

# T & L UPDATE



BFFF TECHNICAL AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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**British Frozen Food Federation**

Registered Office: Warwick House, Unit 7, Long Bennington Business Park, Main Road, Long Bennington, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG23 5JR  
Tel: 01400 283090 Fax: 01400 283098 Websites: [www.bfff.co.uk](http://www.bfff.co.uk) [www.freshfromthefreezer.co.uk](http://www.freshfromthefreezer.co.uk)

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## CONSULTATIONS

# FOREWORD

Welcome to the latest edition of the BFFF Technical and Legislative update, the first edition for 2020 and the new decade! - I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and enjoyed the new year celebrations.

The start of a new year as always, presents itself with the opportunity to reflect on passed events. But with the political turbulence of 2019, just where do you start to make sense of it all?

Well a good place to start would be page 14 – here you will find a link to a Brexit timeline produced by The General Secretariat of the Council. This timeline provides an overview of events since 29th March 2017 when the UK formally notified to the European Council of its intention to leave the EU. Also included are useful videos explaining key stages throughout the Brexit negotiations.

But although 2019 was dominated by Brexit, many other subjects remained high on our agendas. One such example is food waste which is reflected in the number of relevant articles included in the section on sustainability, environment & CSR. It is encouraging to learn that latest research carried out by WRAP has shown that a quarter of all pre-packed unprepared fresh produce now carries no date label and almost all products reviewed carried correct home storage advice.

Also, of interest is the approach taken by Peru, as outlined on page 31. December 2019 saw a new law coming into force in Peru to regulate food loss and waste throughout the country. This law promotes the design and implementation of strategies to improve efficiency at all stages of the food supply chain. Peru had already implemented laws that meant the donation of food in good condition was mandatory from 2019 and also allowed companies to deduct the expenses for the food they donate. Definitely one to watch.

You may also find the recent Lloyds Register report on the UK's Food Trends a useful read. This latest report gives a snapshot in time of what matters to the 'modern shopper' and the concerns they have about what's on the supermarket shelves. Sustainability, ingredient declaration, food safety and food authenticity all feature highly. It also reveals the importance of getting things right – with 1 in 5 shoppers saying they have changed brands following reports of a food safety incident or product recall. Turn to page 28 for more detail.

Looking ahead, I am pleased to confirm that the programme for the Technical Conference 2020 is now almost finalised. On the next page you'll find detail of our fantastic new venue, the date and just a few of the excellent speakers we have lined up. Bookings are now being taken so don't leave it until the last minute - follow the link provided and ensure you've secured your place!

Happy reading!



**Denise Rion**  
**Head of Technical**  
**[deniserion@bfff.co.uk](mailto:deniserion@bfff.co.uk)**



# UPCOMING EVENTS

Two great conferences brought to you by the  
British Frozen Food Federation

## TECHNICAL

### Confirmed speakers include:

The Government Chemist  
'Priorities for the industry and the work programme for 2020 - 2023'

Nadim and Tanya Ednan-Laperouse,  
Natasha Allergy Research Foundation  
'Working together for a better future'

The National Food Crime Unit - 'The increase in food fraud in a global market'

### Other topics include:

- Food Waste
- Cybercrime
- Artificial Intelligence

For more information email:  
[deniserion@bfff.co.uk](mailto:deniserion@bfff.co.uk)

## HEALTH & SAFETY

### Confirmed speakers include:

Dr Shaun Lundy  
'Challenges of the Health and Safety Practitioner'

Sam Bradbrook, Futurist  
'The Future World of Work'

Terry Mallard  
The Black Museum (Enforcement Stories)

### Other topics include:

- Mental Health
- Well-being
- Modern Slavery

For more information email:  
[simonbrentnall@bfff.co.uk](mailto:simonbrentnall@bfff.co.uk)

Thursday 14th May 2020

British Motor Museum, Warwickshire CV35 0BJ

To book tickets go to: <https://tickets.bfff.co.uk>

To book an exhibitor stand at either of these conferences contact  
Kate Miller

Mob: 07793 499871 / Email: [katemiller@bfff.co.uk](mailto:katemiller@bfff.co.uk)



Inspirational Speaker:  
Chris Moon, MBE  
'Step Beyond'

While supervising mine-clearance in Mozambique in 1995, Chris Moon was blown up in a supposedly clear area of the safety lane. He lost his lower right leg and right arm and survived only through sheer determination. Less than a year after leaving hospital, he ran the London Marathon, raising money for charities assisting the disabled, defying all expectations for his own future. He has since completed more than fifteen other marathons, including the punishing Marathon des Sables, which is a 137 mile race across the Sahara.

# ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

## EU COUNCIL APPOINTS NEW COMMISSION



### European Council Council of the European Union

The European Council has now appointed the new Commission for the period from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024. This follows the consent of the European Parliament to the new Commission as a body on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

After the UK's announcement on November 13<sup>th</sup> that it would not be nominating a Commissioner due to purdah rules, the European Commission had sent a letter of formal notice to the UK for breaching its EU Treaty obligations by not suggesting a candidate for the post of EU Commissioner. The Commission gave the UK until November 22<sup>nd</sup> to reply but in the end the Council and Parliament signed off on a 27-member executive.

The new President of the Commission will be Ursula von der Leyen (Germany) and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will be Josep Borrell (Spain), who will also be one of the Vice-Presidents of the Commission.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/txqxz76>

## COMMISSION ADOPT 2020 PROMOTION POLICY WORK PROGRAMME

The European Commission has announced that it has adopted the 2020 promotion policy work programme, with €200.9 million allocated to fund promotion activities for EU agri-food products within and outside the EU.

In 2020, more than half of the budget (€118 million) will go towards campaigns pursuing markets outside the EU with high-growth potential, such as Canada, China, Japan, Korea, Mexico and the United States. Eligible sectors include dairy and cheese, table olives and olive oil and wines. The selected campaigns are expected to enhance the competitiveness and consumption of EU agri-food products, raise their profile and increase their market share in these targeted countries.

Campaigns will also inform EU and global consumers of the various EU quality schemes and labels such as geographical indications or organic products. An additional focus of the campaigns will also be to highlight the high safety and quality standards, as well as the diversity and traditional aspects of EU agri-food products. Finally, within the EU, the focus will be on promoting healthy eating and increase, in the framework of balanced diets, the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The calls for proposals for the upcoming 2020 campaigns will be published in January 2020. A wide range of bodies, such as trade organisations, producer organisations and agri-food groups responsible for promotion activities are eligible to apply for funding and submit their proposals.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yx2mm6an>

## EU-SINGAPORE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT ENTERS INTO FORCE

The European Commission recently announced that Member States had endorsed the EU-Singapore free trade agreement (FTA), which as a result meant that it entered into force on 21st November 2019.

Under the trade agreement, Singapore will remove all remaining tariffs on EU products. The agreement also provides new opportunities for EU services' providers, among others in sectors such as telecommunications, environmental services, engineering, computing and maritime transport. It will also make the business environment more predictable. The agreement will also enable legal protection for 138 European food and drink products, known as Geographical Indications.

You can read more in a recent press release here: <https://tinyurl.com/uu8bawt>

## ADDITIVES, CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS & FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS



## EFSA PUBLISH OPINION ON REVIEW OF EXISTING MRL FOR GLYPHOSATE

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published a Reasoned Opinion on the review of the existing maximum residue level (MRL) for Glyphosate.

This version revises the MRLs derived and data gaps identified in the first version of the Reasoned Opinion. Additional data was made available by the Rapporteur Member State to EFSA in an Addendum only after the publication. This latest Reasoned Opinion replaces the previous version which was published in 2018 although both versions will still be available in the EFSA Journal.

You will find the Reasoned Opinion here: <https://tinyurl.com/rdkxsl9>

## EFSA CONSULT ON OCHRATOXIN A IN FOOD

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is seeking feedback from interested parties on its scientific opinion about public health risks related to the presence of Ochratoxin A (OTA) in food – a mycotoxin naturally produced by fungi such as the *Penicillium* and *Aspergillus* species and found in a variety of foods including grains and grain products, preserved meats, fresh and dried fruits.

EFSA previously assessed public health risks related to OTA in food in 2006 and it was concluded that OTA accumulates in, and is particularly toxic to, the kidneys. As such, EFSA set a tolerable weekly intake (TWI) of 120 nanograms per kilogram of body weight.

However, more information has since become available suggesting that OTA may be genotoxic and carcinogenic. In such cases, EFSA experts calculate a margin of exposure (MOE) for consumers. In general, the higher the MOE, the lower the level of concern for consumers. The estimated MOE for OTA is below 10,000 across most consumer groups, suggesting a possible health concern.

The scientific opinion can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/t2yclmv> and the deadline for comments is January 24<sup>th</sup> 2020.

## GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO REPORT ON TOXIC CHEMICALS IN EVERYDAY LIFE



The Environmental Audit Committee has recently published the Government's response to its twentieth Report of Session 2017-19, Toxic Chemicals in Everyday Life, published on 16 July 2019. The inquiry itself focused on how chemicals are used in everyday products, including food and packaging, and how they are currently regulated.

The document highlights how International agreements and frameworks have led to tighter controls on chemicals and products, including the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Reference is also made to the fact that any item that is expected to come into contact with food will have to be compliant with Regulation 1935/2004 on food contact materials.

The response also alludes to a new Chemicals Strategy in 2021-2022, with a discussion document and call for evidence expected in March 2020.

Both the report and the Government response can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6zbp44t>

## EFSA REPORT ON BISPENOL A HAZARD ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) recently published a Technical Report on testing the study appraisal methodology from the 2017 Bisphenol A (BPA) hazard assessment protocol.

This report describes the testing phase of the study appraisal methodology, its outcome, and the resulting refinement. The two goals of the testing phase were:

- To test the functioning of the 2017 internal validity appraisal tools for human and animal studies
- To assess the comparability of the study appraisal outcome by the 2019 methodology against the '2015 methodology' applied in the EFSA BPA assessments of 2015 and 2016.

The report highlights that the two goals of the testing phase have been achieved. The amendments of the appraisal methodology are being implemented for the full re-evaluation of the new BPA literature and will be fully documented in the final version of the protocol annexed to the new BPA Opinion.

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

## FSA AND COMMISSION UPDATES ON ACRYLAMIDE

The latest Food Standards Agency (FSA) survey of acrylamide and furans in retail foods for the period January – November 2018 is now available here:

<https://tinyurl.com/w9fk6x4>

### In summary:

**Acrylamides** - Whilst some results of this latest survey are in exceedance of the benchmark levels set out in legislation, these levels are lower than the indicative values which they supersede. Additionally, it takes time for changes to be made to the production process and some foods may not be able to meet the levels set out in the legislation as the benchmark levels are based on the 85th percentile of broad food categories.

**Furans** - The European Commission and Member States are considering whether further risk management action is appropriate, following a recent EFSA opinion. The COT recommends that efforts to reduce furan and methylfurans should continue, with respect to commercially produced food, and monitoring should be continued to allow for future accurate risk assessments.

The overall conclusion of the report is that the acrylamide and furans results obtained in this sampling year do not increase the FSA's concern about the risk to human health.

The Commission have also published in the Official Journal of the EU an updated recommendation on Acrylamide monitoring (EU, L290/31, 11/11/2019): <https://tinyurl.com/wogl4h4>

The Recommendation requires competent authorities and food business operators within the Member States to regularly monitor the presence and levels of acrylamide in food, particularly those products within the following categories:

- Potato products, including rosti and croquettes;
- Bakery products, including rolls, croissants, doughnuts, pancakes and speciality bread;
- Cereal products, including crackers and honey roasted muesli; and
- Others, including vegetable crisps/fries, roasted nuts and oilseeds, coffee substitutes and dried fruits.



# ALLERGENS

## EAT STUDY FINDINGS REVEALED

New findings from the Enquiring About Tolerance (EAT) study have shown that giving certain allergenic foods to specific groups of babies at high risk of developing allergies, from as young as three months could reduce the likelihood of them developing an allergy to those foods.

Conducted by the allergy team at the Evelina Children's Hospital, London, the EAT Study tested the hypothesis that the introduction of six allergenic foods into the diet of infants from 3 months of age, alongside continued breastfeeding, results in a reduced prevalence of food allergies by 3 years of age.

The original study, started back in 2016 and placed more than 1,300 babies at random into two groups. The Early Introduction Group was introduced to six allergenic foods from three months of age alongside continued breast feeding. The six allergens introduced included peanuts, fish, eggs, milk, wheat and sesame. The second group – the Standard Introduction Group – followed present UK weaning advice of exclusively breastfeeding for around six months before introducing any allergenic foods. The babies were then monitored over a three-year period.

Originally the results did not show the efficacy of early introduction of allergenic foods in preventing food allergy. However, further funding secured by researchers has now allowed them to analyse blood results not previously examined in order to separate out infants who were already sensitised at enrolment. These babies had specific antibodies present to one or more of the six allergenic foods.

Among these high-risk babies with sensitisation to one or more foods, the early introduction group developed significantly less food allergy to one or more foods than the standard group. For babies sensitised to egg, allergies were reduced by half compared to babies who were introduced to eggs at the recommended time of six months. For babies sensitised to peanut, the risk of developing the allergy was also reduced by around half in the early introduction group. The study also identified a strong association between early food sensitisation and eczema in the babies at enrolment and a reduction in the later development of allergies in babies with moderate eczema who were in the early introduction group.

The conclusion from the results was that early introduction is effective in preventing allergies in specific high-risk groups, such as those already sensitised or those with eczema. Authors of the study hope their findings will inform the debate as to whether a risk-based dietary intervention should be recommended or whether any changes are needed to national infant feeding recommendations.

In response to the findings, the Anaphylaxis Campaign said:

"With it known that the prevalence of allergies is increasing, we welcome the results from the EAT study. This has found that introducing allergenic foods into the infant diet from three months may be effective in food allergy prevention. However, unless the results are translated into Government guidance it is important for parents to continue to follow existing Government advice and discuss any questions or concerns, they may have with their treating doctor, health visitor or allergy specialist."

Findings from the study have been published in The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology. You can read the full papers here: <https://tinyurl.com/uqkpoeb>, <https://tinyurl.com/u43kgyc>, <https://tinyurl.com/s89fgfr>

## GOVERNMENT CHEMIST PUBLISHES PRESENTATIONS ON DETECTION OF ALLERGENS IN SPICES

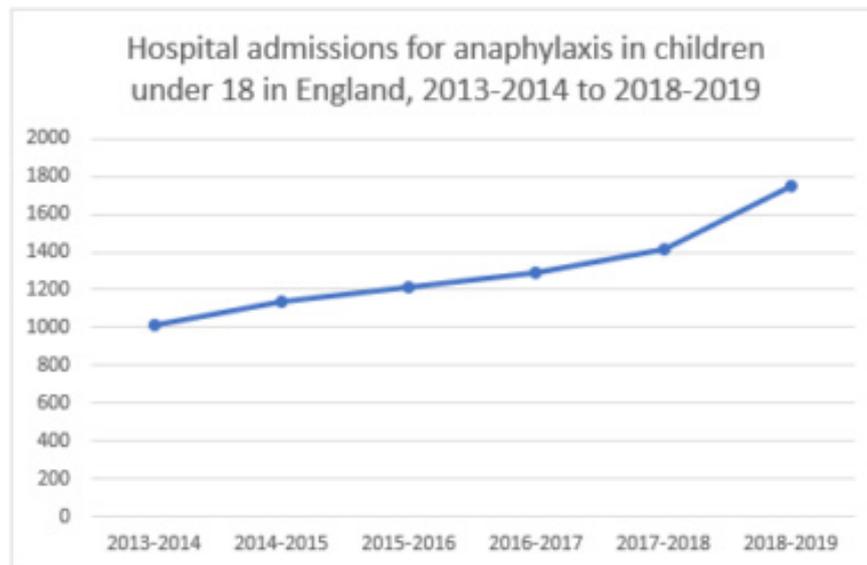
The Government Chemist has recently published the presentations from a workshop on the analytical roadmap for detecting allergens in spices, which was held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

The workshop was designed to provide advice, guidance and best practice on the application of complementary analytical techniques for the detection of allergens in spices.

A copy of an analytical roadmap that can be used for the detection of future allergen/spice combinations has also been published.

The presentations and roadmap can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/tw9egjv>

## LATEST NHS FIGURES REVEAL INCREASE IN ANAPHYLAXIS HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS



Latest NHS Digital figures have revealed that hospital admissions of under 18's for anaphylactic shock have risen by 72% from 1,015 in 2013-14 to 1,746 in 2018-19. Hospital admissions for anaphylactic shock for adults has also increased from 3,092 to 3,751 in the same five-year period.

There is no single cause for the rising prevalence of allergy that has taken place over the past few decades. There are numerous possible reasons for this and many are still under debate. Understanding the allergy epidemic is a work in progress, but some factors that have been considered influential are:

- Heredity
- Eating habits
- Early exposure to allergens
- Modern medicines, e.g. antibiotics
- Vitamin D deficiency and other dietary factors

Chief Executive of the Anaphylaxis Campaign, Lynne Regent, said:

“It is worrying for us to hear that the number of admissions to hospital for anaphylaxis has risen. These figures show the importance of continuing to raise awareness of severe allergies. Our aim is to create a safe environment for all people with allergies by working with and educating those in schools, universities, the food industry, health care professionals and other key audiences.”

The full set of NHS Digital figures can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/th8o8lb> and here <https://tinyurl.com/seq2bu7>

# ANIMAL WELFARE

## LOW PATHOGENIC AI CONFIRMED AT CHICKEN FARM IN SUFFOLK

Low pathogenic avian influenza of the H5 strain was confirmed at a commercial chicken farm in Mid Suffolk, on Tuesday 10th December 2019.

As a result a 1km restriction zone was put in place around the infected farm to limit the risk of the disease spreading and the 27,000 poultry at the farm were humanely culled.

The advice from Public Health England (PHE) is that the risk to public health from the virus is very low and the Food Standards Agency has made clear that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers. Thoroughly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.

Further information and advice can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/rdk3egg>



## RESOLUTION FOR A REDUCTION IN PESTICIDES TO PROTECT BEES



The European Parliament have announced that its Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee had approved a resolution for a reduction in pesticides to protect bees. The resolution highlights weaknesses in the EU Pollinator Initiative, proposes a reduction in the use of pesticides set as a 'common indicator' and to become a key part of the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and demands more funds to support research into the causes of bee decline. The resolution will be put to a vote at the January 2020 plenary session.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/wwk5qkf>

## POULTRY HEALTH SCHEME MEMBERS LIST UPDATED

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have published an updated list of Poultry Health Scheme (PHS) members.

You must be a member of the Poultry Health Scheme (PHS) if you want to:

- export more than 20 birds or hatching eggs to another EU member state (as long as your business meets EU animal health and welfare rules)
- sell birds or eggs to other PHS members
- export to countries that require compliance with EU legislation

The updated list can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/wlfgc3j>



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

## OPINION ON CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) BIOHAZ Panel recently published a Scientific Opinion providing an update on chronic wasting disease (CWD) III. This opinion covers the state of knowledge about the differences between the CWD strains found in North America and the EU and within the EU, reviews new scientific evidence on the zoonotic potential of CWD and provides recommendations to address the potential risks and to identify risk factors for the spread of CWD in the EU.

Preliminary data supports the contention that the CWD strains identified in these areas are different and suggest the presence of strain diversity in EU cervids.

The opinion highlights that current data does not allow any conclusion on the implications of strain diversity on transmissibility, pathogenesis or prevalence or on the zoonotic potential of North American or European CWD isolates. However, the risk of CWD to humans through consumption of meat could not be directly assessed.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/v9tfnpz>

## EU SUMMARY REPORT ON TSE SURVEILLANCE

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have published a summary report on surveillance for the presence of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) in 2018.

This report presents the results of surveillance on TSE in bovine animals, sheep, goats, cervids and other species, and genotyping in sheep, carried out in 2018 by 28 Member States, Iceland, North Macedonia, Norway and Switzerland.

One case of classical bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) was reported in 2018 by the UK, born after the enforcement of the total feed ban, and three atypical BSE cases were reported by France.

In sheep, 934 cases of scrapie were reported by Member States and 29 ovine scrapie cases were reported by Iceland and Norway.

The number of cases of scrapie reported in goats by Member States was 523. There was also confirmation of the first case of chronic wasting disease in the EU, in a wild moose in Finland.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/s9bnywe>

## UPDATED OUTBREAK ASSESSMENT FOR ASF IN WILD BOAR AND PIGS IN EUROPE

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have recently published an updated outbreak assessment for African Swine Fever (ASF) in wild boar and domestic pigs in Eastern Europe and Belgium.

Since the earlier report in November 2019, there have been new outbreaks of the disease in domestic pigs and cases in wild boar in Eastern Europe. Most notably, cases have been identified in wild boar in the west of Poland and in southern Bulgaria, close to the border with North Macedonia.



The report concludes that the risk remains at medium for the entry of contaminated or infected products into UK at present and the risk of exposure to the pig population in the UK is still considered to be low.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/tvugjg9>

# BREXIT



**PLEASE NOTE THAT ARTICLES IN THIS SECTION ARE AS REPORTED AT THE TIME OF WRITING AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS THE SITUATION DEVELOPS.**

## BREXIT TIMELINE

The General Secretariat of the Council have produced a Brexit timeline which provides an overview of events since 29<sup>th</sup> March 2017 when the UK formally notified to the European Council of its intention to leave the EU.

The General Secretariat of the Council is a body of staff responsible for assisting the European Council and the Council of the EU. It helps organise and ensure the coherence of the Council's work and the implementation of its 18-month programme.

Also included in the timeline are useful videos explaining key stages throughout the Brexit negotiations.

You can find the timeline here: <https://tinyurl.com/tnpdmnf>

Note: this timeline is being updated as the negotiations develop so members will find it useful to revisit on a regular basis.

## DIT PUBLISH UPDATED NON-EU TRADE AGREEMENT LIST

In a no-deal Brexit, any trade agreements that the UK is part of as an EU member state will no longer apply. Therefore, the UK government has been working on new agreements to replace such EU trade agreements after Brexit.

The Department for International Trade has recently published an updated list of agreements that have a) been signed and will take effect as soon as the UK leaves the EU or b) are still under discussion. Some new agreements will not be in place before the UK leaves the EU. In those instances, trade will then take place on World Trade Organization (WTO) terms.

The updated list can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/w5houes>

## EC ISSUE PRESS RELEASE ON ARTICLE 50 EXTENSION

The European Council announced that it has adopted a decision to extend the period under Article 50.3 (of the Treaty on the European Union), in the context of the UK's intention to withdraw from the EU.

The extension will last until 31 January 2020 to allow more time for the ratification of the withdrawal agreement. For the duration of the extension the United Kingdom remains a member state with all the rights and obligations set out in the treaties and under EU law.

The decision was taken unanimously by the European Council by written procedure, with the agreement of the UK. This agreement was set out in a letter from UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson to President of the European Council Donald Tusk. The European Council also agreed a declaration accompanying the decision.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/spt3nvh> and here: <https://tinyurl.com/v7nsozj>

## NEW SME FINANCE CHARTER TO HELP BUSINESSES THROUGH BREXIT

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and HM Treasury recently announced that a number of banks and building societies had confirmed commitments under the new SME Finance Charter, to support SME businesses through Brexit.

At the time of writing, a total of 17 banks and lenders had so far signed up to the Government's charter, announced by the Business Finance Council in October. The charter outlines five pledges and all signatories have agreed to these, as well as adding their own commitments, including dedicated funding pots for business and SME customers, local workshops and Brexit helplines with industry experts.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3a6wuu6>

More information about the SME Finance Charter can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y27ud24b>

## DEFRA AND MMO INVITE APPLICATIONS FOR MARITIME FISHERIES FUND

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) recently announced that the Maritime Fisheries Fund is now open for applications in England until March 2022.

English fishermen and those working in the seafood sector will be able to apply for a share of the £14.7 million fund, designed to ensure the industry continues to thrive once the UK leaves the EU. This fund is in addition to the existing European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) which, for projects approved before 31 December 2020, the Government guaranteed full funding.

The Government has also committed to put in place new, domestic, long-term arrangements to support the UK's fishing industry from 2021. This will be via four new schemes to deliver funding for each nation, led by the Devolved Administrations. An additional £700,000 from a £2 million UK-wide fund is ring-fenced for fishing safety improvements on board English vessels and around ports and harbours.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/t37ap84>

## FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE EU-UK RELATIONSHIP

A political declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom was published in the Official Journal of the EU, C1384/178, 12/11/2019.

This declaration accompanies the Withdrawal Agreement and establishes the parameters of an ambitious, broad, deep and flexible partnership across trade and economic cooperation with a Free Trade Agreement at its core, law enforcement and criminal justice, foreign policy, security and defence and wider areas of cooperation.

The forward process is set out, with the aim of concluding agreements giving effect to the future relationship by the end of 2020. You can read the declaration in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/qw526fx>

## BEIS BREXIT IMPORT – EXPORT HELPLINE

Members involved in exporting/importing may find the below information, recently issued from BEIS, of use.

Get information about importing and exporting goods after Brexit. Call the Brexit imports and exports helpline to find out about:

- customs declarations and procedures
- duties and tariffs
- importing and exporting different goods
- transporting goods to and from the EU
- product safety regulations



Department for  
Business, Energy  
& Industrial Strategy

Telephone: 0300 3301 331 - Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

## GROWTH PROGRAMME SCHEME



Rural Payments  
Agency

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Rural Payments Agency have published details regarding the government's Growth Programme scheme, which opened for expressions of interest on 4th November 2019.

The scheme, worth £35 million, provides grants for rural start-ups and businesses to create new jobs, boost tourism and unlock growth.

There are 3 types of grant:

- Business development
- Food processing
- Rural tourism infrastructure

The threshold for minimum grants has been reduced to £20,000. Interested parties need to send an expression of interest form to the Rural Payments Agency, outlining how they meet the criteria for the scheme, and guidance is provided. The deadline for expressions of interest is 16 February 2020.

More information about the scheme can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/zvn47cg>

## FSA CHAIR HEATHER HANCOCK TO STAND DOWN AT END OF SEPTEMBER 2020

The Chairman of the Food Standards Agency, Heather Hancock, has been elected as the new Master of St John's College, Cambridge. Heather will take up her post in October 2020.

Since her appointment as Chair in April 2016, Heather has led the FSA Board and the department as it prepares to face the challenges of the UK's departure from the EU as well as driving through major reforms and modernisation in the way food is regulated.

Heather said: 'The FSA is a wonderful organisation to lead and I will be sorry to leave. However, I'm not taking up my post until October next year and over the next 10 months I will continue to focus on the key issues facing the FSA. My priorities are to see through the Brexit transition, to drive forward our modernisation ambitions, and to embed food allergies and intolerances as a long-term priority.'

Emily Miles, Chief Executive of the FSA said: 'Heather is an outstanding FSA Chair and, while sorry to see her leave, I am delighted that we will continue to benefit from her leadership, clarity of thought and commitment to the values and mission of the FSA until October next year.'

## CIEH REVEAL 50,000 FOOD HYGIENE CHECKS MISSED

# Chartered Institute of Environmental Health



The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) have revealed that more than 50,000 food hygiene checks were missed and outstanding in 2017-2018.

The information from Unchecked UK highlights that only 11% of councils had carried out their planned food checks on time and eight local authorities had missed more than 1000 inspections of food businesses. Where inspections had been carried out, there was 90% compliance on food safety across all premises. However, of the highest-risk food premises in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, 80% of the 1,745 A-rated premises and 36% of the 20,759 B-rated premises failed to meet basic food hygiene standards, scoring 1 or 2 on the food hygiene rating scheme (FHRS).

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/ux9nyz5>

## DEFRA PUBLISH UPDATED DEFRA GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have recently published an update to its governance structure. This includes information on the Defra Board, Executive Committee and Board meetings and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yy3u2kbe>

## FOOD SAFETY AND ZOOSES

### EFSA RAPID OUTBREAK ASSESSMENT ON MULTI COUNTRY L MONO INCIDENT

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have recently published a rapid outbreak assessment on a multi country *Listeria monocytogenes* incident.

Twenty-one cases of *Listeria monocytogenes* IVb sequence type ST6 infections have been reported from the Netherlands (19 cases) and Belgium (two cases). This outbreak was identified using whole genome sequencing (WGS) analysis.

The patients had onset of illness between 2017 and August 2019. Three patients have died and one suffered a miscarriage due to the infection. The close genetic relatedness of the strains ( $\leq 3$  allelic differences), and the temporal distribution of the cases suggest a prolonged, intermittent, common source foodborne outbreak which occurred in at least two EU Member States.

Nine isolates from six sliced ready-to-eat (RTE) meat products, produced between 2017 and 2019 by a Dutch Manufacturing Company A, were found to be contaminated with *L. monocytogenes* strains matching the outbreak strain ( $\leq 3$  allelic differences). Although the exact points of contamination have not been identified yet, the results of the investigation suggest that the contamination may have happened at the Dutch Manufacturing Company A, which represents the only common manufacturing point of the contaminated products. The Dutch Manufacturing Company A distributed products to several EU countries as well as to countries outside the EU.

Following the detection in food of *L. monocytogenes* isolates matching the outbreak strain, and the discovery of the environmental contamination with other *L. monocytogenes* strains, the Dutch Manufacturing Company A stopped the production in October 2019, and finalised the withdrawals and recalls of all RTE meat products. This measure decreases the risk of new cases occurring possibly associated with products from this company.

You can read the Rapid Outbreak Assessment in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/ss459cx>

## APHA PUBLISH NON-STATUTORY ZOOSES QUARTERLY REPORT

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have recently published the non-statutory zoonoses quarterly report, covering the period from July to September 2019.

This report covers the disease surveillance of non-statutory zoonoses, and infections shared between humans and animals, during the period and includes: general scanning surveillance; specific scanning and targeted surveillance including *Campylobacter*; and investigations into zoonotic and potentially zoonotic incidents.

The report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yx9trg7h>

## SCOPAFF BIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF THE FOOD CHAIN MEETING REPORT ISSUED

The Summary Report from the SCoPAFF Biological Safety of the Food Chain meeting, held on 14th October 2019, has now been published.

The Committee discussed, amongst other items:

- Update on intended planning for the preparation of the future decision on the monitoring of antimicrobial resistance in food and food producing animals covering the period 2021-2027
- Commission Notice providing guidance on food safety management systems for food retail activities, including food donations
- Concerns of Ireland on post-mortem inspection (PMI)
- Draft Commission Implementing Regulation amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/626 concerning lists of third countries and regions thereof authorised for the entry into the European Union of snails, gelatine and collagen, and insects intended for human consumption - favourable opinion

You will find the report here: <https://tinyurl.com/yafblanl>

## APHA OCTOBER SCIENTIFIC PAPERS PUBLISHED

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have published details of scientific papers that it had published in November 2019. The papers cover amongst other things Bacterial Diseases and Food Safety and Bovine Tuberculosis

The list, along with lists from previous months can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/tjxw7dz>

# FOOD SECURITY, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

## ADULTERATION AND FOOD FRAUD - E-SEMINARS ON FOOD AUTHENTICITY ISSUES

The Government Chemist published on 12th November 2019 a number of E-seminars covering the following topics, in relation to food authenticity:

- Real-time PCR for food authenticity, including horse DNA
- An introduction to designing quantitative PCR assays.

The purpose of these E-seminars is to provide access to the information for stakeholders who could not attend original Knowledge Transfer events, and to refresh knowledge and expertise in the areas.

The E-seminars can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/w8r9b3s> and here <https://tinyurl.com/sbko65o>

## NEW YORK COMPANIES AND OWNERS PLEAD GUILTY TO SEAFOOD SALES FRAUD

Two New York corporations and their owners have pleaded guilty to importing giant squid from Peru, marketing it as octopus, and selling it to grocery stores across the US.

In a plea agreement with the government, Roy Tuccillo Sr, and his son, Roy Tuccillo Jr and two of their food processing and distribution companies, Anchor Frozen Foods Inc, and Advanced Frozen Foods Inc pleaded to conspiracy to commit wire fraud.

They admitted to importing giant squid from Peru, marketing it as octopus, and using email and wire transactions to sell it to grocery stores in interstate commerce. From 2011 to 2014, the defendants imported, processed, marketed, sold, and distributed over 113,000 pounds of squid worth \$1.1 million that they had falsely labelled as octopus. The defendants admitted to defrauding over ten grocery stores that in turn sold the seafood product to consumers.

“Seafood fraud is illegal, undermines confidence in the market place, and can have serious consequences for fish, fishermen, the seafood industry and consumers,” said James Landon, Director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Office of Law Enforcement. “NOAA’s enforcement priorities include uncovering and investigating incidents of seafood fraud, and we will seek to continue to bring to justice those who engage in this illegal activity.”

Octopus and squid are distinct species of fish with great variance in their taxonomy, habitat, and physical characteristics. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires food companies selling squid to market it by its name or as calamari, while octopus is the only acceptable name when selling octopus. In general, octopus has a greater retail price than squid.

The maximum sentence for the defendants is five years imprisonment, three years of post-release supervision and a fine up to \$250,000. The corporations may be placed on five years of probation and pay a fine of up to \$500,000.

# GLOBAL STANDARDS

## LARGEST MULTI-NATIONAL FISHERY IN NORTH SEA AREA ACHIEVES MSC CERTIFICATE

The Joint Demersal Fisheries, a collaboration of large and small-scale fisheries in the North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, have met the rigorous requirements for sustainable fishing set by the Marine Stewardship Council.

Fisheries from Denmark, Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands have taken a holistic approach to sustainable fishing in the North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat. The Joint Demersal Fisheries can now continue to deliver improvements required for MSC certification across the entire region. This means that a large marine area in the North Sea and adjacent waters, almost the combined size of the four participating countries, is now managed sustainably.

The combined assessment meant a wide range of stocks, species and gear types were assessed together against the MSC Fisheries Standard. Formerly certified under ten individual MSC certificates, this single MSC certificate includes 15 separate stocks of 12 species, 10 gear types and 3 catch areas in the North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat covering 961 vessels at time of certification.

The assessment process, carried out by independent Conformity Assessment Body, Control Union Pesca, lasted over 2 years reflecting the large and complex nature of the certificate. The process included reviews by independent scientists, extensive stakeholder consultations and in-depth analyses of stock assessments, impacts on other species, habitats and the ecosystem, as well as the effectiveness of regulations and fisheries management.

The species included in the certificate are: cod\*, haddock, hake, ling, megrim, Norway lobster (Nephrops), northern prawn (Pandalus), plaice, saithe, Dover sole, tusk and whiting\*. Megrim has been certified for the first-time. The assessment included species that are commonly caught together in a mixed fishery, which means a wider range of species from now on can be sold with the MSC blue label.

As with most MSC certified fisheries, the Joint Demersal Fisheries certificate will need to work on further improvements over the next few years to remain certified. The fishery has made a collective action plan with annual milestones that will be evaluated by independent auditors.

\*Note: North Sea cod and whiting are included in the Joint Demersal Fisheries certificate but are suspended from 31 October 2019. This is because new scientific advice on North Sea cod and whiting stocks published at a late stage during the assessment process indicate that these stocks do not currently meet the MSC Fisheries Standard requirements. The suspension affects all MSC certified fisheries targeting North Sea cod stocks.

## BRCGS ANNOUNCES A PARTNERSHIP WITH SALSA

BRCGS have teamed up with SALSA (Safe and Local Supplier Approval), the widely recognised UK food safety certification scheme designed for smaller food producers and processors.

Whilst SALSA provides an ideal solution for many small and micro food producers within, some will want to access international markets and further develop their approach to product safety and quality. This exciting new collaboration between BRCGS and SALSA will see suppliers who have grown and flourished under the SALSA Scheme, being able to transition to the new BRCGS START! programme.

BRCGS START! is a learning and development approach that both supports operational teams in small businesses and provides clear instruction on how to meet the requirements of a fully recognised GFSI benchmarked Standard - ideal for those who are looking to move towards globally recognised Standards.

More detail can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/tx2d6w4>

## CODEX NUTRIENT REFERENCE VALUES PUBLISHED

FAO has published Codex Nutrient Reference Values, especially for vitamins, minerals and proteins. This publication explains how Codex and the Committee for Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses has developed and reviewed the Codex nutrient reference values for protein, 13 vitamins and six minerals in the Codex guidelines for nutrition labelling.

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

## WORLD ANTIMICROBIAL AWARENESS WEEK

Codex Alimentarius published on 19th November 2019 the details of World Antimicrobial Awareness Week, which ran from 18 to 22 November 2019.

It highlighted that food plays an important role in the development and spread of AMR, with AMR microorganisms in agricultural production systems and food chains being a potential route of exposure and good hygiene practices in agriculture key to addressing the issue.

You will find information here: <https://tinyurl.com/tnmc5wr>

## CONSULTATION ON EVALUATION ROADMAP OF GI'S AND TSG'S PROTECTED IN EU

The European Commission have launched a consultation on the roadmap regarding the evaluation of Geographical Indications (GIs) and Traditional Specialities Guaranteed (TSGs) protected in the EU. This evaluation will assess how effective, efficient, relevant and consistent quality schemes are for certain food and agricultural products.

All responses to the consultation must be submitted by 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020, with adoption by the European Commission planned for the end of 2020.

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



# HEALTH AND NUTRITION

## NETHERLANDS TO IMPLEMENT NUTRI-SCORE FOOD LABELLING SYSTEM IN 2021

The Dutch government is set to implement the Nutri-Score food labelling system to its food products by mid-2021, according to the Dutch National Institute for Health and Environment (RIVM). The move seeks to address a rising overweight epidemic, as Dutch research estimates that one in two Dutch people are currently carrying excess weight.

Dutch government-endorsed consumer research tested three European food labelling logos – Nutri-Score, Keyhole and the Multiple Traffic Light system. The results showed that Nutri-Score best helped consumers make healthier food choices. By implementing Nutri-Score, the Dutch government aims to join the movement toward healthier dietary decision making.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/urcg53p>

## SUSTAIN PUBLISH REPORT ON HOT FOOD TAKEAWAYS AND OBESITY

Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming, recently published a report on hot food takeaways: planning a route to healthier communities.

The report calls for local authorities to be given new powers to reduce the number of existing fast food outlets near schools. Other proposals include restricting the sale of unhealthy food to under-16s on school days, introducing licensing and reviewing residential space standards to ensure houses have sufficient space for food preparation, cooking, dining, and eating. The alliance has also called for the government to support local use of existing planning restrictions around fast food outlets.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/qlunpj6>

## IGD PUBLISH INDUSTRY GUIDE ON SETTING PORTION SIZES

The Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) have published new guidance for the food industry on setting portion sizes, entitled 'Sizing up the opportunity: a guide to setting portion size'.

The guidance is based on consumer research on eating out, on the go and in the home. It aims to help food businesses set, reduce and review portion sizes for new, existing or multi-serve products, and identifies opportunities to reduce portions where appropriate to help reduce consumers' calorie intake.

In October IGD had also published updated voluntary guidelines for communicating portion size to consumers on pre-packaged products and those sold out of home, entitled: 'Be wise to portion size'. These guidelines have been revised to take account of recent research and legislation changes and can be used by the food industry to support consumers to make informed decisions and healthier choices.

Both these publications are based on the latest IGD consumer research, exploring consumers' attitudes to portion size. This research was published by IGD on 28th October 2019, in a report entitled 'Can one size fit all?'. It considers the risks and opportunities for reducing portion size in six food categories: pizza; pre-prepared meals; meat products; biscuits; crisps, and sweet morning goods.

All reports are all available to download from the IGD website here:

Setting portion size: <https://tinyurl.com/uepqp9l>

Communications portion size to consumers: <https://tinyurl.com/sgdwq7s>

Consumer research on portion size: <https://tinyurl.com/yx2e8w8l>

## UK PARLIAMENT FOLLOW-UP INQUIRY INTO CHILDHOOD OBESITY

The UK Parliament has published a video of the follow-up inquiry into childhood obesity by the Health and Social Care Committee.

The witnesses were questioned on the impact of the soft drinks industry levy (SDIL) and whether it should be extended to include milk-based drinks; the progress achieved by the voluntary food reformulation programme; the advertisement and marketing of unhealthy foods, and whether enough is being done to dissuade individuals from making unhealthy food choices.

The video can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/tmlk3my>



## HOUSE OF LORDS REPORT DISCUSSES PROPOSALS ON ADVERTISING HFSS FOODS.

The House of Lords Communications and Digital Committee recently published a report on 'Public service broadcasting: as vital as ever'. Amongst the issues covered by the report is 'junk food', otherwise known as food high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS), advertising.

The Government's current proposal is to impose a 9pm watershed for advertising HFSS food. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) ran a consultation on restricting the advertising of HFSS food and drink between March and June 2019. This House of Lords Committee report says that there is not "sufficient evidence" it would significantly reduce childhood obesity.

The report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/uv36hp6>

## RSPH PUBLISH PUBLIC HEALTH MANIFESTO 2019

The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) have published a Public Health Manifesto 2019, calling for key policy changes to improve public health.

The RSPH is the world's oldest public health organisation and is dedicated to protecting and promoting the public's health and wellbeing. They have over 6,500 members across the health and public health workforce, including those working in the NHS, universities, charities, local authorities, and industry. The proposals put forward in this document have been informed by consultation with their membership and backed by the public. These include taxation, regulation and legislation to be used in tackling health inequalities.

The purpose of this document is to advise on what are the most pressing public health challenges for today and the future, and how the any future Government should respond to champion the public's health.

You can read the Manifesto in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/wweuqwg>

# IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

## GUIDANCE ON FINDING A PROFESSIONAL TO CERTIFY EXPORT HEALTH CERTIFICATES

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have updated their guidance on finding a professional to certify export health certificates (EHCs). The guidance includes a list of organisations in England, Scotland and Wales that inspect and certify animals and animal products for export and can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/vfzbp8a>

## DEFRA AND APHA PUBLISH GUIDANCE ON IMPORT OF PLANTS AND PLANT PRODUCTS

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have published guidance on smarter rules for safer food: how to import from third countries. The guidance covers how to import high-risk plants and plant products to the EU from 14 December 2019 under the smarter rules for safer food regulations and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/wfluk6g>

## DEFRA GUIDANCE ON IPAFFS AND TRACES NT

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) have recently updated guidance on using the IPAFFS system. The Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System (IPAFFS) is the UK's new system for importing animals, animal products, high-risk food and animal feed of non-animal origin.

However, until Brexit happens, you must continue to use the EU's TRACES (Trade Control and Expert System) for EU imports into the UK. TRACES is the EU's digitised trade facilitating system to help track traded goods, to notify authorities of disease possibilities and to reduce risk. It eases the passage of traded goods and can carry documentation needed (health certificates etc) electronically, in an easily retrievable form for the authorities.

Before Brexit, you can register with IPAFFS and use it for testing and training but notifications will not be valid. You can send feedback about IPAFFS to [APHAServiceDesk@apha.gov.uk](mailto:APHAServiceDesk@apha.gov.uk)

IPAFFS:

- controls imports of live animals, products of animal origin, high-risk food and feed of non-animal origin from non-EU countries (third countries)
- allows importers or agents to create an import notification and legal declaration for their consignments
- allows consignments to be inspected at UK border control posts (BCPs), previously known as border inspection posts (BIPs) or designated points of entry (DPEs)
- records the results of inspections against each notification
- triggers the HMRC customs clearance process

Registering for IPAFFS:

You'll need to create a Government Gateway account for the business or organisation you represent.

If you have a personal Government Gateway account, you should create a new one so your business contact details are linked to it.

If you're registering on behalf of a business or organisation, you also need the following:

- main contact details for your business or organisation (for example, for head office)
- Companies House number if you're registering on behalf of a limited company

You will find the guidance and a link to register on IPAFFS here: <https://tinyurl.com/vezukt8>

## EUROPEAN SUPPLY CHAIN INITIATIVE ACTIVITIES WOUND DOWN

Food Drink Europe (FDE) published a press release on 18th November 2019 announcing that the European Supply Chain Initiative would wind down its activities at the end of 2019.

The efforts of the Initiative, which was launched in 2013 to promote fair business practice in the food supply chain, are reflected in the recent Unfair Trading Practices Directive. However, the Principles of Good Practice drawn up by Initiative remain an important standard and can continue to be voluntarily applied.

You can read the press release in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/wxmmk6g>

## EC PUBLISH EUROBAROMETER SURVEY ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The European Commission have published a report of a special Eurobarometer survey on international trade. The report covers a range of aspects related to awareness, perceptions and attitudes of EU citizens towards international trade, including:

- Objectives and priorities for EU trade policy - Over half of respondents suggested that the main priority of the EU trade policy should be to create jobs in the EU, with half also considering defence of EU environment and health standards a priority
- Need for international trade rules - Three quarters of Europeans agree that international trade rules are needed and 71% believe that the EU is more effective in defending its countries' trade interests than these countries acting on their own
- Trust and transparency - 60% say that they trust the EU to conduct its trade policy in an open and transparent manner
- Benefits of trade: Respondents see a wider choice of products and price reduction as the most important advantages
- Fairness in international trade: More than half of respondents think that the EU should increase import duties on non-EU countries or businesses that do not play by international trade rules

You will find the report here: <https://tinyurl.com/s8r2uad>

# REGULATORY

## FSA PUBLISHED LATEST ROF NEWSLETTER

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has published the 13th Regulating Our Future newsletter. This edition of the newsletter focuses on:

- The new digital food registration service 'Register a Food Business (RAFB)', including an Environmental Health Manager's experience of using the system
- An update on National Inspection Strategies and how these may impact the current Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).

The newsletter can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/tl67scf>

## OPSS PUBLISHES UPDATED PRIMARY AUTHORITY OVERVIEW BOOKLET

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has published a revised Primary Authority Overview booklet. This booklet summarises the main features of Primary Authority and can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yb383wex>

Primary Authority is a means for businesses to receive assured and tailored advice on meeting regulations such as environmental health, trading standards or fire safety through a single point of contact. This ensures start-ups get it right at the outset and enables all businesses to invest with confidence in products, practices and procedures, knowing that the resources they devote to compliance are well spent.

There are 2 types of Primary Authority scheme- direct and coordinated.

Your food business can partner with any local authority in England- it doesn't have to be your own' local' authority. You will need to register and pay this authority for the time they spend giving you advice. A formal legal agreement is needed to be put in place. This authority then becomes your Primary Authority. At this point you have a direct partnership and any other local authority throughout the country must inform and consult with your Primary Authority before taking any enforcement action. One of the benefits of a direct PA relationship is your Primary Authority can then look at your specific policies or operating procedures on site and assure themselves that you are operating within the law. In effect they endorse your operating/labelling or other policy. Given their legal status as a Primary Authority partner, this advice which is registered on the appropriate website, then has legal backing for your business.

### **Why not consider joining the BFFF coordinated PA scheme?**

Unlike specific policies or advice which the direct partnership covers, more general sectoral advice is also available- this is where the BFFF coordinated PA scheme offers advantages to your business. We have an expanding range of general advice which offers the same protection to your business as above but saves you from having to reinvent the wheel and helps your business reflect best practice within the industry. It operates in very much the same way as the direct partnership above but you don't need to deal with another authority for general sectoral advice- we have done that for you. And you can rely on this advice in the same way as the direct advice as it too has the same legal standing.

For more information contact [deniserion@bff.co.uk](mailto:deniserion@bff.co.uk)

# RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

## EFSA OPINION ON WGS AND METAGENOMICS

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published an opinion on the use of whole genome sequencing (WGS) and metagenomics for investigating foodborne outbreaks. It proposes that WGS offers the highest level of bacterial strain discrimination for foodborne outbreak investigation and that metagenomics has potential for the detection and characterisation of non-culturable, difficult-to-culture or slow-growing microorganisms.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/ud7rlrp>

## LLOYDS REGISTER REPORT REVEALS UK FOOD TRENDS

A new report, from Lloyds Register entitled 'UK Food Trends: A Snapshot in Time', has revealed what matters to the 'modern shopper' and the concerns they have about what's on the supermarket shelves.

The survey which was carried out with 1,000 UK consumers provides a snapshot in time of consumer thinking, behaviour and current purchasing trends.

It shows that 75% of UK shoppers want supermarkets to only stock food from sustainable and ethical sources, while 72% expect their supermarket, shop or restaurant to know the precise ingredients of all food products, even those from complex supply chains that may span several countries of origin.

The report also shows that UK shoppers are becoming increasingly concerned about food safety, with 1 in 3 expressing concern. The biggest concern (60%) is about microbiological contamination, with 1 in 5 shoppers saying that they have changed brands following reports of a food safety incident or product recall.

As well as doubts about claims for organic products, 80.2% of respondents said that they were either 'very suspicious', 'not confident at all' or only 'fairly confident' that vegan product in their supermarket do not contain meat.

You will find the full report here: <https://tinyurl.com/t5ufevq>

## FSA ANNUAL SOCIAL SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) recently published details of its third annual Social Science Symposium, held in Cardiff on 4th November 2019.

The Symposium, which was part of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Festival of Social Science, included discussions on laboratory grown meat, the perspectives of Generation Z, climate change and the impact of space technology on the food system. A workshop also looked at the areas of research interest, evidence gaps, and how this might inform the future research agenda.

You will find more detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/vnq6e5d>

The presentation from the Symposium is also available here: <https://tinyurl.com/swrhnz5>

## GOVERNMENT CHEMIST PUBLISHES STRATEGY FOR 2020-2023

The Government Chemist has recently published its strategy for 2020-2023. The Government Chemist programme is delivered as part of the National Measurement System programme portfolio overseen by the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

Informed by the continuous horizon scanning activities undertaken by the Government Chemist team, the current regulatory framework, and the Government Chemist stakeholder consultation exercise conducted in May 2019, a set of strategic objectives has been drawn up for the Government Chemist Programme from 2020 to 2023:

- Protecting consumers in a changing world
- Supporting business and government across the UK
- Maximising UK measurement infrastructure to address future challenges
- Growing collaborative national skills initiatives

This strategy sets out an expanded vision for the Government Chemist Programme that is fit for the changing world we are facing and one which will meet the long-standing aim of the Government Chemist to support consumer protection and providing businesses with a route of scientific appeal. It outlines plans to better maximise cross-government assets across the UK infrastructure and to enhance leading capability more globally, in line with stakeholder, technological and regulatory needs and skills initiatives.

You can view the strategy here: <https://tinyurl.com/vua76fj>

## SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT & CSR

### FARMING RECOVERY FUND EXTENDED TO HELP FARMERS HIT BY FLOODS



The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Rural Payments Agency and the Environment Agency announced on 13th November 2019 that the Government will extend its Farming Recovery Fund, to support farmers affected by the recent flooding across Yorkshire and the Midlands.

Under the fund, farmers and land managers can apply for grants of between £500 and £25,000 to cover repair costs, including clearing debris or recovering damaged land, following uninsurable damage to their property.

Defra and the Rural Payments Agency published on 18th November 2019 the form and handbook for farmers to follow in applying for grants under the Farming Recovery Fund.

Read the announcement in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/whn2pul>

The form and handbook can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ud7m69v>

## HMT LAUNCH 'NET ZERO' REVIEW ON UK CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITMENT

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sajid Javid, has launched a review that will determine how the UK ends its contribution to global warming.

The Net Zero Review, the first of its kind, will assess how the UK can maximise economic growth opportunities from its transformation to a green economy. At its heart is a priority to ensure a fair balance of contributions from all those that will benefit, including considering how to reduce costs for low income households.

This review is a major step towards the UK achieving net zero emissions by 2050, after becoming the world's first major economy to legislate to do so earlier in 2019.

The Treasury will consult widely, drawing on evidence from experts, as well as those that will be impacted.

A final report will be published in autumn 2020, ahead of the UK hosting the UN climate change conference in Glasgow in November 2020

You will find more detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/w3uns3v>

## WEETABIX FINED £140,000 FOR POLLUTING RIVER NEAR FACTORY

According to a report in the Guardian, Weetabix has been fined £140,000 for polluting a river with thousands of litres of diesel fuel and putting fish and plant life at risk.

The Guardian reported that the Environment Agency brought a prosecution against the cereal maker for polluting the River Ise, which is close to the company's plant in the town of Burton Latimer, near Kettering, Northamptonshire. The clean-up operation cost Weetabix £500,000.

Judge Rupert Mayo, recorder for the borough of Northampton, issued the fine of £139,694.72 in Northampton crown court after the cereal company pleaded guilty.

Sailesh Mehta, prosecuting on behalf of the Environment Agency, referred to "corporate amnesia" by Weetabix in its failures to carry out appropriate checks on pipes and valves in storage facilities on the site. Mayo said in his ruling: "My considered conclusion is that this corporate amnesia amounted to a negligent failure ... Weetabix failed to keep records of what was on their site. Their plea recognises this failure."

The pollution happened on 10 November 2016 when 23,000 litres of diesel road fuel leaked from tanks contained in a bund on the Weetabix site and entered the river. Wet weather combined with the way the river was flowing at the time limited the amount of damage to fish and plant life.

The judge said: "Had the diesel permeated the river in drier conditions there could well have been a significant adverse effect on animal health or flora."

The leak occurred because of a problem with secondary valves which controlled the flow of the diesel fuel from five storage tanks over-ground. There is a disused fuel storage facility onsite which was decommissioned approximately 20 years ago. In 2007 the Environment Agency sent Weetabix notices advising them to remove the pipework from the decommissioned tank but the company did not do this. When the valves in the fuel tanks over-ground were left open the fuel drained through these pipes into the river.

In his ruling Mayo said Weetabix should have had proper records of the valves and underground pipes in the former storage facility but the company's risk assessment did not contain information about these secondary valves. The judge accepted that before the incident Weetabix had a near spotless record on environmental compliance, employing highly qualified people to monitor health, safety and environmental factors. Jokes were made in court about the company not being a "cereal offender".

A spokesperson for Weetabix Food Company said: "We respect the court's decision and regret the circumstances of the incident. We have worked closely with the Environment Agency during their investigations, and our plea reflects how seriously we take our responsibility to the local environment. We have operated safely and securely from our site in Burton Latimer since 1932 and are proud of our local record which includes promoting sustainable farming through our Wheat Grower's Group."

## ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PUBLISHES UPDATED ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE CHART

The Environment Agency has recently updated its organisational structure chart and map of operational areas.

The chart shows the Environment Agency organisation structure at a high level, including some of the management team for national and area teams.

You will find the updated chart and map here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8mdtado>

## PERU TO REGULATE FOOD LOSS AND WASTE ALONG SUPPLY CHAIN

Peru is taking action to end hunger and improve its environmental footprint with a new law to regulate food loss and waste throughout the country. Law No. 30988, sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture (Minagri), promotes the design and implementation of strategies to improve efficiency at all stages of the food supply chain, from initial agricultural production through final household consumption.

Passed by congress in July, the regulation entered into force in December 2019, giving Minagri and the Multi-sectoral Commission on Food and Nutrition Security a period of 30 days to develop guidelines for specific food loss prevention and reduction actions.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization's 2019 State of Food and Agriculture report, 14% of the food produced globally is lost from post-harvest up to, but excluding, the retail stage. In Latin America and the Caribbean, these losses are estimated at 12%, equivalent to approximately 220 million tons of food and 16% of the global carbon footprint due to food losses.

Since 2018, Minagri and the FAO have been monitoring staple foods - including potatoes, tomatoes, bananas and fish - in the production, post-harvest, storage and transportation phases to contribute to a global food loss indicator.

Understanding critical loss points will also help inform concrete actions to implement sustainable farming and food management practices, as well as improve the scientific and technological capacities of food loss and waste researchers.

Peru has already implemented strong regulations to improve waste recovery, passing laws that make the donation of food in good condition mandatory as of 2019 and allowing companies to deduct the expenses for the food they donate.

## UPDATED INFORMATION ON WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have published updated information on waste management: smart tracking of waste (GovTech Catalyst).

The information sets out the progress being made on the GovTech waste tracking challenge, to build the UK's first comprehensive digital waste tracking system. Phase 2 information has been added.

You will find the updated information here: <https://tinyurl.com/yy2csfwr>

## WRAP PUBLISH 2019 RETAIL SURVEY ON REDUCING FOOD WASTE



The Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) have recently published their Retail Survey for 2019: helping consumers reduce food waste through better labelling and product changes.

The survey covers nearly 60 supermarkets and 2,000 food products and indicates to what extent the UK's grocery retailers and brands have made progress implementing best-practice guidance on date labels, product life, pack size and storage/freezing advice.

The research found that a quarter of all pre-packed unprepared fresh produce now carries no date label, while the amount of product life available to consumers has remained stable on many products. Almost all products had correct home storage advice and a significant increase was noted in the use of the snowflake logo for home freezing, rising from 15% to nearly 50%.

The survey also details the areas where WRAP deems that more action is required. WRAP has also updated its guidance on applying date labels and packaging choices for fresh uncut fruit and vegetables, helping to reduce consumer food waste by changing products, packs, labels and the retail environment.

The Retail Survey can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/r9wc2hj> along with the guidance which can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/t58gzdt>

## RADIOACTIVITY IN FOOD AND THE ENVIRONMENT 2018 REPORT PUBLISHED

The Environment Agency, Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Wales recently published the radioactivity in food and the environment (RIFE) 2018 report and associated documents. This report sets out the findings of the UK-wide radiological monitoring programmes carried out in 2018 by the UK's food standard agencies and environment agencies. The monitoring is independent of, and is also used as a check on, the monitoring carried out by site operators. A summary report for 2004 to 2016 is also available.

You can access the report here: <https://tinyurl.com/sx8ntwu>



## CLIMATE CHANGE AND EMISSIONS TO AIR - EU RESOLUTION TO COMMIT TO NET ZERO EMISSIONS BY 2050

The European Parliament announced in November that it had approved a draft resolution for the EU to commit to net-zero emissions by 2050. The draft resolution, approved by the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee, calls on the EU to submit its strategy to reach climate neutrality at the latest by 2050 to the UN Convention on Climate Change as soon as possible. The Committee also highlighted the need for the EU to raise its ambition level for 2030, in order to reach the 2050 target.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/r6onf5z>



According to the Environmental Protection Agency Ireland (EPA), scientists estimate that food waste produces up to 10% of all global carbon emissions. In terms of addressing climate change, reducing food waste is an action that everyone can do.

In Ireland over 200,000 tonnes of food waste is wasted at home, and this waste has a greater impact on the environment given the energy consumed in processing, transport, packaging and preparation. To help reduce food waste, the EPA has issued advice on the website [www.stopfoodwaste.ie](http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie).

Mary Frances Rochford, EPA Programme Manager said: “We talk about climate change and the need for action, but often it is hard to know where to start. Reducing food waste is an immediate and effective way to reduce your personal carbon footprint. If every household in Ireland takes steps to reduce their food waste, this would be a great achievement towards reducing our national footprint. We as a nation are best when we work together to tackle issues and collectively, our individual actions will make a real difference.”

More than one quarter of all food produced is wasted worldwide. In Ireland, we generate more than one million tonnes of food waste every year which represents a carbon footprint as high as 3.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

The EPA has three simple steps that individuals and families can take to get started in your food waste battle:

- make a shopping list, and stick to it
- make the most of the food you buy; don't forget the leftovers
- when plans change, freeze your food and use it another time.

Ms Rochford added: “As part of the Climate Action Plan, Ireland has committed to halving food waste by 2030. We will do this by working with food producers; retailers and restaurants; but we also need every person in Ireland to take their own action. So make the pledge, get involved and begin to reduce the food you waste.”

## INDUSTRY ALLIANCE TO BOOST CONTRIBUTION OF FIBRE-BASED PACKAGING IN A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Cepi, the European association representing the paper industry, recently announced a new alliance called 4evergreen. The aim of the alliance is to boost the contribution of fibre-based packaging in a circular and sustainable economy that minimises climate and environmental impact.

The alliance will aim to increase awareness about the benefits of fibre-based packaging materials, advocate for EU legislation supporting product design for recyclability and call for the development of optimised collection systems and appropriate recycling infrastructures.

The rise of environmental awareness and consumer concerns, as well as the increase of packaging focused regulation, such as the Single Use Plastics Directive, have helped companies to accelerate the development of alternative packaging materials including fibre-based packaging with a view to helping consumers make more climate-friendly choices.

4evergreen was created as a forum to engage and connect industry members from across the fibre-based packaging value chain, from paper and board producers to packaging converters, brand-owners and retailers, technology and material suppliers, waste sorters and collectors.

“Fibre-based packaging can be a game-changer for material substitution”, says Eija Hietavuo, Chairwoman of 4evergreen and Senior Vice President Sustainability Stora Enso Consumer Board. “Our common goal is to deliver a holistic approach to optimise the sustainability and circularity of the fibre-based packaging’s life cycle.”

“The time to act is now!” says Jori Ringman, Director General at Cepi. “Our industry already has a strong track record in environmental performance and recycling, but our ambition is higher. We are driving a system-wide shift to transition to the next level of circularity and climate resilience. 4evergreen will be the place for the whole industry value chain to co-create and collaborate for a change.”

The first 4evergreen alliance members include: Nestlé, Danone, Mars, Stora Enso, Smurfit Kappa, Sappi, Metsä Board, UPM, Mayr-Melnhof Group, Reno de Medici, Mondi, Burgo, Kotkamills, Ahlstrom Munksjö, International Paper, BillerudKorsnäs, Huhtamäki, SEDA, SIG Combibloc, Tetra Pak, Elopak, Walki, Schur Group, Cardbox Packaging, Firstan Ltd., Westrock, Leonhard Kurz Stiftung and Co. KG, Graphic Packaging International, AR Packaging, Baumer hhs GmbH, Van Genechten Packaging Group. The alliance is welcoming more organisations to join the collaboration.

## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPINIONS PUBLISHED

A number of European Parliament resolutions, recommendations and opinions were published in the Official Journal of the EU, C390, 18/11/2019. These resolutions, recommendations and opinions include:

- European strategy for the promotion of protein crops;
- Inclusion of greenhouse gas emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry into the 2030 climate and energy framework;
- Packaging and packaging waste; and
- Organic production and labelling of organic products.

You will find the above here: <https://tinyurl.com/scagegm>

# CONSULTATIONS

<p>Scottish Government - ending the sale of energy drinks to children and young people</p>	<p>Seeks views on whether there is a need to take mandatory action. An age restriction of 16 is the most appropriate course of action; how an age restriction policy could best be enforced and monitored; and the impacts of implementing such a policy.</p>	<p><a href="https://tinyurl.com/tutlk8d">https://tinyurl.com/tutlk8d</a></p>	<p>4 February 2020</p>
<p>EFSA - Ochratoxin A</p>	<p>Seeking feedback from interested parties on its scientific opinion about public health risks related to the presence of Ochratoxin A (OTA) in food</p>	<p><a href="https://tinyurl.com/t2yclmv">https://tinyurl.com/t2yclmv</a></p>	<p>24 January 2020</p>
<p>EC - roadmap regarding the evaluation of Geographical Indications (GIs) and Traditional Specialities Guaranteed (TSGs) protected in the EU</p>	<p>This evaluation will assess how effective, efficient, relevant and consistent quality schemes are for certain food and agricultural products.</p>	<p><a href="https://tinyurl.com/wbpopz">https://tinyurl.com/wbpopz</a></p>	<p>27 January 2020</p>

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