

T & L UPDATE



BFFF TECHNICAL AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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British Frozen Food Federation

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CONSULTATIONS

FOREWORD

Welcome to edition 102 of the BFFF Technical and Legislative update!

Blink and before you know it September is knocking on our door. And what a year it's been - who would've known that this many months down the line there would still be so much uncertainty. Here's hoping that by the time you read the next T&L things will be a little clearer!

As you will be aware, the European Parliament met in July to elect key figures such as the new president and chairs of the committee and then went on summer break at the end of July. With the Committees only reconvening in early September this has meant that the number of reports on EU activity is somewhat reduced in this edition. However, there still seems to have been a fair bit going on and we've tried to pick out some of the highlights for your review.

Of course, amongst other subjects, this includes the latest updates on Brexit including a report on proposals for the Northern Irish border along with recommendations to ensure there is no need for a hard border post-Brexit. You will also find detail of the latest discussions on the 'Rolling Over' of EU Free Trade Agreements and an article written by Michael Gove MP on the real possibility of a 'no-deal' Brexit.

But on a happier note, we are pleased to inform you that planning for the next BFFF Technical Seminar has now started. Following in the success of previous years, once again we hope to bring you wide-ranging and interesting debates on the major technical issues facing food businesses today. And that's where you come in....to ensure the day is relevant to your business, we would love to hear your thoughts on exactly what subject matter you think we should cover. All suggestions are welcome. Let's make the technical Seminar 2020 the biggest and best yet! - Watch this space for further updates on the date, time and venue along with detail of how you can book to attend what is sure to be a 'must attend event'.

However, the Technical Seminar is just one of many projects the BFFF continue to work on. And whilst they may not be covered here, they can be found in our Technical Group papers. The agenda from our July Technical Expert Group meeting is now available for your information at the back of this edition and you will see just how wide a variety of subjects the group discusses and monitors in the interests of the whole membership. If there are any papers you would like to see, or any subjects you would like more information on please let us know

We would also really welcome your feedback on the Technical services offered to you as part of your BFFF membership – from the publications we produce, to the helpline advice we offer or the member interest groups (MIGs) we operate – please let us know what you think – what works well, what does not, what would you like to see more or less of? As you know we are a small team and we can't cover everything but with your guidance we can strive to bring you the services you really need. - just drop me an email on deniserion@bfff.co.uk and I look forward to hearing from you.

Enjoy your read!



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ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

FDE PUBLISH ANNUAL REPORT



FoodDrinkEurope (FDE) have recently published their annual report for 2019 presenting the highlights of their work over the past year including:

- The celebration of the 25th anniversary of the EU's Single Market
- The challenges surrounding Brexit
- International trade - advocating for strong Free Trade Agreements and cooperation with third countries to strengthen bilateral trade relations
- The Sustainable Packaging Roadmap and continued support to promote a circular and sustainable economy

You can download the annual report here: <https://tinyurl.com/yvr2y9kt>

GERMANY CONSIDERS INTRODUCING MEAT TAX

Germany could introduce a “meat tax” to protect the climate and improve animal welfare.

Currently meat in the country has a reduced tax rate of 7% but the Social Democrat party and the Greens are arguing that this should increase to the standard 19%, with additional revenue spent on improving animal welfare.

The increase was initially proposed by Germany's Animal Welfare Association who urged politicians to raise the tax on meat products to bring down the CO2 emissions and fund improvements in agricultural practices of livestock.

Concern about animal welfare is increasing in Germany, along with a desire for healthier diets and climate-friendly, sustainable food production. In the year through June 2018, Germany was the global leader of vegan and vegetarian product launches, accounting for 15 per cent of new products launched worldwide, according to market research agency Mintel.

German meat output has also dropped 5.2% over the last five years, with pork production slumping by 6.4%, according to official data. The German farmers' association is now arguing that an increase would drive consumers to buy cheaper products imported from European countries with less-stringent animal welfare laws.

CONCERNS OVER RESTRICTIONS ON NAMING VEGETARIAN FOOD



The Lords Select Committee recently announced that the EU Energy and Environment Sub Committee had written to Robert Goodwill MP to raise concerns about an EU proposal for restrictions on the naming of vegetarian food. A letter was also sent to the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

Further to EU proposals to allow the use of descriptions like "sausage", "burger" and "steak" to apply only to products containing meat, the Lords Select Committee hosted a discussion on the proposal with food industry stakeholders.

The video recording of the debate is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4c853m3>

Following on from the debate, the letter to the Minister highlights that:

- There is no evidence that consumers are being confused by such naming of vegetarian foods
- The creation of new words to describe vegetarian foods may create confusion
- It would be costly for businesses selling vegetarian foods to make changes
- The proposal could put people off reducing their meat intake, as recommended by recent scientific reports.

The Committee has also asked the Minister what the Government position is on the proposal, and if it would consider implementing something similar after Brexit.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y66qont7>

ADDITIVES, CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS & FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

JRC DEVELOPS METHOD FOR PESTICIDE QUANTIFICATION

A method for the quantification of certain pesticides has recently been developed and validated by the Joint research Council (JRC).

Based on gas chromatography/mass spectrometry, this new method allowed the reliable quantification of eight pesticides - diazinon, malathion, chlorpyrifos, captan, endosulfan, tebuconazole, iprodione and cypermethrin in soybean but could also be used for their quantification in other food products.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y48bpqzt>



ECJ RULING ON BPA AS A SUBSTANCE OF VERY HIGH CONCERN



The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has published its ruling in case T-185/17 regarding the contested inclusion of Bisphenol A (BPA) as a substance of very high concern due to its properties as a substance toxic for reproduction.

The Court confirmed the inclusion of Bisphenol A (BPA) as a substance of very high concern, under Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH), and dismissed the action entirely. You can read the ruling here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3eenw8r>

UPDATE ON DEVELOPING POLICY ON FOOD CONTAMINANTS

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have published a stakeholder update on developing policy on food contaminants. This includes the topics recently discussed at European Commission working group meetings on agricultural contaminants and industrial and environmental contaminants, as well as at Standing Committee. Some of the items covered are:

- Acrylamides – proposals on maximum levels for biscuits and rusks for infants and young children as well as for baby food and processed cereal based foods for infants and young children (excluding biscuits and rusks). These levels are likely to be finalised and voted on by the end of 2019
- 3-monochloropropanediol (3-MCPD) and 3-monochloropropanediol esters (3-MCDPEs) – Finalised agreement to have split levels, with the lower level of 1250 µg/kg for named oils and an upper level of 2500 µg/kg for other vegetable oils (including pomace olive oils), fish oils and oils from other marine organisms. The maximum level of the sum of free 3-MCPD and 3-MCPD fatty acid esters, expressed as 3-MCPD, will apply from 1 January 2021
- Perchlorate - Following the stakeholder consultation on the setting of maximum levels for perchlorate, levels are due to be finalised and put forward to vote at a future Standing Committee
- The endorsement of a draft Recommendation for monitoring of furan and methylfurans
- The extension to the reporting deadline for monitoring mineral oil hydrocarbons

You will find the update here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxtpuslk>

GUIDANCE ON REGULATIONS ON THE RESTRICTION OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Office for Product Safety and Standards have recently published updated guidance on the regulations on the restriction of hazardous substances (RoHS). The guidance is aimed at manufacturers, importers and distributors and has been updated following the extension of the regulations to products outside the scope of the original 2008 regulations and four specified phthalates.

The guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/hh8n7vs>

FITNESS CHECK OF MOST RELEVANT CHEMICALS LEGISLATION

The European Commission have recently published a Staff Working Document Fitness Check of the most relevant chemicals legislation (excluding REACH), as well as related aspects of legislation applied to downstream industries.

The document accompanies the European Commission Report to the European Parliament, the Council, the EESC and the Committee of the Regions findings of the fitness check of the most relevant chemicals legislation (excluding REACH) and identified challenges, gaps and weaknesses.

You can read the document in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5lscyy1>

HIGH ALUMINIUM LEVELS FOUND IN MATCHA TEA SAMPLES

Investigations by The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) found that a number of matcha tea samples were high in aluminium, greatly exceeding the daily recommended level of 1 milligram per kilogram (mg/kg) set by the European Food and Safety Authority (EFSA).

Three matcha tea samples tested by the Institute found aluminium levels to be 1743, 1775 and 2350 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg) respectively.

“In light of this situation for consumers, the additional intake of aluminium through regular (daily) consumption of a single food such as tea, which represents a considerable portion of the tolerable weekly intake (TWI) or even exceeds it if consumed regularly, is not tolerable from a toxicological point of view,” the report states.

However, it goes on to say “As there are still gaps in the available data, the assessment of the health risk involves great uncertainty and further research is needed. Due to the very small number of analysed samples, it is not possible to reach any conclusions on normal levels of aluminium in matcha tea and on the overall health assessment of matcha tea as a food.”

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3rfq6eu>



ALLERGENS

NEW LEGISLATION ON ALLERGEN LABELLING FOR PREPACKED FOODS



The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have now published the summary of responses and government response to the consultation on changing the food allergen information laws for food that is prepacked for direct sale.

The consultation, ran from 25th January to 29 March 2019 and received 1887 responses. As a result, new legislation, known as 'Natashas Law' will be introduced in the summer which will mandate full ingredient labelling for foods which are prepacked for direct sale. The proposal is that the new legislations will then be enforced in England and N. Ireland from summer 2021 allowing businesses a transition period.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3fo4g4v>

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER FOOD ALLERGY NETWORK JUNE MEETING

The Government Chemist has published details of the University of Manchester Food Allergy Network (MFAN) meeting which was held on 3rd July 2019.

MFAN, led by Professor Clare Mills, is a forum for research and practice in food allergy. It aims to improve quality of life and safety for people with allergies, enable better provision by businesses and provide tools for allergenic food risk assessment and risk management.

The meeting was attended by over 30 expert practitioners including delegates from academia, the European Commission Joint Research Centre, JRC, MoniQA, ELISA allergen detection platform manufacturers, food retailers, and other technical experts. It produced high-level ideas and discussions and very positive feedback. The outputs from the meeting are to include a guidance document on food allergen analysis.

You will find more information here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxhltmf>

HYGIENE EMERGENCY PROHIBITION NOTICE FOR ALLERGEN FAILING

A Birmingham food business has been banned from offering allergen-free meals in one of England's first examples of a hygiene emergency prohibition notice (HEPN) being used for this purpose.

A customer had been reassured that the food business could provide an allergen-free meal, after informing them of an allergy to certain foods yet went on to suffer a severe anaphylactic reaction and was hospitalised. Upon visiting the premises, Environmental Health officers found areas where food could be cross-contaminated and discovered a lack of knowledge about allergens.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y22p5qys>

T CELL THAT DRIVES ANAPHYLAXIS IN FOOD ALLERGY IDENTIFIED



A new study has uncovered a previously unknown cell type that promotes the anaphylactic reaction and could be used to identify individuals who are most at risk. The study, co-led by researchers at Yale School of Medicine and The Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine, was published online in Science.

Researchers have long known that an antibody called IgE initiates anaphylaxis but it was not clear until now exactly how a rare form of IgE that binds strongly to allergens, such as peanuts, was made by the immune system.

Through experiments, researchers discovered that a subset of T cells, which they dubbed Tfh13 (T follicular help cell 13), help B cells make the rare form of IgE. The researchers then examined cell samples from mice and patients with food and respiratory allergies, confirming the presence of the mysterious Tfh13 cell.

This finding could lead to changes in the way ongoing clinical trials that include individuals with allergies are analyzed, and how patients with allergies are tested and diagnosed. While many individuals have IgE in their blood, they may not actually be at risk for anaphylaxis. But testing for the Tfh13 cell could potentially help clinicians identify those most likely to have a severe and possibly fatal reaction. In future studies, researchers can also use this insight to focus on developing drugs to block the anaphylactic response.

The study can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yx8t479x>

ANIMAL WELFARE

REVIEW OF GUIDANCE ON RISK ASSESSMENT OF PESTICIDES AND BEES

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have announced plans to review its guidance on the risk assessment of pesticides and bees in the EU. A consultation will take place whereby EFSA will seek views on the current guidance document, published in 2013. Following analysis of the feedback obtained, EFSA's scientific working group will begin its review. A full public consultation and workshop will then take place, once the document has been drafted.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2t7qlco>



DEFRA LAUNCH NEW UK BORDER CAMPAIGN AGAINST ASF



The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have recently launched a new UK border campaign, designed to keep African swine fever out of the UK. The campaign aims to safeguard the UK's pork and pig industries against the introduction of the disease to the UK. It includes a new poster campaign in UK airports and ports throughout the summer, to raise awareness of the disease and warn holidaymakers of the risks around bringing contaminated pork products into the UK.

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

LATEST OUTBREAK ASSESSMENT FOR HPAI IN EUROPE

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) recently published an updated situation assessment for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Europe.

The assessment highlights that there have been no new outbreaks reported in Europe since April 2019. It also provides an update on the situation in Russia, Bulgaria and Europe since January 2019, with a summary of the outbreaks in the Middle East and central Asia. The assessment concludes that the risk of HPAI in wild birds in the UK is low.



The update can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3rez95d>

OUTBREAK ASSESSMENT FOR BLUETONGUE VIRUS IN BELGIUM AND GERMANY

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have published an updated outbreak assessment for bluetongue virus (BTV-8) in Germany and Belgium. Since the last outbreak assessment in March 2019, the reporting of outbreaks in Germany has fallen with no further spread identified and there have been no new outbreaks reported in Belgium. The report concludes that the overall risk of infection of UK cattle with the virus is still considered to be low.

The report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxk2ph5k>



BREXIT

REPORT ON PROPOSALS TO AVOID IRISH BACKSTOP

The Alternative Arrangements Commission have recently published a report on proposals for the Northern Irish border post-Brexit. Chaired by Conservative MPs Nicky Morgan and Greg Hands, the Commission was established by Prosperity UK, an independent platform dedicated to optimising the UK's global economic status after it leaves the EU.

The report, titled 'Alternative Arrangements for the Irish Border' aims to present solutions to post-Brexit border control between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland without implementing either a hard border – which would contravene the Good Friday Agreement – or the backstop laid out in Theresa May's withdrawal agreement, which would see the UK remain in a customs union agreement with the EU after its exit, with Northern Ireland also staying in a single market arrangement to minimise any friction with Ireland.

The report makes a series of recommendations to ensure there is no need for a hard border after Brexit. The proposals include:

- Carrying out sanitary tests on foods and livestock at points away from the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
- Implementing Special Economic Zones to avoid disruption of cross-border communities
- Establishing a multi-tiered Trusted Trader programme, reducing the need for customs inspections of businesses accredited under the programme.

The Commission notes that, if the report's recommendations are correctly implemented, the alternative arrangements for the Irish border should be fully in place within three years after Brexit.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6g2or4a>

UPDATE ON 'ROLLING OVER' EU FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

The International Trade Committee recently published an update from the Secretary of State for International Trade, providing an update on the 'rolling over' of EU Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). The UK is currently party to around 40 FTAs that the EU has with some 70 countries, accounting for over 14% of UK trade. If these are not 'rolled over' by the time Brexit occurs, and the UK departs on a 'no deal' basis, their benefits will cease to apply to UK businesses. The Committee has continued to closely monitor how well the Government is progressing in rolling-over these agreements since its report on the subject, published in March 2018.

In the letter, some of the things the Secretary of State informs the Committee are:

- DIT "continues to work hard to have bilateral agreements ready for when we need them, whether that is for a No Deal scenario or after an Implementation Period"
- Some partners "have not fully engaged with the prospect that leaving the EU without an agreement remains a possibility"
- Negotiations with key trading partner Canada are "at an advanced stage"
- He and his Department "continue to explore with Turkey all options for enabling continuity of trade", noting that Turkey is in a customs union with the EU and therefore it is not possible to fully replicate these arrangements;
- The EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement will be used "as the basis" for the UK's future trading relationship with Japan (as the current agreement will not be rolled-over);
- The recently-announced 'roll-over' of agreements with Iceland, Norway and Switzerland do not wholly replicate current trading conditions.

Further detail can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5rlpjj5>

COMMONS EXITING THE EUROPEAN UNION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Committee on Exiting the EU have recently published a report into the consequences of a 'no deal' Brexit for UK business. The report warns that a 'no-deal' Brexit would lead to severe disruption, pose a fundamental risk to the competitiveness of key sectors of the UK's economy and put many jobs and livelihoods at risk. According to the report the effect would be most severe in the North East and the West Midlands, and the chemical, retail, food and drink and manufacturing sectors would be hardest hit.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4lz2oum>

REPORT ON FUTURE OF SCOTTISH AGRICULTURE POST-BREXIT

The Scottish Affairs Committee have recently published a report on the future of Scottish agriculture post-Brexit. The report recommends a revision to the funding formula which would ensure that those farmers working in the most challenging environments receive the most support. It would also lead to an increase in the UK-wide agricultural funding allocated to Scotland. The report calls on the government to increase the pilot seasonal agriculture scheme to 10,000 workers and scrap application and visa interview fees.

You can access the report here: <https://tinyurl.com/y45asrql>

SPEECH ON POSSIBILITY OF A NO DEAL BREXIT

The Cabinet Office have published details of an article written by Michael Gove MP on the real possibility of a 'no-deal' Brexit and the importance of being ready for such an outcome. The article highlights that Britain will leave the EU on 31 October 2019 and aims to have a deal in place ahead of this, but the Withdrawal Agreement will not be the same.

It also stresses that the backstop needs to be abolished and a different way found to handle trade, and other important relations, on Ireland. However, it acknowledges that EU leaders have so far resisted this and therefore a 'no-deal' Brexit is a very real possibility. It stresses the work that has already been done in this respect and that which is left to do and promises a public information campaign to enable people and businesses to prepare if there is no deal.

You can read the article in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3pmpya3>



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

SAI GLOBAL ASSURANCE ACHIEVES 5-STAR BRCGS RATING

SAI Global Assurance, a recognised leader in integrated risk management and assurance services, and a member of the BFFF, has been awarded a five-Star “Excellent” rating from leading brand and consumer protection organisation BRCGS – its highest rating for Certification Bodies accredited to audit its standard.



“The five-star rating is testament to our commitment to continuous improvement, auditor capability and expertise and by being awarded the highest achievable rating proves that we have a formidable global BRCGS auditing team,” said Tim Jacob, COO at SAI Global Assurance. “The recognition also acknowledges the professionalism of our support teams and our ingrained customer service centric approach. It also proves our commitment to strengthen an organization’s risk posture; enabling them to better protect their reputation and build trust and brand resilience.”

With the rise of globalisation, social media, and an increasingly energised conscious consumer, the food network is under pressure to prove the quality, safety and integrity of its products. A robust food safety management system, such as BRCGS, demonstrates an undertaking to offer full and transparent disclosure on its products to its customers.

To provide transparency in performance, BRCGS awards Certification Bodies with a star rating according to their service performance. This reflects the overall management of the BRC certification scheme by the Certification Body head office.

The rating system is contingent upon demonstrated excellence in:

- Quality of written audit reports, reviewed on a sample basis
- Compliance to protocols: How audits are conducted and reported
- Auditor registration and compliance relating to training, experience and competence requirements
- Speed of uploading audit data to the BRC Directory
- Communication with the BRC Global Standards compliance team

Tessa Kelly, Operations Director at BRCGS, said: “BRCGS monitors its approved certification bodies closely through its comprehensive compliance program and every six months awards a star rating based on an ever-demanding set of criteria. We offer our congratulations to SAI Global Assurance on their top five-star rating.”

SAI Global Assurance, who has been accredited to the BRC standard since its inception in 1998, has 200 auditors operating in over 50 countries and delivers more than 125,000 audits and training courses to over 100,000 people each year.

You can find out more about how SAI Global Assurance can help you here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6srmu35>

NEW UK SEAFOOD INNOVATION FUND

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) and Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy have launched the UK Seafood Innovation Fund (SIF) scheme offering a £10 million research and development (R&D) fund. It includes primary producers; onshore supply chains; marine and diadromous fisheries; and marine and land-based aquaculture; but excludes freshwater fishing and recreational fishing. This 3-years programme focuses on:

- Delivering longer term, cutting-edge innovation across the seafood sector including the potential use of artificial intelligence by fishermen.
- Helping to take innovative ideas from early stage research to commercial viability

The UK Seafood Innovation Fund is being administered by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas). The first call of applications will close in early September. The second call will open in early 2020.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxaf8svt>

Guidance on how to apply for research and development funding from the scheme has also been published and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyze6ay7>

GUIDANCE ON SEARCHING FOR SIMILAR TRADE MARK GOODS AND SERVICES

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) has produced updated guidance on searching for similar trade mark goods/ services in other classes. The guidance sets out that when the IPO search for earlier trademarks, they only look in classes containing the same or similar goods or services to the application. Class 7 has been added to application class 11.

You will find the updated guidance here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4vfl486>

UNIVERSITY OF READING STUDENTS MAKE ECOTROPHELIA EUROPEAN FINAL

A team of students from University of Reading have won the gold prize at Ecotrophelia for their vegan energy sweets for endurance athletes. The Venergy team has developed lemon and lime flavoured energy sweets which provide a vegan sustainable alternative to energy products, by tackling issues with ingredient and packaging sustainability. Each member of the gold-winning team took home a share of £2,000 and an invitation to become an Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST) Young Ambassador.

Now in its seventh year, Ecotrophelia UK is a 'Dragons Den' style competition that challenges teams of UK students to develop an innovative, eco-friendly food and drink product. From idea generation through to the final packaged product, the teams get a hands-on experience of what it takes to bring an eco-friendly food or drink product to market.

Caruffle team from Nottingham Trent University secured the silver prize and £1,000 for their truffle made from carob and hazelnut with a mixed fruit jelly centre and rolled in popped and ground quinoa. The bronze prize and £500 was awarded to the second team from University of Reading for their vegan, gluten-free and reduced fat quiche-like product made of a sweet potato base packed with roasted vegetables in a chickpea flour filling. All three prize winning teams will also receive a one-year IFST membership.

The teams pitched their ideas to judges from top names in the food and drink industry including PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, Food Manufacture, Marks & Spencer, Mondelez, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Unilever, Warburtons, Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST) and Campden BRI.

Venergy team will go on to compete against 16 other national teams from across Europe for the chance to win up to €6,000 at the Ecotrophelia European final, which will take place during ANUGA in Cologne, Germany on 6 and 7 October 2019.

FSA APPOINTS NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have announced that a new Chief Executive has been appointed. Emily Miles, currently the acting Director-General for the EU Exit Delivery Group in Defra, will take up the position from September 2019.

With a civil service career spanning almost twenty years, Emily joined Defra in November 2015 as the Group Director of Strategy and coordinated work on the domestic implications of EU Exit for Defra after the referendum in 2016.

You can read more on the announcement here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5y4g8cb>



DEFRA GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) have published updated details of its governance structure. The information covers the Defra Board, Executive Committee and Board meetings and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yy3u2kbe>

BRCGS LAUNCH START! TRAINING COURSE

To support the START! Programme BRCGS have developed an e-learning Food Safety Introductory Training course which provides sites with a thorough overview to the correct food handling practices.

By the end of the 9 module interactive course trainees will be able to demonstrate that they can:

- Identify food safety hazards
- Explain the principles of food safety management systems- HACCP
- Apply controls to achieve high standards of safe food practices

This training is currently available in English on <https://www.brcgseducate.com/>

For further information contact training@brcgs.com



FOOD SAFETY AND ZOOSES

FOOD SAFETY AMONG TOP CONCERNS FOR FOOD BUSINESSES IN IRELAND

The Food Safety Authority (FSAI) has published the results of the national attitudinal research which shows from a food regulatory perspective that food allergens and ingredients labelling is the number one concern for Irish food businesses.

FSAI surveyed senior executives from a diverse range of food businesses on their concerns about food safety and the food industry's current operating environment. The research shows that more than 7 out of 10 food businesses are increasingly confident about food safety regulation in Ireland, with almost three quarters (73%) stating that food produced in Ireland is safer than it was five years ago.

Despite the increased confidence, the respondents expressed concerns about a numerous food safety issues:

- Allergens and ingredients labelling came out on top as the greatest food safety worry for Irish food businesses, with over half (53%) listing it as one of their top three concerns
- Food hygiene and handling requirements (36%) and carcinogenic chemicals in foods (30%) also ranked highly amongst those surveyed
- One fifth (18%) respondents called for more food safety regulation and enforcement
- Around one third (31%) of food businesses do not feel well enough informed in terms of food safety information, despite a high proportion claiming to cover this in-house or via consultants

The results can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y44hdz3u>

EFSA PUBLISH FOOD SAFETY REGULATORY RESEARCH NEEDS 2030



The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) recently published an Editorial on food safety regulatory research needs 2030. Views were collected from outgoing Panel members, EFSA staff and other EFSA partner organisations and stakeholders on what food safety research areas should be prioritised for the coming 5–10 years. The paper presents three research streams bringing together the main research needs and priorities in support of food safety risk assessment in the coming years.

You can read the editorial in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5a23ys8>

FSA PUBLISHES THE WALES FINDINGS FOR WAVE FIVE OF FOOD AND YOU SURVEY

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published the Wales findings for wave five of the Food and You survey. Key findings include:

- The most common food groups that most people reported having an adverse reaction to were cows' milk and cows' milk products (21% respondents), cereals containing gluten (16%) and fruit (15%)
- Almost all respondents shopped for food in large supermarkets (94%)
- In Wales, 80% of respondents lived in households with high food security, 10% in households classified as marginally food secure and 10% reported living in household with low or very low food security
- Most respondents (94%) reported having seen the sticker belonging to the Food Hygiene Rating for Food Businesses (FHRS) scheme
- Less than half of respondents (46%) said that they always used different chopping boards for different foods

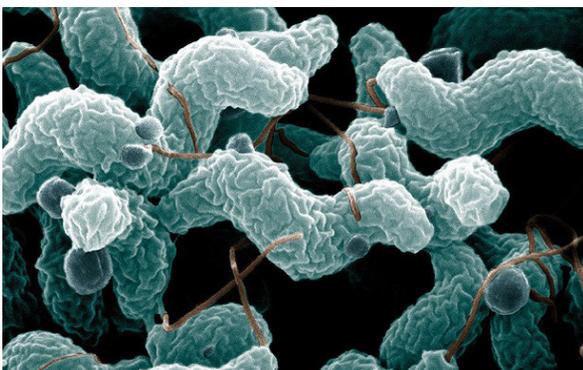


Food and You is an official statistic that has been running on a biennial basis since 2010. It provides key data on the public's self-reported knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in relation to food safety and food related issues. The FSA uses the information to inform policies and its work with consumers.

The Wales report includes findings based on 536 interviews from a representative sample of adults aged 16 and over in Wales. It sits alongside the combined report published on 25 April 2019.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxby399o>

FSA PUBLISH YEAR 4 RESULTS OF CAMPYLOBACTER RETAIL CHICKEN SURVEY



The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have published the Year 4 report for the UK retail chicken survey which took place between August 2017 and July 2018. Samples were collected every quarter but after the first quarter only minor retailers were tested. The UK's top nine retailers have carried out their own sampling since September 2017.

This survey follows on from the 2014/15 survey examining fresh, whole UK-produced chickens sold at retail. The survey again looks at prevalence and levels of campylobacter contamination both on the chicken skin and on the outside of the packaging.

The report found that high level campylobacter contamination in UK chickens has decreased considerably, but remains high in smaller retailers, independents and butchers.

Rebecca Sudworth, Director of Policy at the Food Standards Agency, said:

“Retailers have achieved significant reductions in levels of campylobacter contamination since the retail chicken survey began in 2014. The FSA will continue to engage with industry and particularly smaller retailers, butchers and independents to build on this progress.”

You can access the report here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2me24e7>

EFSA PUBLISH REPORT ON LISTERIOSIS RISK FROM COOKED MEAT

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have published an External Scientific Report on the evaluation of listeriosis risk related to the consumption of non-prepackaged ready-to-eat (RTE) cooked meat products handled at retail stores in Greece.

The report highlights that the probability of illness per serving was found to be related to the sodium nitrate concentration, with products having a lower concentration showing a higher risk per serving. Analysis also showed that the prevalence and initial concentration of *Listeria monocytogenes* immediately after slicing, as well as the temperature and duration of storage in the domestic refrigerator, had the highest impact on the probability of illness per serving.

Predictions were made for the number of listeriosis cases per year for the total population upon consumption of these products handled at retail food service environments in Greece. A higher number of cases were predicted for mortadella, smoked turkey, boiled turkey and parizer, which were the most frequently consumed categories.

Scenarios of setting a use-by date of 14 days in these products and improving the temperature of domestic storage for assessing potential interventions to reduce the risk resulted in the elimination of the median number of annual cases.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5uelkal>

UPDATE ON UK PLANS TO CONTAIN AND CONTROL AMR

The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Public Health England (PHE) have updated information and resources on the UK's plans to see antimicrobial resistance contained and controlled by 2040. New commitments in the fight against antimicrobial resistance have been added to the news section.

The updated information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/olbw52a>

FSA PUBLIC ATTITUDES TRACKER PUBLISHED

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have published results of the public attitudes tracker, which shows that from May 2019, the public's use of hygiene stickers has jumped to 66%, up from 60% in the previous wave from November 2018.

The display of hygiene stickers by food outlets is mandatory in Wales and Northern Ireland; in England, businesses are encouraged to display their hygiene rating.

The survey found that 85% of respondents were aware of the hygiene standards in places they eat out at or buy food from. Food issues of concern were:

- food hygiene when eating out (31%)
- chemicals from the environment, such as lead, in food (30%)
- the use of pesticides to grow food (29%)
- food poisoning (28%)

Wider food issues of concern were:

- food waste (51%)
- the amount of sugar in food (49%)
- food prices (43%)
- animal welfare (43%)
- and the amount of salt in food (39%)

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3h957mq>

FOOD SECURITY, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

The following article has kindly been provided by colleagues at Food Forensics. Food Forensics is an accredited testing laboratory undertaking the analysis of food, food products, beverages, feed and environmental swabs. They offer advice and support on chemical, microbiological and authenticity testing from risk profiling, supply chain mapping, risk management to testing programmes; delivering added value as well as due diligence.



They can be contacted directly on +44 (0)1603 274456 or by emailing info@foodforensics.co.uk.

SAFFRON; RED GOLD OR FOOLS GOLD?

Often quoted as being more expensive than gold, the actual cost of saffron depends on the quality, however, it is extremely expensive. Saffron is produced from the stigmas of the saffron crocus with ~250,000 flowers needed to produce 1kg. It should have a maximum of 0.5% of “floral waste” and 0.1% of extraneous matter.... But how do you know?

A recent food fraud was identified in West Sussex with £750K of stock seized linked back to a factory in Spain. With testing identifying bulking stigmas with worthless material such as other parts of the crocus (dyed with artificial additives) as was seen earlier this year in Spain. Some Spanish saffron has PDO status, but cheaper imports from Iran creates an additional risk of origin fraud. To complicate matters further cartel activity is suspected of market price manipulation.

In 2018 a survey of saffron in India uncovered just 66% of saffron to be genuine with the remainder adulterated with other parts of the plant or other plant material. A French survey suggested 81% of “saffron” samples evaluated had authenticity anomalies. While fraud has been well documented in saffron the financial gain continues to make adulteration worth the risk.

What are the common adulterants?

Species substitution

- Safflower - A member of the daisy family, grown for veg oil, has been sold as saffron with dried flowers giving the characteristic yellow colour to foods but with none of the aromatic components of genuine saffron.
- Turmeric - A member of the ginger family it is sometimes known as Indian saffron, it gives foods the yellow colour but has a very different flavour profile. It has been used to “stretch” genuine saffron powders. Paprika, marigold, Gardenia and arnica have also been used as a diluting filler.
- Artificial colours - Tartrazine (sunset yellow). An azo dye giving a lemon-yellow colour. Used to colour other parts of the crocus plant material or other plant material to bulk out authentic saffron.

What are the common authenticity tests available?

The ISO 3632 standard specifies tests for the major metabolites of the different categories of saffron but there are other tests that provide an overview for authenticity purposes such as:

TEST	DETECTS	LIMITATIONS
Next Generation Sequencing	Species identified from DNA containing material (ie other species)	Will not detect artificial dyes or other parts of the crocus
Liquid chromatography	Identification of natural and artificial dye substances	Will not detect other species present or origin
Microscopic analysis	Identification of the saffron threads/other material, will identify other parts of the saffron plant	Will not detect artificial dyes
Stable Isotope Ratio Analysis	Origin determination	Will not detect artificial dyes or other parts of the plant

ADULTERATED SAFFRON SPARKS INTERNATIONAL PROBE

Officers from West Sussex County Council have uncovered a case of Food fraud involving adulterated saffron.

Officers carried out testing on ten samples of the product as part of a small-scale market surveillance exercise and found seven were adulterated with cheaper plant fibres. The samples related to product sourced partly from a wholesaler and partly from an importer and sold online and in shops by businesses in the Adur and Worthing areas.

Many of the samples originated from Spain so Trading Standards reported the findings to the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The FSA's National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) shared details of West Sussex County Council's investigation with the Spanish Authorities. A total of 90kg of product, worth up to £750,000 was then seized from a clandestine factory in Alicante, Spain and two individuals were arrested.

Genuine saffron sells for £6 to £8 per gram. The method of adulteration usually consists of mixing the pure saffron fibres with other cheaper fibres.

SCIENTISTS DEVELOP ARTIFICIAL TONGUE TO DETECT COUNTERFEIT ALCOHOL

Scientists at Glasgow University have developed an artificial tongue that they propose could be used to detect counterfeit alcohol, as well as in food safety testing and quality control.

The technology is capable of picking up on the differences between the same brand aged in different barrels, with more than 99 per cent accuracy and can tell the difference between those aged for 12, 15 and 18 years.

"We call this an artificial tongue because it acts similarly to a human tongue – like us, it can't identify the individual chemicals which make coffee taste different to apple juice but it can easily tell the difference between these complex chemical mixtures. While we've focused on whisky in this experiment, the artificial tongue could easily be used to 'taste' virtually any liquid, which means it could be used for a wide variety of applications," said Alasdair Clark at the University of Glasgow.

You can read more on this development here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxjam93q>



NEW METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH DEVELOPED FOR FOOD ANALYSIS

Scientists at the Technical University of Munich (TUM) and the Leibniz-Institute for Food Systems Biology have developed a new methodological approach for the simultaneous analysis of odorants and tastants which could simplify and accelerate the quality control of food in the future.

"We have now developed a new, innovative methodical approach that will enable us to examine food simultaneously for both odorants and tastants in a time-saving high-throughput process. It is based on an ultra-high performance liquid chromatography mass spectrometry (UHPLC-MS) method typically used for taste analysis," said Thomas Hofmann, Director of the Leibniz-Institute for Food Systems Biology and Professor of Food Chemistry and Molecular Sensory Science at the TUM.

The new method makes it possible for the first time to analyse a large number of samples in a very short time with regard to their taste and odour giving ingredients and it is hoped that the method can be developed further so that it can be used by food manufacturers to quickly and easily monitor the flavour of food along the entire value chain and, if necessary, optimise it. Using the identified flavour profiles, it would also be possible to check the origin and quality label of the manufacturers and detect food fraud.

WARNING ABOUT MIS-SOLD TUNA IN SCOTLAND

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) have helped to uncover a £180 million scam involving dangerous mis-sold tuna.

The scam involved the tuna being illegally treated with vegetable extracts containing a high concentration of nitrates to alter the colour and give the impression of freshness. This can represent a serious risk to public health.

The ongoing Operation Opson involved police, customs and food experts across 11 countries. Samples were taken from fishing vessels and processing plants across Europe resulted in 51 tonnes of frozen tuna being seized, mainly in Spain, where a criminal investigation was launched.



GLOBAL STANDARDS

BRCGS PACKAGING STANDARD ISSUE 6 PUBLISHED

BRCGS

Following a wide stakeholder consultation, Issue 6 of the BRCGS packaging Standard has now been published.

Originally developed and published in 2001, it was designed to protect the consumer by providing a common basis for the certification of companies supplying packaging to food producers.

The Standard has been updated at regular intervals since, to reflect the latest thinking in product safety, and has now attained usage worldwide, not only by food packaging producers, but by producers of packaging for all applications at all levels of the supply chain. It now provides a robust framework for all types of packaging manufacturer to assist them in the production of safe packaging materials and to manage product quality to meet customers' requirements, while maintaining legal compliance.

The information has been developed and reviewed by a working group composed of international stakeholders representing different sectors of the packaging materials manufacturing industry, retailers, brand owners, food service companies, certification bodies and independent technical experts. Key features remain integral to the Standard, such as:

- meeting the needs of retailers and brand owners to reduce the audit burden;
- better recognition of the diversity of the packaging industry and its customers' demands;
- encouraging greater transparency and traceability in the supply chain; and
- encouraging adoption of the Standard as a means of improving product safety at small sites and facilities where processes are still in development.

The focus for issue 6 has been on:

- enhancing the processes used by quality management systems in printed packaging controls and through a hazard and risk analysis approach;
- continuing to ensure consistency of the audit process across the world;
- the importance of a product safety and quality culture in the drive to improve transparency and coherence across the food supply chain;
- simplifying the hygiene requirements based solely on risk;
- introducing a new fundamental clause, corrective and preventive actions, to address issues and minimise the risk of their occurring;
- based on risk, putting a microbiological environmental monitoring programme in place; and
- simplifying the unannounced audit programme.

There continues to be an emphasis on management commitment, a hazard and risk analysis-based product safety programme and a supporting quality management system. The objective has been to direct the focus of the audit towards the implementation of good manufacturing practices within the production areas while recognising the diversity and breadth of the packaging industry, and the skills required to audit it.

More information , along with a downloadable auditor checklist and site self- assessment tool can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyvcufkc>

CODEX REQUEST INFORMATION ON INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY IN FOOD LABELLING

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS



Codex Alimentarius have issued a request for information on innovation and technology in food labelling.

The request sets out a number of questions for consideration, including: the gaps to address respecting the use of technology in the sale of foods or in conveying information about foods; mandatory labelling information that can be provided through technology and criteria for the use of technology in food labelling. All information must be submitted by 30 November 2019.

Further detail can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y34kpckt>

CODEX REQUEST FOR BULKING OR BLENDING INFORMATION

Codex Alimentarius has published a request for bulking or blending information for commodities and blended foods, in the framework of the review of the International Estimated Short-Intake (IESTI) equations used to assess the short-term dietary intake of pesticide residues.

Replies are sought to three separate questions and must be submitted by 10 November 2019.

You can find more information here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxhdzu38>

CODEX AGREE RANGE OF STANDARDS

Codex Alimentarius recently announced that a range of standards had been agreed at the Codex Alimentarius Commission, held between 8th-12th July 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland. Over 100 countries agreed the standards which will now be published as part of the Codex Alimentarius.

The recommendations for adoption of new and revised Codex texts include:

- Draft guidelines for rapid risk analysis following the detection of contaminants in food where there is no regulatory level
- Maximum levels for contaminants and residues of pesticides;
- A series of food additive provisions
- New work on allergen labelling.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxo8bcdl>

CODEX REQUEST COMMENTS ON DRAFT CODE OF PRACTICE ON FOOD ALLERGEN MANAGEMENT

Codex Alimentarius has published a request for comments at step 6 on the draft code of practice on food allergen management for food business operators. All responses must be submitted by 20 September 2019.

More information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3kxaqm8>

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

EFSA OPINION ON DIETARY SUGARS RESCHEDULED

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have agreed an extension to the scientific advice on dietary sugars, which will aim to set a tolerable upper intake level for total/added/free sugars. Due to the volume of data and studies to be collected, analysed and assessed, the deadline for advice has been extended with the agreement of the Member States involved. It is expected that a public consultation on the draft advice will be conducted in late 2020, with the final advice published in 2021

You can read more in the recent press release here: <https://tinyurl.com/y45jd7ct>

PHE PUBLISH EVIDENCE REVIEW ON COMMERCIAL INFANT AND BABY FOOD AND DRINK



Public Health England (PHE) have published a report on foods and drinks aimed at infants and young children, with evidence and opportunities for action. The report sets out PHE's advice to government on possible actions to improve foods and drinks aimed at children up to 36 months of age.

The report also highlights inconsistencies between national recommendations on infant and young child feeding and some commercial baby foods and drinks, in terms of the types of products available, their ingredient and nutrition composition and product labelling and marketing.

It concludes that infants and young children are eating too much sugar and salt, and energy intakes are exceeding requirements. It goes on to recommend that the food industry and government take action, including:

- Improving the nutrient content of products
- Ensuring clear, consistent and honest labelling and marketing of products and that products high in sugars are labelled as not being suitable for eating between meals
- Restricting the use of implied health claims on baby food products

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y29dzxrk>

LECTURE ON ULTRA-PROCESSED FOODS

Members may be interested in viewing a recording of a lecture recently held by The Institute for Food Science and Technology (IFST) on 'Ultra-processed foods: The science and the policy'.

The lecture, given by Professor Michael Gibney, Emeritus Professor of Food and Health, University College Dublin, discussed views on 'ultra-processed foods' and the issues raised for policy makers. This included no clear biological basis to believe that either processing or additives are linked to chronic disease and that advocating avoidance of ultra-processed foods may create problems for policy makers and for consumers.

It was also noted that more work on nutrient intake as a function of specific genotypes may provide clearer evidence for policy making on major disease classes.

You can watch the lecture here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyas2ptq>

DHSC CONSULT ON ADVANCING OUR HEALTH AND CHAPTER 3 OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY PLAN

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Cabinet Office have jointly launched a consultation on proposals contained in a green paper to help people live healthier, happier lives for longer, entitled, 'Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s'.

Proposals cover a wide range of issues including the next chapter of the childhood obesity plan - Chapter 3. This sets out our plans for:



- infant feeding
- clear labelling –the government will explore what additional opportunities leaving the European Union presents for front-of-pack food labelling in England. As part of exploring this they will consult by the end of 2019 on how we can build on the successes of the current front-of-pack nutritional labelling scheme once we have left the European Union.
- food reformulation improving the nutritional content of foods:
 - Sugar - if the evidence shows that industry has not made enough progress on reducing sugar, they may extend the Soft Drinks Industry Levy (SDIL) to sugary milk drinks.
 - Salt – PHE's 2018 report showed that 81% of products were meeting the targets for 2017. The governments ambition is to reduce the population's salt intakes to 7g per day. To achieve this, they will publish revised salt reduction targets in 2020 for industry to achieve by mid-2023 and will report on industry's progress in 2024. They will "keep all options open if a voluntary approach does not demonstrate enough progress by 2024". They will commission a urinary sodium survey in 2023 to measure progress towards the ambition and understand how much salt individuals are consuming.
- support for individuals to achieve and maintain a healthier weight.

The consultation is open until 14 October 2019 and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3t2bvtg>

Following this, government aims to publish a response by spring 2020, setting out its proposals in more detail.

WHOLE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO OBESITY PUBLISHED

Public Health England (PHE) recently published guidance on a whole systems approach to obesity. This is a guide and set of resources to support local authorities with implementing a whole systems approach to address obesity and promote a healthy weight.

The guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6qqmz9e>

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICERS' 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have published the Chief Medical Officers' Annual Report for 2019, entitled 'Health, our global asset - partnering for progress'.

The report by Professor Dame Sally Davies considers current and future UK engagement with global health and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yymevkcl>

SACN REPORT ON SATURATED FATS AND HEALTH

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) has published its final report on 'Saturated fats and health', which considers the relationship between saturated fats, health outcomes and risk factors for non-communicable diseases in the general UK population.

Overall conclusions and recommendations were:

Conclusions:

- New evidence published since 1994 supports and strengthens the COMA conclusion that a reduction in intake of saturated fats from current population average levels would be beneficial.
- The evidence indicates that reducing saturated fats reduces the risk of Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) and Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) events, lowers total, LDL and HDL cholesterol and improves indicators of glycaemic control.
- The evidence also indicates that reducing saturated fats is unlikely to increase health risks for the general UK population.
- SACN concluded that reducing population average saturated fat intakes from current levels of intake to no more than about 10% of [total] dietary energy would result in health benefits to the population.
- In relation to what should take the place of saturated fats in the diet, more evidence is available from Randomised Controlled Trials (RCT's) for substitution with Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids (PUFAs) than for substitution with Monounsaturated Fatty Acids (MUFAs), carbohydrates or proteins, in relation to CVD and CHD outcomes. However, SACN was mindful that if all substitution of saturated fats was with PUFA alone this could increase the proportion of the population consuming in excess of about 10% energy from PUFA; at odds with current UK Government dietary recommendations.

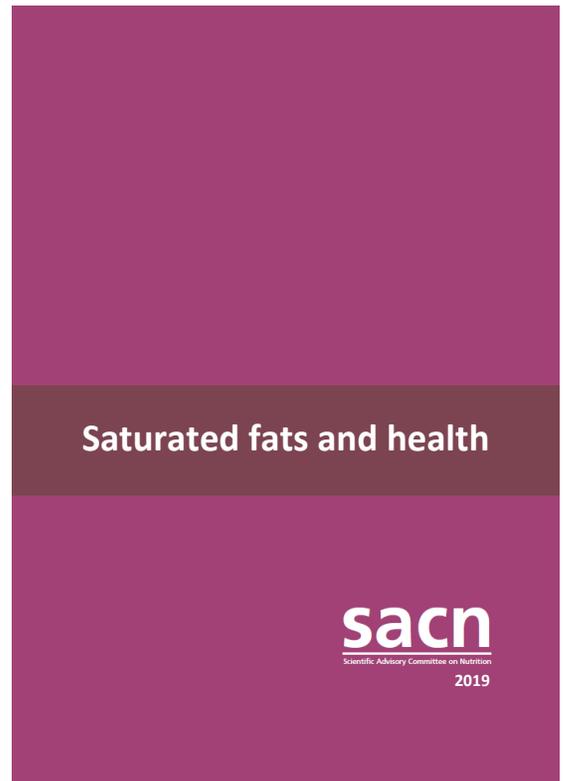
Recommendations:

- The dietary reference value for saturated fats remains unchanged: the [population] average contribution of saturated fatty acids to [total] dietary energy be reduced to no more than about 10%. This recommendation applies to adults and children aged 5 years and older.
- Saturated fats are substituted with unsaturated fats. More evidence is available supporting substitution with PUFA than substitution with MUFA.
- This recommendation is made in the context of existing UK Government recommendations for macronutrients and energy.
- It is recommended that the government gives consideration to strategies to reduce the [population] average contribution of saturated fatty acids to [total] dietary energy to no more than about 10%. Risk managers should be mindful of the available evidence in relation to substitution of saturated fats with different types of unsaturated fats and ensure that strategies are consistent with wider dietary recommendations, including trans fats.

Note however that this report doesn't consider the effects of specific types of fatty acids as it was not part of the scope of the work. The challenge will now be how to communicate this information to consumers – Which types of food do you tell consumers to eat less of?

The report is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxatt8gt>

The consultation responses are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6pfj9lq>



FUNDING FOR COUNCILS TO ADDRESS CHILDHOOD OBESITY

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) DHSC have announced that five local councils will receive funding to test and refine their ideas for addressing childhood obesity and health inequalities.

As part of the second chapter of the government's childhood obesity plan, the councils in Bradford, Blackburn, Nottinghamshire, Lewisham and Birmingham will be awarded £100,000 a year over three years for their planned programmes. These will be supported by DHSC and Public Health England (PHE) and include:

- Offering health, food, nutrition and physical-activity focused apprenticeships for 15 to 19-year olds in deprived areas, where obesity rates are highest
- Partnerships with local mosques to support South Asian children, who are at a greater risk of obesity, by providing places and ways to exercise, alongside healthier food
- Working with local restaurants and takeaways to improve menus and incentivise healthier options

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxr3p7z9>

IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

DRAFT REGULATION ON ANIMALS OR GOODS REQUIRING CHECKS AT EU BCPS

An Implementing Regulation has been drafted under the Official Controls Regulation (EU) 2017/625 establishing the lists of animals and goods subject to official controls at border control posts (BCPs). Also indicated within the document are their respective Combined Nomenclature (CN) code.

This draft document was open for public consultation until August 16th but can still be viewed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3jh5zm5>

Note: Defra have stated that should an Implementation Period be agreed, they would be obliged to adopt the Official Controls Regulation in full. If no deal is agreed on exit from the EU, whilst the intention is to adopt the principles of these laws, Defra would want to review the final legislation before committing to adopt it in full. This fits in line with their commitment to maintain both the highest standards of biosecurity in the UK and the frictionless trade at the border

This draft Implementing Regulation will apply from 14 December 2019.

DEFRA CONTACTS LIST UPDATED

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) recently issued a revised contacts list. The email address for queries related to exports of animal, animal products (where export health certificates are needed) and imports of live animals has been updated.

You will find the updated list here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyoeltg8>

REGULATORY

GOVERNMENT CHEMIST PUBLISHES QUARTERLY LEGISLATION REVIEW

The Government Chemist has published its quarterly legislation review on food and feed law.

This is the eighth in a series of quarterly reports produced under the Government Chemist Programme 2017-2020. The reports provide a compendium of UK food and feed law of interest to the Government Chemist, Public Analysts and those working primarily in food and feed standards.

The aim is to provide regular updates, to ensure contextual awareness and assist in the interpretation of chemical measurement data.

The report covers a number of areas and topics, organised in categories. It also includes an executive summary with a description of issues. A total of 36 topics have received updates to legislation or guidelines including Exiting the EU, Animal welfare, Antimicrobial resistance, Food Additives, Food Authenticity, Food Contact Materials, Food hygiene, Food labelling and composition, Import controls, Nutritional data. Protected names and quality schemes and sugars analysis

The report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y59b8l5u>

INCREASED LEVEL OF OFFICIAL CONTROLS ON IMPORTS OF FEED AND FOOD OF NON-ANIMAL ORIGIN

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1249 of 22 July 2019 amending Annex I to Regulation (EC) No 669/2009 implementing Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the increased level of official controls on imports of certain feed and food of non-animal origin was published in the Official Journal of the EU, L195/5, 23/07/2019.

This Regulation entered into force on 26th July 2019 and includes new listings for jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) from Malaysia, unprocessed whole, ground, milled, cracked and chopped apricot kernels from Turkey and groundnuts and peanut butter from the USA. Several other listings are also amended. You can access the regulation here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5k3qx3x>

FSS PUBLISH APPROVED PREMISES REGISTER FOR SCOTLAND

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) have published an Approved Premises Register for Scotland. The establishments contained in the register handle, prepare or produce products of animal origin and are approved according to Regulation (EC) 853/2004.

The register is split into sections according to product type and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yddcdt6b>

OPS ANNOUNCE PA REGULATORY EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPS) has announced that Wakefield Council and Wm Morrison Supermarkets plc were Primary Authority category winners in the Regulatory Excellence Awards.

Wakefield Council and Morrisons were one of the first primary authority partnerships in the country to take National Inspection Strategies (NIS) from an unexplored concept to a viable option for delivering risk-based regulation (to be trialled). Their work explored how National Inspection Strategies (NIS) for food hygiene partnerships could be used to tailor proactive intervention and reduce regulatory burdens. It used business data to accurately predict independently awarded food hygiene ratings. The partnership also looked at how the Food Hygiene Rating System (FHRS) could continue to operate if NIS was implemented.

You can read more in the following news story: <https://tinyurl.com/y4p68ynm>

RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH SHOWS PATIENTS WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE EXHIBIT LOWER VITAMIN D LEVELS

Patients with Parkinson's disease were found to have significantly lower levels of vitamin D in their blood in a study published in the journal Acta Neurologica Scandinavia.

The study, which evaluated 182 Parkinson's patients and 185 healthy individuals, also found that patients with lower vitamin D levels were more prone to accidents of falling, sleep problems, depression and anxiety. The findings suggest that vitamin D supplementation may help to treat the non-motor symptoms associated with Parkinson's disease.

An overview of the report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6zb6hvx>

STUDY SHOWS BENEFITS OF VEGAN DIET

A study of over 12,000 people aged 45 to 64 by John Hopkins University, has found that eating more plant-based foods and reducing meat intake 'lowers your risk of dying from heart disease by 32%' and reduces risk of early death by any cause by 25%. Researchers stress that people do not have to give up meat and dairy completely but should have a 'larger proportion of plant-based foods' in their diet.

The findings of the research are published in the Journal of the American Heart Association and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y46ub63t>



APHA PUBLISH RESEARCH ON ANIMAL AND WILDLIFE DISEASES

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have published updated details of the research it carries out on various animal and wildlife diseases, including: bovine TB, foodborne bacteria, and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The information also highlights that APHA acts as a National and International reference laboratory for a wide range of infectious and non-infectious diseases in farm animals.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6t4lswH>

CHIA SEEDS REDUCE RESIDUAL NITRITE LEVELS IN PROCESSED MEAT.



Researchers from Miguel Hernández University in Spain have found that adding chia seeds or chia co-products to processed meat products boosts their nutritional profile and lowers residual nitrite levels.

The scientists prepared a typical frankfurter formulation using lean pork meat and fat, water, potato starch, sodium chloride, sodium tripolyphosphate, sodium nitrite, casein, liquid smoke and spices. They then added 3% chia seeds to one batch, 3% chia flour to another, 3% chia co-product to a third and kept one batch as a control. They found that adding chia seeds in any form increased the fiber content while there was a significant increase in the fat content with whole chia seeds and chia flour. This could improve the fatty acid profile of the frankfurters, the scientists noted.

The chia seed ingredients also showed greater resistance to oxidation and lower residual nitrite levels. All three of the chia seed frankfurters saw reductions that reached around 90% - something that may be due to the polyphenolic compounds present in chia products, according to the study authors – compared to 65% for the control.

However, the researchers state that the findings do not mean that manufacturers could use lower amounts of nitrates as nitrates (or alternative additives with the same function) are needed to inhibit the growth of *Clostridium botulinum*. But they claim it is still a positive:

“The presence of chia reduces the level of residual nitrite in the sausages during its preservation, and so, the risk of these nitrites reacting with amines forming potentially carcinogenic nitrosamines is lower,” they state.

As part of the study, 30 individuals aged between 18 and 55 tried the frankfurters and rated them for colour, taste, aroma, texture and general acceptability. Although they detected some sensory differences in the reformulated sausages, all of these were deemed acceptable.

You will find the research paper here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxwYqsjf>

STUDY ON USE OF AI TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL FOOD RECALLS

Researchers at Boston University School of Medicine have used an artificial intelligence (AI) programme named BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representation from Transformations) to identify foods that may need to be recalled.

The system is based partly on Amazon customer reviews and identified potentially unsafe foods through customers' use of words such as 'terrible', 'strange' and 'unacceptable', as well as comments about labelling errors.

The study is published in the Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association (JAMIA) here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyh877yg>

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT & CSR

WRAP PUBLISH DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR RECYCLABILITY OF RIGID PLASTIC PACKAGING



The Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) recently published design guidance for recyclability of household rigid plastic packaging. This guidance, part of the UK Plastics Pact, sets out which rigid plastics used in household packaging are currently classed as 'recyclable'. It also provides direction to packaging designers, setting out a vision for design, including targets for recycled content and highlights a preference for clear plastic.

The guidance will be updated in the future to include other plastics, such as films and flexibles and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6m8lrmf>

Grant To Increase Rates of Business Waste Recycling In England

The Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) have launched a new grant to increase rates of business waste recycling in England. The new one-million pound recycling grant is part of the Resource Action Fund, launched by Defra in May 2019.

The aim is to provide capital support to organisations that either collect or facilitate collection of non-household municipal waste (including packaging, paper and food waste) generated by sectors such as hospitality and food service, to increase recycling rates. The grants will be managed by WRAP with application forms available from the WRAP website

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y63ln82q>

WRAP publish report on food waste in UK primary production

The Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) recently published a report on food waste in primary production in the UK. The review covers the moment when a food crop is ready to harvest, or an animal to be slaughtered, and assesses surplus and waste arising from processes such as grading, packing and washing, as well as customer rejections. It includes the core categories of vegetables, fruit, cereal crops, dairy and livestock. Amongst the key findings are:

- More work is urgently needed in the areas of food surplus and waste on farms
- Approximately 3.6 million tonnes of food surplus and waste occur in primary production every year, worth £1.2 billion
- Agricultural food waste is over 1.6 million tonnes with 2 million tonnes of surplus, or 7% of the total annual UK food harvest.



You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/y5ssr2eh>

RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION ON CHANGING THE UK PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Welsh and Scottish Governments and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland (DAERA) recently published a summary of responses and next steps to the consultation on changing the UK producer responsibility system for packaging waste.

The consultation which ran from 18th February to 13th May 2019 received 679 responses. As a result, the Government will introduce an extended producer responsibility system for packaging in 2023. The powers to extend the producer responsibility systems will be enacted via the Environment Bill and a consultation on the final proposals is expected in 2020.

You can read details of the outcome here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4w2ks9g>

RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION ON CONSISTENT RECYCLING COLLECTIONS IN ENGLAND

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Defra have published a summary of responses and the Government response to the consultation on making recycling collections consistent in England. The consultation ran from 18th February to 13th May 2019 and received 1713 responses.

The Government response sets out that work will be undertaken with stakeholders to develop more detailed regulations and guidance for implementing consistency in recycling. The measures are expected to come into effect from 2023.

You will find the summary here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6kyuxo8>

RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION ON DRS



The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Welsh Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland (DAERA) have published a summary of responses, executive summary and next steps to the consultation on introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers (bottles and cans).

The consultation ran from 18th February to 13th May 2019 and received 1180 responses, as well as over 207,000 campaign responses. As a result, the government are seeking to introduce a deposit return scheme for drinks containers in England and Wales into law via the Environment Bill. A consultation on the proposed scope and model of the scheme is expected in 2020, with introduction of the scheme by 2023.

You can find more detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/yyeca3uj>

RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION ON A PLASTIC PACKAGING TAX

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and HM Treasury have published the summary of responses to the consultation on a plastic packaging tax, which ran from 18th February to 12th May 2019.

There were over 400 responses and a number of respondents agreed with the initial proposals on many elements of the tax design, although there were some areas where significant numbers disagreed. It also sets out that, for all areas of the tax design, the government will continue to consider which approaches will best support the objectives and do not have a disproportionate impact on business.

The next steps will be set out in the Budget 2019 and HMRC will publish a technical consultation on the detail of the tax design at a later date, as well as draft legislation for consultation in 2020.

More detail can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4lwulnm>

CITIZENS' INITIATIVE ON PUTTING AN END TO THE ERA OF PLASTIC IN EUROPE

Commission Decision (EU) 2019/1268 of 3 July 2019 on the proposed citizens' initiative entitled 'Let's put an end to the era of plastic in Europe' was published in the Official Journal of the EU, L200/33, 29/07/2019.

The Decision entered into force on 26th July 2019 and calls on the European Commission to revise the Directive on the impact of certain plastics on the environment, with the aim of banning all single-use plastics in Europe.

You will find the document here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4ckdf14>

CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON LINKS BETWEEN INEQUALITY, HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND FOOD SUSTAINABILITY

The Committee on Food, Poverty, Health and the Environment is calling for evidence for its inquiry into the links between inequality, health inequalities and food sustainability.

Healthy life expectancy is nearly twenty years shorter in the lowest income groups than in the highest. Our diets are a key part of this. The Committee will consider how a healthier and more environmentally sustainable diet can be made accessible to everyone and what changes to food policy, the industry and existing measures can achieve this. The inquiry will examine, amongst others, the following issues:

Causes of food insecurity and its impact on public health

The barriers that prevent people from accessing healthy food and eating a health diet

The impact of food industry practices (including product formulation, portion size, packaging and labelling) on consumers dietary choices

Whether efforts to improve food production sustainability could offer solutions to improving food insecurity and dietary health in the UK.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y27wavzl>

All information must be submitted by 12 September 2019

FUNDING TO HELP FIGHT AGAINST SINGLE-USE PLASTICS



The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and UK Research and Innovation announced on 22nd July that business are expected to jointly invest, alongside government investment, under the Industrial Strategy challenge to help fight against single-use plastics. Up to £149 million is expected from business investment, alongside the £60 million government funding.

This could be used to find ways to cut waste in the supply chain, develop new business models and create new sustainable forms of packaging and plastic made from plants, wood chippings and food waste. This initiative forms part of the government's Clean Growth Challenge and will contribute to the UK's drive to become net zero in terms of global warming by 2050.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3jfkvwy>

EC BAN COMMERCIAL COD FISHING IN BALTIC

Commercial fishing for cod in most of the Baltic Sea has been banned until the end of the year following a directive from the European Commission. The ban is part of emergency measures to support the ailing eastern Baltic cod stock from impending collapse and comes into force immediately until 31st December 2019. It covers all fishing vessels and applies in all those areas of the Baltic Sea where the largest part of the stock is present, except for some specific targeted derogations

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2wn8xtr>

CONSULTATIONS

Defra and BEIS - Standards for Biodegradable, Compostable and BioBased Plastics.	To identify gaps and provide expert advice on the overall sustainability, existing relevant plastic degradation standards and the design and implementation of standards.	https://tinyurl.com/yxmg2692	14 Oct 2019
European Commission - Evaluation and fitness check roadmap for the evaluation of marketing standards	To determine to what extent the EU marketing standards for food products are delivering to achieve the fixed objectives and are useful	https://tinyurl.com/yy3zuhkw	14 Oct 2019
Lords Select Committee – Call for evidence. Inquiry into Links Between Inequality, Health Inequalities and Food Sustainability	The inquiry will examine numerous issues, including: Causes of food insecurity and impact on public health, barriers that prevent people from accessing healthy food and eating a health diet, impact of food industry practices on consumers dietary choices and whether efforts to improve food production sustainability could offer solutions to improving food insecurity and dietary health in the UK.	https://tinyurl.com/y27wavzI	12 Sept 2019



British Frozen Food Federation Technical & Legislative Expert Group

Meeting of the Technical and Legislative Expert Group
To be held at 10am on Wednesday 10th July 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 Introduction from Richard Harrow, CEO BFFF.
- 4.2 BFFF Technical Seminar 2020 (no paper)
 - feedback from 2019 seminar
 - discussions on date, venue, format, topics etc for 2020.
- 4.3 Food Waste
 - Recent visits to Company Shop and FareShare
 - Recent Campaigns (2019_03_H, 2019_03_M)
- 4.4 Listeria – Update on PROFEL work and opportunity with BRC for further best practice guidance (no paper)
- 4.5 Defra updates
 - Feedback on questions raised on ID/Health marks (item 4.5 April meeting - 2019_02_H, 2019_02_AF, 2019_03_F)
 - Imports and exports (2019_02_AB, 2019_03_Y)
 - New points of contact and communications and engagement opportunities.

Agenda Item 5 – Items to discuss if time

- 5.1 Chlorates - proposed approach for chlorate levels (no paper)
- 5.2 Allergen labelling review update (2019_02_B, 2019_03_D, 2019_03_N, 2019_03_T, 2019_03_U)
- 5.3 NFCU – future interaction and recent issues (2019_03_I)
- 5.4 Country of origin labelling and geographical indicators (2019_03_B, 2019_03_W)

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_03_A - Food Industry Liaison Group meeting notes
2019_03_C - IFST event on RoF - 21st May
2019_03_E - HPAI (H5N8) outbreak in Israel
2019_03_G - PHE Reduction and reformulation programme - Spring 2019 update
2019_03_J - Consultation on info management system for official controls (IMSOC Regulation)
2019_03_K - 12th Regulating Our Future Newsletter
2019_03_L - Updated FDF Gluten Labelling Guidance
2019_03_O - Efficacy of Recalls and Withdrawals project - additional new key tools
2019_03_R - BEIS Policy paper - Regulation for the 4th Industrial Revolution
2019_03_S - Request for comments on Draft Revision of the General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC_RCP 1-1969)
2019_03_V - House of Lords Debate re. Proposed EU legislation on Vegan & Vegetarian labelling
2019_03_X - National Food Strategy - Launch of Independent Review

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

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

Agenda Item 9 – Contact with other Organisations

Joanna Dyson, Head of Food, Fareshare
Geraint Thomas, Senior Officer (Relationship Management), NFCU
Camilla Chapman, Senior External Affairs Manager – Defra
Roy Betts – Campden BRI

Agenda Item 10 – Any Other Business

- Suggestions from the group welcomed

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