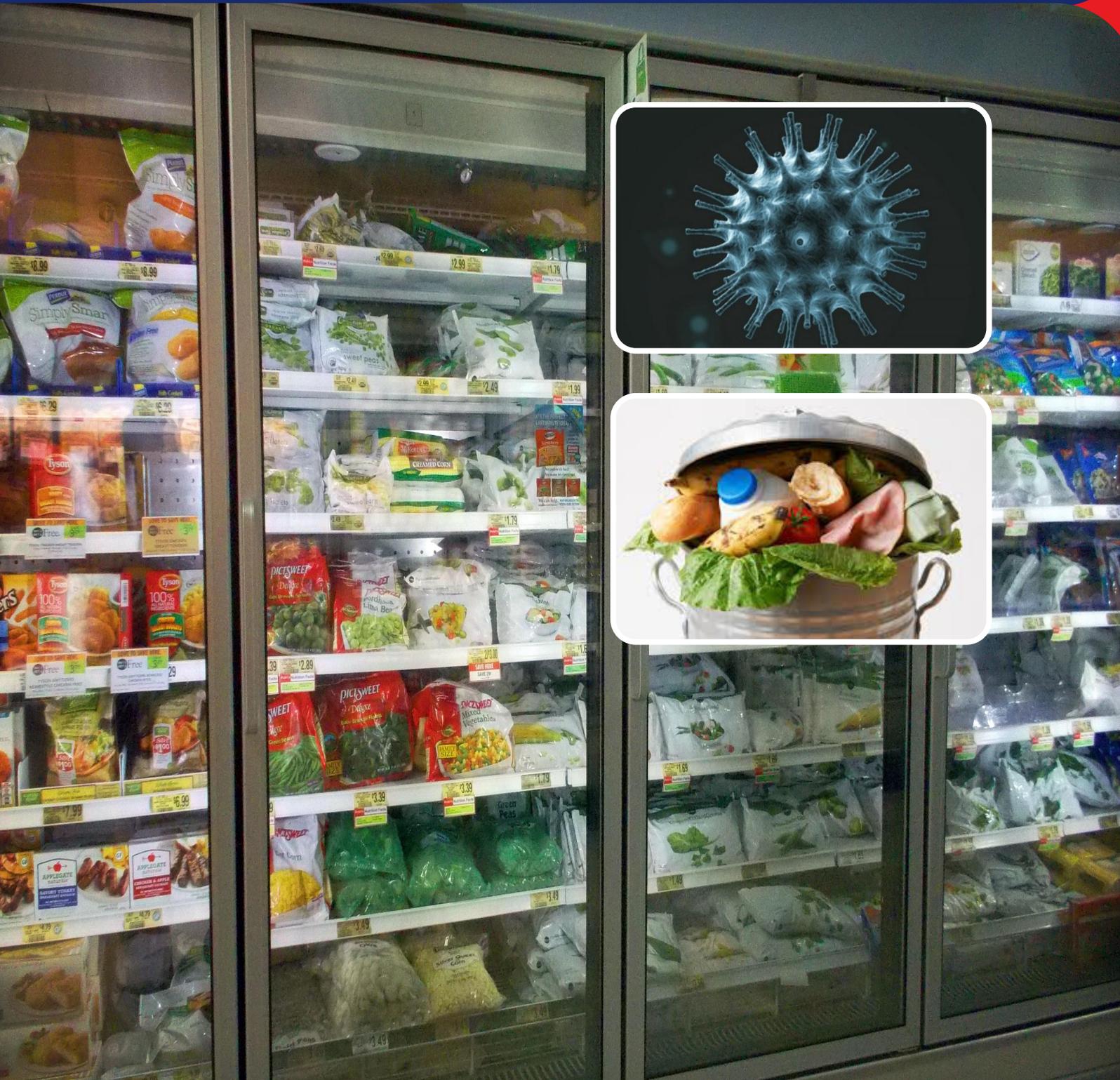


T & L UPDATE



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 www.freshfromthefreezer.co.uk

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CONSULTATIONS

FOREWORD

Welcome to the slightly later than normal March edition of the BFFF Technical and Legislative update. Amid the huge challenges we are all facing with the COVID-19 pandemic, we have tried to keep a sense of normality by bringing you, as always, updates and news on hot topics from across the industry. For those of you now working remotely, I hope the articles will be of interest and will provide a welcome break in the day.

Unfortunately, I have to report that due to the pandemic, we have taken the decision to postpone the Technical Conference, which was scheduled for 14th May 2020 at the British Motor Museum, Warwick. This decision has not been taken lightly, but we feel that this is the only possible course of action to ensure the safety of all our speakers and guests. We will be looking at rescheduling the event, so will inform you of the new date once confirmed. We appreciate your understanding.

On a more positive note, I would like to take this opportunity to formally introduce you to Holly Jones, our new Technical Assistant. Holly joined the business in January, and I must say, she has really hit the ground running (to be fair she didn't have any choice!). Please don't hesitate to contact either myself or Holly in the coming weeks if you feel we can help in any way. We have many useful contacts across the industry as well as within government departments. And supporting us we also have a great Technical Expert group who are more than willing to offer support and advice.

Whatever it is, we are only an email or phone call away and will always do our best to help.

Stay safe and take care!

Denise and Holly.



Denise Rion
Head of Technical
deniserion@bfff.co.uk



Holly Jones
Technical Assistant
hollyjones@bfff.co.uk

ACTIVITY OF EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

EU COMMISSION PUBLISH WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020.

On 29th January, the European Commission adopted its 2020 work programme. The programme sets out the actions the Commission will take in 2020 to turn the Political Guidelines of President von der Leyen into tangible benefits for European citizens, businesses and society.

They will start by turning the six headline ambitions of President von der Leyen into concrete initiatives that will then be negotiated and implemented in cooperation with the European Parliament, Member States and other partners. Sitting under the six headline ambitions are 43 new policy objectives which can be found in Annex 1.

In preparing the Work Programme, the Commission also examined all proposals that currently are awaiting decision by the European Parliament and the Council. As a result, they are proposing to withdraw and repeal 34 of them as some of them do not match the new Commission's political priorities. However, for the majority of initiatives, the Commission remains strongly committed to deliver on their objectives. The Commission will reflect on better and more efficient ways to pursue the objectives and will consult the European Parliament and the Council before formalising the withdrawals. A full list of the proposals for withdrawal is set out in Annex 4.

A 'one-in, one-out' approach will ensure that newly introduced burdens are offset by relieving people and businesses – notably SMEs – of equivalent administrative costs at EU level in the same policy area. A Fit-for-future platform will support the Commission's simplification efforts and a full list of proposals for regulatory simplification can be found in Annex 2.

The 2020 Work Programme, along with relevant associated documents is available to download here: <https://tinyurl.com/wg7fbfe>

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT APPROVES EU-VIETNAM FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The European Parliament recently announced they had approved the EU-Vietnam free trade and investment deals. This is the most comprehensive trade agreement between the EU and a developing country which will remove almost all customs duties between the two parties over the next 10 years, taking into account Vietnam's development needs. However, many important EU export items such as pharmaceuticals, chemicals or machinery will benefit from duty free import conditions as of entry into force. The trade agreement also contains specific provisions which provide protection for Geographical Indications on 169 traditional European food and drink products for example, Rioja wine and Roquefort cheese.

The trade agreement will enter into force in 2020, following formal conclusion by the European Council and conclusion of the ratification procedure by Vietnam.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/wp8z2dc>

EU COMMISSION PUBLISH DIGITAL STRATEGY

On 19th February, the European Commission published its strategies for data and artificial intelligence.

The objective of the European data strategy is to make sure the EU becomes a role model and a leader for a society empowered by data. For this, it aims to set up a true European data space, a single market for data, to unlock unused data, allowing it to flow freely within the European Union and across sectors for the benefit of businesses, researchers and public administrations.

To achieve this, the Commission proposes to first establish the right regulatory framework regarding data governance, access and reuse between businesses, between businesses and government, and within administrations. It then intends to support the development of technological systems and the next generation of infrastructures, which will enable the EU and all the actors to grasp the opportunities of the data economy. Finally, it will launch sectoral specific actions. The Commission will also work to further narrow the digital skills gap among Europeans, and explore how to give citizens better control over who can access their machine-generated data.

You can read more about the strategies here: <https://tinyurl.com/yx37vfc9>

A Q&A section can also be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/rdk6o3h>

ADDITIVES, CHEMICALS, CONTAMINANTS & FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

CODEX REQUEST COMMENTS ON PRIORITY LIST OF CONTAMINANTS AND TOXICANTS

Codex Alimentarius has published a request for comments on the priority list of contaminants and naturally occurring toxicants for evaluation by the Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA).

The request seeks comments on substances that are already included in the priority list, as well as nomination of new substances. Further detail can be found under the reference of CL 2020/24-CF here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3v2gcwp>

All comments must be made in writing and submitted by 30 March 2020.

DEFRA AND HSE PUBLISH LATEST REPORT ON PESTICIDE RESIDUES IN FOOD.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recently published Quarter 2 2019 results from the quarterly monitoring programme to check UK grown and imported food for pesticide residues.

This quarter's programme surveyed 828 samples of 24 different foods. 62 samples contained residues above the legal Maximum Residue Level (MRL). These results are in the surveys of beans with pods, cabbage, cheese (processed), grapes, milk, okra, potatoes, pre-packed salad and spinach.

However, although many of the exceedances were for chlorate findings, the findings of chlorate residues in cheese (processed), pre-prepared salad leaves and spinach have not been treated as breaches of the legislation.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/rqr6jra>



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT REJECTS PROPOSAL ON RECYCLED PVC

The European Parliament have rejected a European Commission proposal on recycled polyvinyl chloride (PVC). The proposal would have amended the rules concerning lead concentration in PVC, allowing up to 1% lead in recycled flexible/soft PVC and up to 2% in recycled rigid PVC. However, MEPs didn't consider this would be compatible with the REACH regulation and that lead in PVC products should be eliminated, with no derogations for recycled PVC.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/u4wwpor>

CONSULTATION ON NEW SURVEY ON NITRATES IN LEAFY GREEN VEGETABLES

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have launched a consultation on a new survey to monitor tissue nitrate levels in domestically grown leafy green vegetables. The proposed new survey will only cover domestically grown produce and will focus on rocket, where levels are increasing. Sampling on kale, chard, bulls-blood, land cress and baby leaf will also be increased, to investigate fluctuating nitrate levels.

Comments are invited on the survey design and how the occurrence data might be used to identify potential mitigation measures to further reduce nitrate levels.

Should you wish to comment, the consultation can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/u6eq7ed>

All feedback must be submitted by 13 March 2020.

FSA CONSULT ON NEW ACRYLAMIDE AND FURANS SURVEY

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have launched a consultation on a new survey to monitor levels of acrylamide and furans in UK retail foods.

Comments are invited on the survey design and how the occurrence data might be used to identify effective mitigation measures and steps to further reduce levels of acrylamide and furans.

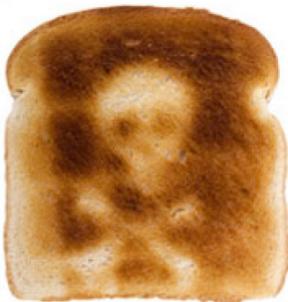
Compared to previous FSA Surveys of Acrylamide and Furans in UK Retail Foods, the proposed survey is intended to be more targeted to ensure that the UK dataset is up to date and that there is sufficient data to inform on any future regulatory measures.

It will include bread, potato crisps, breakfast cereals, fine bakery wares, coffee and coffee substitutes, baby food and processed cereal-based food for infants and young children, fruit juices and other products. Full details of each sample will be recorded in a database and reported annually to the FSA along with full methodologies, results and interpretation including trending in the form of annual reports and a final report at the end of the survey period. Interim results will be provided to the FSA when available to allow the notification of brand owners of any products which exceed benchmark levels

The consultation closed on 13th March but can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/u3l2rwr>



GUIDANCE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACRYLAMIDE REGULATION



The European Commission has published Guidance on the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2017/2158 establishing mitigation measures and benchmark levels for the reduction of the presence of acrylamide in food.

The guidance provides information on the food products within scope of the regulation, the activities of food business operators, benchmark levels, the application of mitigation measures, sampling and analysis, record keeping and information, and colour guides.

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

EFSA OPINION ON FLAVOURING GROUP EVALUATION 73

The European Food Safety Authority's Food Additives and Flavouring Panel (EFSA - FAF) recently published a scientific opinion on Flavouring Group Evaluation (FGE) 73. This latest revision considers alicyclic alcohols, aldehydes, acids and related esters.

The Panel concluded that none of the 24 substances give rise to safety concerns at their levels of dietary intake. It also found the specifications for the materials adequate for 23 substances. For 19 of the substances it was highlighted that more detailed data on uses and use levels should be provided in order to refine their exposure assessments and finalise their safety evaluations.

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

EFSA OPINION ON OAT LECITHIN

The European Food Safety Authority's Food Additives and Flavouring Panel (EFSA - FAF) recently published a scientific opinion on the use of oat lecithin as a food additive.

The opinion covers the use of the substance as a new food additive in the proposed food category 'cocoa and chocolate products'.

The Panel considered that the previous conclusion for lecithins (E 322) equally applies to oat lecithin to be used as a food additive and there is no safety concern for it to be used at the proposed use and use levels. They also concluded there was no need for a numerical ADI and recommended that the European Commission should consider including specifications for oat lecithin as a new food additive.

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



ALLERGENS

RESEARCH REVEALS 20% OF FOOD CONTAINS UNDECLARED ALLERGENS

Research recently carried out by Unchecked has found that 20% of food samples contain at least one undeclared allergen including peanuts, egg and gluten.

Unchecked is a new campaign which investigates the UK's shrinking enforcement capacity and exposes the real-world costs of the failure to properly enforce the rules. Over the coming months, Unchecked have pledged to carry out in-depth investigations into the real-world impacts of weak enforcement in important areas of public protection. Their investigations will focus on a range of issues; the environment, health, food safety, consumer protection, workers' rights and local spaces.

This particular investigation revealed that out of 6,602 food samples tested for allergens by Local Authorities in 2016, 2017 and 2018, 1,213 were found to contain traces of allergenic substances. In each case there was no indication of the allergen's presence in the food product. In England, more than 20 per cent of samples contained an undeclared allergen, in Scotland just under 8 per cent, and in Wales nearly 44 per cent.

Peanuts were the most commonly detected allergen, found in five per cent of tested food samples, but a range of high-risk allergens were found, including gluten, milk, egg, sulphites, soya, sesame, mustard and other nuts.

The findings were amongst those presented in a wider report from Unchecked entitled 'The UK's Enforcement Gap' which can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/v9jphjm>



FSA CONSULTS ON UPDATES TO TECHNICAL GUIDANCE FOR FOOD ALLERGEN LABELLING

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) recently launched a consultation on updates to its existing technical guidance to reflect changes to food allergen labelling legislation coming into effect in England on 1st October 2021.

From 1st October 2021, any food which will be packaged on-site before a customer selects or orders it (pre-packed for direct sale (PPDS)), will be required to now have an ingredient list clearly displaying allergen information.

Whether a food is PPDS is dependent on where and when it is packed in relation to the point at which it is offered for sale. An approach based on the Government's position which can be used to help determine whether or not a food is PPDS is provided in Annex B of the consultation document. This approach sets out three criteria, all of which must be met for a food to be PPDS.

The changes are supported by Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and those nations are working towards introducing similar requirements. This guidance is expected to cover England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the consultation is therefore open to stakeholders in these three nations. In Scotland, relevant guidance will be produced by FSS.

The consultation closed on 6th March but can be found here <https://tinyurl.com/rol2gvl>

FDF PUBLISHES GUIDANCE ON 'ALLERGEN-FREE' AND VEGAN CLAIMS

The Food and Drink Federation (FDF) have published new guidance on 'Allergen'-Free and Vegan Claims. Supported by the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the guidance aims to inform both the food industry and consumers as to the difference between '*allergen*'-free claims (e.g. milk-free) and vegan claims. Each claim communicates to different consumer groups, with only the allergen absence claim being food safety information.



The provision of this information aims to dispel any misunderstanding that a vegan claim automatically means a food product is safe and suitable for an allergic consumer. The document details the current legal framework that regulates the use of these voluntary claims and how it may develop going forward. It also signposts to resources and positions from other relevant stakeholders both in the UK and EU.

The guidance can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/ql2hkcc>

ANIMAL WELFARE

FSA PUBLISH LATEST LEVELS OF AMR BACTERIA IN CHICKEN

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have recently published the results of two surveys monitoring antimicrobial-resistant bacteria in chicken.

The two annual surveys tested fresh chicken on sale in the UK, with one looking at certain types of antimicrobial-resistant (AMR) *E. coli*, and the other at AMR campylobacter. The results are from Year 4 of the surveys (2017 to 2018).

Overall, the AMR *E. coli* contamination in retail chicken has declined in comparison to previous years, which suggests that the tighter control on antimicrobial usage in industry might be having a positive impact although further work is required to explore this.

The proportion of AMR campylobacter isolates and multi-drug resistance found were similar to those in Year 3 (August 2016 to July 2017).

The reports can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/wbcebdh> and here <https://tinyurl.com/y4nl7ynz>

APHA REPORT ON AVIAN INFLUENZA IN WILD BIRDS

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) recently published an updated Avian influenza in wild birds 2020 report. This report covers weekly findings of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) – often referred to as bird flu – in wild birds in Great Britain. Updates are recorded in calendar weeks (for example, week 1 is the first week in January).

This surveillance is made up of patrols by wild bird reserve wardens and collections of found-dead wild birds reported to the APHA by members of the public. The data only represents cases where birds have tested positive for avian influenza.

The report can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/w2zlcbe>
along with the latest guidance here: <https://tinyurl.com/zzdcs95>



LATEST REPORTS ON ASF IN EUROPE

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) recently published a scientific report on the epidemiological analyses of African swine fever (ASF) in the EU between November 2018 and October 2019.

In this period, ASF has been confirmed in Slovakia, whereas Czechia became officially ASF free in March 2019, bringing the number of affected countries in the EU to nine. The report provides a narrative update of the situation in the different countries and an analysis of the temporal and spatial patterns of the disease. Several new studies have been identified in this reporting period, but these did not alter the conclusions of the previous reporting period.

You can access the full EFSA report here: <https://tinyurl.com/wtuz6xr>

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have also issued updated outbreak assessments for ASF in Eastern Europe and Belgium. The assessments report that since December 2019 there have been new outbreaks of the disease in domestic pigs and cases in wild boar in Eastern Europe, including reports of the first cases in domestic pigs in Greece.

The reports conclude that the risk remains at medium for the entry of contaminated or infected products into the UK and the risk of exposure to the UK pig population is still low.

The outbreak assessments can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/tvugjg9>

UK AND AUSTRALIA COLLABORATE ON ASF

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) announced in January that the UK and the New South Wales government in Australia would be collaborating on a joint, simulated exercise to practice biosecurity measures in the event of an African swine fever outbreak.

The exercise took place over 3 days (29th – 31st January 2020) and assessed how movement restrictions would be applied in practice to best manage an ASF outbreak.

There has never been an outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) in the UK and there are robust measures in place to protect against it, including joint operations with Border Force and a policy to seize and destroy all illegal imports of meat and meat products. However, ASF is a major risk to the pig industries of both Australia and the UK due to trade links with and proximity to affected regions in Asia and Europe. In the event of an outbreak, disease control measures will mean the governments will put in place movement controls for all pig-related businesses, potentially including feed delivery, slaughter houses, pig breeding units or movement of animals to sales.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/ttpx9ms>



BREXIT

CONSEQUENCES OF BREXIT FOR ECJ



In the lead up to the UK's withdrawal from the EU, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) published a press release outlining the impact of Brexit on them. They reported that the number of Judges of the Court of Justice and the General Court would reduce immediately upon UK's withdrawal but that the UK's Advocate General would remain in office until a successor took up their duties.

The Court of Justice continues to have jurisdiction in the following instances: in any proceedings brought by or against the UK; and to give preliminary rulings on requests from courts and tribunals of the UK, both made before the end of the transition period.

Read the press release (No 10/2020: 31 January 2020) in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/yx7wxhyk>

EU COMMISSION Q&A'S ON WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT

On 24th January, the EU Commission published a set of questions and answers on the UK's withdrawal from the European Union on 31 January 2020.

The Q&A's outline that EU and the United Kingdom conducted intensive negotiations to agree on the terms of the UK's withdrawal and create legal certainty once EU law ceases to apply to the UK. They state that throughout the negotiations, the European Commission ensured an inclusive process, with regular meetings of the 27 EU Member States, as well as with the European Parliament and national parliaments.

Answers are provided for numerous questions including:

- Who will lead the negotiations on the EU side?
- What is the transition period?
- What status will the UK have during the transition period?
- What obligations will the United Kingdom have during the transition period?
- What is the timeline of the transition period? Can it be extended?
- What is the Withdrawal Agreement? And what does it cover?

Also explained is the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland.

The Q&A's can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/ucnl2sq>

REPORT ON IMPACT OF BREXIT ON SCOTLAND'S ECONOMY

Brexit uncertainty resulted in significantly lower growth for the Scottish economy in 2019, a report has found.

The latest State of the Economy report, published by the Scottish Government's Chief Economist Gary Gillespie, says despite the immediate risk of a 'no deal' Brexit being removed, uncertainty remains - particularly for those reliant on new trade agreements.

The report documents how:

- Recent performance of the Scottish economy has been dominated by Brexit, with the uncertainty impacting growth and business investment
- Scotland's labour market has continued to perform strongly by historical standards, however employment levels have fallen over the year
- Consumer and business sentiment weakened in 2019 and continues to risk growth
- The outlook for 2021 and beyond is crucially dependent on the shape of any future EU trade deal and the impact of businesses adjusting to additional requirements to trade both in terms of costs and access

The report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/wbze2v2>

THINK TANK REPORT ON BREXIT: WHAT NEXT?

A new report by academic think tank 'The UK in a Changing Europe' has outlined how the government faces several challenges after Brexit, including the negotiation of a new trade deal with the EU, devising and implementing a whole raft of new policies, reshaping the economy and holding the Union together.

The report, Brexit: what next? explores how the government has set itself a mammoth task of negotiating a new relationship with the EU, in less than a year.

It states that the trade deal itself will be exceedingly challenging, predicting that the government's unwillingness to countenance an extension means it will be hard to agree anything other than 'the barest of bare bone deals' during 2020.

Professor Anand Menon, director of The UK in a Changing Europe, said: "Getting Brexit done, in the sense of leaving the European Union was, in a way, the easy bit. Now, the Government confronts the challenge not only of successfully concluding a set of complex negotiations in under a year, but also putting in place structures and policies to replace those of the EU. And perhaps most important and most challenging of all, it must address the political imperatives created by Brexit and its aftermath. These are sizeable and complex challenges, to say the least."

You can read the full report 'Brexit: what next' here: <https://tinyurl.com/wxbkzxt>

DIT CONSULTATION ON UK GLOBAL TARIFF

On 6th February, the Department for International Trade (DIT) launched a consultation on a new the UK Global tariff policy.

Now that Britain has left the EU, the government can develop a new UK Most Favoured Nation (MFN) tariff schedule, which will enter into force on 1st January 2021. This UK Global Tariff will ensure UK businesses compete on fair terms with the rest of the world.

The consultation closed on 5th March 2020, but can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/r3r5ykr>

BUSINESS BREXIT HELPLINE

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) have published information on how to contact the business Brexit helpline. The helpline provides information on how to support businesses now that the UK has left the EU. Call the helpline to find out about:

- where to find information and guidance
- other government helplines that are available to support your business

Telephone: 0300 2000 900 - Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm

IMPORT CONTROLS ON EU GOODS AFTER TRANSITION PERIOD

On 10th February, government confirmed plans to introduce import controls on EU goods at the border, after the Brexit transition period ends on 31 December 2020. The announcement, by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, explained that EU and British traders will have to submit customs declarations and be liable to goods' checks from 2021. Note: This is aimed at GB/EU traders. This approach does not apply to the flow of trade between Northern Ireland and Ireland, or between Northern Ireland and GB.

It also confirmed that the policy easements put in place for a potential no-deal exit will not be reintroduced, as businesses have time to prepare.

There are a number of reasons for implementing import controls:

- to keep our borders safe and secure so we know who's coming in and how often, what they are bringing in, and why
- to ensure we treat all partners equally as we begin to negotiate our own trading arrangements with countries around the world
- to collect the right customs, VAT and excise duties
- the EU has said it will enforce checks on our goods entering the Eurozone. We will likewise enforce our own rules for goods entering the UK

Business can prepare for border controls by making sure they have an Economic Operator Registration and Identification (EORI) number, and also by looking into how they want to make declarations such as using a customs agent.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/uvyf7ag>

On the same day, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) also announced that the deadline for businesses to apply for customs support funding had been extended to 31st January 2021. The announcement highlights that such funding could finance training courses to help traders submit customs declarations.

You can read this announcement here: <https://tinyurl.com/wu2wxex>

GUIDANCE ON BREXIT

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) recently updated guidance for food and feed businesses now that the UK has left the EU. The guidance explains that during the transition period, businesses will be able to trade with the EU on the same terms as before. There are no immediate changes that will come into effect before 1 January 2021 that businesses need to prepare for. It also explains that, during the transition period, the UK and EU will negotiate additional arrangements.

The guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/rboc47p>

USEFUL GUIDANCE FROM GOVERNMENT

Several pieces of guidance have recently been issued by Government departments which members may find useful, including information on exporting goods outside the EU and EU trademarks. Links to the guidance can be found below:

- Exporting goods outside the EU: <https://tinyurl.com/we4yl9t>
- EU trademark protection and comparable UK trademarks: <https://tinyurl.com/qpsrsog>
- Changes to EU and international designs and trade mark protection after transition period: <https://tinyurl.com/wapa2kb>
- Changes to unregistered designs after transition period: <https://tinyurl.com/ro9wsly>
- Changes to copyright law after transition period: <https://tinyurl.com/vpo85zv>
- Exhaustion of IP rights and parallel trade after transition period: <https://tinyurl.com/r3khged>
- Changes to international trade mark registrations after transition period: <https://tinyurl.com/qrwmv7t>

REPORT ON THE 'GET READY FOR BREXIT CAMPAIGN'

The National Audit Office have recently published a report on the 'Get Ready for Brexit' public information campaign which Government ran from 1st September 2019. The report looks at the management of the campaign, from preparation to the evidence available on the effectiveness of the campaign.

The campaign's original objective was to ensure that everyone was prepared for leaving the EU on 31st October – regardless of the negotiation outcome. However, the campaign was stopped on 28th October when the government and EU agreed an extension to the UK's membership of the EU.

Led by the Cabinet Office the overall campaign budget was £100 million. By the end of October, at the point at which the campaign was stopped, £46 million had been spent against an expected spend of £53 million by that point.

This latest report concludes that, as a result of the campaign, the public was more aware of some of the things they might need to take action on, although there was no evidence that it resulted in significantly better preparedness.

You can download the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/trpqh2g>

EU STATEMENT ON UK WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EU

On 31st January 2020 the European Commission published a joint Statement by President von der Leyen with President Sassoli and President Michel on the UK withdrawal from the EU.

The statement sets out the challenges and opportunities faced by the EU and stresses that these have not changed because of Brexit. It also highlights that the EU wants to have the best possible relationship with the UK, but that this will never be as good as membership.

The statement can be found here along with a video recording: <https://tinyurl.com/wwlbn8f>

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING

BEIS LAUNCH NEW BUSINESS SUPPORT CAMPAIGN AND WEBSITE

The government has launched a new business support campaign, designed to help businesses to find the right support as part of an ambition to make the UK the best place in the world to work and grow a business.

As part of the campaign, government support will be advertised across a range of media, from billboards and newspapers to radio and social media. All of the government's business support schemes will be accessible via the new Business Support site, making it easier for businesses in England to find out about the full range of support available to them. (Business support in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is provided by the devolved administrations so this site covers business in England only.)

Schemes are divided into 4 areas.

- **Finance and business planning** - Funding for new businesses and support to help existing business grow, dealing with late payments, and equity and debt finance.
- **Leadership and talent** - Mentoring schemes, help with recruiting, developing leadership skills or joining a network.
- **Innovation and technology** - Funding for innovation, adoption of new technology, intellectual property and finding partners for innovation.
- **Exporting** - Support for doing business internationally and expanding online.

The website which can be found here: <https://www.businesssupport.gov.uk/> also provides access to a Business Support Helpline and a LiveChat function.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING WITH SMALL BUSINESSES UP BY ALMOST £2BN

An increase in the amount of money the government spends with small businesses has been welcomed by politicians and business leaders.

Figures released by the Cabinet Office show that for the year 2018/19, government spending with small and medium size firms rose to £14.2bn – an increase of £1.8bn on the previous year and the highest spend since government records began in 2013.

The investment has seen money pumped into small businesses providing services as varied as training courses for apprentices to the development of specialist software.

The government's manifesto also committed to making sure that businesses are paid on time. And latest data from the Cabinet Office shows that the department pays 99 per cent of its undisputed invoices within 30 days and 91 per cent within five days. The government's commitment to prompt payment also covers the private sector, where tough measures are in place to make sure that suppliers are paid in good time.

FOOD SAFETY AND ZOOSES

FSA JANUARY BOARD MEETING

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have published the key outcomes of its Board meeting, held on 21st January 2020 along with a recording of the meeting. At the meeting, the Board confirmed the three main routes to trigger changes to authorisations on food and feed after Brexit and set out its approach to future trade negotiations featuring food and feed.

The meeting also heard from Henry Dimbleby, regarding the creation of a National Food Strategy for England, and agreed a long-term strategy to improve quality of life for people with food allergies and intolerances, particularly the needs of young adults.

The agenda, papers and recording of the meeting can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/vpohoot>

FSA REVIEW ESTIMATES 2.4M CASES OF FOODBORNE ILLNESS IN UK PER YEAR

A scientific review recently published by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has estimated that around 2.4 million cases of foodborne illness occur every year in the UK. This is up from the 2009 estimate of approximately one million.

The publication includes the Foodborne Disease Estimation Model (FDEM), developed by analysts at the FSA to provide annual estimates for the burden of foodborne disease in the UK. The FDEM produces estimates for the total number of cases of infectious intestinal disease (IID) in the UK as well as the number of those cases that are due to food. It also provides individual estimates for the major IID and foodborne disease-causing pathogens.

The increase in the proportion of foodborne norovirus cases estimated by the Norovirus Attribution Study (NoVAS) has a significant impact on the overall picture of foodborne disease, and so the FDEM was updated with the NoVAS estimates in order to create updated estimates of the burden of foodborne disease in the UK.

In summary, these new figures do not indicate an increase in total illness, or any new risk to public health, but rather provide a better estimation of the proportion of infectious intestinal disease that is due to food. The overall estimate for this type of illness, from all sources, remains the same, at around 18 million cases each year in the UK.

These new studies and their accompanying models also reveal:

- an estimated 380,000 cases of norovirus linked to food occur in the UK per year
- a breakdown of the roles of the main transmission pathways in food suggest eating out accounts for an estimated 37% of all foodborne norovirus cases, takeaways 26%, open-headed lettuce (retail sale) 30%, raspberries (retail sale) 4%, and oysters (retail sale) 3%.

The report can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/wc3wg4b>

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY REVIEW OF AIRBORNE AMR

The Environment Agency have published a report presenting the findings of a short project that explored the current state of knowledge on airborne antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Resistance to antibiotics and other antimicrobial substances is becoming a major risk for human health and it is now clear that many of the resistant infections seen in hospitals have been contracted elsewhere. This report presents the findings of a short project that explored the current state of knowledge on airborne antimicrobial resistance.

A summary of the work, along with the full report can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/uudqd5p>

NON-STATUTORY ZONOSSES DISEASE SURVEILLANCE REPORT 2019

The Animal and Plant Health Authority (APHA) have recently published the latest non-statutory zoonoses annual disease surveillance report for 2019. The report covers, among others: Campylobacter; Mycobacteria; Streptococcus suis; and Shiga toxin producing Escherichia coli.

Monitoring the occurrence of certain animal diseases can highlight the potential for zoonotic transmission and provide an indication of human, environmental and foodborne health risks.

These project reports, funded by Defra, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government through the APHA's Bacterial Diseases and Food Safety portfolio focus primarily on farmed animal species.

The report can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/rfpb8ae>

CAMPAIGN TO “PROTECT OUR FOOD”

Unison have launched a campaign to “protect our food”, amid concerns around food safety regulation. The campaign is set against a background of austerity cuts to local authority funding and concerns that the UK may relax food hygiene and animal welfare standards in Brexit negotiations.

Unison has also carried out research into the public's perception of food safety regulation and found them to be strongly in favour of it being kept independent. The union has sampled public opinion on the work of Environmental Health Practitioners (EHPs), and found that they are concerned to keep this work under the local authority control. This research will be published in the coming weeks.

More information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/r3zfv88>

In the meantime, a petition to keep meat inspections independent will be delivered to the FSA, amid concerns that the FSA plans to move to a self-regulatory system. The Unison backed petition has been signed by more than 216,000 people. You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/vj38zbn>

EFSA REPORT ON OUTBREAK OF SALMONELLA ENTERITIDIS LINKED TO EGGS

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have published the fourth update of a Technical Report on a multi-country outbreak of Salmonella enteritidis infections linked to eggs.

The report highlights that the multi-country outbreak has been ongoing in the EU/EEA for several years. Between 1st February 2017 and 14th January 2020, there have been 656 confirmed cases and 202 probable cases in 15 countries, with a decrease in reported cases during 2019.

Cases have previously been linked to eggs from a Polish consortium. The report concludes that the outbreak is still ongoing, the reporting of new cases is expected in the coming months and additional investigations are necessary to identify the source of contamination.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/t5hx2ts>



FOOD SECURITY, INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

GOVERNMENT CHEMIST RESPONSE TO NATIONAL FOOD STRATEGY

The Government Chemist, Julian Braybrook, recently published a response to the call for evidence for the National Food Strategy. The response provides information about the expertise of the Government Chemist and its current involvement in the areas of food allergy, food authenticity, environmental challenges and food innovation.

You can read the response in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/vo5hpw8>

FSS COLLABORATE WITH SCOTTISH BUSINESSES TO TACKLE FOOD CRIME

Food Standards Scotland has announced 17 food and drink industry partners have pledged to support its Scottish Food Crime and Incidents Unit (SFCIU) so far, in raising awareness of food crime and how to report it.

Collaborating organisations include Seafood Scotland, Scotland Food & Drink, Quality Meat Scotland, Crimestoppers and Safe and Local Supplier Approval (SALSA).

SFCIU Head, Ron McNaughton, said:

“Food crime costs the UK economy around £1.2 billion each year and it’s vital we tackle it to uphold Scotland’s well-deserved reputation for food that’s safe and of the highest quality and standard. We’re delighted to have support from key organisations which encourages food crime reporting as well as setting a standard for others. We rely on working with partners, and intelligence we get from industry is vital in helping us bring criminals to justice.”

Any knowledge or suspicions of food crime can be reported to the SFCIU’s free and confidential Scottish Food Crime Hotline, run in partnership with Crimestoppers, on 0800 028 7926 or via the secure online form here: <https://tinyurl.com/vv6on8j>

Food Standards Scotland also recently collaborated with Professor Chris Elliott, Director of the Institute for Global Food Safety at Queen’s University Belfast, on a video examining key issues facing industry and businesses when tackling food crime. You can view the video here: <https://tinyurl.com/tke6co5>

More information on the SFCIU can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/wb3zo3j>

For further information on how to be a supporting partner contact Food Standards Scotland: marketing@fss.scot

DANONE LAUNCH TRACK & CONNECT TECHNOLOGY

In response to recent recalls on a range of baby foods, Danone has launched a service that will enable customers and retailers to verify the quality and authenticity of their baby formula products.

The Track & Connect technology is a digitally enabled service that gives consumers and retailers greater transparency on the product’s farm-to-fork journey. The technology is powered by serialisation, aggregation and blockchain, thus providing a safe and secure method of storing data and information on the movement of the product through the supply chain.

Serialisation is the process of converting an object into a stream of bytes to store the object or transmit it to memory, a database, or a file. QR codes, unique to each individual item appear on the outside of the packaging, as well as on the inside meaning it can only be accessed once the sealed product has been opened. These codes are then linked together via aggregation technology, with each connection between every pair of QR codes specific to that link. The outer QR code can be scanned numerous times, but the inner code can only be scanned once.

Upon scanning the outer code, you are directed to a webpage containing verified information regarding the manufacture of the product and its journey whereas the inner code triggers a one-time message, verifying the quality and authenticity of the formula. Blockchain is used to track the product’s individual journey, recording each step of the process in a highly secured way. Initially the service is to be launched in China, followed by France, Germany, Australia and New Zealand.

GLOBAL STANDARDS

BRC GS LAUNCH NEW GLOBAL STANDARD FOR PLANT-BASED FOODS

BRC Global Standards (BRC GS) has announced the launch of a global standard for plant-based food and drink products.

The standard was developed in response to a shift in consumer purchasing behaviour, resulting in the rapidly growing demand for plant-based products and the need for brands to ensure consumer facing claims are validated. It provides manufacturers with a framework to assist them in the production of plant-based foods and includes operational criteria required to be in place to ensure products are free of material of animal origin

BRCGS have also introduced a Plant-Based Global Standard on-pack trademark that they hope will empower consumers to make informed choices quickly and easily as well as protect brands' reputations and mitigate risks, while providing certainty to both consumers and industry.

A digital copy of the new standard can be downloaded from the BRC GS Bookshop here: <https://tinyurl.com/r6spk8s>

DRAFT FOOD SAFETY RESOLUTION ENDORSED

Codex Alimentarius have announced that the World Health Organisation Executive Board has endorsed a draft food safety resolution which will give political guidance to update the WHO Global Strategy on Food Safety.

The draft resolution will now be sent for consideration by the World Health Assembly in May 2020.

Member States have been urged to participate in Codex and support WHO and FAO. Countries are also urged to take into account Codex standards, guidelines and recommendations when developing national legislation.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/u27z6gv>

CODEX REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON WORK OF COMMITTEE ON FOOD LABELLING

Codex Alimentarius has published a request for comments on the proposed draft approach and criteria for evaluation and prioritisation of the work of Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL).

Should you wish to comment, the deadline is 30th June 2020

More information can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/rtat5fr>

CODEX REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON FUTURE WORK AND EMERGING ISSUES ON FOOD LABELLING

Codex Alimentarius has published a request for information on future work and emerging issues on food labelling. The request highlights that the information sought is to enable the Codex Committee on Food Labelling paper on future work and emerging issues to be updated, including "high in" nutritional descriptors.

Further detail can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3v2gcwp> All submissions are required by 30 April 2020.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

OBESITY-RELATED DISEASES AMONG TOP THREE KILLERS IN MOST COUNTRIES

A new report from the World Bank Group has revealed why the growing obesity epidemic needs to be tackled now.

The report, Obesity: Health and Economic Consequences of an Impending Global Challenge, is at the core of the World Bank's Human Capital Project, which highlights the importance of investing in people to boost economic growth.

The report reviews the changing epidemiology of overweight/ obesity; current trends globally and by region, gender, and age; the health and economic costs, and the potential impacts of failure to address it, including on the climate; the potential effectiveness of policies and interventions; and country experiences and lessons learned, particularly with diet-related taxes and other preventive actions across several sectors. It puts forward a call to action for next steps in fighting this growing challenge.

An overview along with the full report can be downloaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/vam8vhn>



SACN - 2018 ANNUAL REPORT PUBLISHED

Public Health England have now published the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) 2018 annual report.

The report provides a summary of the work of SACN and its working groups and subgroup, including: the position statement on diet, cognitive impairment and dementias; the draft SACN report on saturated fats and health; and the feeding in the first year of life report.

The full report can be accessed here: <https://tinyurl.com/yy57ooso>



Public Health
England

DRAFT REGULATIONS UPDATING NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FOOD AND DRINK IN SCOTTISH SCHOOLS

On 11th February the Scottish Government notified the European Commission of The Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020

Directive (EU) 2015/1535 sets up a procedure which imposes an obligation upon the Member States to notify to the Commission all the draft technical regulations concerning products and Information Society Services before they are adopted in national law.

The overarching objective of the Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020 is to update the nutritional requirements in the Scottish Government's existing regulations governing the nutritional requirements for food and drink in schools, which have been in place since 4th August 2008.

These Regulations will require that schools in Scotland offer greater access to fruit and vegetables than at present; they set out to reduce the amount of sugar that can be consumed across the course of the school day; they will place a limit on the amount of red and red processed meat that can be served across the course of the school week; and they will also introduce a school dining service that better accommodates the needs of secondary schools pupils (age 11-19) to ensure they still get the nutrients they need.

These Regulations will bring the nutritional content of school food and drink more closely into line with the Scottish Dietary Goals, which were revised in 2016. The Scottish Dietary Goals were revised in order to reduce the frequency of both obesity and other diet-related diseases, such as diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease as well as improving dental health. These Regulations are also a key part of the Scottish Government's wider strategy to halve childhood obesity by 2030.

You can read the notification in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/whh3tft>

FSA NI LAUNCH 'CHECK THE LABEL' CAMPAIGN

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) in Northern Ireland (NI) has launched an integrated marketing campaign across NI to encourage people to 'Check the Label.' The campaign is designed to educate and motivate consumers to make healthier informed choices when food shopping by looking at nutritional labels on pre-packed foods.

In partnership with the Public Health Agency (PHA), the new 'Check the Label' campaign features imagery of foods commonly consumed in NI such as muffins, biscuits and chocolate, coupled with statements about how many calories are in a portion of each food.

The 'Check the Label' campaign uses images of real foods to show people just how many calories are in the foods they buy. It also features the message that just 100 calories extra a day could mean 10 pounds of weight gain a year.

You can read learn more about the 'Check the Label' campaign here: <https://tinyurl.com/spuqzrk>

DEVELOPMENT OF CODEX NRVS FOR OLDER INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

Codex Alimentarius recently announced that its Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses is developing Codex nutrient reference values (NRVs) for infants and children aged 6 to 36 months.

The work is being led by Ireland and will cover many unique aspects of this age group related to their developmental stage.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/yx3gxcvf>

IMPORTS AND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

DEFRA GUIDE ON BRINGING GOODS INTO THE UK FROM OUTSIDE THE EU

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has published a step by step guide on how to bring goods into the UK from outside the EU.

The guide includes how much tax and duty you'll need to pay, registering a business for importing, transporting and classifying goods, obtaining a licence or certificate and keeping invoices and records.

The guide can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/qn8ozgr>

BRC CASE STUDIES ON SUSTAINABILITY IN SUPPLY CHAINS



The British Retail Consortium (BRC) recently teamed up with DP World to produce an on-demand video of case studies and tips on the quick and low-cost things that can be done to improve sustainability in retailer supply chains. Also covered is advice on questions to ask and what can be expected from suppliers.

The 'Supply Chains: Your Route To Sustainability' on-demand video is available to watch here: <https://tinyurl.com/r2p9u5c>

GUIDANCE ON FINDING A PROFESSIONAL TO CERTIFY EHCs

The Animal and Plant Health Authority (APHA) have published updated 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. Entries have been updated and added to the England list.

The guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/vfzbp8a>

REPORT ON SUSTAINABLE USE OF PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS



The European Court of Auditors published on 5th February 2020 a special report (05/2020) on the sustainable use of plant protection products.

Plant protection products (PPPs) are pesticides used to protect crops. The EU framework aims to achieve sustainable use of PPPs by reducing risks and impacts on human health and environment and promoting integrated pest management.

The report finds that the Commission and Member States have taken action to promote the sustainable use of PPPs but there has been limited progress in measuring and reducing the associated risks. Applying integrated pest management is compulsory for farmers, but not a requirement for receiving payments under the common agricultural policy and enforcement is weak. Available EU statistics and new risk indicators do not show how successful the policy has been in achieving a sustainable use of PPPs.

It goes on to make recommendations related to verifying integrated pest management at farm level, improving PPP statistics and developing better risk indicators.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/te3rlgw>

BEIS LAUNCH CONSULTATION ON CREATING TEN NEW 'FREEPORTS'

The Government have announced that up to ten new innovative Freeports will be opened across the UK as they seek to level up the country and seize on the opportunities leaving the EU has presented.

A consultation has been launched setting out the Government's vision for Freeports, with the aim of announcing the location of the new zones at the end of this year so they can be open for business in 2021.

Benefits of the 2020 Freeports model could include:

- Goods brought into a Freeport do not attract tariffs until they leave the Freeport and enter the domestic market.
- No duty is payable if they are re-exported.
- When raw materials are imported and processed into a final good, duties are only paid on the final good.
- Freeports could be located inland as well as adjacent to ports. This can reduce relocation or investment costs for existing manufacturing sites near ports.

- A full customs declaration would not be required to move goods into a Freeport. This saves businesses time and makes it easier to import goods.
- Planning reforms to help sea ports develop within their boundaries and empower local councils to greenlight much-needed local construction projects.
- A regeneration agenda to level up the local areas around Freeports
- Innovative environments to trial new technologies.
- Challenge-based initiatives to build collaborative partnerships between ports, businesses and innovators

In addition, the Government is considering tax measures that aim to:

- Increase investment in infrastructure, construction and machinery in Freeports to raise productivity.
- Incentivise research to stimulate innovation in Freeports.
- Cut costs associated with processing goods through a port.
- Reduce the costs of hiring workers working in Freeport sites.

The UK's high standards with respect to security, safety, workers' rights, and the environment will not be compromised.

Once the 10-week consultation is completed, the Government will invite sea, air and rail ports to bid for Freeport status on a competitive basis.

You will find the consultation here: <https://tinyurl.com/sffdlrn>. The closing date for comments is April 20th 2020.

REGULATORY

PET FOOD COMPANY DONATES £75K TO CHARITY FOR FAILURE TO MEET PACKAGING RECYCLING OBLIGATIONS



The Environment Agency announced on 6th January 2020 that a pet food company had made environmental charity donations for failure to meet its obligations under The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2007 for 15 years.

The Nottingham-based company failed to register with the Agency and recycle and recover a proportion of its waste by purchasing Packaging Recovery Notes. It has therefore donated more than £75,000 to environmental charities, as part of an enforcement undertaking.

You can read more on the case here: <https://tinyurl.com/yx7h29nj>

DEFRA INTRODUCE LANDMARK AGRICULTURE BILL

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) introduced a landmark Agriculture Bill on 16th January which gives us the necessary powers to design England's agriculture policy so that we deliver strong outcomes for farmers and the environment now we have left the EU.

The Bill allows us to move away from the EU's bureaucratic Common Agriculture Policy and in doing so, in England, we will change our approach, meaning farmers and land managers are able to be rewarded with public money for providing public goods through:

- activities to protect and improve the land, water and air that makes up our environment
- measures to support thriving plants and wildlife
- actions for reducing and protecting from environmental hazards
- actions to adapt to and mitigate climate change
- maintaining, restoring or enhancing the beauty of our heritage and increasing engagement and access to the environment
- measures to improve the health and welfare of our livestock

The new Bill maintains our flagship policy to pay those who look after our land and animals for the provision of public goods, particularly the environmental public goods listed above. There is now also more of a focus on food production as environmentally-friendly farming and food production can go hand in hand.

On 3 February 2020 the Bill underwent its second reading in Parliament. Following the second reading, it will go to Committee stage, reports stage and third reading, before transferring to the House of Lords for further scrutiny.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/s4qnaf4> and here: <https://tinyurl.com/vs97neu>

BEIS PUBLISH 'BETTER REGULATION' REPORT FOR 2018-19

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) have recently published their second annual report on better regulation for the 2017 to 2019 Parliament. It includes information on the government's progress towards the business impact target (BIT) and was presented to Parliament to meet a statutory obligation under Section 23 of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on 13th February 2020, this replaces the November 2019 version of this report, which was originally laid on 5th November 2019.

You can read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/wuh8vbd>

GUIDANCE ON PRIMARY AUTHORITY DETERMINATIONS

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) have published updated guidance on Primary Authority determinations.

If you have an interest in the Primary Authority determination process, this guidance is a good source of information and assistance. Note, it does not serve as a substitute for the statutory framework, but aims to summarise the effect of that framework as far as possible.

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

NEW FISHERIES BILL INTRODUCED



The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) announced on 29th January 2020 that a new Fisheries Bill had been introduced to Parliament.

The Fisheries Bill delivers a legal guarantee the UK will leave the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) at the end of the Transition Period, in December 2020 - allowing the UK to control who may fish in our waters, and on what terms, for the first time since 1973.

The Bill ends current automatic rights for EU vessels to fish in British waters. In future, access to fish in UK waters will be a matter for the UK to negotiate and we will decide on the rules that foreign vessels must follow.

The Bill also covers the setting of quotas, changes to funding rules, new measures for devolved governments and UK-wide fisheries objectives to ensure that fish stocks, and the marine environment, are better protected. You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/qvr8jq5>

The British Retail Consortium (BRC) have also published a useful explanation of the new Fisheries Bill which can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/wlxnl49>

By 11th February 2020, the Bill had moved forward to its second reading in the House of Lords. Details of the discussions that took place can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/svu2lge>.

Following this second reading, the Bill will proceed to Committee stage, report stage and then third reading, before transferring to the House of Commons for further scrutiny.

You can track the progress of the Bill through Parliament here: <https://tinyurl.com/wamb49m>

OPSS LAUNCHES REGULATORY EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2020

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) have recently launched the Regulatory Excellence Awards for 2020. The awards share best practice in regulatory delivery by recognising work that has achieved positive outcomes.

The categories remain unchanged from last year: Primary Authority, Better Business for All, Innovation and Technical, and Product Safety.

From engineers, scientists and technicians working in metrology and testing to individuals in businesses, trade associations and frontline regulators using better regulation tools and principles, the aim is to showcase outstanding work being done to protect the public and help British business comply with regulation.

Entry is simple, via a 500-word statement which demonstrates how the individual or organisation has made a real difference in protecting citizens and supporting the business community, using better regulation tools and principles.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/wscpaw3>

Entry forms are available from [Regulatory Excellence Awards 2020 Entry Form](#) or from OPSSRegExAwards@beis.gov.uk.

Entry forms must be returned to the Office for Product Safety and Standards by May 1, 2020.

UPDATED LIST OF COMMERCIAL DESIGNATIONS OF FISH

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have recently published an updated list of commercial designations of fish accepted at the point of retail in the UK.

All EU Member States are required to publish a list of the commercial designations (fish names) accepted in their territory. The list must indicate the scientific name for each species, its name in the official language or languages of the Member State and, where applicable, any other name or names accepted or permitted locally or regionally.

Commercial designations must be used when marketing fish in the EU and are provided to consumers at the point of retail.

You will find the list here: <https://tinyurl.com/ml7zsm2>

RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

PHE SCIENTISTS FULLY SEQUENCE THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (2019-NCOV) VIRAL GENOME

Scientists at Public Health England (PHE) have fully sequenced the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) viral genome.

The UK was one of the first countries outside China to have an assured testing capability for the novel coronavirus. PHE has since rapidly developed further specific tests in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) and a global network of laboratories.

The publication of the sequence by PHE provides valuable information on any mutations in the virus over time and allows an improved understanding of how the virus spreads. The new sequencing in the UK cases illustrates that so far the virus has not evolved to better infect humans since the sequence was first published by China.

Matt Hancock, Health Secretary said “I’m proud UK scientists are at the forefront of the global research effort - this is a vital step forward in the international fight against novel coronavirus. By sequencing this virus’s genome, we can better understand the roots of this disease, predict its behaviour, and learn how to tackle it. We are excited to share this knowledge across the scientific community and will continue to work closely with partners around the world”.

Prof Yvonne Doyle, Medical Director at Public Health England, said “This is a crucial step in helping us understand this virus. Genome sequencing means that we can see where it came from, how it’s developing and determine the interventions that aid treatment. These data play an integral part in helping the scientific community in tackling this global problem”.

SECOND ROUND OF UK SEAFOOD INNOVATION FUND OPEN

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science announced on 11th February 2020 that applications for the second round of the UK Seafood Innovation Fund had opened on 7 February 2020.

Applications to the £10 million fund, to make an improvement to the sustainability, profitability and efficiency of the seafood sector, are open until 20th April 2020.

More detail can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/yxxfyur4>

REPORT ON WHOLE GENOME SEQUENCING OF ESCHERICHIA COLI

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) have published a research report on whole genome sequence typing and analysis of non-O157 Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli (STEC).

Shiga Toxin-producing E. coli (STEC) are a group of bacteria that reside in intestines of ruminant animals, particularly cattle. They can cause serious illness in people who become exposed, either directly through contact with animal faeces in the environment, or through water or food that has become contaminated.

STEC infection is most commonly caused by a strain called E. coli O157, which has been responsible for a number of high-profile foodborne outbreaks in Scotland. Non-O157 STEC are E. coli strains which also produce Shiga toxin, and are thought to account for around one third of STEC cases in Scotland. However, as non-O157 strains can be more difficult to detect, less is known about the severity of illness they can cause.

In order to improve understanding of the importance of non-O157 STEC, FSS commissioned the Scottish E. coli O157/STEC Reference Laboratory (SERL) to undertake Whole Genome Sequencing on its historical collection of patient isolates to examine the genetic profile of organisms that have been implicated in illness in Scotland.

It highlights that 522 non-O157 STECs were identified over a 16-year period and 88 different serotypes found. This study is also being used to support Health Protection Scotland research to compare the genetic profile of the non-O157 STECs with the symptoms reported by patients.

The report is available to download here: <https://tinyurl.com/qm6nss9>

SUSTAINABILITY, ENVIRONMENT & CSR

GREENYARD TEAM UP WITH FARESHARE TO HELP THOSE IN NEED

GREENYARD 



Fruit and Veg producer, and BFFF member, Greenyard Frozen, have created 80,000 meals by recycling food waste. They have once again teamed up with FareShare, a redistribution charity, to distribute their excess purple carrots to frontline charities, including homeless hostels, older people's lunch clubs and community centres.

FareShare were given a £1.9 million grant from the Department for environment, food and rural affairs (Defra) towards their "Surplus with Purpose Fund", as part of Defra's £15 million scheme launched in January to help redistribution charities overcome barriers getting surplus food onto people's plates. Greenyard Frozen have set up a separate packing production line for their excess carrots with FareShare's "Surplus with Purpose Fund" covering the additional processing and labour costs

FareShare CEO Lindsay Boswell, said: "WRAP estimates over 2 million tonnes of edible surplus food goes to waste each year within the UK supply chain alone – yet at the same time, over 8 million people struggle to put food on the table. By accessing FareShare's Surplus with Purpose Fund Greenyard Frozen are doing the right thing with their surplus veg – getting it onto the plates of people who need it."

Laura Dixon, customer service manager at Greenyard Frozen, said: "We've worked with FareShare for many years whereby they've helped us redistribute excess packed stock from our business to those in need. But what was different about this campaign was that by using the Government grant, we were able to pack stock specifically for FareShare which was in bulk storage within our business. It was a real game changer and has opened the door for us to increase our support to FareShare in the future."

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

GUIDANCE ON DISPOSAL OF WASTE TO LANDFILL

The Environment Agency have published guidance on disposal of waste to landfill. The guidance applies in England and details what needs to be done before sending waste to a landfill site. It includes information on banned waste, classifying waste and treating waste for landfill.

You can find the guidance here: <https://tinyurl.com/vs422sf>

WRAP GUIDANCE ON COMPOSTABLE PLASTIC PACKAGING



The Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP) have published guidance on compostable plastic packaging.

The guidance aims to help businesses make choices when considering the use of compostable plastic packaging, outlines current waste management practice, identifies key applications and opportunities for such packaging and recommends how to communicate with consumers about appropriate disposal of the packaging.

The guidance can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/wenruc4>

NEW GRANTS TO HELP TACKLE FOOD WASTE

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) recently announced the launch of new 'Citizen Food Waste Prevention and Value From Food Waste' grants, to try to find solutions to tackling food waste.

The £1.15 million fund will provide grants for businesses and not-for-profit organisations in England to tackle food waste. Ideas could range from educating the public on how to store fresh food, to turning food waste into new, edible products.

You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/v8vve4n>



EC PUBLISH ROADMAP ON CLIMATE LAW

The European Commission have published a roadmap on climate law. The roadmap sets out the goal in the European Green Deal, for Europe's economy and society to become climate-neutral by 2050, and how this might be achieved, whilst ensuring all EU policies contribute to this.

The roadmap was open for consultation until February 6th but is still available to download here: <https://tinyurl.com/toz4d8e>. Stakeholder comments can also be viewed.

INTRODUCTION OF ENVIRONMENT BILL

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) recently published a Policy Statement on the Environment Bill 2020, which has been introduced to Parliament.

This statement sets out details on the Environment Bill, which underlines the commitment to tackling climate change and to protecting and restoring the natural environment. It introduces measures including:

- Creating a new governance framework for the environment;
- Plans for resources and waste management including plastic pollution;
- Improving air and water quality; and
- Updating laws on chemicals (REACH).

The Policy statement can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/uwnobbb>

C2025 MILESTONE PROGRESS REPORT PUBLISHED

The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) have recently published a Courtauld Commitment 2025 (C2025) Milestone Progress Report setting out progress in food waste reduction since 2007.

The report highlights that:

- Total food waste levels have fallen by 480,000 tonnes between 2015 and 2018 - This is equal to a 7% reduction per person and the equivalent of filling London's Royal Albert Hall ten times!
- 1.4 million tonnes of household food waste have been prevented from going to waste each year compared to 2007
- There has been a 4% reduction achieved in food waste in the supply chain.

There is still much more to do however, across the whole food chain, as reports show that UK households still waste 4.5 million tonnes of food that could have been eaten, worth £14 billion every year.

Marcus Gover, WRAP CEO said, "We are in a new decade and have just ten years if we are to honour our international commitment to halve food waste. This really matters because it is untenable that we carry on wasting food on such a monumental scale when we are seeing the visible effects of climate change every day, and when nearly a billion people go hungry every day.

"This great news announced today means we are starting to wake up to the reality of food waste, but we are too often turning a blind eye to what is happening in our homes. We are all thinking about what we can do for the environment and this is one of the most simple and powerful ways we can play our part. By wasting less food, we are helping to tackle the biggest challenges this century – feeding the world whilst protecting our planet."

WRAP is also calling for further action to reduce food waste and pressures on water to help tackle climate change and intends to launch a public campaign to get people talking about food, to complement the work of Love Food Hate Waste.

Read the report in full here: <https://tinyurl.com/wr44md8>

CONSULTATIONS

BEIS	Consultation on creating up to 10 new freeports as Government seeks to level up the country and seize on the opportunities leaving the EU has presented.	https://tinyurl.com/sffdln	20 th April 2020
Codex Alimentarius	Request for comments on the proposed draft approach and criteria for evaluation and prioritisation of the work of Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL).	https://tinyurl.com/rta5fr	30 th June 2020
Codex Alimentarius	Request for information on future work and emerging issues on food labelling	https://tinyurl.com/y3v2gcwp	30 th April 2020

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