

FOOD FOCUS

Food Services Newsletter

Issue 42 –Summer 2018



Editorial

By Andrew Buxton, Food Service Manager

Welcome to this summer edition of *FOOD FOCUS*, in which you'll find articles across a range of food safety and standards issues that have emerged in recent months.

We report on the latest Food Standards Agency (FSA) attitude survey which indicates that when eating out premises hygiene and potential food poisoning remain amongst the highest food concerns for consumers. The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) aims to address those concerns and help consumers choose where to eat out or shop for food. A business's FHRS score is determined by the risk rating undertaken following a food hygiene inspection, in accordance with standard protocols set out by the FSA. In this edition we have included an article outlining some of the checks and balances in place to ensure that our officers determine FHRS ratings in a fair, representative and consistent manner.

For those businesses handling or processing perishable ready-to-eat foods I would especially highlight the article concerning the risks *Listeria monocytogenes (LM)* present to food businesses and their customers. The article highlights the drastic and widespread control measures that were taken due to the impact of a recent huge outbreak in South Africa. Thankfully the UK has not experienced anything on this scale, but *LM* remains our biggest cause of mortality due to food-borne contamination. Consequently, food manufacturers/processors have particular obligations to monitor their products and premises for *LM* as detailed in the article.

What's on the Menu?

P.1 Editorial

P.2 FHRS update

P.3 Consistent Food Hygiene Interventions

P.5 Food Handler Training

P.6 The Threat from *Listeria monocytogenes*

P.10 Food Standards Agency Public Attitudes Tracker Survey

P.11 How food and drink businesses in East Yorkshire can reap the benefits of exporting

P.12 Food Safety Management Systems: - Are you doing what you need to?

P.13 Food 'Co-Products' sold as Animal Feed.

P.14 Allergens-The Potential Pitfalls!

P.16 Keeping up to date with guidance and legislation

If there are any particular issues that you should wish to see covered in future editions of *FOOD FOCUS*, please send us an email at food.services@eastriding.gov.uk and we will do our best to bring you the information.

FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME

Update

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) helps consumers choose where to eat out or shop for food by giving them information about the hygiene standards in restaurants, pubs, cafés, takeaways, hotels and other places they eat, as well as supermarkets and other food shops.







The FHRS now includes 2815 East Riding premises, which means that only our very lowest risk businesses, new food businesses awaiting inspection and those businesses such as manufacturers are now left outside the scheme. So, if you operate a food catering or retail business e.g. a restaurant, café, pub or hotel, canteen or kitchen, takeaway, a supermarket, mini-market, corner shop, market stall or mobile van selling food then invariably your business will have been inspected and given a FHRS risk rating.

It is an inevitable fact that customer awareness of a poor FHRS rating may affect business. Most often, such poor ratings arise not through deliberate acts, but through poor or neglectful management and lack of awareness or priority being given to food hygiene issues within a business. Where this occurs Food Services will always work with the business to bring about lasting change and improvement of the FHRS rating. But our first priority, as should be that of the food business, is to protect the consumer and by working within the strict protocols of the FHRS, shortfalls in food hygiene are brought to light and the consumer is able to make the informed choice they deserve.

Local press and consumer interest in food businesses that receive less than satisfactory ratings continue to be a feature, often resulting in press enquiries and articles. In such cases we always strive to provide the press with a balanced view of not only the extent of non-compliances found but also the steps being taken with businesses to rectify shortfalls. As ever, 'prevention is better than cure', so we would urge food businesses to stay on top of their premises, practices and procedures to avoid any negative publicity a poor FHRS rating might bring.

At the time of publication East Riding food businesses currently have the following rating

FOOD HYGIENE RATING

| 5 | 39 | 34 | 257 | 432 | 2044 |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.8% Not Broadly Compliant | | | 97.2% Broadly Compliant | | |

The Food Standard Agency's national FHRS website can be found at: <http://ratings.food.gov.uk>

Consistent Food Hygiene Interventions

The Food Service team works hard to ensure officers are acting consistently when visiting and inspecting food businesses. In accordance with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) 'Food Law Code of Practice' the Food Service team carries out a variety of 'interventions' at food businesses, these may include 'audit', 'inspection', 'verification', 'monitoring', and/or 'sampling' visits.

A food hygiene/standards risk rating is only generated at an 'audit' or 'inspection' visit, but not at any other type of intervention visit. This rating is used to determine the appropriate interval between intervention visits and also form the basis for the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) score.

In order to avoid inconsistency and promote fairness in the manner in which interventions are carried out, Food Service officers have to operate in accordance with the FSA Food Law Code of Practice and Food Law Practice Guidance, and have regard to any relevant enforcement guidelines, Industry Guides and local authority intervention protocols/procedures. In addition, we undertake:

Internal monitoring

- a) All officers who carry out interventions are regularly subject to 'accompanied' visits by their line manager. The line manager will be observing the officer carrying out the intervention whilst carrying out their own intervention to make sure the inspecting officer does not either miss anything, and/or provide the business with incorrect information.
- b) Once back at the office there will be a discussion between the two officers, and feedback will be given to the inspecting officer.
- c) The inspecting officer and their line manager will independently complete the 'risk rating' form, which determines the food hygiene/standards rating and creates the next intervention date, and any inconsistency in approach is reviewed.

Food Standards Agency consistency exercises

East Riding food service officers regularly take part in FHRS consistency exercises. These are run nationally by the FSA, regionally by the Humber Authorities Food Liaison group and also internally across the East Riding council's three district food safety teams. In these exercises, both individually and then collectively, officers are asked to rate a fictitious business based on an exercise inspection scenario and comparisons are then drawn between officers and teams against scenario expectations. Results are analysed to identify inconsistencies which may require to be addressed.

Training

Inspecting officers receive Continuing Professional Development training at regular intervals on key aspects of their work, and they can request training on specific or more complex situations.

What to do if you think you disagree with your FHRS rating

If a food business operator considers the rating is unwarranted or unfair, in the first instance they should always try to raise their concerns with the inspecting officer and take the opportunity to have the intervention findings further explained to obtain clarification on how the rating has been determined.

Food businesses that remain dissatisfied may then, if necessary, consider the following options for response or redress concerning the outcome of their FHRS rating inspection:

- **Request a Re-inspection**

If all of the work required in the inspection letter has been completed, businesses can apply for a re-inspection which will cost £130. Following an on-line submission by the food business including payment, the re-inspection will be carried out, unannounced, within the following three months.

The hygiene standards in the premises will be reassessed during the re-inspection and a new food hygiene rating will be issued. This rating can go up, down or stay the same depending on the findings during the visit. Please note: food businesses can request as many re-inspections as needed at a cost of £130 each.



- **Submit a 'Right to Reply'**

Food Business Operators (FBO's) have a 'Right to Reply' about the food hygiene rating issued as a result of an inspection.

The 'Right to Reply' mechanism allows the FBO to give an explanation of subsequent actions that have been taken to make the required improvements as detailed in the inspection letter, or to explain any unusual circumstances at the time of the inspection. It is not for making complaints, for criticising the scheme or food safety officer.

FBO comments will be reviewed before they are published on the [Food Standards Agency website](#) alongside the food hygiene rating.

- **Appeal**

If an FBO considers that the FHRs rating score is unfair or wrong, in that it does not fairly reflect the hygiene standards/management controls found during the inspection, then they have the right to appeal.

In the first instance the FBO should contact the inspecting officer whose name appears on the inspection letter and make their concerns known. The officer will explain how the rating score was determined and discuss a course of action.

If the FBO remains dissatisfied they may submit a formal FHRs Appeal, which must be lodged within 21 days of receiving the inspection letter. Whilst an appeal is being considered, the premises rating will not be published on the Food Standards Agency website until the outcome of the appeal has been determined. Further details are available on our website at:

<http://www2.eastriding.gov.uk/business/food-services/food-hygiene-rating-scheme/>

Food business operators (FBO's) are required to ensure that food handlers receive appropriate supervision and instruction and/or training in food hygiene in line with their work activity which should enable them to handle food safely.

FBO's and managers responsible for developing and maintaining a business's food safety management procedures must have received adequate training to enable them to do this. In addition to food hygiene training food handlers should also be trained in relevant food safety management procedures. Details of training must be recorded within the food safety management system and be available for inspection.



Food hygiene certificates

In the UK, food handlers are not necessarily required to hold a food hygiene certificate to prepare or sell food but most food businesses will prefer that they do. The necessary skills may be obtained through on-the-job training, self-study or relevant prior experience, but the FBO must be able to demonstrate this.

Some food hygiene certificates have an associated expiry date and some do not. It is left to the discretion of the FBO or food safety enforcement officer to decide whether a refresher course is needed. This may be a result of changes to legislation or technological developments in food hygiene, or otherwise needed to improve staff awareness and performance.

What level of food hygiene training do food handlers need?

This depends on the extent to which individuals are involved with handling food and again is at the discretion of the food business. The training provider will provide course information and indicate which level is suitable for the candidate.

Food certification bodies can provide **different** levels of food hygiene training: such as Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3. Typically each level covers similar topics, but the higher the level the more in-depth the coverage.

For instance, Level 1 doesn't cover cooking and preparing food as comprehensively as Level 2 because it's not intended for people involved in high-risk food preparation: rather, it's for people who only handle low-risk foods and or open foods.

What topics does food hygiene training cover?

It depends on the level of training provided, but training generally covers 6 key areas:

- Hygienic food preparation.
- Good handling practices.
- Hygienic food storage.
- Controlling food safety hazards.
- Personal hygiene.
- Keeping the premises clean.

Where can I find a food hygiene training provider?

The Food Service team does not run food hygiene training courses but there is a list of local food hygiene training providers on our website at <http://www2.eastriding.gov.uk/business/food-services/advice-and-guidance-for-new-and-existing-food-businesses/>. Details about food hygiene training providers can also be found via a simple search on the internet.

The threat from *Listeria monocytogenes*

At the time of writing this article 204 people have died and 1034 are ill due to an on-going outbreak of *Listeria* food poisoning in South Africa. The South African government has advised members of the public not to eat **any** cooked meat products. The outbreak has been traced to 'polony'. It is the largest outbreak of *Listeria* ever recorded.

Take a moment to consider the impact of such an outbreak; the families involved and the businesses implicated. What lessons will be learnt? How can we prevent people becoming ill from such an outbreak here in the UK? How can people protect their food businesses?

Thankfully, outbreaks of Listeriosis are rare. However, the organism is widely distributed in the environment, soil, vegetables, animals, meat, milk and fish. The presence of the organism is therefore anticipated in most food types. Compared to other bacteria which cause food-borne illness *Listeria* is unusual in that it can multiply slowly at refrigeration temperatures. This is the key characteristic that makes control of *Listeria* important to food safety.

Previous outbreaks have been associated with products such as; coleslaw, soft cheese, pate, cooked meats, smoked shellfish and milk. *Listeria* causes a variety of illnesses, from mild fevers to life-threatening illnesses, e.g. septicaemia or meningitis.

The primary groups of individuals at greatest risk from Listeriosis are:

- **Immunocompromised** – organ transplant patients, cancer treatment patients.
- **Pregnant women and their unborn babies**– Listeriosis can result in spontaneous abortion, still birth and a severely ill baby. It is for this reason that expectant mothers are advised to avoid the consumption of certain foods.
- **The elderly.**

Factors that have contributed to past outbreaks

- Extended periods during cold storage allowing extensive growth of the organism.
- Use of unpasteurised milk.
- Environmental contamination of products from food rooms that are difficult to clean.
- Contamination of equipment used in the manufacture/handling of food.
- Processing control failures.
- Contamination of products following production.
- Contamination of delicatessen counters.



Steps food businesses need to take

- Review the Food Safety Management System to ensure that there are adequate controls in place and that there is effective monitoring of those controls.
- Control retail shelf-life and cold storage conditions (stock control systems and date coding)
- Use hygienic processing equipment capable of being cleaned and disinfected to a high standard.
- Control and monitor the cooking process.
- Adhere strictly to effective cleaning schedules and monitor cleaning efficacy.
- Regularly train staff in good hygienic practices (allow staff to read this article).
- Control post processing and cross contamination risks.

Minimising the Risk of Listeria

Keep chilled ready-to-eat food cold

- Make sure the fridge is set to keep food at 5° C or less.
- Foods taken out of chilled storage for up to 4 hours can be placed under chill holding until they are served, sold or discarded but this can only be done once.
- Maintain temperature control from production until serving.

Storage – follow the instructions on the label

- Don't use food past its use-by date – make sure you check labels and date codes.
- Clearly label own produced food with a date of preparation or a date by which it must be consumed.
- Use opened foods within 2 days, unless the manufacturer's instructions state otherwise.
- Don't keep foods prepared in advance in the fridge for more than 2 days after the day of production and date mark containers accordingly.

Cleaning and disinfection

- Thoroughly disinfect food preparation areas and equipment after washing and preparing raw vegetables.
- Regularly clean and sanitise the interior surfaces of refrigeration equipment.



Further information can be found on the Food Standards Agency website, including guidance for healthcare and social care organisations at:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/listeria>.

Particular concerns Food Producers / Manufacturers need to be aware of in monitoring the threat from *Listeria monocytogenes*

Food producers/manufacturers should have in place a documented Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) system. In light of the outbreak detailed above, now is the time to conduct a review of the HACCP for the effective control of *Listeria*.

As part of the HACCP process businesses should be undertaking validation and verification of their food safety systems and controls. This may well, and should in some cases, involve undertaking microbiological testing/examination of both food production environments and food products, using an accredited laboratory.

Laboratory testing

Historically, food service officers have identified some laboratory tests which have given false negative results and thereby the food producer/manufacturer the impression that a food product is safe, when in fact there has been a problem. This can occur when the laboratory carrying out the testing has used a laboratory testing method that is not effective at lower levels of detection.

Food businesses submitting food samples for testing should seek the following information:

- Details of the testing method.
- Details of the lower levels of detection and counting.

In technical terms this is as follows:

Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2073/2005 on microbiological criteria of foodstuffs sets out specific requirements for not only the organisms which require investigation but the analytical reference method which must be employed to perform the analysis.

The detection of *Listeria* (as shown in the table extract below) requires the method to be based on the ISO standard EN/ISO 11290-1.

| Micro-organisms/their toxins, metabolites | Sampling-plan | | Limits | | Analytical reference method |
|---|---------------|---|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| | n | c | m | M | |
| <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> | 5 | 0 | 100 cfu/g | | EN/ISO 11290-2 |
| <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> | 5 | 0 | Absence in 25 g | | EN/ISO 11290-1 |
| (NB. A different Analytical reference method is to be applied for ready to eat foods intended for infants and ready to eat foods for special medical purposes) | | | | | |

Employing a UKAS accredited laboratory may guarantee an accredited method but it does not guarantee a method based on legislative requirements. As an example, the table below is part of a food testing laboratory's UKAS accreditation schedule. You can clearly see the potential confusion as it details two accredited methods for *Listeria* detection.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| FOODS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SWABS (cont'd) | <u>Microbiological Tests (cont'd)</u> Detection of: (cont'd) Listeria spp. including <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> and species identification | Documented in-house methods identified by method number 1) M5 using <i>Listeria</i> selective enrichment broth and Oxford isolation agar with biochemical confirmation using Microgen List ID 2) M23 based on BS EN ISO 11290-1:1996 + A1:2004 with biochemical confirmation using Microgen List ID |
|---|---|---|

In this case, M5, describes steps utilised in the ISO standard, i.e. enrichment, isolation agar and Microgen List ID, however only the second one is based on the ISO standard detailed in 2073/2005, as per below:

The first method (M5) only includes a pre-enrichment stage and uses automated Elisa to screen for positives. Positive broths are then plated onto Oxford isolation agar for confirmation. After pre-enrichment a positive result will only be obtained if levels of listeria are present at levels of above 10⁵ cfu/mL of pre-enrichment media.

The ISO based method employs an initial pre-enrichment and isolation stage but also includes a secondary enrichment stage (to promote further growth) and an isolation agar that enable easy detection of *Listeria monocytogenes*. After this two stage enrichment levels of listeria above 10² cfu/mL in the pre-enrichment will elicit a positive result. The ISO method is therefore 1000-fold more sensitive than the method with a single enrichment stage.

Although the initial method has benefits, such as a quicker turnaround time, the results are unreliable and may not meet legislative requirements. Therefore, to ensure your products are being tested correctly it is essential that you note the ISO reference number in 2073/2005 and strongly recommend methods are based on these standards unless the laboratory is able to provide evidence to show that the method has been fully validated against the ISO method and can demonstrate the same level of sensitivity.

Our thanks to Mark Swindlehurst, Laboratory Manager, Public Health England FW&E Microbiology Laboratory, York for assistance in the production of this article.

STAY INFORMED

In order that you receive the latest edition of Food Focus we need to ensure that we have your current e-mail address. You can keep us up to date by any of the following means:

- Visiting our website and subscribing to our mailing list here: [Food Focus subscription](#)
- E-mailing us at Food.Services@eastriding.gov.uk

The Food Standards Agency conducts a bi-annual tracking survey with **consumers** in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, in order to monitor changes in consumer attitudes towards the Agency and food-related issues. Work began on this survey in November 2017, when a representative sample of 1,989 adults in England, Wales and Northern Ireland were interviewed face-to-face. The results from this survey have been published and are detailed below:

Food issues of concern

The top food safety issues of concern for respondents were:

- Food hygiene when eating out (36%)
- Food poisoning (30%)
- Chemicals from the environment, such as lead, in food (29%)
- Food additives (26%)

The top wider food issues of concern were:

- The amount of sugar in food (52%)
- Food waste (48%)
- Food prices (46%)
- Animal welfare (43%)

Concern about food safety in UK food outlets

45% of respondents reported concern about food safety in UK restaurants, pubs, cafes and takeaways. 42% of respondents reported concern about food safety in UK shops and supermarkets. The general overall trend for concern for food safety in both restaurants and shops has decreased since the first survey.

Awareness of hygiene standards

84% of respondents reported being aware of the hygiene standards in places they eat out at or buy food from. The most commonly reported ways of knowing about hygiene standards were via hygiene stickers / certificates (61%) and the general appearance of the premises (60%).

Awareness of the FSA

Findings demonstrate that 78% of respondents reported being aware of the FSA, similar to previous survey. Of those aware of the FSA, 70% trusted the FSA to do its job, and 75% reported that they trust the FSA to tell the truth in the information it provides. Ensuring that food was safe to eat was the main issue respondents (88%) reported the FSA to be responsible for.

Awareness of food poisoning

Salmonella and E.coli were by far the most commonly known types of food poisoning (total awareness of 89% and 82% respectively). Perceived most likely sources of food poisoning were raw chicken or turkey (79%), followed by shellfish (54%), reheated take-away food (47%) and eggs (38%).

Awareness and incidence of allergens

18% of respondents were aware of specific rules about allergens, and 10% reported that they have a food intolerance and / or allergy themselves. Most people (70%-77%) reported feeling confident to ask members of staff at food outlets for more information about ingredients in food because of a concern about possible allergens/food intolerance.

Attitudes towards food production, sale and labelling

The majority reported that they trust that food is what it says it is and is accurately labelled (75%) and 74% trusted the authenticity of ingredients / origin / quality of food. Findings also demonstrated that 44% of respondents trusted that people who produce and sell food have their best interests at heart. For further information about the survey work undertaken by the FSA visit <https://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/biannual-public-attitudes-tracker>

How food and drink businesses in East Yorkshire can reap the benefits of exporting



Department for International Trade

With Yorkshire food and drink exports topping £1 billion in 2017, Mark Robson, Head, UK Regions – Yorkshire and Humber, at the Department for International Trade (DIT) encourages East Riding firms to take advantage of global exporting opportunities.

“As a region, we’re excelling at exporting food and drink, with meat, dairy and eggs topping the list of most sought-after products from overseas buyers. Yorkshire food and drink exports totalled £1.1 billion in 2017, which was an 11% increase on the year before.

“It’s clear that there’s an appetite for British goods overseas, and many East Riding businesses are taking advantage of the opportunities available to them. Hull boasts the largest share of exports per job out of any other city in Yorkshire, according to Centre for Cities.

“With food and drink companies across the region winning business overseas, there’s nothing stopping other East Riding firms from successfully exporting too.

“One East Riding business that’s actively exporting is confectionary distributor Crème d’Or. After working with DIT’s International Trade Advisers to gain access to markets in China and the UAE, the business saw its international sales grow by 9% in 2017.

“Following this export growth, Crème d’Or joined the government’s Northern Powerhouse delegation to Gulfood 2018 in Dubai, the world’s largest annual food and drink trade show. There the firm secured two supermarket orders and made many new contacts in Middle Eastern markets.

“A total of 17 Yorkshire firms exhibited at this year’s show, from cheesemongers to ice cube makers, all supported by Food is GREAT, the cross-departmental initiative from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department for International Trade (DIT).

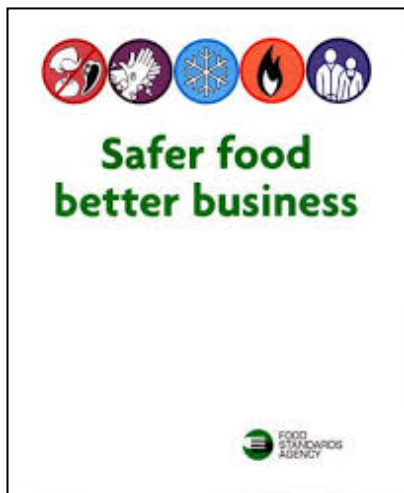
“Exporting isn’t without its complexities. Language and cultural differences, import regulations, finding the right buyer and understanding overseas markets are common examples of some of the challenges that exporting businesses need to address. DIT’s expert advisers are on hand to help support businesses to overcome these.”



For more information telephone 0300 365 1000, email yorkshire@mobile.trade.gov.uk or visit great.gov.uk

Food Safety Management Systems:–

Are you doing what you need to?



It is over two decades since changes in food safety legislation required most (but not the simplest, very low-risk) food businesses to put in place written procedures to ensure safe food handling and production. One of the easiest ways to put such procedures in place in a food business is to use the FSA's 'Safer Food Better Business' (SFBB) pack.

Since 2006, officers within the Food Service team have distributed thousands of SFBB packs and advised chefs, managers and owners of businesses how to use the system. Unfortunately, about three years ago, the FSA stopped supplying SFBB packs for local authorities to issue, but the packs are available to use electronically or can be downloaded and printed at <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business>

Analysis of the reasons for food hygiene non-compliance recorded by officers during inspections in 2017-18, indicates that inadequate food safety management systems and/or monitoring records together account for 25% of contraventions. In relation to the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme this can have a very significant impact on the Confidence-in-Management score.

Keeping up-to date

The inspecting officer is able to advise food businesses about what is required and the most suitable pack for completion by type of business. Whilst the majority of businesses have completed and are using the main pack sections, (cross-contamination, cleaning, chilling, cooking and management), it is disappointing that some are not continuing to complete the daily diary. It is important that daily diaries are completed on each day of trading as failure to do this can compromise food safety and a business's ability to demonstrate due diligence in its operations.

The image shows a 'DIARY' form from the Safer Food Better Business pack. It features a central icon of a green notepad with a pencil, surrounded by a dotted circle. Below the icon, the word 'DIARY' is written in a dotted font. The form includes fields for 'NAME:', 'BUSINESS:', 'ADDRESS:', 'START DATE:', and 'END DATE:'. At the bottom, it says 'Food Standards Agency © food.gov.uk/2014'.

Food Safety Management Systems – a business checklist

- Have in place a system that identifies and controls food safety hazards. The system needs to be written down. The business guidance section of the FSA website at <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry> provides a great deal of information about food safety management systems including the relevant types for different catering establishments.
- Ensure all food handlers have been trained about the system and follow it. Documented records of staff training in the food safety management system must be available for inspection.
- Keep a simple record of food safety checks. The diary section of the safer food better business pack is useful for this.
- Review the system periodically including when there are changes in the business such as a new menu, new staff changes, changes in products, etc.

Food 'Co-Products' sold as Animal Feed

Animal feed plays an important part in the food chain and has implications for the composition and quality of the livestock products (milk, meat and eggs) that people consume.

Examples of co-product producers are: a brewery which supplies spent brewer's grains as feed, a baker whose waste bread goes into animal feed or waste sweets from a confectionary manufacturer being supplied as feed.

Since 2006, feed hygiene legislation has applied to farmers, growers and other producers, in many cases for the first time, as part of the 'farm to fork' approach to food safety.

Whilst some waste from some businesses can be supplied as a co-product, **waste from catering establishments cannot** be supplied as animal feed.



Any food businesses that supply 'co-products' as animal feed must be registered as a feed business with the local authority. Businesses can register as a 'feed business' on our Food Service web pages at: www.eastriding.gov.uk/business/food-services/animal-feedingstuffs/

Businesses supplying co-products must have a HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) plan that covers the feed activities. Many larger businesses will be familiar with the principles of HACCP and may have a HACCP plan for some areas of the business but they will also have to make sure that the plan covers the feeding stuffs element of the business. There is a guidance note on HACCP at the bottom of the above web page.

Other requirements of the legislation cover:

- Facilities and equipment
- Personnel and training
- Production and quality control
- Storage and transport
- Record keeping
- Complaints and product recall

Depending upon the size and scale of the business, and the amount and complexity of the feeding stuffs activities taking place, these requirements will range from being very simple, which is likely to be the case for most food businesses, through to very detailed for large scale feed businesses.

If you think you may be affected by this legislation and would like further information please contact the Food Service team via email at food.services@eastriding.gov.uk or telephone on 01482 396301.

The Food Standards Agency has information on their website for primary producers about starting an animal feed business and this can be accessed here:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/starting-an-animal-feed-business>

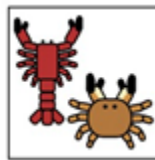
Allergens – The Potential Pitfalls!



Peanuts



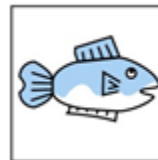
Nuts



Crustaceans



Molluscs



Fish



Eggs



Milk



Cereals
containing
Gluten



Soya



Sesame seeds



Celery



Mustard



Lupin



Sulphur Dioxide

It has been over three years since the introduction of the legal requirement to provide allergen information for loose food and food served at catering establishments. Many food businesses have been introducing systems and procedures in order to comply with the requirements. This article considers some of the pitfalls that have been identified by Food Service officers during visits to caterers.

Matrices versus labels

Allergen information can be provided in various formats. Many food businesses provide allergen information by way of an allergen matrix. However, one of the constraints using this method is that the matrix is only accurate for a very short period of time. The next delivery from a food supplier or a brand change in an ingredient used can result in the matrix being inaccurate. On this basis, the Food Service team is advising businesses to move away from the matrix and simply ensure that all ingredients have either a label or specification, which can be referred to upon an allergen request. Sitting alongside this system would be the requirement to ensure that recipes are written down detailing ALL ingredients making up its composition.

Frozen dishes

It is common practice for caterers to freeze down prepared dishes. This can create issues when the ingredients change or brands of ingredients change resulting in a change in the allergens present in that dish. Based on this, at the point of freezing it is advisable to label the prepared dishes with the allergens it contains.

Differences in recipes and chefs

The Food Service team has encountered situations where dishes may have been prepared by different chefs to a different recipe e.g. addition of **milk** to scrambled **egg** or addition of **milk** to batters or cake mixes. Such changes impact on the declaration of allergens, therefore it is advisable to have recipes written down and ensure that all chefs follow the same recipe.

'May Contain' allergens

The Food Service team has also seen a number of matrices where the presence of an allergen is identified but upon checking the ingredients, the allergen is identified on the label as 'may' be present due to cross contamination. In these instances, it is important that the presence of an allergen is clearly differentiated between that which is actually present and that which may be present.

Clarification of certain allergens

It is not uncommon for a customer to state that they have a dairy allergy. In food businesses dairy is often considered to include eggs as well as **milk**, however in terms of allergies these are two separate allergens. Similarly, someone with a nut allergy may be allergic to **peanuts** which are **groundnuts** but not allergic to tree nuts such as **almond**, **hazelnut** and **cashew**. In both these instances it is important that the allergy is clarified in terms of what the customer can and can't safely consume.



Hidden allergens

Some ingredients contain allergens that food business operators would not expect to see e.g. **celery** in Garam Masala. Additionally, the same product can have different allergens depending on its brand e.g. some tomato sauces contain **celery** whilst others do not. During inspections Food Service officers have observed that the same brand of ingredients can have different allergens

depending upon the product size. Therefore, ALWAYS check the product label to confirm which allergens it contains.

Safer Food Better Business.

The latest version of Safer Food Better Business available at <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/sfbb> has some comprehensive sections covering allergens. In all cases where SFBB is used the completion of these sections should form part of your systems for the provision of allergen information and ultimately the sale of safe food.

It is likely that over time further issues will come to light, however this article has at least given a little insight into some of the those that have already been identified and how best to overcome these. In the meantime, continue to be extra vigilant when dealing with customers who have allergy requirements.

Further information, including a free on-line training course is available on the Food Standards Agency website at <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/allergy-guide>

If there are any particular issues that you should wish to see covered in future editions of *FOOD FOCUS*, please send us an email at food.services@eastriding.gov.uk and we will do our best to bring you the information.

Keeping up to date with guidance and legislation

The requirement to ensure that documented procedures are up to date and accurate is something that the majority of food businesses are familiar with. Moving into the digital age has assisted compliance with legal requirements and maintenance of documented procedures. Using on-line resources is the most effective way of keeping up to date and there are websites that can help businesses achieve this.



The **new** Food Standards Agency website is a trusted source for accurate and up to date information. Extensive advice for food businesses can be found on their website at <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry>.



The following link <https://www.food.gov.uk/news-updates> enables users to keep up-to-date with the FSA's latest news, campaigns, consultations, food recalls, allergy alerts and help shape their policies.



Whilst we keep you informed with Food Focus we also regularly update our webpages providing food safety and standards information. A range of advice notes are available, back issues of Food Focus and access to our services is available at <http://www2.eastriding.gov.uk/business/food-services/advice-and-guidance-for-new-and-existing-food-businesses/>

In addition to the Food Services web pages there is also a great deal of information for businesses available at <http://www2.eastriding.gov.uk/business/>

To keep up to date with council news visit <http://www2.eastriding.gov.uk/say/>

The council also uses social media to keep the public informed. Click on the relevant media outlet to access these

- [Like us on Facebook](#)
- [Follow us on Twitter](#)
- [Watch us on YouTube](#)
- [View our pictures on Flickr](#)
- [Visit our contact us page](#)

There are also other organisations that provide essential information



The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) website has further information on the labelling of food products.

[Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs](#)



The GOV.uk website has further information on the distance selling of products.

[Online and distance selling for businesses - GOV.UK](#)



The Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) website has further information regarding food standards and trading standards issues.

[Chartered Trading Standards Institute \(CTSI\)](#)

The council's [trading standards](#) team can also provide further information on any **non-food** business issues.

The council does not formally endorse specific food safety or standards associations/organisations but there are organisations such as NCASS (Nationwide Caterers Association), British Sandwich Association, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and NHS for advice about handwashing and preventing food poisoning. A simple search on the internet can help food business operators to access a range of services and information without having to wait until an officer visits.

Are dogs allowed in food establishments?



It is a common misconception that food safety regulations prevent dogs from entering all food businesses.

It is true that pets **should not** be allowed in any food preparation areas, but it is the business owner's decision if they want to allow dogs in the front-of-house areas. Providing a dog remains under control and is not allowed to physically contaminate front-of-house food service or production facilities or staff, then there is deemed to be negligible risk to consumers' health just due to a dog's mere presence.

Even in food establishments operating a 'no dogs' policy exceptions must be made for assistance dogs, such as guide dogs.