hygiene and supported their application to the FAO. The FAO designation is recognition of the important work Cefas carries out to protect consumers and support the shellfish industry.

Steve Wearne, FSA Director of Science and Vice-Chair of the FAO’s Codex Alimentarius Commission said:

‘Investing in this level of trusted science and research is essential to producing food we can trust. We’re committed to working with Cefas to ensure shellfish is safe and sustainable in the UK and globally.’

The prestigious international designation follows an evaluation of the scientific, technical and policy capability and expertise at Cefas, in addition to a commitment to continued capacity development in this area. The award recognises Cefas as world experts in this area and acknowledges the high scientific standards and years of expertise in the centre. In the letter of award, Mr Árni M. Mathiesen Assistant Director-General, Fisheries and Aquaculture Department praised the scientific and policy standing of Cefas and its commitment to areas relevant to the FAO’s mandate.

Dr Rachel Hartnell, Cefas lead for the new centre said:

‘This is excellent news for Cefas scientists and for UK science in general. Bivalve shellfish play a very important role in global food security but can sometimes pose risks to the consumer. This designation gives us a fantastic platform to work internationally and to use our experience of delivering reference laboratories within the EU, to assist FAO member countries globally with the aim of improving shellfish safety for all.’

EC OFFICIALS CARRY OUT UNANNOUNCED VISITS IN FARMED ATLANTIC SALMON SECTOR

The European Commission recently confirmed that officials had carried out unannounced inspections in several Member States at companies in the farmed Atlantic salmon sector. The Commission has concerns that the inspected companies may have violated EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices (Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). The Commission officials were accompanied by their counterparts from the relevant national competition authorities.

Unannounced inspections are a preliminary investigatory step into suspected anti-competitive practices. The fact that the Commission carries out such inspections does not mean that the companies are guilty of anti-competitive behaviour nor does it prejudice the outcome of the investigation itself. The Commission respects the rights of defence, in particular the right of companies to be heard in antitrust proceedings.

There is no legal deadline to complete inquiries into anti-competitive conduct. Their duration depends on a number of factors, including the complexity of each case, the extent to which the companies concerned co-operate with the Commission and the exercise of the rights of defence.

PROVISIONAL AGREEMENT ON EU CONSUMER PROTECTION RULES ANNOUNCED

The European Parliament recently announced that updates had been provisionally agreed to EU consumer protection rules, to tackle misleading rankings in online marketplaces and dual quality of products. This proposal is part of the “New Deal for Consumers” package and amends four consumer rights’ directives: unfair commercial practices; consumer rights; unfair contract terms; and price indication. The key developments include:

- Transparency rules for online rankings and reviews - meaning online marketplaces and comparison services (e.g. Amazon, eBay, AirBnb, Skyscanner) will have to disclose the main parameters determining how offers resulting from a search query are ranked,
- Significant differences for dual quality products will have to be made clear and visible.
- Penalties for infringements - A maximum lump sum of €2M for penalties (where information on turnover is not available) or at least 4% of the trader’s annual turnover in the previous financial year in the member state(s) concerned.

The provisional agreement still needs to be confirmed by Member States’ ambassadors and the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee. It will then be put to a vote by the full House and submitted for approval to the EU Council of Ministers.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y443o2sg>

COMMISSION UPDATES PLAN AND PROCEDURES FOR FOOD SAFETY CRISIS MANAGEMENT.

The European Commission has adopted a Decision which updates its plan, dating from 2004, and procedures for crisis management in the field of safety of food and feed.

With a view to reinforce the protection of public health in the EU in case of a crisis linked to food or feed, this new General Plan first draws on the lessons learnt from crises in recent years, like E. coli in 2011 or fipronil in 2017, which have shown the need for enhanced coordination between the different authorities at the Union and national levels, as regards the management of cross-border incidents but also the communication around it.

It also takes into account the conclusions of the REFIT evaluation of the GFL Regulation which had flagged in particular the need for a stronger focus on crisis preparedness. The Decision will allow, when necessary, the creation of a “Crisis Unit”.

ADDITIVES, CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS & FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

BEUC CALL FOR EU ACTION OVER ACRYLAMIDE LEVELS

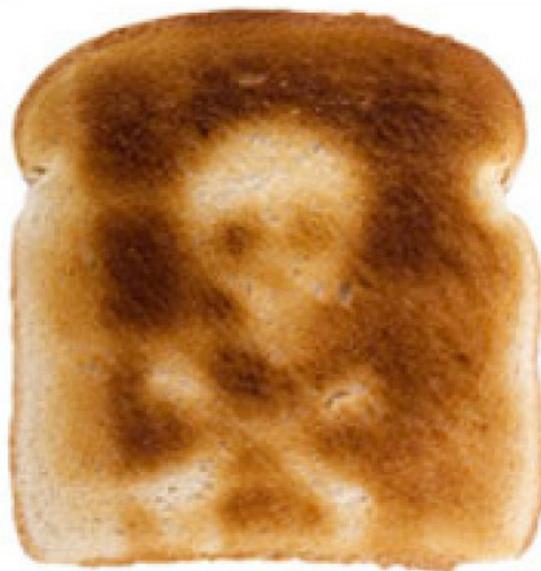
The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) is calling on the Commission to tighten up EU limits on the cancer-causing processing contaminant acrylamide and to make compliance mandatory rather than indicative after tests showed levels remain high in certain foods.

The EU acrylamide regulation has applied since 11 April 2018. It requires food manufacturers, fast-food chains and restaurants to apply measures to ensure acrylamide levels in their products remain below 'benchmarks' set in the law.

In autumn 2018, ten consumer organisations across Europe sampled foodstuffs known to be at risk of containing acrylamide and sent them to an accredited laboratory for analysis. Products tested included potato crisps, vegetable crisps, French fries, biscuits for infants and young children, biscuits and wafers and breakfast cereals. In total, 532 samples were selected and tested (across all countries and food categories).

For most of the food categories tested, results were compliant with the regulatory benchmarks set. However, a third of biscuits and wafers were at or above the benchmark. 13% of baby food products, 7.7% of potato crisps and 6.3% of the biscuits for infants and young children also exceeded the benchmark.

You can read the BEUC letter in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2ltmqxd>



FSS ISSUE SHELLFISH OFFICIAL CONTROL MONITORING REPORT 2018



Food Standards Scotland (FSS) have recently released the annual report on the results of the Shellfish Official Control Monitoring Programmes for Scotland for 2018.

The joint report describes the results of the Scottish Official Control Monitoring Programmes delivered by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and partners, on behalf of FSS, for the period from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

The programmes were aimed at delivering the testing required for the statutory monitoring of biotoxins, Escherichia coli and chemical contaminants in shellfish and for the identification and enumeration of potentially harmful algal species in selected shellfish harvesting areas.

A total of 3,975 shellfish samples and 1,305 water samples were collected of which 254 samples breached the maximum permitted limits (MPL) for lipophilic toxins and all chemical contaminants results were below the regulatory maximum limits

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y489uwwu>

MEDIA REPORTS QUESTIONING USE OF NITRITES CAUSE CONCERN

Concern has been raised over recent reports in the media questioning the role nitrites play in preserving meat.

The reports were based on a partial leak of information from an ongoing study by BMPA members and is part of a wider commitment to challenge and question established practices as well as new innovations. The BMPA member commissioned research aims to assess the degree of inhibition of *C. botulinum* that nitrites can exert in cured meat. The output of this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge and will help to provide new evidence and clarity around the factors contributing to the safety of vacuum and modified atmosphere packaged meat products with regards to the organism.

According to the media reports, the paper concludes that 'The results show that there is no change in levels of inoculated *C. botulinum* over the curing process, which implies that the action of nitrite during curing is not toxic to *C. botulinum* spores at levels of 150 ppm (parts per million) ingoing nitrite and below'.

However, writing for The Grocer, Nick Allen, chief executive of the British Meat Processors Association stressed that 'it is important that the industry maintains an open mind and conducts such research regularly to ensure that we stay on top of new innovations and technologies as well as challenging what we already know. We must also demonstrate our commitment to embracing new research and evidence and our willingness to change where appropriate. Such a rigorous approach sends a strong signal to consumers and should reassure people that British companies produce products to some of the highest standards in the world. It was, therefore, incredibly disappointing to see one of the group of members, who participated in this first round of research, leak selected information to The Observer. It appears that they leaked the parts of the report that they wanted to be made public with the intention, we suspect, of creating a headline that would potentially benefit sales of their product. This has put a dent in the spirit of co-operation among fellow meat industry companies. We can only hope it will not stop the industry working together in the future'.

FDE UPDATE ACRYLAMIDE TOOLBOX

Food Drink Europe (FDE) have recently published an updated acrylamide toolbox, including new scientific and technological developments. The 15th edition of the FDE guidance includes the following key changes:

- A more thorough distinction of the tools applicable for potato-based snacks and those for French fries
- Coffee and coffee substitutes are now two separate categories
- The section on methods of analysis and sampling has been rewritten to further consider issues surrounding measurement uncertainty
- Inclusion of relevant analysis requirements of the recent Commission Regulation and European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) work on methods of analysis for acrylamide in certain foodstuffs
- provision of guidance to correctly implement Commission Regulation (EU) 2017/2158

The toolbox can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5bs8g3a>

A dedicated infographic has also been created to visually demonstrate what acrylamide is and what science says, in combination with the industry's actions. The infographic is available to download here: <https://tinyurl.com/yympkanc>

HSE ISSUE LATEST REPORT ON UK PESTICIDE USAGE ON CROPS

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have recently published a report on pesticide usage on outdoor vegetable crops in the UK in 2017. The report contains information on the application of pesticides during the 2016/2017 growing season which usually runs from September to August.



Vegetables included in the report are: brassicas; root crucifers; peas and beans for harvesting green; onions and leeks; carrots, parsnips and celery; lettuce, endive and radicchio; sweetcorn; other root vegetables; cucurbits; and other vegetables. A total of 618 UK sites were visited which represents 25% of the total area of outdoor vegetables grown.

This was the fourth survey of pesticide usage on outdoor vegetable crops in the UK. Previous surveys were conducted in 2015, 2013 and 2011.

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

DEFRA AND HSE REPORT ON PESTICIDE RESIDUES IN FOOD



The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have recently published the Expert Committee on Pesticides in Food monitoring report for quarter 3 of 2018.

This quarter's programme surveyed 933 samples of 29 different foods. 74 of the samples contained residues above the legal MRL, including beans with pods, beef, berries, Chinese cabbage, game, ginger, grapes, infant food (cereal based), lentils, okra, peppers, potatoes and vine leaves.

A number were for chlorate residues however such residues found in cheese, frozen fruits and smoothie mixes and melon were not considered to be breaches of the legislation and were therefore not highlighted.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/yy9euzmj>

ECJ PUBLISH JUDGEMENTS ON GLYPHOSATE CASE

On 7th March 2019 the European Court of Justice published judgements in Cases T-716/14 and T-329/17 regarding the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) decisions to refuse access to the toxicity and carcinogenicity studies on the active substance glyphosate.

The Court annulled EFSA's decisions and concluded that EFSA cannot argue that the requested studies do not concern actual emissions or the effects of actual emissions. It therefore ruled that the public interest in having access to the information relating to emissions into the environment is specifically to know not only what is, or could be, released into the environment, but also to understand the way in which the environment could be affected by the emissions in question.

In a statement, a spokesman for EFSA said "EFSA welcomes the decision. This case, and the Court's ruling, is important because it provides orientation for EFSA and others charged with interpreting EU legislation on public access to documents."

Glyphosate was developed by Bayer's Monsanto under the brand Roundup. It is now off-patent and marketed worldwide by dozens of other chemical groups including Dow Agrosiences and Germany's BASF. Concerns about its safety were highlighted when a World Health Organization agency concluded in 2015 that it probably causes cancer.

In 2017, President Emmanuel Macron pledged to ban glyphosate in France within three years, rejecting a European Union decision to extend its use for five years.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yb8mmngl>

EFSA ISSUE OPINION ON PROCESS TO RECYCLE PLASTIC INTO FCM'S

The European Food Safety Authority's Panel on Food Contact Materials, Enzymes and Processing Aids (EFSA-CEP) have recently published a Scientific Opinion on the safety assessment of the process 'Jász-Plasztik'. 'Jász-Plasztik' is based on Vacurema Prime technology, which is used to recycle post-consumer poly(ethylene terephthalate) (PET) into food contact materials (FCM's).

It was demonstrated that this recycling process can ensure that the level of migration of potential unknown contaminants into food is below the conservatively modelled migration of 0.1 µg/kg food. Therefore, the Panel concluded that the recycled PET obtained from this process when used up to 100% for the manufacture of materials and articles for contact with all types of foodstuffs for long-term storage at room temperature, with or without hotfill, is not considered of safety concern. Note: trays made of this recycled PET are not covered in the evaluation as they are not intended to be used in microwave and conventional ovens.

You can read the opinion in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6tgkeza>

GUIDANCE ON THE MONITORING OF MINERAL OIL HYDROCARBONS IN FOOD AND FCM'S

The European Commission has published guidance from the Joint research Centre (JRC) on sampling, analysis and data reporting for the monitoring of mineral oil hydrocarbons in food and food contact materials (FCM's).

The guidance is in the context of Commission Recommendation (EU) 2017/84 on the monitoring of mineral oils and sets out the minimum performance requirements of the analytical methods fit for mineral oils monitoring in food and FCM's. It also lists the data elements and content to be reported in the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) database and provides further clarification on the requirements of Regulation (EC) No 333/2007 related to sampling.

The guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yygfsc27>

OPINION ON THE SAFETY OF ANNATTO E

The European Food Safety Authority's Panel on Food Additives and Flavourings (EFSA-FAF) recently published a Scientific Opinion on the safety of annatto E and the exposure to the annatto colouring principles bixin and norbixin (E 160b) when used as a food additive.

The Panel concluded that food colour annatto E does not raise concern for genotoxicity and the ADIs established in 2016 for the two colouring principles, bixin and norbixin, can also be applied to annatto E. Considering the uncertainties and the very likely overestimation of the exposure, the Panel concluded that the level of exposure does not raise a health concern.

You can read the opinion in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y43uj32k>

ALLERGENS

ANAPHYLAXIS CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCES ANAPHYLAXIS AWARENESS WEEK

Join the Anaphylaxis Campaign on 6th -12th May 2019 in making their 25th Anniversary Awareness Week the best ever.

The Anaphylaxis Campaign is celebrating 25 years of supporting people at risk of severe allergies and despite their extensive efforts, there are still thousands of people across the UK who need their help and support and are not aware of the work they do. Help them to reach those people and create greater awareness of Anaphylaxis.

Run, walk, dance, dress-up, bungee-jump, hold a bake-sale, coffee morning, talent contest etc...Choose an event that suits you to raise awareness and funds to help create a safer environment for those with severe allergies.

Email the Anaphylaxis Campaign at fundraising@anaphylaxis.org.uk for a fundraising pack or to make them aware of your event. Or call 01252 893850 for more information.

ALLERGY UK ANNOUNCES ALLERGY AWARENESS WEEK

Allergy UK's spring Allergy Awareness Week will focus on outdoor air quality and will run between the 29th April – 3th May 2019.

The aim is to raise awareness of the impact of poor air quality and the link between poor air quality and allergy. As such Allergy UK will be encouraging the public to get involved in activities such as travelling by public transport to reduce pollution, meal planning an allergen free menu and buying local so as to reduce air miles. They also aim to increase the knowledge and understanding among healthcare professionals as well as promoting better management of allergic conditions.

You can sign up to receive news, information and resources on Allergy Awareness Week 2019 here: <http://bit.ly/2SaFXSQ>

ALLERGY UK WELCOMES NEW POLLERGEN ANNOUNCEMENT

Allergy UK have welcomed the news that scientists could be a step closer to providing more accurate pollen forecasts to those living with allergies. The research project, known as PollerGEN, shows interesting findings about the way in which asthma attacks or intense hay fever could be related to the release of pollen from particular grass species.

Allergy UK's Head of Clinical Services, Amena Warner explained "Grass pollen allergy (hay fever) is a very common allergy that can make the late spring and summer months miserable for those affected. It can be mild, moderate or severe and can be different on different days and apart from staying in all the time, it is very difficult to avoid when outdoors. Medication is the only current way to control the symptoms. Helping us to understand grass pollen species in much more depth is very welcome, particularly if in the future it can be used to provide information to the population affected by grass pollen allergy, that may help them make informed choices about their outdoor environment to be able to enjoy it. Allergy UK was a major supporter of this research and welcomes the study's latest findings. We are looking forward to further findings later this year and the benefits this will bring to those living with hayfever".

The research was led by an interdisciplinary team of scientists from Bangor University, The National Botanic Garden of Wales, Aberystwyth University, University of Exeter, University of New South Wales, Sydney; The University of Queensland, University of Worcester, in collaboration with the UK Met Office, collectively known as PollerGEN and supported by a £1.2 million grant from the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)

You can read more about PollerGEN here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyfr7l46> and more information about hay fever can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6ng52m7>

ANIMAL WELFARE

DEFRA INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) recently published information to help answer stakeholder and public queries on various subjects, including: animal health and welfare; environment; farming and food; fisheries; and EU exit. Contact details for the relevant organisations and sections within Defra are also provided.

You can access the information here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyoeltg8>

APHA LAUNCH NEW ANIMAL DISEASE ALERT SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have launched a new animal disease alert subscription service, to notify subscribers when there is an exotic notifiable animal disease outbreak in Great Britain. This is a new service for sending disease alerts and current subscribers do not need to re-subscribe. Alerts are sent by email or SMS.

More detail can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5vdv2he>



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

DEFRA REPORTS ON TB IN WILDLIFE IN ENGLAND

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have published the latest reports on the TB surveillance in wildlife in England from 2016 to 2018. These documents contain results from the TB surveillance of badgers and other wildlife in England. The 2018 surveillance report from Eastern Cumbria shows that infected badgers were found in the area. These results will be used to inform future control measures in both badgers and cattle in the wider TB Hot Spot area.

In the 2016 surveillance report, infected badgers were found in all areas. Further details on viability of carcasses and genotyping of samples is also contained in this report. Also included is an update on the TB surveillance of 'found-dead' wildlife in eastern Cumbria within the Low Risk Area. Infected badgers have been found in the area and collection of carcasses is still on-going.

You can read the reports in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6sk6j7r>

Defra also published updated information and data on operations to control bovine tuberculosis in parts of England in 2018. Advice on the outcome of supplementary badger control 2018 from Natural England's Chief Scientist and Defra's Chief Veterinary Officer has been added. This updated information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7flo3fc>

SURVEY ON SLAUGHTER METHODS OF FARM ANIMALS



The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have published the results of a survey on slaughter methods used for farm animals in England and Wales between 29 January and 4 February 2018. The survey, conducted by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) on Defra's behalf and the Welsh government revealed the following:

- A total of 19,718,680 animals were slaughtered across 248 operating plants (228 in England and 20 in Wales), with 91% of these being broiler chickens
- 98% of poultry and pigs, 67% of cattle, and 37% of sheep were sourced directly from farms
- For all species, the majority were stunned prior to slaughter
- 85% of broiler meat, 66% of pork and 56% of beef and sheep meat was distributed within the UK
- The most prominent third-party assurance schemes were Red Tractor and British Retail Consortium; and
- At the time of the survey, there were 163 non-UK Certificates of Competence recorded

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5g8xo2q>

EU ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON BETTER CARE OF TRANSPORTED ANIMALS

The European Parliament have announced that the Agriculture Committee has adopted a resolution on the better care of transported animals. In the resolution, MEPs renewed the European Parliament's 2012 call for a strong and uniform enforcement of the 2005 EU law on protecting transported animals, which is currently poorly applied in some EU Member States. Specifically, MEPs would like to see the following actions in relation to animal welfare during transport:

- More unannounced and risk-based checks and tougher penalties for offenders
- Minimised transport time and the transport of carcasses rather than live animals
- Better enforcement of existing rules, with the help of new technology.

The resolution also recommends setting up an inquiry committee on the welfare of animals transported within and outside the EU, to investigate reported ill-treatment of such animals and the lack of enforcement of existing EU rules.

You can read more in the following press release: <https://tinyurl.com/yvzshk2>

BREXIT

NO-DEAL TARIFFS CRITICISED BY INDUSTRY

HM Treasury and the Department for International Trade (DIT) published on 13th March 2019 details of a temporary tariff regime for a no deal Brexit. The communication stresses that the regime is temporary, and the government would monitor the effects of these tariffs on the UK economy. It would apply for up to 12 months while a full consultation and review on a permanent approach to tariffs is undertaken.

In the event of a no deal, the majority (87%) of imports would be eligible for zero-tariff access, but the UK meat sector has been earmarked for protection, with tariffs applied to imports of beef (52% of current EU Most Favoured Nation rate), pork (13%) and poultry (60%). The dairy (32% for butter and 13% for cheddar) and grain (83%) sectors would also have tariffs applied, should there be a no-deal situation.

However, the tariffs have come under some criticism from industry. Food & Drink Federation chief executive Ian Wright said:

“This new system is confusing and complex. It includes some zero tariffs, some new tariffs and some quotas. Some foodstuffs qualify for partial protection and some not for any protection at all; with little logic to explain the difference. New tariffs will apply to some foods that are currently imported tariff-free, yet no tariffs will be applied to goods that cross the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. This is likely to result in massive trade distortions. In a world where it is costly and complex to export finished goods to the EU, and costly and complex to import key ingredients, many food and drink manufacturers who trade with the EU will surely question whether the UK is the right place for them to be.”

National Farmers Union president Minette Batters said:

“Although we are pleased to see that the Government has listened to our concerns and elected to treat many agricultural sectors sensitively, which may support farmers who are already facing disastrous disruption from a no-deal, it is enormously worrying that some sectors will not have this protection – noticeably eggs, cereals, fruit and vegetables. Even those sectors that are treated sensitively will, in most instances, see worrying and large reductions in the tariff rates currently charged on non-EU imports. Furthermore, the approach taken by the Government to lump products under the same high-level tariff code, for example whole carcasses and high-value cuts of fresh beef, means there is a high chance of market distortion for many sectors that are deemed to have been treated sensitively.”



DEFRA PUBLISH INFO ON RECRUITING EU SEASONAL WORKERS AFTER BREXIT

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have published a leaflet and information to help employers recruit EU citizens for seasonal work in farming and food businesses after Brexit.

EU citizens can continue to come to the UK for seasonal work in 2019 and 2020. If there's a deal there will be no change to current arrangements for EU citizens in 2019 and 2020. If there's no deal EU citizens can enter the UK and take up work in 2019 and 2020. EU citizens arriving after 11pm on 31 October 2019, who want to stay for more than 3 months, will need to register for European Temporary Leave to Remain to continue working in the UK

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y65bxmbq>

NEW DIGITAL CATCH CERTIFICATE SERVICE FOR FISH EXPORTERS

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have recently launched a new digital catch certificate service as part of contingency planning for fish exporters in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

Should the UK leave the EU without a deal, UK exporters will be required to obtain a validated catch certificate for most fish and fish products exported to the EU (excluding some aquaculture products, freshwater fish, some molluscs, fish fry or larvae).

Catch certificates prove that fish has been caught in line with established conservation and management measures. All non-EU countries are required to present catch certificates when trading with the EU. To be ready for leaving the EU, fish exporters should familiarise themselves with the new services to generate the necessary export documentation, including:

- catch certificates
- processing statement
- storage document
- prior notification form
- pre-landing declaration

Registering early gives exporters time to test the new service before the UK leaves the EU.

Details on how to register can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y57p9xw3>



ELECTRIC PULSE FISHING AFTER BREXIT

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) announced on 13th February 2019 that EU vessels will no longer be able to carry out electric pulse fishing in UK waters after Brexit. Pulse trawling is a controversial fishing method that uses electrical signals to drive flat fish from the seabed into nets. It has been allowed under an EU derogation since 2006, but the Common Fisheries Policy and Aquaculture (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, will remove this derogation. It will also ensure retained EU law regarding Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and the North Sea multiannual plan, is operable in the UK after EU exit.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y42cd5tg>

FSAI PUBLISHES Q&A'S ON BREXIT

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) have published a Questions and Answers document on Brexit and Food Law in Ireland. The document addresses food legislation issues that are likely to arise in a situation where the UK becomes a third country and will be updated as more information becomes available.

You can access the document here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4p8cmqg>

BRITAIN URGED TO REJECT INADEQUATE US FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS

The US should join the back of a queue for a post-Brexit trade deal if it thinks its “woefully inadequate” and “backward” animal welfare and food safety standards will be accepted in Britain, the former farming minister George Eustice has said. Eustice, a leading Brexit supporter, said signing any deal that allowed a reduction in food standards would be a mistake, as it could “give free trade a bad name”.

His remarks are a rebuttal to Woody Johnson, the US ambassador, who has invited the UK to drop its opposition to certain practices such as the use of hormones in beef and chlorine washes in chicken when considering a trade deal. The issue is a contentious one within the UK government as Michael Gove, the environment secretary, has insisted food and welfare standards will be maintained, but Liam Fox, the trade secretary, has defended the safety of chlorine-washed chicken.

Writing for the Guardian, Eustice said the UK has a “sophisticated and discerning” market for food but agriculture in the US “remains quite backward in many respects”.

“Their livestock sectors often suffer from poor husbandry which leads to more prevalence of disease and a greater reliance on the use of antibiotics,” he said. “Whereas we have a ‘farm to fork’ approach to managing disease and contamination risk throughout the supply chain through good husbandry, the culture in the US is more inclined to simply treat contamination of their meat at the end with a chlorine or similar wash.”

He said the situation in relation to animal welfare was even worse, as “legislation as regards animal welfare is woefully deficient”.

“There are some regulations governing slaughterhouses but they are not as comprehensive as ours,” he said. “As far as on-farm welfare legislation is concerned, there is virtually nothing at all at a federal level and only very weak and patchy animal welfare regulations at a state level, predominantly in the west coast states. There is a general resistance to even acknowledging the existence of sentience in farm animals which is quite extraordinary.”

Eustice said he was strongly supportive of the UK striking trade deals after Brexit but they should demand that suppliers meet British standards, highlighting a Conservative manifesto commitment to do so.

“If the Americans want to be granted privileged access to the UK market, then they will have to learn to abide by British law and British standards, or they can kiss goodbye to any trade deal and join the back of the queue,” he said.

Johnson, who has been ambassador since 2017, stated

“You have been presented with a false choice. Either stick to EU directives, or find yourselves flooded with American food of the lowest quality. Inflammatory and misleading terms like ‘chlorinated chicken’ and ‘hormone beef’ are deployed to cast American farming in the worst possible light.”

Johnson described using chlorine to wash chicken as a “public safety no-brainer” and insisted it was the most effective and economical way of dealing with “potentially lethal” bacteria.

He said the EU was a “museum of agriculture” and its “traditionalist” approach belonged in the past.

CONSULTATION OUTCOME ON THE NUTRITION (AMENDMENT) (EU EXIT) REGULATIONS 2018

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have published the outcome of the consultation on the Nutrition (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018, which was held from 3rd to 14th December 2018.

The analysis of responses showed that respondents supported proposals to mirror the existing regulatory system for this aspect of nutrition legislation after Brexit.

In response to requests for additional detail about how the proposals will work in practice, DHSC have stated that they will publish guidance on this before EU exit day.

You can read the outcome of the consultation in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/yypsvfqt>

REDUCING UK SUGAR CONSUMPTION AS A RESULT OF BREXIT

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) have published details of a Food Research Collaboration briefing, suggesting that Brexit could provide an opportunity to reduce sugar consumption in the UK.

The report argues that, as well as looking to manufacturers and consumers to reduce sugar consumption, attention to sugar supply is also needed. The paper argues that, as Brexit will necessitate new regulations around sugar supply, the government should use this to control the supply of sugar through agriculture and trade policy. Some of the suggestions within the briefing include:

- Encouraging large food and drink manufacturers to use less sugar in individual products and across their portfolio
- Limiting the amount of sugar that can be sold within a given market
- Bringing back a 'minimum price' for sugar, which could be used to promote public health by incrementally raising prices to food and drink manufacturers to encourage reformulation.

You can read more in the recent press release here: <https://tinyurl.com/yx8o3psp>

FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS AFTER THE UK LEAVES THE EU

Food Standards Agency (FSA) Chair Heather Hancock has reassured consumers that food safety standards will not be reduced after the UK leaves the EU. Her comments were made at the FSA's quarterly Board meeting, confirming that the FSA has made the necessary preparations for maintaining protection for public health and consumers wider interests in food.

The Board also confirmed that the FSA had delivered a full and complete replacement regulatory regime for food and feed safety, and that the department is prepared for the immediate demands of EU Exit.

The minutes and a video recording of the board meeting can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/yvgtw2hg>

EMPLOYERS COULD BE EXPECTED TO FOOT BILL FOR EU WORKERS.

Food and drink manufacturers could be expected to foot the bill to keep their EU migrant employees in the country once the UK leaves the EU.

At a review of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra) preparedness for Brexit, Michael Gove was asked whether it was acceptable for migrant workers to have to pay a charge (about £225) required to certify their ability to stay in the UK.

In response, he said: "I would expect that in many cases that it would be the employer to pay. As I've said a number of times before, there are costs to a no-deal exit that all of us need to contemplate."

When asked if Government should be the one to cover these costs, Gove said it wouldn't be possible to cover them in a blanket fashion.

According to Robert Goodwill, minister of state for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the threat of having to pay for this certification could make the UK an even less desirable place for EU migrants to work, with the plummeting pound and negative public reception already turning them away.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

BRCGS ANNOUNCE LEADERS OF TOMORROW LECTURE

The British Retail Consortium Global Standards (BRCGS) Leaders of Tomorrow lecture returns to London on 20th June 2019. The lectures encourage future leaders to realise their full potential and support their professional development within their businesses.

The event provides an exciting opportunity for companies to work with their HR team to bring the company's five most promising and talented colleagues to be inspired. Colleagues who are passionate about developing their careers within the industry.

This year's keynote speaker will be Patricia McGeough, VP Food Safety, Quality, Safety & Environment at Kerry Foods, providing an insight into best practice and her professional journey. Patricia's talk will also be complemented by a motivational session on communication, collaboration and conflict resolution from speaker, trainer and author, Nick Saunders.

More information about the event and details of how to book can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxjrvwme>

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN BEIS AND UKAS

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills published on 14th March 2019 an update to the memorandum of understanding between BEIS and the UK Accreditation Service (UKAS).

The memorandum explains how BEIS and UKAS will work together to maintain and promote a strong national accreditation service in the UK and establishes the terms under which UKAS may operate in the private sector.

It has been updated to reflect the changes of lead signatories and the change of BEIS internal directorate with lead policy responsibility for accreditation, to the Office for Product Safety and Standards.

You will find the updated document here: <https://tinyurl.com/m2rty78>

FRESH CASH BOOST REVEALED FOR WELSH FOOD INDUSTRY

A £22m boost to Welsh food and drink firms has been announced by Welsh minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths.

The new investment will support business growth opportunities and ambitions, propel innovation forward and help firms respond to the challenges raised by Brexit, said trade body Food & Drink Wales.

The Welsh food and farming sector was worth £6.8bn in 2018, with latest export figures showing Welsh food and drink exports were worth £539m in 2018 – up 2% (£10m) on the previous year. Particular growth came from non-EU countries, which delivered £145m of exports during the year, adding £25m to 2017's figure.

The announcement came days after the disclosure that Project HELIX, an initiative to boost innovation and efficiency in the Welsh food and drink industry, has delivered £82m-worth of growth. Using state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities, the scheme has provided technical support and bespoke training to help businesses develop hundreds of new products, innovate, be more productive, improve skills and reduce waste. The innovation scheme is delivered in partnership with three food centres based in Cardiff, Ceredigion and Anglesey as part of Food Innovation Wales.

FOOD SAFETY AND ZOOSES

LATEST CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISER'S REPORT PUBLISHED

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published the latest science report by Chief Scientific Adviser Professor Guy Poppy.

In his eighth report, Professor Poppy looks at how work on data standards aims to make FSA data available and easy to access, ensuring quality data that can be used across the food industry to help keep food safe and protect public health.

Professor Poppy said:

'Here at the FSA we aim to create a strong data culture, strengthening our position as a data enabled organisation. On its own, data is of little value, and only becomes valuable when we can transform it into information and turn that information into action.'

The report outlines how important data standards are to the FSA, the approach to adoption and use, and provides real examples of where deployment of the data standards is making an impact. The report covers three areas:

- Adoption: using recognised standards created and maintained by others, such as using standardised data about climate and weather to inform the FSA's strategic surveillance programme
- Consensus: working with others in the food industry to agree common standards, such as the Collection and Communication of Inspection Results (CCIR) developed with the UK meat industry
- Ownership: setting, managing and maintaining clear, unambiguous data standards for the FSA's work as a regulator, ensuring the effective use of data by the agency and others. An example of this is developing an application programming interface (API) to standardise and increase the reach of our food alerts.

The report can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y53qp2c8>

AMR SHOWS NO SIGNS OF SLOWING DOWN



Data released recently by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) reveal that antimicrobials used to treat diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans, such as campylobacteriosis and salmonellosis, are becoming less effective.

Vytienis Andriukaitis, EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: "The report released should ring, again, alarm bells. It shows that we are entering into a world where more and more common infections become difficult, or even sometimes impossible to treat.

However, ambitious national policies in some countries limiting antimicrobial use have led to a decrease of antimicrobial resistance. So before the alarm bells become a deafening siren, let's make sure that we increasingly act all together, in every country and across the

public health, animal health and environment sectors under the One Health approach umbrella."

According to the report, which refers to 2017 data, resistance to fluoroquinolones (such as ciprofloxacin) is so high in Campylobacter bacteria in some countries that these antimicrobials no longer work for the treatment of severe campylobacteriosis cases.

Most countries reported that Salmonella in humans is increasingly resistant to fluoroquinolones. Multidrug resistance (resistance to three or more antimicrobials) is high in Salmonella found in humans (28.3%) and animals, particularly in *S. Typhimurium*.

In *Campylobacter*, high to extremely high proportions of bacteria were found to be resistant to ciprofloxacin and tetracyclines. However, combined resistance to critically important antimicrobials was low to very low in *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* from humans and animals, and in indicator *E. coli* from animals.

In June 2017, the European Commission adopted the EU One Health Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance, calling for effective action against this threat and recognising that it needs to be tackled in both human health, animal health and the environment. The prudent use of antimicrobials is essential to limiting the emergence and spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in humans and animals.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyn27gam>

BMPA RESEARCH QUESTIONS FSA SHELF-LIFE GUIDANCE

Research conducted by the British Meat Processors Association (BMPA) and Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), into the shelf-life of meat products has found that products could be given a longer shelf life than previously advised.

The FSA VP/MAP (Vacuum Packed/Modified Atmosphere Packed) Guidance (FSA, 2017) restricts the shelf-life of VP/MAP foods (including fresh meat) held at 3°C to 8°C to 10 days, unless suitable grounds for a longer shelf-life can be identified. This project used a risk assessment approach and carried out a challenge test experiment, to establish whether a shelf-life of greater than 10 days can be applied to fresh chilled meat. Below are the key findings from the research:

- A search of the literature failed to uncover any cases of botulism associated with fresh chilled VP or MAP meat.
- Data provided by industry members of the project consortium indicates that UK industry applies a maximum chilled retail pack shelf life at 3°C to 8°C of up to 23 days for beef, 27 days for lamb, and 18 days for pork. Using a risk assessment approach, it was established that the current industry practice provides a high level of protection with respect to non-proteolytic *Clostridium botulinum*, estimated as >10.8 safety units (decimal number of products (i.e. >10 10.8) marketed per number causing botulism).
- There is no evidence that currently-applied UK shelf lives combined with current production standards are unsafe. If changes are made to industry practice, then these may affect the level of protection.
- A new challenge test study demonstrated that samples of beef and lamb inoculated with spores of non-proteolytic *C. botulinum* and incubated at 8°C, did not become toxic to day 50 for beef, day 35 for lamb, or day 25 for pork (i.e. <40 pg type B toxin g⁻¹ of meat and <40 pg type E toxin g⁻¹ of meat).
- The estimation of the level of protection and the results from the new challenge test experiment both support a shelf-life of greater than 10 days for fresh chilled beef, lamb and pork held at 3°C to 8°C, and also support currently-applied UK shelf lives combined with current production standards.
- The ability not to be constrained by a 10-day shelf-life, as indicated in present FSA (2017) guidelines, and the freedom to adopt a shelf-life greater than 10 days at 3°C to 8°C for fresh chilled beef, lamb and pork is of significant economic/social/sustainability benefits to producers/processors/retailers. Such freedom removes a technical barrier to trade. There may also be environmental/consumer benefits through lower food wastage.

BMPA technical operations director David Lindars, said:

“The shelf-life of fresh red meat held at 3°C to 8°C is of great significance to industry. These new scientific findings will give meat processors the ammunition they need to apply longer retail shelf-lives to their products. It is not just the commercial benefit to producers, processors and retailers that will result from these findings. Longer shelf-life of products will also benefit consumers and the environment through lower wastage and better sustainability. It’s a significant piece of research which will bring significant benefits to everyone involved in the production, selling and consumption of British meat products.”

In response to the BMPA/MLA research, an FSA spokesperson said:

“The FSA guidance was developed using robust scientific evidence, drawing on the expertise of the independent Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF). The ACMSF recommended a maximum ten-day shelf-life for vacuum and modified atmosphere packed foods stored from 3°C to 8°C in the absence of other controlling factors. However, where such controlling factors are present and where food businesses can satisfactorily demonstrate the safety of their product throughout its shelf-life, then longer than ten days may be applied. When relevant new science is generated it is standard practice to revisit the evidence base and we will now consider the findings of this report.”

The full report can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4h59hzb>

DUNBIA GIVEN £266,000 FINE BY FSA

Dunbia (Preston) Limited has been handed fines and costs totalling more than £266,000 after pleading guilty for failing to ensure the removal of specified parts of the animals required by law, referred to as “specified risk material”.

Food Standards Agency (FSA) inspectors found a sheep without a fully removed spleen and a cow that had not had its spinal cord fully removed. The final charge was for two sheep heads with permanent incisors erupted which were incorrectly identified as lambs and therefore destined for human consumption instead of disposal.

The fine is the most significant to be handed out to a UK meat producer and is for failures to comply with the Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (England) Regulations 2010. TSE regulations help to reduce risk from a group of brain diseases that cattle, sheep and goats are vulnerable to by requiring correct removal and disposal of specific parts of those animals before they enter the food chain. The most widely recognised of these diseases is BSE in cattle (referred to as ‘mad cow disease’), which has been linked to the human TSE diseases such as Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD).

After pleading guilty, Dunbia received a reduced £250,000 fine for the three offences and was ordered to pay full prosecution costs of £16,121.42 and a victim surcharge of £170.

Dr Colin Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer at the FSA said:

“This very significant fine underlines just how seriously breaches of these regulations are taken. It is vitally important for consumers and the wider industry that they are followed and public health is protected. The FSA will continue to investigate and prosecute any food businesses we find failing to uphold them. However, I should put on record that since the start of court proceedings Dunbia has signed up to our enhanced assurance initiative which involves working more closely with the company using data from a range of different audits and other data to help demonstrate compliance with official controls.”

CO₂ SHORTAGE COULD HAPPEN AGAIN

A recent report, produced by Global Counsel and published by the Food & Drink Federation (FDF) has warned that if proper measures aren't taken, industry would be faced with another CO₂ shortage as per June 2018.

A combination of increased demand due to higher-than-average temperatures, planned shutdowns of European fertiliser and bioethanol plants and breakdowns at key UK ammonia producers, meant that suppliers were unable to provide CO₂ to their customers. This affected various food sectors including the meat, bakery, soft drinks and alcohol industries meaning businesses had to put measures in place to meet demand or ration their products.

Food and Drink Federation (FDF) Director General, Ian Wright said:

“The events in the summer of 2018 showed up a lack of resilience in the CO₂ supply chain. Effort, ingenuity and extra resources deployed by businesses up and down the country mitigated the impacts of the shortages, but it is important to learn lessons from the crisis for the future. Last summer's events were a wake-up call that we need to make the UK's CO₂ chain more resilient. A proper response should have three parts: learning from this summer's shortage; preventing another such shortage happening in the future; and preparing for if it does.”

The report outlines a series of proposals for the entire supply chain to help reduce the risk of future CO₂ shortages and urges the Government to get more involved with the CO₂ supply chain through consultation; ensure Defra carried out a biennial food chain survey relating to contingency planning; issue guidance on handling and responding to CO₂ shortages; and for the Competition and Markets Authority to investigate the concentration of CO₂ production and supply.

As recommended in the document, members who use CO₂ would be well advised to review procurement 'best practices' to maximise the resilience of their CO₂ supply. Steps that can be taken to improve resilience might include:

- Refocusing on relationships with CO₂ suppliers;
- Contracting with more than one CO₂ supplier;
- Increasing contracted volumes against spot volumes;
- Reviewing contracts with a particular focus on the terms of force majeure clauses;
- Contracting with suppliers for 'virtual stock' – options on additional supply in times of shortage;
- Reviewing current production practices for where CO₂ can be safely and cost-effectively replaced with other more secure inputs;
- Putting in place 'Plan B' for future shortages;
- Exploring additional storage options;

You can read the report, 'Falling flat: lessons from the 2018 UK CO₂ shortage' here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxbz9bgg>

ACMSF CONSULT ON 3RD CAMPYLOBACTER REPORT

The Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF) Ad Hoc Group on Campylobacter have launched a 10-week stakeholder consultation on their 3rd report.

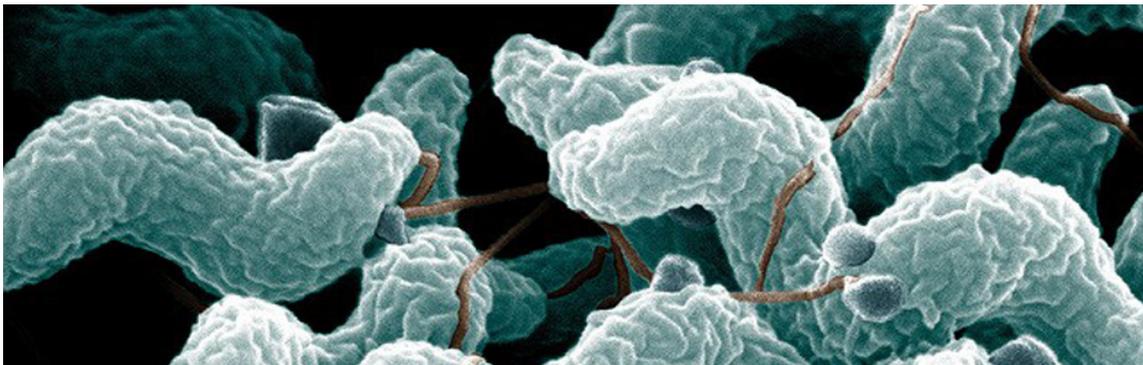
In particular, they would welcome comments on the report's conclusions and recommendations. Comments specifically on risk management are not within the remit of the Committee and are therefore not within the scope of the consultation.

The Committee returned to review Campylobacter over a decade after its Second Report on this organism because of the continued dominance of Campylobacter as a leading bacterial cause of foodborne disease in the UK. ACMSF would welcome comments, information or observations on the review particularly material that the report should include or address and information on the latest science and any observation on the conclusions and recommendations made in the report. In producing its report, the ACMSF has focused on the UK situation and have drawn on the international scientific literature where appropriate.

All responses to the consultation must be submitted by 16 May 2019.

The report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4mpqx7t>

CAMPYLOBACTER LEVELS IN UK WHOLE CHICKENS



The top nine UK retailers have once again published their latest testing results on Campylobacter contamination in UK-produced fresh whole chickens, covering the period from October to December 2018.

Latest figures show that, on average, 3.1% of the chickens sampled tested positive for the highest level of contamination, (i.e. those carrying more than 1,000 colony forming units per gram (cfu/g) of Campylobacter). This is a reduction on the previous three quarters of 2018.

Results by retailer are available on the FSA website here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5xocysb>

MEAT PROCESSING PLANT FINED £240K FOR USING DETAINED MEAT

On 11th March the Food Standards Agency (FSA) announced that a meat processing plant based in Birmingham had been fined £240,000 and ordered to pay costs of over £12,800 for illegally accessing meat detained by FSA.

The incident took place after the FSA found evidence of rodent activity during an unannounced inspection in October 2017. Inspectors took immediate action and temporarily detained unwrapped products, which were then found to have been moved or were missing on several occasions

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3hm37aj>

GUIDANCE ON FOOD TRACEABILITY, WITHDRAWALS AND RECALLS PUBLISHED

As you will be aware, over the last year the BFFF have been actively involved in workstreams and the steering group for the Food Standards Agency (FSA) / Food Standards Scotland (FSS) Efficacy of Recalls and Withdrawals project.

Following on from the FSA's four-week consultation (7th Jan to 4th Feb) on Guidance on Food Traceability, Withdrawals and Recalls within the Food Industry, I am pleased to confirm that they have now published their new guidance and tools for withdrawing or recalling unsafe food.

The guidance has been designed to help food businesses carry out food safety withdrawals and recalls with greater ease and effectiveness. It explains what the law requires, how to comply and includes best practice, including information on: traceability systems; making a decision on carrying out a withdrawal or recall; roles and responsibilities; and the key principles to effectively inform consumers of a food recall. Tools have also been created to supplement the guidance and make it easier to implement, including a food recall point of sale notice.

The guidance can be accessed here:

Guidance on FSA website: <https://tinyurl.com/yxm2fmh3>

Guidance on FSS website: <https://tinyurl.com/yyzgaaec>

FSA web story: <https://tinyurl.com/yxn98n3f>

FSS web story: <https://tinyurl.com/y5elch2a>

Note: Workstream 4 on root cause analysis is still active. The package which will include an e-learning course, a best practice example and a form that can be used to share learnings, will be published in due course.

The final phase of the project will be its evaluation. The FSA are in the early stages of planning for the evaluation, with a likely timeline of mid-2019 to mid-2020. They are keen to evaluate the processes used as well as the products that have been developed and at that time, they will be welcoming your input.

UPDATED METHODS FOR SALMONELLA TESTING AND SAMPLING IN POULTRY

Commission Regulation (EU) 2019/268 of 15 February 2019 amending Regulations (EU) No 200/2010, (EU) No 517/2011, (EU) No 200/2012 and (EU) No 1190/2012 as regards certain methods for Salmonella testing and sampling in poultry was published in the Official Journal of the EU, L046/11, 18/02/2019.

The European Committee for Standardisation and the International Organisation for Standardisation have revised a number of reference methods and a protocol to verify compliance with the Regulations listed. This Regulation therefore updates the use of alternative methods in light of the revised reference standard protocol EN ISO 16140-2 (validation of alternative methods) and the new reference method for the detection of Salmonella (EN ISO 6579-1).

It permits competent authorities, as well as food business operators to use alternative methods for Salmonella testing, provided that they are appropriately validated against the reference methods. The Regulation also allows an alternative sampling procedure for the control of Salmonella in flocks of laying hens and breeding hens of Gallus gallus.

The Regulation entered into force on 10th March 2019 with transitional measures provided for until 31st December 2021.

The Regulation can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6cqxsx9>

OPINION ON SALMONELLA CONTROL IN POULTRY FLOCKS

The European Food Safety Authority's Panel on Biological Hazards (EFSA - BIOHAZ) have recently published a Scientific Opinion on Salmonella control in poultry flocks and its public health impact.

The Panel considered that setting stricter targets for Salmonella in laying hens at farm level could help reduce salmonellosis cases of this origin by half. It also estimated that, if the target for the proportion of laying flocks infected with certain types of Salmonella was reduced to 1%, salmonellosis cases in humans transmitted via laying hens would drop by 50%.



A target of 1% is currently in place for breeding hens, for five types of Salmonella of human health significance. The Panel recommended maintaining the existing target for three of these types and replacing the other two with types that are more relevant for public health today. The Panel also concluded that the occurrence of Salmonella is lower in hens that are reared in alternative housing systems than in cage systems, although the reasons cannot be fully explained due to a lack of scientific evidence.

You can read the opinion in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3p7wn6h>

REPORT ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE IN ZOO NOTIC AND INDICATOR BACTERIA IN 2017

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 2017. The report covers data submitted by Member States in 2017 and jointly analysed by EFSA and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

It reveals that antimicrobials used to treat diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans, such as campylobacteriosis and salmonellosis, are becoming less effective.

In Salmonella from humans, as well as in Salmonella and Escherichia coli isolates from fattening pigs and calves, high proportions of isolates were resistant to ampicillin, sulfonamides and tetracyclines. Resistance to colistin was observed at low levels in Salmonella and Escherichia coli from fattening pigs and calves and meat thereof and in Salmonella from humans. In Campylobacter from humans, high to extremely high proportions of isolates were resistant to ciprofloxacin and tetracyclines, particularly in Campylobacter coli. Very high to extremely high multidrug resistance levels were observed in Salmonella typhimurium and its monophasic variant in both humans and animals. Salmonella Kentucky from humans also exhibited high level resistance to ciprofloxacin.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyn27gam>

FOOD SECURITY, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

NOFIMA LAUNCHES A NEW EUROPEAN STANDARD FOR FOOD FRAUD

A new European standard has been created by the Norwegian Institute of Food, Fisheries and Aquaculture Research (Nofima), together with food fraud experts from several European countries with the aim of making communication regarding food fraud more precise. UK input was provided from The Government Chemist along with UK food fraud experts from the Food Authenticity Network.

The standard defines many of the English terms and concepts used in connection with food fraud. The words are placed in a hierarchical system that makes it easier to understand how they relate to each other.

Led by Petter Olsen, a senior scientist at Nofima, the standardisation was coordinated as part of the EU-funded Authent-Net and FoodIntegrity projects. First published in January 2019, it is now also being distributed by several other National Standardisation Bodies in Europe.

Petter Olsen said:

“We have created a common European standard in which all the definitions are interconnected and mutually consistent. Terms relating to food fraud are often used interchangeably even though they mean entirely different things. This can lead to confusion and misunderstanding, especially across borders. With food fraud a worldwide problem, many countries have committed considerable resources to combat the issue. It is clear that this standard will be significant, especially when it comes to research and legislation. For example, if one defines laws and regulations that refer to the tampering or adulteration of food, it is important that everyone understands the difference between these two terms. The same applies when developing statistics, creating reports, or writing scientific publications.”

The standard named CWA 17369:2019 – Authenticity and fraud in the feed and food chain – Concepts, terms, and definitions can be purchased from the British Standards Institute (BSI) shop here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3nq5qff>

You can also read a press release from the UK Government here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5cr64xr>

NFCU GET TOUGH ON FOOD FRAUD

According to recent BBC press coverage, The National Food Crime Unit's (NFCU) is to step up raids on food businesses that fraudulently use cheaper substitutes, and to increase the number of fraudsters that are criminally prosecuted.

Particular focus will be on instances where fraud or adulteration of a food product could cause 'real, physical harm and risk of harm to people, particularly the vulnerable like people who have allergies'. The financial costs of food fraud are also acknowledged.

You can read the BBC report here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5bk6aef>

FSA URGES VIGILANCE IN LIGHT OF FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCAM

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have been made aware of a scam in Wales and England which references both the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).

Three local authorities in Wales and one in England have received reports of a person claiming to be from the FSA or the local authority, approaching food businesses demanding money for a food hygiene re-rating and warning that failure to pay will result in a fine.

Neither the FSA nor local authorities would demand money in this way. Local authorities are responsible for carrying out inspections of food businesses to check that they meet the requirements of food hygiene law.

They give businesses food hygiene ratings based on the findings of the inspections. There is no charge for these inspections. Local authorities may charge only when the re-rating inspection is requested by the food business and will not demand that a request is made.

The FSA are advising that if a business is concerned that it may have been targeted by a scam referencing food hygiene inspections or the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, they should not provide any details or make any payments and ask for ID from the caller. If the business has any suspicions, they should report them to their local authority. Contact details can be found on the following form: <https://tinyurl.com/y6gsggefz>

Angela Towers, Head of the Food Hygiene Rating Team of the FSA, said:

“Although the number of reports of this particular scam are low, we are concerned that businesses may lose money to fraudsters pretending to be from the FSA or a local authority. If you are approached by someone asking you to hand over money in this way, do not make any payment and always advise your local authority.”

METHOD TO IDENTIFY FISH SPECIES IN PROCESSED FOOD

The European Commission have announced that Joint Research Centre (JRC) scientists have developed a method to identify fish species present in processed food. The capability of the DNA-based method includes identifying cod fish species in raw, frozen, salted and cooked test food samples, irrespective of whether it is mixed with other fish species. It is complementary to existing fish identification strategies and can support the prevention of frauds.

More information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxk9autf>

NEW MEASUREMENT SYSTEM TO REPORT GM CONTENT

The European Commission have announced that the Joint Research Centre (JRC) has developed a new measurement system to correctly report GM content in food and feed products originating from or containing GMOs. It is hoped that linking a measurement result to a particular reference material and a well-defined reference method should improve the comparability of results.

More information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y27uyykk>

FSAI NEW DNA SCANNING TOOL

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) have announced that it has a new, non-targeted DNA scanning tool to identify the entire DNA content of a food. The new analytical tool is the result of a 2-year project and is based on next generation DNA sequencing which can proactively identify all the ingredients and their biological sources in a food.

45 plant-based foods and food supplements from Irish health food shops and supermarkets have been screened which resulted in 14 food products of interest that may contain undeclared plant species. Of these, one was confirmed to contain undeclared mustard at significant levels, another was found to contain DNA from two undeclared plant species, one at significant levels, and a third product was found to have no DNA from the plant species declared on the label, but rice DNA was identified instead. All three products are under further investigation.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4ufykbx>

GLOBAL STANDARDS

GLOBAL STANDARDS ON SEAFOOD TRACEABILITY LAUNCHED

A new global standard on seafood traceability has been launched in a collaborative effort to address the growing business need for traceability in the complex seafood supply chain.

The Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship (SeaBOS) and the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST) are working together towards the adoption of global industry standards to improve the quality, efficiency and affordability of seafood traceability.

While seafood is one of the most globalised sectors it could be said that it has lagged behind other industries in the development of voluntary, pre-competitive standards. This leaves an information gap that these new standards hope to fill.

By creating a set of voluntary industry norms, the seafood sector aims to:

- Develop shared expectations about the kinds and quality of information entering seafood supply chains
- Ensure that fishing and aquaculture enterprises around the world receive more consistent and predictable demands for the data accompanying their products
- Create a level playing field that promotes equitable market access for large and small producers from diverse countries
- Establish technical protocols for interoperability that will facilitate digital communication among thousands of actors across the seafood supply chain
- Provide a basis for more efficient and consistent regulatory practices among producer, processor, and market country governments.

You can read a joint statement about the initiative here: <https://tinyurl.com/yfyohym>

IPO PUBLISH TRADE MARK GUIDE

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) have recently published The Trade Mark Guide: a handbook for analysing and interpreting trade mark data.

This handbook aims to improve shared understanding between trade mark experts and those undertaking or using trade mark research. Topics include:

- what is a trade mark?
- trade mark data
- nationality
- trade mark classification
- trade mark quality
- the value of a trade mark

You will find the handbook here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5bs2x5u>

CODEX PUBLISHES BOOKLET CHARTING ITS FOOD HYGIENE JOURNEY

Codex Alimentarius has published a booklet charting the Codex journey on food hygiene, entitled 'Food hygiene at 50'.

In 1964, nine Codex Alimentarius Commission Member countries and a number of Observer organizations gathered in Washington DC, United States of America to begin building consensus on how to produce food hygienically and, where feasible, set limits for microbial counts in foods.

Thanks to the visionary approach of Codex in those early years, knowledge about how to safely prepare and handle food was used to develop standards, providing tools for both national regulatory authorities and the food industry to systematically improve food hygiene. The leaps and bounds made over five decades mean that food can now be safely produced, processed and distributed in greater volumes and over greater distances than ever before.

The booklet is available to download here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxuhwyje>

JUDGEMENT ON ORGANIC FARMING INDICATION FOR MEAT

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) have published a judgement in Case C-497/17, regarding a request for a ban on the use of the 'organic farming' indication in the adverts for and on the packaging of minced beef patties certified 'halal' from animals slaughtered without pre-stunning.

The Court ruled that the EU Organic production logo cannot be placed on meat derived from animals that have been slaughtered in accordance with religious rites without first being stunned, as such a practice does not comply with EU law and fails to observe the highest animal welfare standards.

You can read the judgement in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4z4hr56>

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON DRAFT CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN

Codex Alimentarius has published a request for comments on the revised draft Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

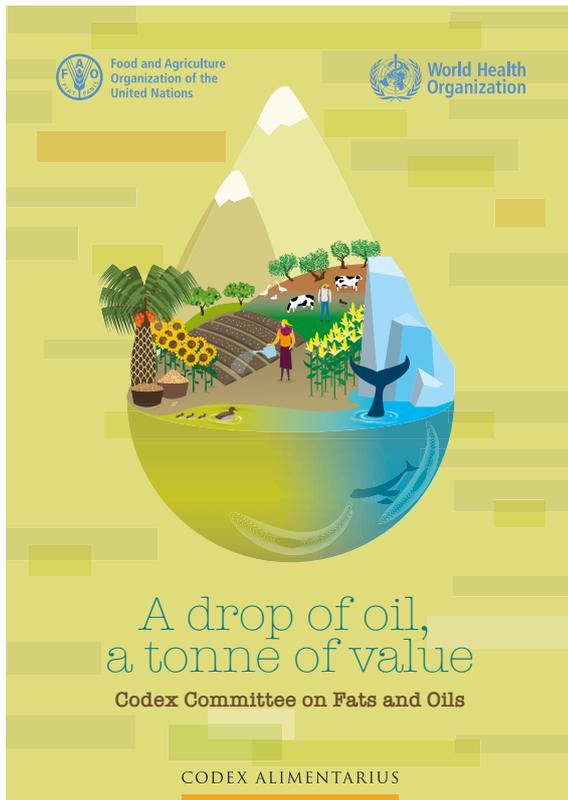
The request asks stakeholders to take into consideration the changes made by the subcommittee and, in particular, consider the following issues:

- The revisions made to the section on drivers and whether this section now reflects comments previously made by members and strikes an appropriate balance;
- The recognition that, in the absence of consensus regarding possible amendment of the core values, any further discussion should take place in an appropriate forum;
- The simplification of the objectives and indicators; and
- The proposal to develop a supporting work plan with the input of the responsible parties.

Comments must be submitted by 30 April 2019.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2rovguf>

CODEx PUBLISHES 'A DROP OF OIL, A TON OF VALUE' BOOKLET



Codex Alimentarius has published a booklet on the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils, entitled 'A drop of oil, a ton of value'.

This publication explores how the Committee operates and sets out what goes on to ensure safe food and a level playing field for trade.

The booklet is available to download here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyosjbzc>

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

INVESTIGATION INTO ANTIBIOTIC USAGE ON UK POULTRY FARMS

A recent investigation carried out by BBC One's Countryfile has reported that tonnes of antibiotics are still being used in UK poultry farming.

The programme reported that 281 tonnes of antibiotics known as ionophores, were sold in the UK in 2017. Ionophores are used to prevent the intestinal disease coccidiosis which affects chickens when they ingest chicken droppings. But campaigners fear certain ionophores could cause resistance to antibiotics that are medically important for humans.

John Reed, chairman of Antibiotic Stewardship with the British Poultry Council (BPC) is reported as saying that ionophores "are classed as feed additives" as they are not classed as antibiotics by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate. But the broadcaster said he conceded that whilst by definition it is an antibiotic, it is used only in animals and not in humans and he does not believe they pose a risk to the consumer.

Coilin Nunan, from the Alliance to Save our Antibiotics, told the programme: "We are calling for ionophores to be made prescription-only but, really more fundamentally, we are calling for chickens to be kept in better conditions so that they don't develop this terrible disease coccidiosis in the first place."

The BBC programme's investigation is based on figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act and presenter Tom Heap speaks to chicken farmers across the UK, some of whom now farm completely antibiotic-free.

STUDY REVEALS 11 MILLION DEATHS DUE TO POOR DIET

A study published in the Lancet, has revealed that 1 in 5 deaths (11 million in total) in 2017 were associated with poor diet. Cardiovascular disease was by far the biggest cause of death, linked to 10 million deaths in the study. Interestingly the study found that overall, the lack of healthy foods and nutrients seemed to be more important in affecting disease risk than an excess of unhealthy ones.

This study looked at dietary intakes across 195 countries and quantified the burden of disease (population attributable fraction) that could be attributed to deaths related to cardiovascular disease, cancer or type 2 diabetes, as well as the impact of diet on ill health (as disability-adjusted life-years or DALYs).

Using data collated within each of the countries included, the study looked at 15 different aspects of the diet:

Low intakes of: Fruit, vegetables, legumes, wholegrains, nuts and seeds, milk, fibre, calcium, long chain omega 3s from seafood, and polyunsaturated fats.

High intakes of: Red meat, processed meat, sugar-sweetened drinks, trans fats and sodium.

There were varying levels of data available for each of these from the countries included, in particular for sodium (based on 24-hour urinary sodium excretion), which was only available in about 1 in 4 of the countries.

For each of the factors included, the optimal intake was calculated based on a meta-analysis previously carried out by Global Burden of Disease researchers. These figures differ from current public health advice in the UK, for example the total suggested for fruit, vegetables and legumes was 670g per day (compared to 400g or more that forms the basis of the UK 5 A DAY recommendation), the level suggested for fibre was 24g (as compared to 30g/day for adults in the UK) and for sodium, the equivalent as salt used was 7.5g/d (compared to 6g/day for adults in the UK).

Globally the study found that intakes of all the factors measured were 'non-optimal', that is below the optimum for the 'healthier' dietary attributes and above the optimum for the 'unhealthier' ones. No one country managed to reach the optimal level for all attributes and no one attribute was optimal across all countries.

Overall the study found that the largest number of diet-related deaths were associated with eating too much sodium and not enough wholegrains or fruits (the relative importance of the different factors varied by region - in Western Europe the factor associated with the greatest number of deaths was low wholegrain intake, followed by low intake of nuts and seeds and high sodium intakes). Across all 15 dietary attributes, more deaths were associated with not eating enough 'healthy' foods or nutrients than eating too much of those foods or nutrients classed in the study as 'unhealthy'.

The countries with the lowest rates of diet-related death were Israel, followed by France, Spain and Japan. The UK was ranked 23rd, followed by Ireland and Sweden who were 24th and 25th respectively. The US was ranked 43rd, India 118th and China 140th. The country with the highest diet-related disease risk according to this study was Uzbekistan, which had ten times more diet-related deaths than in Israel. The association between different nutrients and diet-related deaths varied by country with high sodium intakes being the biggest contributor in China and Japan, low wholegrain intakes the biggest contributor in the US, Russia and India and low fruit intakes the biggest contributor in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The study is based on observational data and, inevitably with 195 countries included there were variations in how the data were collected. 15 dietary attributes were selected for inclusion in the study – some that are of interest to health such as saturated and monounsaturated fatty acids and free sugars across the diet were not included in the analysis. The study also did not take into account lifestyle factors, such as smoking, obesity and physical activity, that can have a significant impact on the risk of the disease outcomes used in the study.

Overall the finding that it was the lack of healthy foods over and above the excess of unhealthy ones that had the greatest impact on disease risk is interesting and perhaps points to the importance of giving positive healthy eating messages about the foods we should eat more of and not just those we need to cut back on.

The study can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3mzdwxp>

PHE PUBLISH UPDATE TO MCCANCE AND WIDDOWSON'S COFID

Public Health England have recently published an update to McCance and Widdowson's 'composition of foods integrated dataset' (CoFID) on the nutrient content of the UK food supply. It has been updated to incorporate data from the 2015 fruit and vegetable nutrient analysis project. New and revised data on almonds, as well as errors in the previous dataset, have also been corrected. All other values remain unchanged from the 2015 update.

The document is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/hoqzux8>

TRADING STANDARDS WARNINGS OVER '5-A-DAY' CLAIMS

A recent study has revealed three-quarters of products with five-a-day claims fell short of the recommended 80g portion size.

The research, published in Archives of Disease in Childhood, also found that the health claims made on the product packaging were "confusing" and could be contributing to rising rates of childhood obesity. The evidence suggested that when such health claims were made, they created a phenomenon known as the "health halo effect".

Led by Dr Ada Garcia at the University of Glasgow, the research team studied 332 different products, including breakfast cereals, fruit snacks, fruit-based drinks, dairy products and ready meals. They were assessed using the broadcast regulator's tool (Ofcom NPM) that identifies so-called 'healthy' food. Calculations made by the Ofcom NPM tool showed that a large proportion of the products, including those commonly perceived as 'healthy' (41%), were classified as 'less healthy'.

Over 41% made five-a-day claims, most of which were fruit drinks, ready meals, and fruit snacks. Processed fruit, concentrated fruit juice or puree appeared as ingredients in nearly half (just over 44%) of these products. But despite most (82%) of them claiming to contain one portion of fruit or vegetables, the study found that three out of four didn't contain the recommended 80g portion size. Furthermore, half of the products making five-a-day claims didn't specify whether these were adult or child-sized portions. Also, almost 95% of the fruit-based drinks exceeded the recommended 150ml serving size limit for fruit juice, yet the fruit and vegetable portions for most products were below the recommended portion size.

Cereal bars had the highest energy and saturated fat content, while cereals had the highest salt content. Fruit snacks had the highest sugar content, averaging 48g per 100g, but still made the five-a-day claim in many cases.

The researchers cautioned that while they tried to include as representative a sample of products as possible, some may have been missed, and they were obliged to estimate the content of some products in the absence of adequate ingredients information on the packaging.

"Prepacked foods targeted to children can be consumed as part of a 'balanced and healthy' diet, yet their health and nutrition claims remain questionable," said Dr Garcia, "Stricter regulations on product composition, food labelling, and marketing techniques are required to discourage the promotion of foods that might be considered obesogenic."

A DHC spokesperson said: "Nutrition and health claims made on packaging are already subject to strict requirements to make sure they are accurate and clear – and if they're claiming something that's not true, Trading Standards and the Advertising Standards Authority can and should take robust action to stop this from happening. We know the food and drink products children see advertised can impact what they eat – we're addressing this under our childhood obesity plan by consulting on reducing children's exposure to sugary and fatty food advertising and restricting in-store promotions of these foods. We have asked the NIHR Obesity Policy Research Unit to continue to review the evidence base on the effect of marketing and advertising on children, including in this area."

Details of how to access the full report are here: <https://tinyurl.com/y64vcsvy>

SACN ANNUAL REPORT 2018 PUBLISHED

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) have recently published their annual report for 2018. This report provides a summary of the work of SACN and its working groups and subgroup, including:

- A position statement on diet, cognitive impairment and dementias;
- A draft report on saturated fats and health, issued for public consultation;
- A report on feeding in the first year of life;
- The joint SACN, NHS England and Diabetes UK working group, which continued to review evidence on lower carbohydrate diets.

You can access the report here: <https://tinyurl.com/yy57ooso>

CONSULTATION ON FURTHER ADVERTISING RESTRICTIONS FOR HFSS PRODUCTS

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport have launched a consultation on further advertising restrictions for products high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS).

The consultation proposes options for further restrictions on the advertising of HFSS products to children on TV and online. The proposed scope of restrictions covers products within the PHE sugars and calorie reduction programmes and soft drink industry levy, which also fail the current UK nutrient profiling model.

Various options are proposed for both TV and online advertising, including a 9pm watershed for HFSS advertisements on TV and online. There are several implementation routes available, depending on the result of the consultation, and any advertising restrictions arising will be applied to online and broadcast simultaneously, to avoid the potential risk of displacement.

Other forms of advertising regulated by the BCAP and CAP Codes (including print, outdoors, direct marketing and cinema) are not explicitly considered or further restrictions proposed as part of this consultation.

Responses to the consultation must be submitted by 10 June 2019.

You can access the consultation here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4cgkv2s>

UNHEALTHY FOOD AND DRINK DOMINATES NON-FOOD RETAIL ENVIRONMENTS

Food Active and the UK Health Forum have published new research showing that unhealthy food and drink dominate options in non-food retail environments.

The key findings of the research, commissioned by Public Health England (PHE) and conducted by the public health charities, are:

- Wide availability of unhealthy food and drink in more than 1 in 4 (29%) non-food retail environments, with confectionery and sugary drinks dominating;
- Seven out of ten consumers (70%) reported seeing food or drink in non-food retail stores, with 42% making a purchase while shopping in these stores in the previous month;
- Two of every three (66%) products purchased are classified as less healthy e.g. sweets and chocolate, savoury snacks, sugary drinks and energy drinks.

The research has been linked to PHE's sugar reduction programme and DHSC's promotions consultation.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5zutrhj>

PARENTS ENCOURAGED TO SWAP CHILDREN'S SUGARY FOODS FOR HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVES

Public Health England (PHE) is encouraging parents to swap children's sugary foods and drinks for healthier alternatives and protect children's teeth by using fluoride toothpaste. According to recent PHE data, almost 9 out of 10 hospital tooth extractions among children aged 0 to 5 are due to preventable tooth decay. The data shows that, although children's sugar intakes have declined slightly in recent years, consumption remains the equivalent of around 8 sugar cubes more than the recommended daily limit.

The PHE Change4Life programme is encouraging parents to:

- Swap sugary drinks and snacks for lower or no sugar alternatives;
- Limit fruit juice and smoothies to a total of 150ml per day and only consume with meals;
- Ensure children brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6f6swk6>

More about the change4life programme can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>

INFORMATION STATEMENT ON DIETARY FIBRE

The Government Chemist has announced that an information statement on dietary fibre has been published, in collaboration with the Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST). The information statement was developed and peer-reviewed through the Institute's Scientific Committee. It provides details on, amongst other items, what dietary fibre is, how it is measured and how much should be eaten. The statement aims to help the food industry to innovate to provide attractive foods contributing to healthy eating and to help regulators and enforcement personnel understand the issues.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y42qdngt>

The statement itself is available on the Institute of Food Science and Technology website here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4k3jqf>

IEA ISSUE REPORT ON JUNK FOOD AND ITS DEFINITION

The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) have published a report on junk food and its definition, entitled 'What is junk food?'. The paper highlights the misleading use of the term 'junk food' by campaigners, media and within consumer surveys and recommends the use of the term 'high in fat, sugar and salt' (HFSS) instead. The report also notes the importance of understanding the Nutrient Profile Model definition for HFSS foods and the impact of this within government's Childhood Obesity Plan. It highlights that, under the new system, some snacks recommended by the NHS as 'smart swaps' will become 'junk food' as will certain '5-a-day' recommendations, including pure orange juice.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4f9ww8d>

IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

FOOD PRICES HIT BY COMMODITY COSTS AND WEATHER

Retail food costs have jumped by their highest rate in more than five years, according to latest figures from the British Retail Consortium (BRC)-Nielsen Shop Price Index.

The BRC-Nielsen Shop Price Index (SPI) is a monthly measure of UK shop price inflation. The SPI measures changes in the price of 500 of the most commonly bought items. The SPI demonstrates the extent to which retailers contribute to inflation through the pricing of commonly bought goods.

Food inflation rose to 2.5% last month, up from 1.6% in February – the fastest rate of growth since November 2013 – while overall shop price inflation increased from 0.7% in February to 0.9% in March.

Adverse weather events, including the Beast from the East – which delayed planting of some UK crops, flooding and scorching summer weather, as well as global commodity prices were all cited as reasons for the surge.

Rises in global cereal prices helped push up the cost of bread and cereals, while UK-grown potatoes, onions and cabbages were more expensive due to 2018's inclement weather, which reduced crop yields.

Other findings revealed that fresh food inflation had accelerated to 1.9% in March, up from 1.7% in February. Ambient food inflation soared by 3.4%, a significant increase on February's rate of 1.5% and the fastest rate of growth in six years.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT APPROVES NEW RULES ON UTP'S

The European Parliament has announced that it has approved new EU rules against unfair trading practices (UTPs). The rules will apply to all parties involved in the food supply chain with a turnover of €350 million, with differentiated levels of protection provided below that threshold.

The new rules cover retailers, food processors, wholesalers, cooperatives or producers' organisations, and single producers.

The UTPs to be banned include:

- late payments for perishable food products
- last minute order cancellations
- unilateral or retroactive changes to contracts
- forcing the supplier to pay for wasted products
- refusing written contracts.

Once formally endorsed by the Council it will enter into force and EU Member States will then have 24 months to introduce it into national laws, The rules should then be applied 30 months after entering into force.

The European Commission has welcomed the support from the European Parliament to ban UTPs saying that the vote will ensure fairness in the food chain, with protection for all EU farmers, as well as small and mid-range suppliers.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2s2mo8r> and here <https://tinyurl.com/yyxcdflj>

FINDING A PROFESSIONAL TO CERTIFY EXPORT HEALTH CERTIFICATES

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have published guidance on finding a professional to certify export health certificates. The guidance provides a list of people and businesses in England, Scotland and Wales that inspect and certify animals and animal products for export. The list does not include every certifier and contact details are provided for further information.

You can find the guidance here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxqkqsmn>

LIST OF PORTS FOR THIRD COUNTRY FISHING VESSELS

A list of ports in EU Member States where landings and transshipment operations of fishery products are allowed and port services are accessible for third-country fishing vessels, in accordance with Article 5(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 was published in the Official Journal of the EU, C058/8, 14/02/2019

You will find the list here: <https://tinyurl.com/y38b35ns>

REGULATORY

UK SUPREME COURT RULES ON MEANING OF MSM

The UK Supreme Court has now published its judgement following its appeal hearing, on 30th January, relating to the Newby Foods versus the Food Standards Agency case (case number M-027-19-A1).

The appeal concerned whether certain chicken and pork products manufactured by Newby Foods should be classified as 'mechanically separated meat' (MSM) within point 1.14 of Annex I to EU Regulation No 853/2004 Laying Down Specific Hygiene Rules for Food of Animal Origin.

Annex I, point 1.14 of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 defines 'mechanically separated meat' as "the product obtained by removing meat from flesh-bearing bones after boning or from poultry carcasses, using mechanical means resulting in the loss or modification of the muscle fibre structure."

According to this definition MSM must meet all three following conditions;

1. it must be obtained by removing meat from flesh-bearing bones after boning or from poultry carcasses;
2. it must be obtained with the aid of mechanical means; and
3. Those mechanical means must result in the loss or modification of the muscle fibre structure.

Both high and low pressure MSM fall under the definition of MSM since they fulfil all three conditions.

However, the following products do not fulfil all the above mentioned three conditions and therefore are not to be considered as MSM;

- products obtained from mechanical deboning by removal of the bone from a bone-in meat cut (e.g. a cut of poultry breast, a poultry wing or a poultry leg), without loss or modification of the muscle fibre structure, should be considered as fresh meat.
- products obtained by mechanical removal of tendons, cartilage and skin from fresh meat with modification of the muscle fibre structure, including that obtained from the processes described in the previous bullet point. should be considered as minced meat .
- products of mechanical separation of cooked poultry or pig meat and bones should be considered as a "meat product."

Newby argued they should not be classified as MSM. The Food Standards Agency contended that they should be so classified. Therefore the judgement dismissed the appeal by Newby.

The judgement and press summary (M-027-19-A2) are available on the Supreme Court website here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxm2vkkz>

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO FOOD LAW CODE OF PRACTICE CONSULTATIONS

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published a summary of responses to its consultations on proposed amendments to the Food Law Codes of Practice for:

England: <https://tinyurl.com/y7m9ymly> and

Northern Ireland: <https://tinyurl.com/yae2nwgz>

The parallel consultations ran from 5th July to 27th September 2018. At this stage, the FSA proposes to only take forward amendments to the Code that relate to the new registration system and to the recognition of Primary Authority national inspection strategies. The timing of these changes depends on there being greater clarity on EU exit. The FSA will refine its proposals on changes to the food hygiene risk assessment and consult again before making any changes in this area.

QUARTERLY FOOD AND FEED LAW LEGISLATION REVIEW

The Government Chemist has published the quarterly food and feed law legislation review. This seventh quarterly report provides information and updates on UK food and feed law and related scientific and regulatory issues from October to December 2018.

The areas covered include exiting the EU and technical updates on a number of areas, including: animal welfare; food additives; and food labelling.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y26al7hz>

GUIDANCE ON ORIGIN INDICATION OF PRIMARY INGREDIENT

Food Drink Europe (FDE) have published guidance on the origin indication of the primary ingredient, which aims to provide a common understanding of the adopted provisions.

This guidance clarifies the uncertainties regarding Implementation Regulation (EU) 2018/775, which requires the origin of primary ingredients to be labelled when it is different than the given origin of the food.

Each section includes the relevant legal provisions and a factual description of the provisions, with an interpretation where uncertainties have been identified. The Regulation itself entered into force on 28 May 2018 and applies from 1 April 2020.

You will find the guidance here: <https://tinyurl.com/yykof5fy>

RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH TO TURN SUGAR CANE WASTE INTO DRINKS BOTTLES

Researchers in eastern Australia have started work on a three-month pilot plant to prove the economic viability of turning sugarcane waste into other compounds, including plastic drinks bottles.

The programme is being run by Darryn Rackemann, a senior research fellow at Queensland University of Technology's Centre for Tropical Crops and Biocommodities, and will be carried out at Gladstone, north of Brisbane.

It is being undertaken in partnership with Mercurius Australia using a process patented by the start-up's US-based parent Mercurius Biorefining. This has the potential to convert the fibre left over after sugarcane is pressed, known as bagasse, and other types of biomass into cost-effective biofuels and bio-chemicals. These include PEF, a material which is more sustainable, is lightweight, strong, and has good barrier properties. Therefore, many people think it would be a good replacement PET bottles and packaging.

However, it is not fully known yet whether PEF breaks down as well as PET, and more research needs to be done in this area before it's possible to say it's both sustainable from this bioderived source and also biodegradable.

SCIENTISTS DEVELOP 'MACHINE' TO IDENTIFY SOURCE OF SALMONELLA OUTBREAKS

A team of scientists led by researchers at the University of Georgia Center for Food Safety in Griffin has developed a machine-learning approach that could lead to quicker identification of the animal source of certain Salmonella outbreaks.

Xiangyu Deng and his colleagues used more than a thousand genomes to predict the animal sources, especially livestock, of Salmonella Typhimurium. The team trained the 'machine', an algorithm called Random Forest, with more than 1,300 S. Typhimurium genomes with known sources. After the training, the 'machine' learned how to predict certain animal sources of S. Typhimurium genomes.

Overall, the system predicted the animal source of the S. Typhimurium with 83% accuracy. The classifier performed best in predicting poultry and swine sources, followed by bovine and wild bird sources. The machine also detects whether its prediction is precise or imprecise. When the prediction was precise, the machine was accurate about 92 percent of the time.

However, Prof Deng said the tool has limitations; it cannot predict seafood as a source and it has difficulty predicting Salmonella strains that "jump around among different animals."

WAITROSE LOOKS TO REPLACE PLASTIC WITH LANGOUSTINE SHELL FILM

Waitrose has teamed up with a biotech company to create packaging made from waste langoustine shells. The retailer has partnered with Cuan Tec, which uses the shells created from seafood processing to make a natural polymer. This can then be turned into a flexible film.

Waitrose is hoping to use the packaging as an alternative to conventional plastic film on some of its fish products in 12 to 18 months' time.

The material, which is at the experimental stage at the moment, also has the potential to be both industrially and home compostable.

“While we are still at an experimental stage, the potential for this new packaging material is incredibly exciting,” said Waitrose packaging manager Karen Graley. “Conventional plastic films can’t currently be recycled, reused or composted - so finding an alternative which doesn’t go into landfill would be very significant in helping us reach our target of ensuring that all own label packaging is widely recyclable, reusable or home compostable by 2023.”

Cuan Tec CEO Dr Cait Murray-Green added: “As well as protecting food on sale to consumers, this technology gives value to what would have been a waste product and takes single-use plastic out of the food system, meaning that less waste goes to landfill.”

The initiative comes as part of Waitrose’s ongoing endeavour to become more environmentally friendly, which has seen it use vine leaves to make punnets for Waitrose Duchy tomatoes and encourage customers to bring their own reusable containers for products from its meat and fish counters.

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT & CSR

MSC TO ADDRESS FORCED AND CHILD LABOUR IN SEAFOOD BUSINESSES

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) has announced new requirements for seafood suppliers and processors. They include the introduction of independent audits of labour practices for supply chain companies if a risk of forced or child labour practices is established.

Dr Yemi Oloruntuyi, Head of Accessibility at the MSC said: “Around the world, more than 150 million children and 25 million adults are involved in forced labour. We recognise the urgency in addressing forced and child labour violations and have put measures in place to tackle this issue in the supply chain for certified seafood. This update to our supply chain requirements will provide seafood buyers and consumers with greater assurances that companies involved in processing and packing MSC and ASC certified seafood do not employ forced or child labour.”

The new requirements are introduced as part of the recently published MSC’s updated Chain of Custody Standard. This standard provides seafood buyers and consumers with confidence in the traceability and integrity of the supply chain for both MSC and ASC (Aquaculture Stewardship Council) certified seafood. Over 4,500 seafood companies and subcontractors, in more than 45,000 sites in around 100 countries, are currently certified to handle seafood for sale with the MSC and/or ASC labels.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y69d9m4z>

NEW LEGISLATION APPROVED TO BAN SINGLE-USE PLASTIC ITEMS

The European Parliament has announced that it has approved a new law banning single-use plastic items such as plates, cutlery, oxo-degradable plastics and food containers, and expanded polystyrene cups and straws.

The legislation will require Member States to achieve a 90% collection target for plastic bottles by 2029 and plastic bottles will have to contain at least 25% of recycled content by 2025 and 30% by 2030. The agreement also strengthens the application of the 'polluter pays' principle, by introducing extended responsibility for producers. The legislation finally stipulates that labelling on the negative environmental impact of throwing products, such as plastic cups and wet wipes, in the street should be mandatory

You can read more in the recent Parliament newsletter: <https://tinyurl.com/y6y5zs5z>

SPEECH ON ENSURING ENOUGH WATER IN 2050

The Environment Agency have published details of a speech by Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, at the Waterwise Conference entitled 'escaping the jaws of death: ensuring enough water in 2050'.

The speech covers understanding what's going on, in terms of climate change and water shortages, highlighting that by 2050 the amount of water available could be reduced by 10-15%, meaning higher drought risk. It also includes information on what can be done, and action by the Environment Agency, government, politicians, water companies, regulators, NGOs and the public.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y66n6sby>

JRC REPORT ON SOIL LOSS DUE TO CROP HARVESTING

The European Commission have published details of a JRC-led article regarding soil loss due to crop harvesting in the EU.

When root or tuber vegetables are harvested, some soil clings to them and is thereby removed from the field. The study, of sugar beet and potato crops in the EU, estimates that about 14.7 million tonnes per year are lost in this way, with 65% of this loss due to sugar beet harvesting and 35% to potatoes. While this soil loss is much less than soil loss due to water erosion, it can be quite significant in certain regions.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3tsmkhq>

WRAP AND OPRL JOIN FORCES ON RECYCLING

The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) have announced that they have formed a strategic partnership with On-Pack Recycling Label (OPRL) to work together towards meeting the UK's recycling targets.

To achieve the Circular Economy packaging recycling target of 70% by 2030 and the UK Plastics Pact target of 70% of plastic packaging by 2025, the partnership will focus on:

- Consistent messaging on-pack to reduce confusion about what can and can't be recycled
- Improving the quality and quantity of household recycling in the UK
- Improving the quality and quantity of 'on the go' recycling in the UK

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y69rnl3o>

CONSULTATIONS

DEFRA - Reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system	Seeks views on measures to reduce amount of unnecessary and difficult to recycle packaging and increase the amount of packaging that can and is recycled. Also proposes full net costs of managing packaging waste are placed on businesses.	https://tinyurl.com/y5hymmcz	13 May 2019
DEFRA - Introducing a Deposit Returns Scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland	Consultation will help to consider the merits of introducing a DRS.	https://tinyurl.com/y6gu4nb7	13 May 2019
DEFRA - Consistency in household and business recycling collections in England	Members of the public, industry and other stakeholders have called for greater consistency in the materials collected for recycling as well as how it is collected.	https://tinyurl.com/y54xw2rr	13 May 2019
HMT - Plastic Packaging Tax	Government wants to encourage the sustained use of more recycled plastic in the production of plastic packaging to help tackle plastic waste.	https://tinyurl.com/yxan97mq	13 May 2019
EFSA – Dietary reference Values for Sodium and Chloride	EFSA is publicly consulting on draft dietary reference values (DRVs) for sodium and chloride, the final two nutrients in its review of scientific advice on nutrient intakes for the EU population.	https://tinyurl.com/y27c6mjd	22 May 2019
HM Government - Introducing further advertising restrictions on TV and online for products high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS)	Seeks views on options across broadcast and online media in order to reduce children's exposure to HFSS advertising.	https://tinyurl.com/y53nj7xo	10 June 2019



British Frozen Food Federation Technical & Legislative Expert Group

Meeting of the Technical and Legislative Expert Group

To be held at 10am on Wednesday 24th April 2019

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. Update on activities of other groups/associations
7. Items for information – see list following
8. Items carried forward – see list following
9. Contact with other organisations
10. Any other business

Agenda Item 4 – Items for discussion

- 4.1 BFFF Technical Strategy (no paper)
- 4.2 Listeria – Collaborative opportunity with BRC and retailers for further best practice guidance (no paper)
- 4.3 Lessons from the CO2 shortage – Inc. suggestion of purchaser’s checklist (2019_02_AD)
- 4.4 PHE Calorie Reduction - updated PAPA position (2019_02_V)
- 4.5 FSA updates on ID/Health marks (2019_02_H, 2019_02_AF)
- 4.6 Food Waste and decision tree of best practice principles from Helen White @ WRAP (2019_02_Z)

Agenda Item 5 – Items to discuss if time

- 5.1 Newby Foods case (MSM) outcome (2019_02_O, 2019_02_X)
- 5.2 NFCU Bulletin, Information Requirement and future interaction (2019_02_K)
- 5.3 BMPA Risk Assessment of Botulism from Chilled, VP/MAP, Fresh Meat held at 3°C to 8°C (2019_02_AE)
- 5.4 EU exit (imports, exports) webinars and future opportunities with Defra (2019_02_AB)
- 5.5 Consultation on allergen labelling (2019_02_B)

Agenda Item 6 – Activities of other groups/associations

- 6.1 Feedback from members on any activities of other groups/associations as relevant

Agenda Item 7– Items for Information

2019_02_A - Sugar Case Studies - Year 2
2019_02_C - Food Authenticity and Integrity Seminar - NCFM 5_2_19
2019_02_E - Defra and HMT Consultations on Resources and Waste Strategy
2019_02_F - Campden BRI Microbiology seminars for March
2019_02_L - Defra and HMT Resources and Waste Strategy Consultations in word
2019_02_N - Request for input on JRC Best Environmental Management Practices document
2019_02_P - FSA new guidance and tools for recalls and withdrawals
2019_02_T - Chlorates discussion - SCoPAFF meeting (21-22 Feb 2019)

Brexit related papers for information:

2019_02_D - No Deal Imports - Training for TRACES replacement
2019_02_G - Consultation on Common Health Entry Document for animals and goods
2019_02_I - DEFRA GOV_UK update on imports and exports
2019_02_J - Important Government Comms re. Brexit
2019_02_M - Important Government Communications - Week 04_03_19 - 08_03_19
2019_02_Q - Important Government Communications - Week 11_03_19 - 15_3_19
2019_02_R - Exports of POAO out of the port of Dover
2019_02_S - Important Government Communications Week 18_3_19 - 22_3_19
2019_02_U - DEFRA EU Exit Information WebEx
2019_02_W - Brexit - Important Government Comms and exports of composite products
2019_02_Y - Brexit - Important Government Communications - Week 01_04_19 - 05_04_19
2019_02_AB - EU exit (imports & exports) webinars
2019_02_AC - DEFRA EU Exit – Imports & Exports - NEW press release
2019_02_AF - Defra Food and Drink sector update

Agenda Item 8 – Items Carried Forward (Standing agenda items awaiting further development):

- Salt Reduction -Scampi
- FSA/FSS Efficacy of recalls project -workstream
- 4 - Root cause analysis
- FRPERC project on Frozen storage of meat
- 3rd Party accredited labs issues

Agenda Item 9 – Contact with other Organisations

Samantha Lai – Commercial Officer, Fareshare
Lisa Smith – Senior Officer - Prevention, NFCU
Danielle Lehane – Stakeholder Engagement and Communications - Exports, EU Exit - Defra
Elizabeth Andoh-Kesson - Food Policy Advisor, BRC

Agenda Item 10 – Any Other Business

- Suggestions from the group welcomed

