

working together...  
**to protect consumers' health  
and consumers' interests**

Food Safety Authority of Ireland **Annual Report 2009**



**Celebrating ten years**

2009 marks the tenth year since the establishment of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland as the national food control agency tasked with protecting consumers' health and interests.



page 4 →



**To the Minister for Health and Children**

The Board is pleased to submit to the Minister, its tenth annual report and accounts for the twelve-month period ended 31 December 2009, in accordance with Section 25 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998.

Mr Eamonn Ryan  
Chairman

Prof Alan Reilly  
Chief Executive

**Our Mission**

Our mission is to protect consumers' health and consumers' interests by ensuring that food consumed, distributed, marketed or produced in the state meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene.

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## Chairman's Statement



Mr Eamonn Ryan Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Eamonn Ryan', written over a horizontal line.

Few issues are more central to our lives than the safety of the food we eat and enjoy every day. For many in Ireland, food is at the core of their working lives impacting directly on our economy and personal security. Food safety is essential, not simply in terms of the prevention of illness, but also in supporting our health, affluence, cultural identity and our sense of pride.

A significant milestone in the history of the Authority was reached in 2009, as it celebrated its 10th year since its establishment. Ten years ago, our Government made a farsighted decision to establish the Authority – one of the first single national food control agencies in Europe. Over the past decade, the Authority has demonstrated that it brings added value to the national food control system in Ireland. A priority task has been to put consumers' health and interests first and foremost and, in so doing, ensuring that foods consumed, produced, distributed and marketed in Ireland meet the highest level of food safety and hygiene.

Since its establishment, the Authority has focused on the development and strengthening of the national food control system. The role of the Authority has been to co-ordinate the enforcement of food legislation across all national agencies, and to ensure enforcement actions are underpinned by the best scientific evidence available. Key tasks over the past ten years have been to keep consumers informed about the safety of the food they eat, and to advise ministers on matters relating to food safety policy. Our endeavours and achievements over the past ten years are in no small part due to the continued support and dedication of the staff in the official agencies, who work under service contract to the Authority. We are grateful for their professionalism and efforts, together with their enthusiasm and capacity to consistently keep abreast of a food safety legislative landscape that is constantly changing.

The overall importance and economic contribution of the food industry, permeating as it does all aspects of Irish society - tourism, health, and culture – is enormous. A priority for the Authority has been to create genuine partnerships with all sectors across the food chain. This has involved working to gain the food industry's commitment to food safety, and to build processes and structures to maintain and improve food hygiene standards. There is no market for unsafe food and the Authority, as a visible and credible regulator, helps to underpin consumer confidence in the safety of food in Ireland. Working at international level has also been an important part of the Authority's agenda, and has led to building active networks with food safety agencies worldwide at both corporate and professional level.



*“ There is no market for unsafe food and the Authority, as a visible and credible regulator, helps to underpin consumer confidence in the safety of food in Ireland.”*

On behalf of the Board, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mary Harney T.D., Minister for Health and Children, and the staff of her Department for their ongoing positive partnership to assist us in our endeavours. Gratitude and thanks are due to Brendan Smyth T.D., Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and his staff who have been supportive of the Authority in its workings and actions this year.

My fellow Board members have provided significant expertise, time and guidance to the Authority. I am very grateful for their positive participation and contribution to the strategic direction of the Authority, and the personal support they have given to assist me in my role. On a similar note, I wish to express my appreciation to members of the Food Safety Consultative Council for their sound advice on the wider issues that make up the food safety agenda.

Deep gratitude is due to each of the individuals who comprise the Scientific Committee and Sub-committees. They give their time and scientific acumen voluntarily to our scientific advisory structure in the best interests of protecting public health. It is impossible to evaluate the tangible worth of this immense scientific asset, which provides the Authority with the very best in world class thinking, knowledge and expertise on scientific matters. Finally, I would like to thank our Chief Executive, Prof Alan Reilly and the staff of the Authority for their continued work, dedication and enthusiasm.

As we come to end of our 10th year of operation, we can be confident that Ireland has a sophisticated national food safety agency that is well armed to protect consumer health in relation to food. The challenge now is to continue to advance and develop in order to identify, plan and tackle new emerging food safety issues, and to provide the best scientific evidence as the basis for food policy and regulatory actions. I have no doubt that the team in place and the vision of the Authority will continue to be flexible and all embracing, to withstand and adapt as it has shown in the past decade, to stand us in good stead as we embark down that road.

## Ten Years of Leadership in Food Safety and Hygiene



### Chronology of Major Food Safety Events in Ireland: 1999-2009



### Celebrating ten years

Ten years ago, the FSAI became one of the first single, national food control agencies in Europe tasked with protecting consumers' health and interests.

#### 1999

##### GMOs

Lack of knowledge and confusion on GMOs caused consumer concern.

##### Belgian Dioxin Contamination

Consumers advised not to purchase or eat Belgian foods affected by dioxin contamination (pork, beef, dairy, poultry and egg products from animals reared between 15 January and 1 June 1999).

##### Use of Antibiotics in Farming

Advice issued following the publication of a food safety report on microbial antibiotic resistance published by the UK Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food.

#### 2000

##### Product Recall: Cooked Ham

Following a number of cases of *Salmonella* Typhimurium DT104 in the North East, the North Eastern Health Board and the Authority issued a precautionary warning not to eat cooked ham produced by a small meat plant in Co. Meath.

##### Weil's Disease

Advice issued to industry on rodent control following the reported death of a Limerick man from Weil's disease.

#### BSE

The BSE crisis resulted in an increased focus, and increased consumer concern on the safety of the food chain.

#### 2001

##### Product Recall: Cooked Ham

Identification of *Salmonella* spp. in a batch of cooked ham produced in Cork.

##### Product Recall: Infant Formula

A large baby food manufacturer voluntarily recalled specific batches of its infant formula, due to it being linked to a case of infant botulism in the UK.

#### 2002

##### Product Recall: Shrimps and Prawns

The Authority was informed by the Food Standards Agency, Northern Ireland that testing of samples of warm water South East Asian shrimps and prawns on sale in Northern Ireland revealed traces of the chemicals 3-amino-2-oxazolidinone (AOZ), 5-morpholinomethyl-3-amino-oxazolidinone (AMOZ) and semicarbazide (SEM).

##### Chicken Fillets Imported into Ireland in Breach of Food Labelling Laws

A high proportion of imported chicken fillets analysed were found to contain additives that were not disclosed or accurately stated on the products' labelling, and in many cases water content was in excess of that declared.



#### Risk of *E. coli* O157 Infection

Prevalence of *E. coli* O157:H7 in 2.8% of Irish minced beef and beef burgers.

#### Acrylamide

A new process contaminant was identified by the National Food Administration, Sweden, which impacted on processed foods right across the food chain.

#### 2003

##### Semicarbazide

Semicarbazide was found to be present in small quantities in certain foods.

#### 2004

##### Suspected Case of vCJD

A suspected case of vCJD was reported in an Irish man.

#### 2005

##### Product Recall: Sudan Red 1

An illegal red food colourant, Sudan Red 1, was used to manufacture chilli powder. A large number of food products on sale in Ireland were recalled.

##### Product Recall: Para Red

Various recalls were carried out on a number of products contaminated with the illegal red food colourant, Para Red.

#### 2006

##### Hidden Dangers of *E. coli* in Childcare Facilities Highlighted

Due to the risks associated with the dangerous bacteria *E. coli* O157 in childcare facilities and crèches, the Authority published an information leaflet directly targeting childcare professionals.

##### Product Recall: Cadbury Chocolate

A trade recall was initiated by Cadbury Ireland due to the identification of *Salmonella* Montevideo in a number of products.

#### 2007

##### Red 2G

The colour Red 2G (used in sausages) will no longer be permitted in food.

##### Presence of SRM in Vertebral Column of Beef from Animals over 24 Months

During an Authority audit of a meat plant in Co. Kildare, it was discovered that beef provided to specific butcher shops may not have complied with the specified risk material (SRM) requirements relating to the supply of beef from animals under 24 months old.

#### 2008

##### Outbreak of *Salmonella* Agona

Food poisoning outbreak of *Salmonella* Agona affecting the UK and Ireland.

##### Nanotechnology in Food Production

A report published by the FSAI on nanotechnology and its potential future applications in relation to food and food packaging makes a series of recommendations to ensure that consumers' safety is protected in relation to developments in this area.

##### Product Recall: Irish Pork and Bacon Products

Recall from the market of all pork and bacon products produced from pigs slaughtered in Ireland from 1 September to 6 December 2008, due to possible dioxin contamination.

#### 2009

##### Product Recall: Sesame Seed Mixes

Sesame seeds were recalled due to the presence of *Salmonella* spp.

##### *Listeria monocytogenes* in Baked Sliced Ham

*Listeria monocytogenes* was detected in a batch of sliced baked ham manufactured in Carrickmacross.

##### Product Recall: Crumbed and Cooked Ham

Recall of ham due to the possible presence of *Listeria monocytogenes*.



## Chief Executive's Review



Prof Alan Reilly Chief Executive (From June 2009)

2009 was a special year for the Authority, as it marked the tenth anniversary of its establishment as the national agency responsible for the enforcement of food legislation. During the past decade, the Authority has focused on bringing the work of all official agencies under one centralised national food safety control system. A priority task for the Authority has been to put consumers' health and consumers' interests first and foremost.

Included in this task, is the work of ensuring that the enforcement of food legislation is proportionate to the risk, and that all risk management decisions are underpinned by the best scientific advice available. Improved inter-agency collaboration and co-operation in recent years has led to greater consistency in enforcement, and better integration of the national food safety control system. With the guiding principles of scientific excellence, independence, openness and transparency, the Authority has collaborated with all stakeholders in striving to deliver sound scientific advice, and risk assessments on which food safety policy and enforcement decisions can be based. Independence from the food producing sector has been central to gaining the confidence of all stakeholders in the safety of the Irish food supply.

The national food safety control system came under scrutiny, when the Food and Veterinary Office of the European Commission reported on an audit of the food and feed control system in Ireland. This audit examined the adequacy and implementation of the National Control Plan, and its compliance with Community law. The National Control Plan was prepared by the Authority, in association with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, as the Department is responsible for official controls on feed, plant and animal health, and animal welfare. The Food and Veterinary Office concluded that the authorities in Ireland have demonstrated a constructive attitude to the development of the National Control Plan. It found that Ireland is in overall compliance with regulatory requirements. It identified some areas for improvement, and an action plan to deal with these was implemented. This positive view by an independent external evaluation of Ireland's food and feed control system provides confidence that we are achieving our goal. Collectively, the official agencies now supervise the operations of nearly 49,000 food businesses in Ireland.

A series of seminars to update food businesses, official agency staff and interested parties on new laws, practices and influences on the provision of safe food were hosted by the Authority in 2009. The purpose was to promote attaining higher standards of compliance, and to ensure all were informed about the latest developments. The seminars covered subjects such as meat traceability systems, food supplements, fat reduction in foods, the implications of spreading waste on land used for food production, and the salt reduction programme. Also, to cater specifically for the increase in growth of ethnic foodstuffs in Ireland, specialist food safety training courses for African food shops and for the enforcement officers inspecting African food shops were delivered.



The Authority's website, which is a central resource for information for the industry, interested groups and consumers, was redesigned with a specific focus on enhancing it as an information resource for the food industry. It is now home to a dedicated 'food businesses' section, providing guidance on topics such as starting a new food business, HACCP and training.

A new *Safe Catering Pack*, aimed at assisting over 31,000 food service businesses meet their legal requirement to manage food safely, was launched in 2009. The pack was developed principally for catering businesses, but is also relevant to retailers who have a catering function in their business. Its launch proved to be a significant success with the food sector providing positive feedback.

The Authority's responsibility for managing food incidents was continuously vigilant during 2009, and as the Irish contact point for the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed, it resulted in some 1,800 food rapid alerts being processed and prioritised for action as appropriate in Ireland.

Our objective, in partnership with industry, to reduce salt in the daily diet reached a new plateau in 2009. Since the programme started a number of years ago, the industry has made significant progress in reducing salt in processed foods on a voluntary basis. However, some food businesses are facing technical barriers if further reductions are to be achieved. The national salt target intake of 6 g (or one teaspoon) per day has been extended to 2012, as part of an EU wide programme. More emphasis in communicating with consumers to reduce their salt intake at the table needs to be undertaken in tandem with the industry's efforts. This will be a future focus for the Authority.

## Looking Forward

As we move forward we are entering un-chartered economic paths for Ireland. However, I am confident that we can meet the challenge and build on the successes of the past decade. We need to be able to demonstrate value for money, to look for efficiencies in how we work and to ensure that the food control system is fit for purpose. The key challenge is that we must be able to demonstrate that all aspects of the official controls from inspections, to sampling, to analyses of food, are the most appropriate. We must be able to show that our resources are effectively managed and that we are delivering a food safety programme that is protecting both consumers' health and their interests, and also underpinning confidence in the safety of Irish produced foods. Food safety is a shared responsibility and the food

industry is responsible for the production, marketing and distribution of safe food. The challenge for the industry is that they must be able to demonstrate high standards of hygiene during production, marketing and distribution and also strengthen food safety management systems and develop comprehensive traceability and recall measures.

Any success of the Authority to date owes a great deal to its staff, past and present, and their clear sense of purpose, enthusiasm and professionalism. Also the work undertaken by the staff of the official agencies, who act to the highest professional standards in the enforcement of legislation and also, to the scientists who serve as advisors on our committees. Deep gratitude goes to all these individuals for the work they do in supporting the food safety agenda of the Authority.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the continued support of Mary Harney T.D., Minister for Health and Children and the staff of her Department during 2009. I also deeply appreciate the support of our Board members who have contributed to the development of our corporate governance structure that ensures robust and effective systems are in place.

By looking back over ten years of food safety, we can see how the Authority has grown into an organisation that continues to work in partnership to protect consumers' health and interests. I look forward to further enhancing this growth and continuing to maintain consumer confidence in the safety of food.







working together...  
**to raise standards from the beginning of the food chain**

“We need to ensure that food coming off the farm is safe, to reduce potential food safety problems further down the food chain.”

**John J Cummins**  
Egg Inspector, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food





## Regulatory Review

The Authority is responsible for enforcing food safety legislation in Ireland, and the FSAI Act, 1998 provides the legal basis for this. Currently, the Authority's legal remit does not cover the entire food chain, as it does not extend to controls on animal feed, animal or plant health, animal welfare, or on farm activity.

Food legislation is not static. Periodically, it is necessary to amend or replace existing legislation to take account of new scientific advice, or new practices by the food industry. The Authority is involved in the development of legislation and advises the Department of Health and Children on scientific and technical issues that underpin food safety policy and risk management decisions. To this end, the Authority continued to participate in various European Commission food legislation working groups, including those on additives; agricultural contaminants; flavourings; food contact materials; food labelling; industrial contaminants; nutrition and health claims; and persistent organic pollutants. In these working groups, technical issues associated with the legislation are debated and agreed, and drafts are submitted to the Standing Committee for the Food Chain and Animal Health, the European Council and European Parliament.

The Authority carries out its responsibility to enforce food legislation by contracting official food control and enforcement activities to the official agencies that work under service contract to the Authority. The official agencies working under this contract agreement in 2009 were: the Health Service Executive; the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority; 31 local authorities; the National Standards Authority of Ireland; and the Marine Institute. The Authority's role is to coordinate the activities of the official agencies to achieve the most effective use of State resources in protecting consumers' health and consumers' interests. Over its ten years of operation, the Authority has focused on developing and strengthening Ireland's national food control system.

To ensure the effectiveness and the appropriateness of official controls with regard to relevant legislation, the Authority carries out audits of its official agencies. During 2009, the Authority conducted significant official control audits in the Local Authority Veterinary Service, the Marine Institute, the National Standards Authority of Ireland, and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Furthermore, the European Commission is required, through its Food and Veterinary Office, to carry out audits to verify that overall specific controls are taken in Member States. Although no missions were conducted in Ireland by the Food and Veterinary Office in 2009, the Authority carried out three audits to close out findings following missions in 2008, covering fishery products, food of animal origin, and the control of residues.



A comprehensive resource pack; *Safe Catering – Your Guide to Making Food Safely* was published to assist over 31,000 food service businesses meet their legal requirement to manage food safely. The pack has been developed principally for catering businesses, but is also relevant for retailers who have a catering function in their business. It is ideal for food businesses that have not yet developed their own food safety management system, but is also useful for businesses who wish to improve existing systems. It consists of a DVD, workbook and record books. Pictured at the launch of the pack are (l-r): Dr Lisa O'Connor, Food Safety Authority of Ireland and Ms Sharon Williams, Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

## Number of Staff Working in Official Control

Food control and enforcement activities are outsourced to official agencies, which work under service contract to the Authority. This arrangement increases the resources available to supervise nearly 49,000 food businesses operating in Ireland.

### Staff Working in Official Control, 2009

Agency	Staff (whole time equivalent)
Food Safety Authority of Ireland	84.2
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food <sup>a</sup>	485.23
Health Service Executive:	
Food Microbiology Laboratories	82.51
Public Analyst's Laboratories	66.8
Environmental Health Service	Not reported
Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority	46.25
Local Authority:	
Veterinary Inspectors <sup>b</sup>	38.43
Administrative Staff	36.81
Marine Institute	27.69
National Standards Authority of Ireland	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>868.02<sup>c</sup></b>

a: Excludes 19 temporary veterinary inspectors (whole time equivalent)

b: Excludes 129 temporary veterinary inspectors

c: Excludes Environmental Health Service as number was not reported to the Authority

## Inspections

In 2009, 48,965 establishments in Ireland were supervised by the official agencies. Each food business is categorised by risk according to the activities carried out. This ensures that food businesses which carry out activities that present the greatest potential risk to human health are prioritised for inspection.

### Number of Establishments Supervised, 2007-2009

Supervising agency	Number of establishments		
	2007	2008	2009
Health Service Executive	42,210	43,926	45,303
Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority <sup>a</sup>	2,214	2,486	2,555
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	637	627	650
Local Authorities	442	410	457
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,503</b>	<b>47,449</b>	<b>48,965</b>

a: Figures include food establishments, fishing vessels and production areas



The Authority attended the CATEX 2009 exhibition in the RDS, Dublin – the trade exhibition for the food service sector. Pictured is Ms Noeleen Murtagh, Food Safety Authority of Ireland, with visitors to the Authority's information stand. Attending industry exhibitions gives the Authority an opportunity to meet with people working in the food industry and to offer advice on the regulatory requirements for food businesses, such as starting up a new food business; food labelling; food safety training; food safety legislation; and HACCP.

## working together... to raise food hygiene standards

“Our role is to enforce food law from farm to fork, whilst also assisting small and medium sized agri-food businesses on how to comply.”

**Ted Massey**

Agricultural Inspector, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food







Regulatory Review

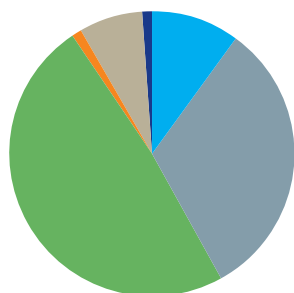
Health Service Executive

The Health Service Executive supervised 45,303 establishments in 2009, and carried out 45,485 inspections. Infringements of food legislation were recorded in 7,331 establishments, with general hygiene and risk assessment/HACCP recorded as the reason for most infringements.

Establishments Supervised by the Health Service Executive in 2009

Business category	Number of establishments	Number of establishments inspected	Number of inspections	Number of establishments committing infringements
Primary producers	30	23	45	4
Manufacturers and packers	1,649	1,148	1,654	178
Distributors and transporters	1,246	693	892	94
Retailers	10,533	6,732	10,622	1,572
Service sector	31,055	19,561	31,206	5,290
Manufacturers selling primarily on a retail basis	790	636	1,066	193
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,303</b>	<b>28,793</b>	<b>45,485</b>	<b>7,331</b>

Reason for Infringements in Health Service Executive-supervised Establishments in 2009

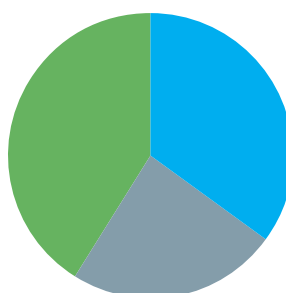


Training	10%
Risk assessment/HACCP	32%
General hygiene	49%
Chemical/physical contamination	1%
Labelling and presentation	7%
Other	1%

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food supervised 650 food establishments in 2009, including large-scale meat processing establishments, milk processing establishments and egg production, packing and processing establishments. Inspections are carried out by the Department's veterinary inspectorate and agricultural inspectorate. The enforcement of food legislation for fish processing establishments is carried out by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority which is an agency of the Department.

Supervision of Food Establishments by the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Food in 2009 (Total 650)



Dairy inspectorate	35%
Veterinary public health inspectorate	24%
Egg and poultry meat inspectorate	41%

<b>Establishments Supervised by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in 2009</b>	
Type	Number
Milk processing establishments with limited capacity (e.g. farmhouse cheese/ice-cream, yoghurt production)	90
Milk processing establishments	52
Off-site milk storage facilities	43
Milk purchasers	20
Milk heat treatment establishments	18
Milk collection centres	4
Infant formula manufacturing establishments	4
Free range egg producers	125
Egg packing centres	60
Barn egg production units	5
Egg products establishments	1
Free range poultry producers	64
Meat products establishments	55
Slaughtering establishments	52
Cold stores	27
Minced meat and meat preparation establishments	16
Poultry processors/slaughterhouses	10
Wild game handling establishments	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>650</b>

In 2009, over 14,000 inspections were carried out by the Department's inspectorate: 10,114 inspections by the veterinary public health inspectorate<sup>1</sup>; 3,461 inspections by the egg and poultry meat inspectorate; and 669 inspections by the dairy inspectorate. The inspection frequency is risk-based with the premises having the highest risk rating (due to the scale or nature of the food processing activities, or if there have been previous non-compliances) receiving the most inspections. Where non-compliances are found during the course of an inspection, a range of actions may be taken, depending on the seriousness of the non-compliance. For breaches of food legislation, legal notices may be served which can require the food business to cease an activity, close all or part of the premises, order the seizure or destruction of food, or to correct non-compliances within a specified timeframe. The majority of legal notices served by the Department's veterinary public health and dairy inspectors for breaches of food legislation are served under the Food and Feed Hygiene Regulations, 2009 (S.I. No. 432 of 2009).

In 2009, 151 legal notices were served on meat establishments and 34 legal notices were served on milk processing establishments, under the provisions of S.I. No. 432 of 2009, arising from non-compliances identified during inspections or as part of official testing. The egg and poultry meat inspectorate found 112 non-compliances, mainly relating to egg and poultry marketing and labelling. Legal notices were served requiring seizure or withdrawal of eggs or poultry meat, and formal warning letters were issued requiring the non-compliances to be addressed. Egg and poultry meat inspectors also carried out 3,461 inspections to check for compliance with the egg and poultry marketing standards and labelling legislation in establishments such as bakeries, hospitals/nursing homes, retailers and wholesalers/distributors/egg depots, which are registered with the Health Service Executive.

1: Excludes inspections carried out in slaughterhouses where there is a permanent veterinary inspector presence



## Regulatory Review

## Animal Slaughter

As part of their supervisory role in slaughtering establishments, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's inspectorate carries out checks on all animals before and after slaughter. Over 81 million animals were slaughtered in 2009.

## Animals Slaughtered and Related Product Inspected by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in 2009

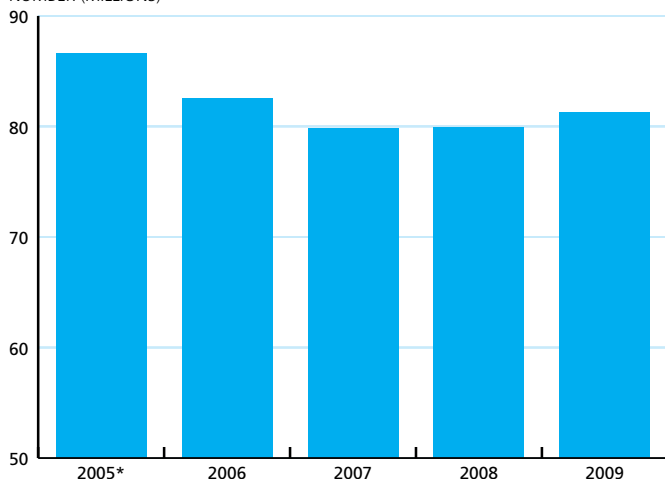
Species	Number slaughtered	Related product inspected (kg)
Poultry	74,851,001	39,963,565
Sheep	2,454,706	4,079,772
Pigs	2,363,212	127,405,709
Cattle	1,532,187	65,389,573
Wild game	57,294	127
Horses	2,567	Not available
Farmed game	1,247	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>81,262,214</b>	<b>236,838,801<sup>a</sup></b>

a: Excludes kg of horse meat inspected

The number of animals slaughtered in 2009 increased by 1.3 million compared with 2008, and by 1.4 million compared to 2007.

## Animals Slaughtered in Establishments Supervised by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, 2005-2009

NUMBER (MILLIONS)



\* Excludes farmed and wild game

## Border Inspection Posts

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is responsible for controls on imported food of animal origin, where the first point of entry into the EU is through Ireland. All such imports must enter through one of Ireland's two designated and EU-approved border inspection posts for food: Dublin port or Shannon airport. Veterinary inspectors and port officers at these border inspection posts checked 1,189 consignments of food in 2009: 71% meat and meat products; 19% fish and fishery products; 5% milk and milk products; and 5% honey. Sixteen (1.3%) of these consignments were rejected: ten for documentary reasons, three for identity reasons and three for physical reasons.

## Organic Food

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is the competent authority for organic farming in Ireland, and is therefore, responsible for ensuring that producers and processors who are certified as organic are in compliance with European and Irish organic food legislation. In 2009, the Department contracted three approved certification and inspection bodies (the Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association, the Organic Trust Ltd and the Institute of Market Ecology) to ensure compliance in both producers and processors. The certification and inspection bodies check each operator at least once a year, and 10% receive a second check. In 2009, 1,466 checks were carried out on producers and 344 in processing businesses. As a result of these inspections, 19 unsatisfactory findings were recorded in producers and six in processors, which led to nine organic businesses being involuntarily deregistered. The Department carries out compliance checks on the three certification bodies, based on a risk assessment, selecting 5% of producers and 5% of processors for checks, as well as carrying out inspections on retail establishments which sell organic food. In 2009, just over 1,000 inspections were recorded by the Department, of which 90% were satisfactory.

## Special Investigations Unit

The Department's Special Investigations Unit is responsible for investigating serious breaches of legislation, including those relating to food safety. In addition to the non-compliances identified and followed-up by the veterinary and agriculture inspectorate, the Unit investigated 24 breaches of the European Communities Animal Remedies Regulations, 2007. District Court summonses were served in 23 cases.

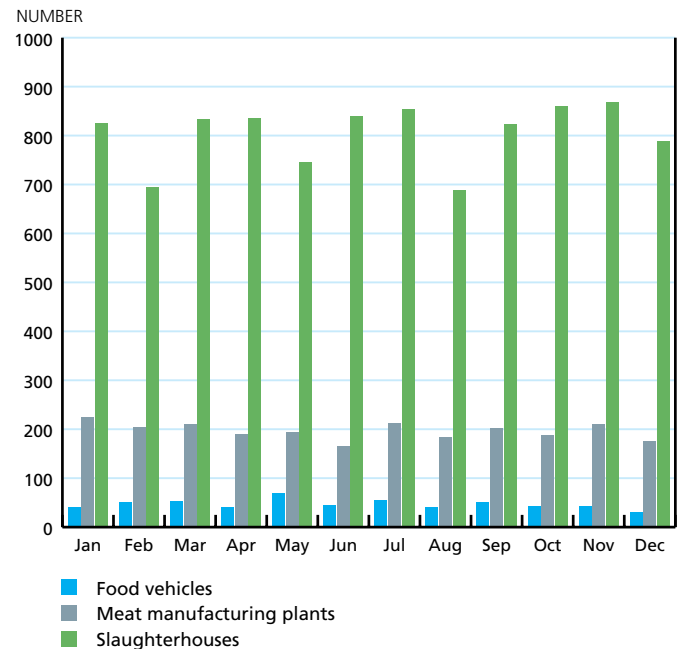
## Local Authorities

Veterinary inspectors working in local authorities across the country supervised 457 establishments (237 slaughterhouses, 186 small meat manufacturing plants, 27 poultry plants, 7 cold stores) and 518 food vehicles associated with these establishments in 2009.

Under Regulation (EC) No 853/2004, establishments that handle or process meat and meat products must be approved. The Local Authority Veterinary Service, in conjunction with the Authority, issues approval numbers to those establishments that meet all legal requirements. At the end of 2009, 403 establishments were approved and a full list of these establishments, along with their approval number and activity, can be found on the Authority's website. Local authorities are also responsible for registering and supervising small scale poultry slaughter plants which operate in their functional area. From 1 November 2009, new legislation was introduced requiring all poultry farmers slaughtering poultry in Ireland for human consumption to register with their local authority veterinary office. These new requirements were notified to poultry farmers through public notices.

As part of the supervision process, veterinary inspectors carry out hygiene inspections of all slaughterhouses, small meat manufacturing plants and food vehicles. In 2009, 12,562 hygiene inspections were carried out. The majority of inspections were in slaughterhouses, which account for over half of all establishments under local authority supervision. Hygiene inspections are part of the system for ensuring that food meets the requirements of food law. As a result of inspections in 2009, 12 non-compliance notices were served under food safety regulations. In some instances, seizure, removal and detention or destruction of food product was necessary.

## Hygiene Inspections by Local Authority Veterinary Inspectors in 2009



Veterinary inspectors are also responsible for ensuring that the health of animals brought into local authority supervised slaughterhouses is in line with legal requirements. In 2009, veterinary inspectors paid 22,284 visits to slaughter houses to check the health of animals before and after slaughter. In total, 424,307 animals were slaughtered at local authority supervised establishments in 2009, a drop of over 9,500 compared with 2008. Sheep account for approximately 70% of all animals slaughtered and cattle approximately 18%. Other species of animals slaughtered include deer, horses and goats.

## working together... to help businesses understand food law

“The population in Ireland is now diverse and we can see this by the variety of ethnic food businesses in all our towns and cities. Information and training is provided in a range of languages to help these food businesses comply with the law.”

**Grace McAlister**  
Environmental Health Officer, Health Service Executive

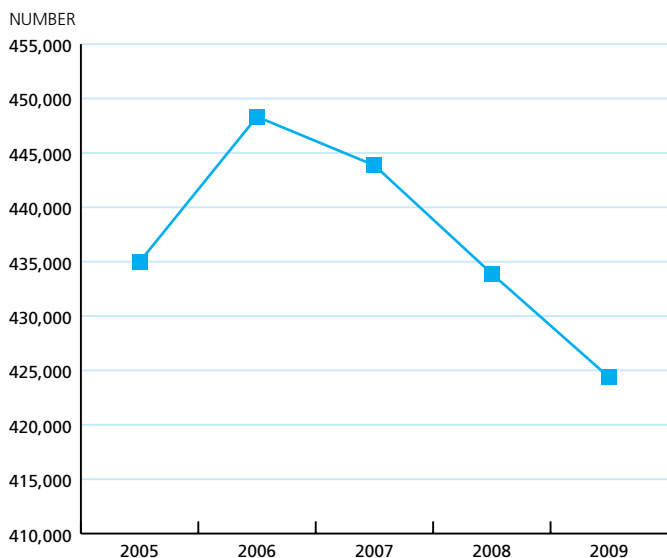




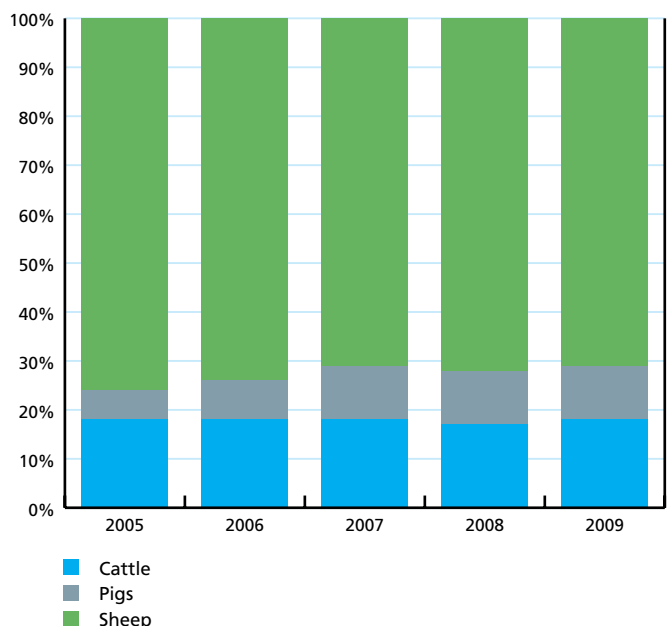


Regulatory Review

**Numbers of Animals Slaughtered in Local Authority Supervised Slaughterhouses, 2005-2009**



**Distribution of Animals Slaughtered in Local Authority Supervised Slaughterhouses, 2005-2009**



**Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority**

In 2009, sea-fisheries protection officers performed 2,792 inspections on the 2,555 food establishments, production areas and fishing vessels supervised by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority. Inspections resulted in four enforcements being served under the FSAI Act, and 12 compliance notices issued under the European Communities (Food and Feed Hygiene) Regulations, 2009 (S.I. No. 432 of 2009). Compliance notices are issued when contraventions of food law are found and action is necessary.

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority received 27 complaints against food businesses in 2009: 37% related to food; 22% were food business related; 19% were complaints about suspect food poisoning; 14% resulted from the European Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed; 4% were regarding packaging; and 4% were related to animal by-products.

**National Standards Authority of Ireland**

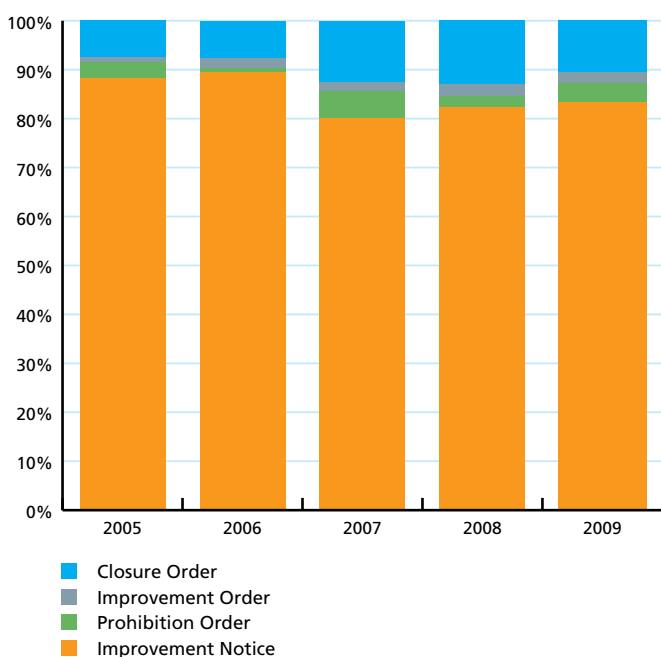
In Ireland, three establishments are approved for the recognition and exploitation of natural mineral water. The National Standards Authority of Ireland supervises these establishments, which includes checking compliance with legislation and taking samples to verify compliance with legislation. In 2009, 14 inspections were carried out, from which 63 infringements against legislation were recorded. Action was taken under S.I. No. 225 of 2007. Nine samples were taken for microbiological analysis, one of which was found to be unsatisfactory.

**Enforcements**

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998, is one of the pieces of legislation which gives authorised officers the power to inspect food businesses for compliance with food safety legislation. Under this Act, authorised officers may, if conditions warrant it, serve an Improvement Notice (requiring remedial work to be carried out), an Improvement Order (issued by the district court as a result of non-compliance with an Improvement Notice), a Closure Order (closing a business down) or, more rarely, a Prohibition Order (placing restrictions or prohibitions on the use of food). In 2009, 327 enforcements were served on food businesses that were found to be in breach of food safety legislation. This marks an increase of 65 enforcements compared with 2008.

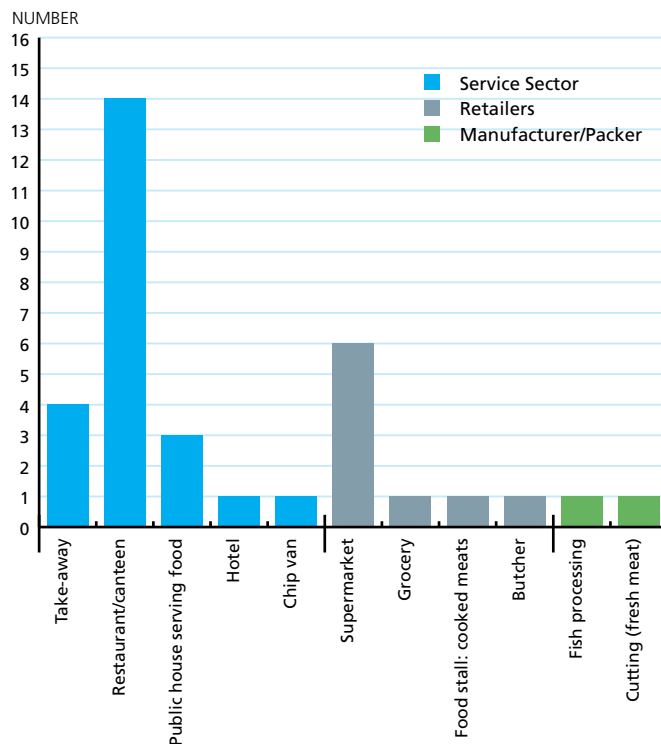
Improvement Notices accounted for the majority (84%) of enforcements served in 2009, followed by Closure Orders (10%), Prohibition Orders (4%) and Improvement Orders (2%). Since 2005, 1,360 Improvement Notices, 159 Closure Orders, 50 Prohibition Orders and 30 Improvement Orders have been served on food businesses under the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998. For each type of enforcement, the majority have been served in the service sector, followed by retailers.

**Enforcements Served, 2005-2009**



Closure Orders are served when there is a grave and immediate danger to public health, or where an Improvement Order is not complied with. In 2009, following the trend of previous years, most Closure Orders (68%) were served in the service sector, in particular on restaurants or canteens, which made up 41% of all businesses receiving Closure Orders.

**Closure Orders Served Under FSAI Act in 2009**



As the largest number of food businesses is in the service sector, it is not unexpected that this sector received the highest percentage of Closure Orders. In 2009, the Authority launched a new *Safe Catering Pack* as a user-friendly, jargon-free resource to help food businesses in this sector comply with the legislative requirement to implement a food safety management system based on the principles of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points). It is also anticipated that retailers who have a catering function within their business will be able to use the pack. As each food business is unique, the pack allows food businesses to implement a food safety management system tailored to the activities carried out in their own particular food business, and comes with an instructional DVD to explain how the pack should be used.

The pack was developed by the Authority, working in partnership with the Food Standards Agency, Northern Ireland, environmental health officers and representatives of the catering sector. In the long term, it is envisaged that the successful uptake and implementation of the pack will reduce the time environmental health officers currently spend assisting food businesses to meet their legal requirement to produce safe food.





working together...  
**to ensure food is safe**

“By testing food, we can identify potential hazards in the food chain so that preventative measures can be put in place to eliminate these hazards.”

**Teresa O’Hara**  
Laboratory Analyst, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

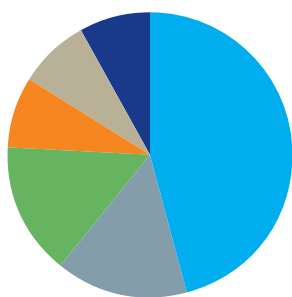


## Regulatory Review

## Prosecutions

Successful prosecutions concluded as and from 1 January 2009 now appear on the Authority's website. In 2009, the Authority was notified of 13 successful prosecutions under food hygiene legislation: 12 served by the Health Service Executive and one by the Authority. Seventy seven percent of these prosecutions were served in the service sector, 15% in the retail sector and the remaining 8% in the manufacturing/packing sector.

## Prosecutions by Business Type in 2009 (Total 13)



■ Restaurant/canteen	46%
■ Grocery	15%
■ Take-away	15%
■ Fish processing	8%
■ Hotel	8%
■ Pre-school serving meals	8%

In one case, legal proceedings were taken by the Authority against a food business operator following an investigation into breaches of food legislation found during routine labelling and traceability audits. After a partial hearing in the Dublin District Court, when authorised officers from the Authority and the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority gave evidence, the food business operator entered a guilty plea to all seven summons on which they were charged. The charges to which guilty pleas were entered included: false declaration of the method of production for salmon, which described them as 'caught at sea' whereas they were actually farmed; false declaration of the catch area for salmon as FAO 27-N East Atlantic, when the country of origin was Norway; false declaration of a Portuguese premises approval number on cooked crab, when the product was actually processed in Ireland. Furthermore, the food business operator was not in a position to produce on inspection, marking, labelling or commercial documentation for several products, as required under law to ensure traceability, and so was unable to authenticate the origin or method of production of these foodstuffs.

The Authority also brought legal proceedings against a food business operator alleging that they had supplied or placed on the market a product with incorrect or misleading labelling on fishery products. The Authority's case alleged that the labelling indicated the product to be 'Irish Smoked Wild Salmon Sliced', when it was in fact farmed. The judge, while satisfied that a case was proven that the fish did not come from the sea, dismissed the charges on the grounds that there was not sufficient evidence that the farming referred to was aquaculture.

Authorised officers from the Authority also supported the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority during a case it took in the District Court. The prosecuted food business operator entered guilty pleas to samples of the following charges: placing unsafe food on the market; failing to withdraw and recall unsafe food from the market; obstructing authorised officers during the course of their official duties; using unsuitable water in food production and placing fishery products on the market that did not comply with biotoxin safety standards.

## Monitoring

Monitoring of the safety of food in the Irish food chain continued in 2009. Routine and targeted samples were collected and analysed at various laboratories throughout the country, to check for possible contamination of food, to verify compliance with legislation, or both.

## Marine Institute

The Marine Institute, under service contract to the Authority, provides scientific advice to help ensure Irish seafood products, such as marine fish and shellfish, meet legislative requirements. For example, the harvesting status of shellfish production areas is based on the results of samples taken under the National Shellfish Biotoxin Monitoring Programme. Samples of shellfish flesh, received from both producers and sea-fisheries protection officers, are tested to determine the level of biotoxins defined under legislation. Based on a sample's test result, a production area will be assigned a harvesting status of open, closed pending or closed. A production area is only assigned an open status if two samples (taken a minimum of 48 hours apart) are found to have biotoxin levels below the regulatory limit. A closed pending status is given where the first sample is satisfactory, but the results of the second sample are awaited. Where a sample is above the regulatory limit, the production will be closed, and in order to re-open, two satisfactory samples are required to return to an open status.

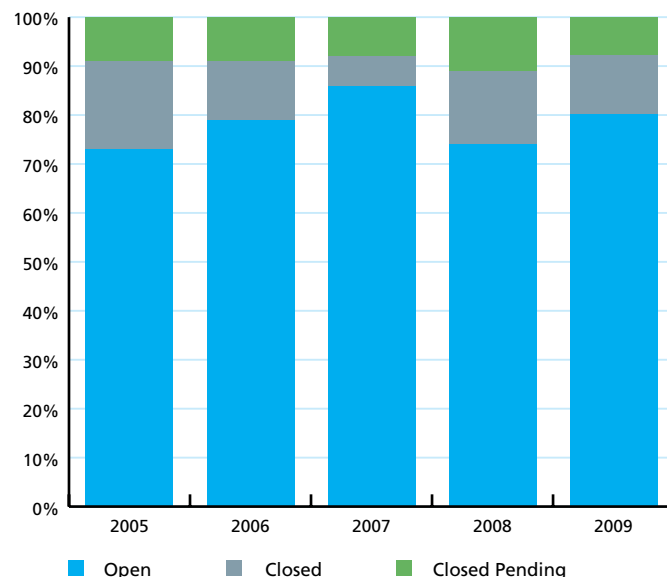


Over the past five years, over 10,000 shellfish samples have been analysed by the Marine Institute as part of the biotoxin monitoring programme. Over this time, on average, 78% of samples resulted in an open status, 9% in a closed pending status and 13% in a closed status.

#### Number of Samples Taken for the National Shellfish Biotoxin Monitoring Programme, 2005-2009

Species	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Arched razor shell	4	6	6	6	3
Blue mussels	1,583	1,637	1,387	1,239	988
Carpet shell clam	0	1	0	0	0
Cockles	32	34	33	18	21
Manila clam	35	25	29	42	35
Native oyster	65	51	42	47	42
Pacific oyster	725	541	587	545	546
Razor fish	83	73	46	51	62
Surf clam	45	38	29	27	31
Warty venus clam	0	2	0	2	0
Other	0	0	0	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,572</b>	<b>2,408</b>	<b>2,159</b>	<b>1,977</b>	<b>1,734</b>

#### Samples Resulting in Open, Closed or Closed Pending Status, 2005-2009



In addition to the Shellfish Biotoxin Monitoring Programme, the Marine Institute performed microbiological and chemical analysis on over 5,100 samples of finfish, shellfish and water.

#### Other Analyses Performed by the Marine Institute in 2009<sup>1</sup>

Sample type	Test description	Number of samples	Number of tests	Number of satisfactory samples	Number of unsatisfactory samples
Finfish	Chemistry: port (non-routine)	10	40	9	1
	Chemistry: port (routine)	0	0	0	0
	Residues (non-routine)	9	26	8	1
	Residues (routine)	715	1,750	715	0
Shellfish	Chemistry (non-routine)	0	0	0	0
	Chemistry (routine)	492	2,035	492	0
	Microbiology (non-routine)	118	118	67	51
	Microbiology (routine) <sup>a</sup>	1,611	1,611	--	--
Water	Phytoplankton (non-routine)	664	664	628	36
	Phytoplankton (routine)	1,486	1,486	916	570
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,105</b>	<b>7,730</b>	<b>2,835</b>	<b>659</b>

1: Excludes biotoxin data

a: The categorisation of these samples was not provided to the Authority

## Regulatory Review

## Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority

A total of 4,048 tests were carried out on food samples collected by sea-fisheries protection officers for analysis during the course of their inspections.

## Health Service Executive

During the course of inspections, or as part of a survey of a particular food, environmental health officers collect samples that are analysed in one of the Health Service Executive's seven food microbiology laboratories, or three public analyst's laboratories. In 2009, nearly 18,000 samples were collected by environmental health officers for testing.

## Food Samples Submitted for Analysis by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority in 2009

Test description	Number of tests
Shellfish classification (microbiology)	1,577
Shellfish classification (virology)	39
Fish, fishery products and live bivalve molluscs (microbiology)	682
Water/ice (microbiology)	139
Environmental swabs (microbiology)	209
Histamines	390
Sulphites	50
Agmatine	8
Arsenic	1
Cadaverine	308
pH	3
Putrescine	308
Serotonin	8
Total volatile base nitrogen	18
Tyramine	308
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,048</b>

## Samples Collected by Environmental Health Officers to Support Inspection Activity, National Surveys or Regional Sampling Plans in 2009

EU food category	Microbiology samples		Chemical / physical samples				
	Number	Number with micro contamination	Number	Number with infringements	Breakdown of infringements		
					Physical / chemical contamination	Composition	Labelling and presentation
Dairy products	832	137	339	29	0	12	17
Egg and egg products	305	66	3	0	0	0	0
Meat and meat products	2,897	609	514	22	1	8	13
Fish, shellfish and molluscs	291	40	359	19	1	11	7
Fats and oils	9	0	133	8	2	6	0
Soups, broths and sauces	349	22	220	6	0	4	2
Cereals and bakery products	339	51	669	34	1	10	23
Fruit and vegetables	395	28	558	16	0	14	2
Herbs and spices	57	0	332	7	0	1	6
Non-alcoholic beverages	388	55	505	26	2	13	11
Wine	5	0	85	6	0	0	6
Alcoholic beverages	17	0	149	2	0	2	0
Ices and desserts	236	27	16	2	0	0	2
Cocoa and cocoa preparations, coffee and tea	12	0	160	3	0	1	2
Confectionery	221	22	246	27	0	10	17
Nuts and nut products	15	0	199	6	0	3	3
Prepared dishes	3,386	433	255	7	0	2	5
Foodstuffs intended for special nutritional uses	32	0	418	11	0	6	5
Additives	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
Materials and articles intended to come into contact with foodstuffs	32	3	13	0	0	0	0
Other	2,418	137	483	16	3	10	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,236</b>	<b>1,630</b>	<b>5,664</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>124</b>

During 2009, the Health Service Executive's seven food microbiological laboratories analysed 14,262 samples submitted as part of routine (65%) or complaint (5%) investigations of food establishments supervised by the Health Service Executive; or as part of the National Microbiological Surveillance Programme (26%) or local surveillance programmes (4%).

Ready-to-eat foods accounted for 68% of samples; 32% were non-ready-to-eat foods, or foods for which the ready-to-eat status was not reported. The 9,922 samples collected during routine and complaint sampling were categorised according to EU category codes. As in 2008, the majority of complaint (41%) and routine samples (38%) were in the meat and meat products, game and poultry category.

#### Routine and Complaint Samples Submitted to the Health Service Executive's Food Microbiology Laboratories in 2009

EU food category	Routine (total=9,199)	Percent of samples	Complaint (total=723)
Dairy products	8.11		9.68
Egg and egg products	4.57		3.32
Meat and meat products, game and poultry	37.70		41.22
Fish, shellfish and molluscs	4.28		5.53
Fats and oils	0.03		0.14
Soups, broths and sauces	4.13		8.85
Cereals and bakery products	6.08		9.13
Fruit and vegetables	3.52		5.39
Herbs and spices	0.35		0.55
Non-alcoholic beverages	2.44		0.97
Alcoholic beverages (other than wine)	0		0.14
Ices and desserts	1.86		1.66
Cocoa and cocoa preparations, coffee and tea	0.01		0
Confectionery	0.29		0.28
Nuts and nut products, snacks	0.08		0.55
Prepared dishes	25.89		10.37
Foodstuffs intended for special nutritional uses	0.02		1.66
Other	0.64		0.55
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>100</b>

Overall, 65,270 microbiological tests were carried out on routine and complaint samples. Results of 40,765 tests were categorised according to the microbiological criteria specified in Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005, or the Authority's Guidance Note Number 3. Ninety-six percent were satisfactory, 3% were acceptable, 1% unsatisfactory, and 0.04% unacceptable/potentially hazardous.

Tests for counts of *Enterobacteriaceae* and total *E. coli* are carried out on ready-to-eat food, in order to indicate problems such as poor hygiene practices, poor process control, or the possible presence of pathogens. In 2009, 8.5% of routine and complaint samples were unsatisfactory for *Enterobacteriaceae* and 0.9% unsatisfactory for *E. coli*. This was a slight improvement on 2008, when 8.7% and 1.2% of samples were unsatisfactory for *Enterobacteriaceae* and *E. coli*, respectively.

When tested for pathogens, 16 (0.04%) results were categorised as unacceptable/potentially hazardous. These samples were from a variety of food categories, namely: meat and meat products (6); herbs and spices (4); fruit and vegetables (2); cereals and bakery products (2); dairy products (1) and prepared dishes (1). This was a slight decrease on 2008, when 26 (0.07%) results were categorised as unacceptable/potentially hazardous.







## working together... to protect Ireland's food chain

“Food coming into Ireland must comply with European food safety and hygiene legislation. By working with customs officials, we check that third country imports are in compliance with European standards.”

**Niamh McGrath**

Senior Environmental Health Officer, Health Service Executive



## Regulatory Review

**Categorisation of Routine and Complaint Test Results Analysed  
by the Health Service Executive's Food Microbiology Laboratories in 2009**

Test	Indicator or pathogen	Number of results categorised	Percent of results categorised as:			
			Satisfactory <sup>a</sup>	Acceptable <sup>b</sup>	Unsatisfactory <sup>c</sup>	Unacceptable / potentially hazardous <sup>d</sup>
<i>Enterobacteriaceae</i>	Indicator	4,388	76.03	15.45	8.52	NA
<i>E. coli</i> (total)	Indicator	6,391	97.98	1.11	0.91	NA
<i>Salmonella</i> spp.	Pathogen	7,172	100	NA	NA	0
<i>Campylobacter</i> spp.	Pathogen	1,120	99.73	NA	NA	0.27
<i>E. coli</i> O157 and other verotoxigenic <i>E. coli</i>	Pathogen	146	100	NA	NA	0
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	Pathogen	4,438	99.95	NA	NA	0.05
Coagulase-positive staphylococci	Pathogen	7,470	95.19	4.44	0.35	0.01
<i>Clostridium perfringens</i>	Pathogen	6,346	99.86	0.06	0.08	0
<i>Bacillus cereus</i> and other pathogenic <i>Bacillus</i> spp.	Pathogen	3,294	98.39	0.94	0.36	0.30
<b>Total</b>		<b>40,765</b>	<b>96.06</b>	<b>2.74</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>0.04</b>

a: Means satisfactory according to the limits specified in Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 or those specified in the Authority's Guidance Note No. 3

b: Means acceptable according to the limits specified in Guidance Note No. 3

c: Means unsatisfactory according to the limits specified in Guidance Note No. 3

d: Means unsatisfactory according to the limits specified in Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 or unacceptable/potentially hazardous according to the limits specified in Guidance Note No. 3

NA: not applicable

**Food Samples for which Results were Categorised as Unacceptable/Potentially Hazardous in 2009**

Pathogen	Number	Food (number)
<i>Bacillus cereus</i> and other pathogenic <i>Bacillus</i> spp.	10	Cooked rice (2), chilli powder (2), cumin powder (1), turmeric powder (1), rocket (1), watercress (1), cooked chicken pieces (1), and ready-to-eat spring roll (1)
<i>Campylobacter</i> spp.	3	Ready-to-eat chicken thigh meat (1), raw chicken breast fillet (1), and cooked chicken pieces (1)
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	2	Roast beef (1) and pasteurised cheese (1)
Coagulase-positive staphylococci	1	Irish stew (1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	

The Health Service Executive's food microbiology laboratories also analysed 3,667 samples collected for two surveys conducted under the 2009 National Microbiological Surveillance Programme. For the first survey, 971 samples of pre-packed sandwiches were tested for *Listeria monocytogenes* and coagulase positive staphylococci. For the second, 2,696 swabs from meat slicers used to slice cooked meat were tested for *Enterobacteriaceae*, aerobic colony count, *L. monocytogenes* and verotoxigenic *E. coli*. The survey results will be published in 2010.

The Health Service Executive's three public analyst's laboratories perform physical and chemical analysis on food and food-related samples that are submitted as part of routine investigations, programmed surveys or as a result of complaints. The laboratories also provide an analytical service to food manufacturers who require a certificate of free sale if they wish to export their product outside the EU. In 2009, 9,689 samples were submitted to the public analyst's laboratories, and 11,190 tests were carried out on these samples.

**Samples Analysed in the Public Analyst's Laboratories in 2009**

Sample type	Number
Routine samples	7,191
Complaint samples direct from the public	59
Complaint samples from environmental health officers	438
Follow-up samples	134
Quality control/proficiency test samples	544
Samples analysed for export	448
Samples received for analysis under EU Emergency Decisions	319
Other (e.g. import control, private samples)	556
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,689</b>

**Tests Performed by the Public Analyst's Laboratories in 2009**

Analyte <sup>a</sup>	Number tests	Number unsatisfactory (%)
Additives	1,642	84 (5.1)
Allergens	409	13 (3.2)
Authenticity	37	0 (0)
Complaints	453	178 (39.3)
Composition / quality	1,287	87 (6.8)
Export certificates	486	2 (0.4)
Food contact materials	101	7 (6.9)
GMOs	68	1 (1.5)
Inorganic contaminants	1,870	18 (1.0)
Irradiation	290	4 (1.4)
Labelling	734	127 (17.3)
Naturally occurring contaminants: mycotoxins	852	14 (1.6)
Naturally occurring contaminants: other	855	36 (4.2)
Naturally occurring contaminants: phycotoxins	50	0 (0)
Nutritional	1,266	59 (4.7)
Organic environmental contaminants	58	0 (0)
Process contaminants	337	4 (1.2)
Residues	89	0 (0)
Other (e.g. melamine)	307	2 (0.7)
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,191</b>	<b>636 (5.7)</b>

a: More than one test may be carried out on a sample

**Irradiated Food**

The Authority is the competent authority for irradiated food. In 2009, analysis carried out by the public analyst's laboratories identified four of the 294 foods sampled as having been irradiated, but not labelled appropriately. These samples were: tea, Cajun seasoning, paprika, and blueberry herbal tea.

**Foods Tested for Irradiation by the Public Analyst's Laboratories in 2009**

Food type	Number samples tested	Number of samples found to be irradiated (%)
Herbs/spices	217	1 (0.5)
Herbal teas/tea/coffee	23	2 (8.7)
Seasonings/stocks	13	1 (7.7)
Vitamins and supplements	12	0
Foodstuffs intended for special nutritional uses	7	0
Seeds	6	0
Fruit or vegetables	4	0
Herbal supplements	3	0
Others	5	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>4 (1.4)</b>

**Local Authorities**

In addition to inspecting establishments and animals, veterinary inspectors from local authorities collected over 2,500 official samples from slaughterhouses and small meat manufacturing plants. A further 740 samples (42% bovine, 25% ovine, 22% porcine, 4% caprine and 7% other) were collected under the national residue plan – a monitoring programme set up to identify illegal residues in animals and animal products. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is responsible for coordinating this monitoring programme.







## working together... to promote seafood safety

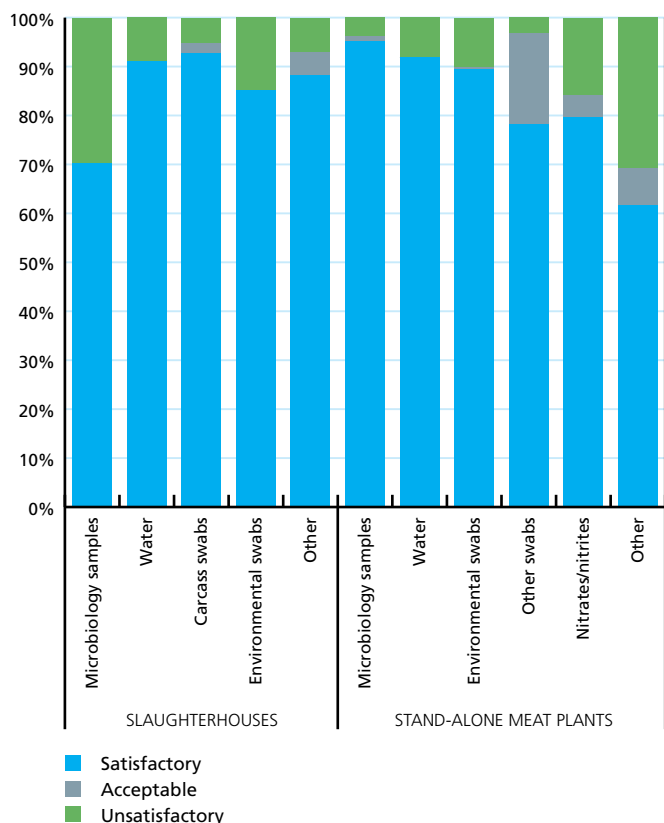
“Ireland as an island nation has a valuable natural resource in its sea fisheries and aquaculture. Our job is to ensure that all fish caught, produced, marketed and exported from the country complies with food safety and hygiene standards.”

**Cormac Craven**  
Sea-Fisheries Protection Officer, Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority



Regulatory Review

**Official Samples Taken from Local Authority-Supervised Establishments in 2009 (Total 2,579\*)**



\* Excludes samples collected under the National Residue Plan

Under Regulation (EC) No 2075/2005, all domestic pigs and horses slaughtered for human consumption must be sampled for *Trichinella* as part of the post mortem inspection. From August 2007 to January 2009, the Authority collected 10,247 samples from 33 slaughterhouses supervised by the local authority veterinary service, in order to investigate the prevalence of *Trichinella* in pigs slaughtered in low throughput pig slaughterhouses. No positive samples were detected. Since the conclusion of the Authority's survey, *Trichinella* sampling and analysis has continued in local authority supervised slaughterhouses. In 2009, 47,881 samples from slaughter houses were tested for *Trichinella*, all of which were negative.

Cork County Council operates a veterinary food safety laboratory where samples are regularly sent by other local authorities and for analysis of samples taken as a result of special investigations. Over 2,200 samples were analysed by the laboratory in 2009. Work carried out in the laboratory includes research into *Campylobacter*, verotoxigenic *E. coli*, antimicrobial resistance and *Yersinia enterocolitica*.

**Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food**

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is responsible for implementing the national monitoring programmes for residues of pesticides, veterinary medicines and environmental contaminants.

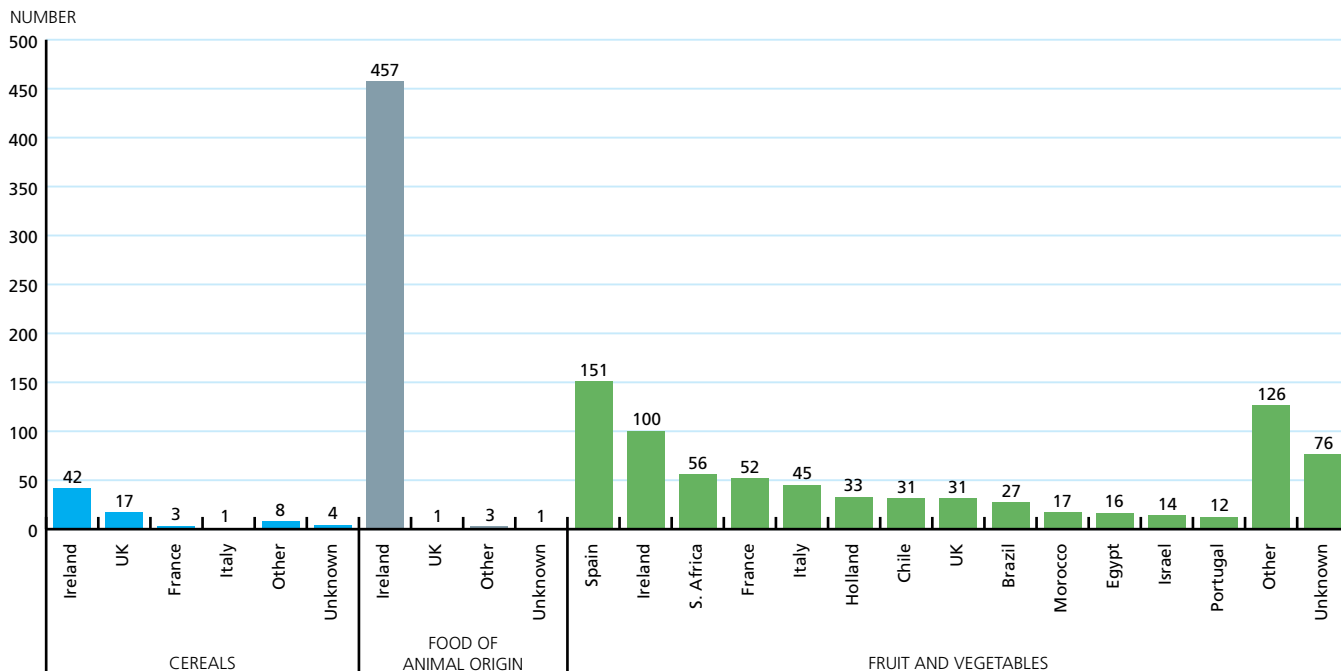
In 2009, 1,324 samples of imported and domestically produced food were analysed for pesticide levels. In addition, over 200 cereal samples were tested for the presence of PCB congeners, as part of the follow-up to the dioxin crisis in 2008. Twelve samples (less than 1%) contained pesticides levels which exceeded the maximum permitted residue limit, as defined by European legislation. This is a similar figure to that recorded in 2008. All 12 were samples of fruit or vegetables.

Where a sample exceeds the maximum permitted residue limit, a dietary intake risk assessment is immediately carried out to assess if the acceptable daily intake or the acute reference dose has been exceeded. The level of risk is calculated based on consumption data for both adults and children. In all 12 cases where the legislative limit was exceeded, the risk assessment stated that there was no unacceptable risk to consumers in Ireland. It is worth noting that for 11 of the 12 cases, the exceedances were of a technical nature, where the maximum residue limits have been set at the limit of detection, but this does not necessarily imply a food safety concern.

When a maximum residue limit of a pesticide is exceeded, the relevant food commodity will be targeted for testing in the next year's sampling plan. Depending on the case, action could also involve withdrawal of food from the market, issuing an alert through the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed and prosecution. In the case of imported food, the distributor and country's Codex Alimentarius contact point are also informed of the breach.



### Routine Food Samples, by Country of Origin, Analysed for Pesticides in 2009



### Details of the 12 Samples which Exceeded Legislative Pesticide Limits in 2009

Food	Origin	Pesticide	Amount detected (mg/kg)	Limit (mg/kg)	Limit exceeded by (m/kg)
Apple	United States	Fenpropathrin	0.025	0.01	0.015
Apricot	France	Chlorpyrifos	0.1	0.05	0.05
Celery	Spain	Prometryn	0.012	0.01	0.002
Cherry	United States	Carbaryl	0.066	0.05	0.016
Mandarin	Cyprus	Thiabendazole	5.47	5	0.47
Mandarin	Spain	Captan	0.059	0.02	0.039
Orange	Brazil	Dimethoate	0.051	0.02	0.031
Pear	Brazil	Dimethoate	0.051	0.02	0.031
Potatoes	Spain	Pencyuron	0.17	0.1	0.07
Table Grape	Chile	Phosmet	0.051	0.05	0.001
Turnip	Ireland	Chlorpyrifos	0.13	0.05	0.08
Yam	United States	Fludioxonil	0.073	0.05	0.023

## Regulatory Review

In 2009, 25,213 samples of foods of animal origin were tested as part of the National Residue Plan, 0.3% of which were positive. This continues the low trend of residues in Irish food over the last number of years. As in previous years, there was no evidence of the use of illegal growth promoters.

The residue plan covers 18 distinct types of residues which fall into four broad categories: banned substances (such as growth promoting hormones); approved veterinary medicines; animal feed additives; and environmental contaminants. Samples are taken directly from animals, from animal produce on the farm, at primary processing or at packing plants. The majority (80%) of samples were taken on the basis of standard targeting criteria, and some were taken as a result of suspicion of the presence of illegal residues, for example during examination at slaughter. When a non-compliant sample is found, the farm receives a full investigation and appropriate follow-up action is taken by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

#### Foods of Animal Origin Tested Under the National Residue Plan in 2009

Sample	Number of samples analysed	Number of non-compliant samples (%)
Bovine	11,897	24 (0.2) <sup>a</sup>
Equine	218	0
Eggs	274	0
Farmed fish	599	4 (0.7) <sup>b</sup>
Farmed deer	122	0
Honey	100	0
Milk	1,303	14 (1.1) <sup>c</sup>
Ovine	2,057	17 (0.8) <sup>d</sup>
Porcine	7,234	15 (0.2) <sup>e</sup>
Poultry	1,328	10 (0.8) <sup>f</sup>
Wild deer	102	1 (1.0) <sup>g</sup>
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,234</b>	<b>85 (0.3)</b>

a: 9 antibiotics, 11 thyrostats, 4 nitrofurans

b: Leuco malachite green

c: 12 anthelmintics and 2 antibiotics

d: 6 anthelmintics, 7 thyrostats and 4 nitrofurans

e: 3 antibiotics, 9 thyrostats and 3 PCBs

f: 9 anticoccidials and 1 nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug

g: lead

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's Central Meat Control Laboratory provides laboratory support for the Department's veterinary public health inspectorate. The main focus of the laboratory's work is to ensure compliance with food safety standards in meat. The food safety analyses carried out by the laboratory includes: testing for residues of veterinary medicines, taken under the National Residue Plan; *Trichinella* testing; microbiological testing of meat and water samples to check for pathogens and indicator organisms; and checks on the level of food additives such as nitrates and nitrites. In 2009, 18,037 samples were tested, of which 176 (1.0%) were designated unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory samples related to non-compliances with the standards for microbiological quality of meat or water and permitted nitrate/nitrite levels. Where samples are found to be non-compliant, appropriate follow-up action is taken by the Department's veterinary public health inspectorate in the relevant meat establishment.

#### Analysis Performed by the Central Meat Control Laboratory in 2009

	Number of samples tested	Number of samples unsatisfactory (%)
Microbiological analysis of meat and meat products	1,613	75 (4.6)
Microbiological analysis of water	588	80 (13.6)
Residues of veterinary medicines	12,293	0 (0)
Nitrates/nitrites	202	21 (10.4)
<i>Trichinella</i> (pigs)	3,215	0 (0)
<i>Trichinella</i> (horses)	79	0 (0)
Fat purity	47	0 (0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,037</b>	<b>176 (1.0)</b>

The Department's three dairy science laboratories are responsible for testing samples collected by dairy inspectors from milk processing establishments. The purpose of this testing is to check compliance with food safety standards, as well as for export certification and market support schemes. Samples are tested by the laboratories for a range of microbiological and chemical parameters. In total, 8,156 samples of milk and milk products and 227 water samples were tested by the three dairy science laboratories in 2009. Two percent (172 samples) of milk and milk product samples and 12% (27 samples) of water samples were found to be unsatisfactory. Action taken based on unsatisfactory results included disposal of non-compliant product, notification of a food safety hazard to the dairy inspectorate for follow-up investigation in the processing establishment, and the issuing of a product compliance notice.

### **Cross-Agency Nutrition and Health Claims and Nutrition Labelling Survey**

In 2009, the Authority organised the first annual cross-agency national labelling survey, with the involvement of inspectors and laboratory staff from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Local Authority Veterinary Service, the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority and the Health Service Executive. For this survey, the labels of 381 foods of animal origin, which bore a nutrition and/or health claim, were assessed for compliance with the legislation on nutrition and health claims and on nutrition labelling. A report of the survey will be published in 2010.

### **Genetically Modified Food**

The Authority is the competent authority in Ireland for genetically modified food. With the assistance of the GMO Sub-committee, the Authority reviewed the European Food Safety Authority's safety assessments of ten genetically modified food ingredients in 2009. The Public Analyst's Laboratory in Cork carries out routine analysis of food samples collected by the Health Service Executive, to check for the presence of a variety of genetically modified ingredients. Of the 65 samples analysed in 2009, six contained genetically modified maize, five contained genetically modified soya and three contained genetically modified maize and soya. One sample contained unauthorised genetically modified rice, while a rice flour product was found to contain unquantified levels of genetically modified soya, which could have implications for soya allergy sufferers.

### **Novel Food**

The Authority is the competent authority for novel foods, which are foods not on the EU market before 1997. With the assistance of the Nutrition and Novel Food Sub-committee, the Authority reviewed the safety assessments of ten novel foods in 2009, carried out safety assessments on two novel ingredients, and provided one substantial equivalence opinion where a new product was deemed equivalent to one already on the EU market.

### **Food Supplement, PARNUTS and Foods for Special Medical Purposes**

Under the food supplements legislation, food business operators must notify the Authority of their intention to place a food supplement on the Irish market for the first time. In 2009, a total of 908 food supplements were notified to the Authority. Sixty-one of these were referred to the Irish Medicines Board, as they were considered medicinal products. In 2009, the Authority began developing an online notification form through which food businesses will be able to notify food supplements to the Authority. This will be introduced in 2010.

The Authority also received 21 notifications for general PARNUTS (foods for particular nutritional uses) and 115 notifications for foods for special medical purposes. Under the notification procedure, the food business operator must submit a completed notification form (available from the Authority's website), a label of the product and any other supplementary information to the Authority for assessment. The food is then assessed for compliance against the relevant legislation.



working together...  
**to achieve the  
highest standards**

“Ireland is a world class meat exporter. The quality of the products we produce must reach the highest levels of food safety, so as to protect consumers both at home and abroad.”

**Garrett Shine**  
Veterinary Inspector, Louth County Council





## Incident Management

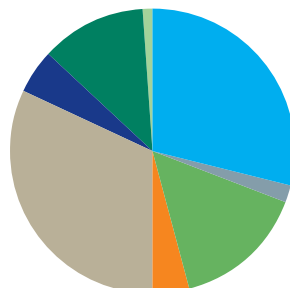
The Authority is the national control point for information and communication relating to food incidents and food alerts, and provides 24/7 emergency cover. The Authority is also the Irish contact point for the European Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed.

### Food Incidents

A food incident may arise from a problem identified by a food business, by an official agency in the course of official controls, or from information received from other countries, usually through the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed.

Similar to 2008, the Authority handled nearly 300 food incidents in 2009. The incidents were categorised as full incidents, minor and miscellaneous incidents, notifications from industry, and cross-country incidents. The Authority investigated 98 full incidents in 2009, eight more than in 2008. As in previous years, the majority (36%) of full incidents related to chemical hazards (mycotoxins and other chemical hazards), followed by microbiological contamination (29%).

Categorisation of Full Food Incidents in 2009 (Total 98)



Microbiological	29%
Labelling and packaging	2%
Foreign body	15%
Mycotoxins	4%
Other chemical	32%
GMO and novel food	5%
Allergen	12%
Fraud	1%

A total of 120 minor and miscellaneous incidents were investigated in 2009; only a slight increase on the 115 recorded in 2008. In addition, the Authority managed 64 cross-country incidents (primarily with the UK) and received 15 notifications of food incidents from the food industry.

### National Food Alerts

For some food incidents, it is necessary to communicate specific information to the official agencies, the food industry or consumers. Category 1 alerts (for action) are issued where there is an identified risk to consumers requiring action, and Category 2 alerts (for information) are issued to provide information, but for which no action is required, often because the food business operator has already carried out a full recall.



A seminar to review current meat traceability systems and to showcase model solutions from Ireland and abroad was hosted by the Authority, in conjunction with GS1 Ireland. Speakers from Ireland, Canada, New Zealand and Denmark reviewed ways to improve current meat traceability systems. The objective is to further enhance the traceability systems for beef, chicken and pork, so that if a food incident like that of the pork dioxin crisis is faced again, a more targeted recall of product could take place, if required. Pictured at the seminar are (l-r): Mr Jim Bracken, GS1 Ireland and Prof Alan Reilly, Food Safety Authority of Ireland.



The Authority issued 21 food alerts during the year: four Category 1 and 17 Category 2 alerts. The four alerts for action involved: a recall of two food supplements due to the presence of nimesulide – a medicine that has been suspended for use in Ireland; two recalls of sesame seeds due to the presence of *Salmonella*; and an investigation into a salmonellosis outbreak caused by *S. Enteritidis* PT14b. All alerts are published on the Authority's website and an email notification is issued to online subscribers.

### Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed

A total of 1,791 market notifications were issued through the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed in 2009. This is a notification system managed by the European Commission to exchange information between Member States on hazards identified in food, feed and food contact materials. Twenty-seven of the market notifications were issued by the Authority in respect of food and food contact materials that were distributed to or from Ireland. Ireland was the country of product origin for 11 market notifications issued through the system in 2009.

### Foodborne Disease Outbreaks

When an outbreak of foodborne disease is suspected, the Authority works closely with the official agencies and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre, the Irish body responsible for collating and reporting on cases of infectious disease. Over its years in operation, the Authority has investigated a number of foodborne outbreaks including *Salmonella* Typhimurium DT104 in cooked ham, *S. Typhimurium* DT104b in cooked meats, *S. Agona* in cooked meats, and two *E. coli* O157 outbreaks linked to hotels.

A cluster of three *S. Typhimurium* DT8 cases in September were tentatively linked with duck egg consumption, but no microbiological link was established during investigations of duck farms by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Nevertheless, all three human *Salmonella* isolates had the same multiple-locus variable-number tandem repeat analysis (MLVA) pattern (2-10-NA-12-212) suggesting a common source.

In December, a nationwide cluster of ten cases of salmonellosis, caused by *Salmonella* Enteritidis phage type 14b, was investigated. Although investigations did not identify a specific food, around the same time, a large outbreak in the UK of a similar strain of *Salmonella* was believed to have been linked to eggs from an approved egg production premises in Spain. This prompted the Authority to issue food alerts asking enforcement officers and food businesses to check if eggs bearing the Spanish production facility's code were on the market, and also to remind food businesses to source good quality eggs and to follow good hygienic practices.

Provisional data shows that 21 outbreaks suspected to be transmitted by food, were reported to the Health Protection Surveillance Centre in 2009. The bacteria responsible were *Salmonella* (7 outbreaks), *Campylobacter* (5), enterohaemorrhagic *E. coli* (5); *Shigella* (2); *Clostridium perfringens* (1) and norovirus (1). The mechanisms for reporting foodborne illness have improved since 1999, with the introduction of a computerised infectious disease reporting tool (CIDR) and improved legislation on reporting infectious diseases.



The Authority's annual competition for best food safety related project in third level colleges was awarded in 2009 to Ms Tara Raftery, Trinity College, Dublin and DIT Kevin Street. Her project; '*Dietary fat intake, physical activity and metabolic profile of an adult cohort attending a hypertension clinic*', examined the relationship between dietary fat and ambulatory blood pressure in a cohort of hypertensive adults. Dietary fat is important in the regulation of blood pressure and the primary objective of the study was to affirm whether or not a hypertensive adult's blood pressure would be reduced on a diet that includes monounsaturated fat.

## Science

The Authority makes its risk management decisions based on sound science and risk assessment. In addition to the high level of scientific expertise of its staff, the Authority has, at its disposal, the expertise of 64 independent scientists through its Scientific Committee and five Sub-committees. Over its ten years of operation, the Scientific Committee has produced 19 reports on a range of subjects including genetically modified foods; foodborne pathogens; additives; food safety implications of spreading agricultural, municipal and industrial organic waste on land used for food production; nanotechnology; and vitamin D supplementation in infants.

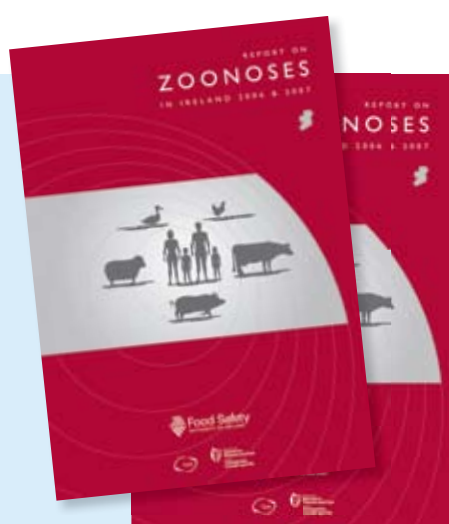
### *Mycobacterium avium* subsp. *paratuberculosis*

In 2009, the Scientific Committee published its second opinion on *Mycobacterium avium* subsp. *paratuberculosis* (*Map*) and the possible links to Crohn's disease. There is ongoing debate surrounding whether this bacterium has a role in the development of Crohn's disease. In 2000, the conclusion of the Scientific Committee's report on *Map* was that a direct link could not be established between *Map* and Crohn's disease, as available data were inconclusive, but the Committee would keep this issue under review. In 2009, the Committee published the findings of its review of key research published between 2000 and 2008. It concluded that the balance of available evidence does not support a causal relationship between *Map* and the incidence of Crohn's disease.

### Bottled Water

In 2009, the Scientific Committee issued a report on the consumption of bottled water, containing certain bacteria, or groups of bacteria and the implications for public health. From time to time, bacteria may be present in bottled waters at low concentrations. Usually, these are harmless and reports of outbreaks of human illness linked to bottled water in the international literature are infrequent compared to reports of outbreaks linked to tap water. No cases of illness associated with bottled water have been reported in Ireland. However, a study of the microbiological safety and quality of bottled water by the Authority in 2007 raised a question as to the food safety risk posed by bottled water. As a result, the Authority requested the Scientific Committee to provide an opinion on the risks posed by bottled water contaminated with one or more of the following: *E. coli*, enterococci, coliforms, and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.

The Scientific Committee concluded that bottled water that tests positive for *E. coli* or enterococci should be regarded as contaminated with faeces, and therefore, represents a risk to public health. Such water should be considered unsafe for consumption, irrespective of the lack of direct detection of known pathogenic bacteria. Bottled water that tests negative for *E. coli* or enterococci, but positive for coliforms should not be considered unsafe, but does require careful investigation of the potential causes, and an enhanced monitoring of finished product and source water for the presence of *E. coli* and enterococci. This is because the presence of coliform bacteria on its own is not in itself a strong indication of potential presence of enteric pathogens. *P. aeruginosa* is an opportunistic pathogen associated



Zoonoses are diseases and/or infections which are naturally transmissible directly or indirectly between animals and humans. European Council Directive 2003/99/EC, requires Member States to collect, evaluate and report data on zoonoses, zoonotic agents, antimicrobial resistance and foodborne outbreaks to the European Commission each year. These data are then processed by the European Food Safety Authority and published in the form of an annual community summary report. In 2009, the Authority published the *Report on Zoonoses in Ireland for 2006 and 2007*. This is the fifth Irish report compiled by the Authority, the Health Protection Surveillance Centre and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and covers data submitted for Ireland for 2006 and 2007.

with hospital-acquired infections in people that are severely immunocompromised. The Scientific Committee concluded that the presence of *P. aeruginosa* in bottled water, in the absence of *E. coli* and enterococci, is not a significant health risk for the general population. The presence of *P. aeruginosa* in bottled water can only be considered a risk to profoundly immunocompromised patients in hospitals, and suitable measures within hospitals can be adopted to reduce or remove this risk.

### Gluten-free and Very Low Gluten Foods

In 2009, the Authority advised Irish food businesses and others concerned with the labelling of gluten-free and gluten-reduced foods that the requirements of Commission Regulation (EC) No 41/2009 take precedence over the recommendations regarding labelling, issued in the Authority's 2008 report on gluten-free foods. The Regulation, which came into force on 10 February 2009, requires that foodstuffs which have been specifically formulated, processed or prepared to meet the dietary needs of people intolerant to gluten and marketed as such, should be labelled as either 'gluten free' (gluten content not exceeding 20 mg/kg) or 'very low gluten' (gluten content above 20 up to 100 mg/kg). The Regulation also allows for food which does not contain ingredients derived from gluten-containing grains or oats to be labelled to indicate the absence of gluten, provided they contain less than 20 mg/kg gluten. However, the labelling Directive 2000/13/EC requires that such a statement does not mislead the consumer by suggesting that the food possesses special characteristics, when in fact, all similar foodstuffs possess such characteristics. While the Regulation came into force in February 2009, it allows industry a grace period up to 1 January 2012,

to bring their products into compliance with these labelling requirements. In 2010, the Authority will publish a guidance note on the legislation on gluten-free foods and avoidance of cross-contamination during manufacture of gluten-free or very low gluten products.

### Folic Acid Food Fortification

In March, the Implementation Group on Folic Acid Fortification presented its final report to the Department of Health and Children. The Implementation Group, for which the Authority acts as secretariat, was formed to review and implement the recommendations of the National Committee on Folic Acid Fortification. Following extensive national monitoring of the folate status of the population, and of levels of folic acid in foods on the Irish market, the Implementation Group proposed that there would be no benefit to public health to introduce mandatory folic acid fortification at this current time. This new advice followed scientific assessment and a number of factors which negate the need for a mandatory policy. These factors include the fact that, due to voluntary fortification by the food industry, women of childbearing age now receive 30% more folate in their diet compared to three years ago; secondly, since 2005, the incidence of neural tube defects has reduced to 0.93 per 1,000 births; and finally, preliminary and inconclusive data indicate some potential for adverse effects to excessive high levels of folic acid.



An information leaflet on nanotechnology and food was published to provide a brief and objective overview to inform stakeholders about nanotechnology, and how it relates to our food in terms of its potential uses, safety and regulation. Though still an emerging science, nanotechnology has been used for some time in the production of goods such as cosmetics, and holds significant promise as a tool in the diagnosis and treatment of certain human illnesses. Despite the numerous benefits associated with nanotechnology, the interaction of nanoparticles with humans, animals and the environment has yet to be fully explored.





working together...  
**to protect consumers**

“Consumers are the final link in the food chain and they must feel confident that the food they are eating is safe to eat. They are our number one priority when we are carrying out our work.”

**Orla Scanlon**  
Environmental Health Officer, Health Service Executive



## Science

## Rice Milk

In May, the Authority advised, as a precautionary measure, that infants and young children (up to four and a half years old) should not consume rice milk as a substitute for breast milk, formula or cow's milk. Parents were advised to contact their GP or dietician for advice on a suitable alternative. This advice was based on the findings of a UK study which indicated that rice milk contains low levels of inorganic arsenic. As young children drink a relatively large amount of milk, their potential intake of arsenic will be higher compared to older children and adults, relative to their body weight.

## Nutrition and Health

Nutrition and health is high on the Authority's agenda. Healthy eating is a necessary part of preventing chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancers and obesity. Given that people on low incomes have been shown to have a greater chance of developing these conditions at a young age, and that low income households have been found to have a lower quality diet in general, the Authority assessed the affordability of healthy eating in 2009. The study highlighted two of the main barriers to healthy eating among low income households. First, it is much more affordable to meet daily calorie needs by eating foods from the fats and oils, and snacks food categories (which should be eaten sparingly) than foods such as fruit, vegetables, lean meat and fish. Secondly, food from local convenience stores was found to be the most expensive, but as many low income households rely on public transport, it is easier to use local stores than travel to larger supermarkets.

The Authority also carried out a survey to assess consumers' perceptions of 'average' portion sizes of bread, cereals and potatoes in Ireland. Portion sizes are known to have a significant impact on energy intake, and there is evidence that the consumption of larger portion sizes is linked with the rise in obesity. Based on the results of the survey, it was recommended that portion sizes for bread, cereals and potatoes used in dietary guidelines should be made larger, and the number of portions advised should be reduced so that healthy eating advice is more meaningful to consumers. Recommendations were made to the food industry to reduce the size of individual portion sizes for bread, cereals and potatoes, and to provide clear labelling on the energy (calorie) content per portion, as well as per 100g. The survey also indicated that consumers need more education on the varying energy content of different starchy foods.

The Authority published the result of its survey into the levels of fat in 150 samples of food collected from 12 fast-food restaurants. Although results showed the level of trans-fatty acids was low, the level of saturated fats in some samples was high, prompting the Authority to urge food businesses to pursue healthier alternatives to saturated fat and trans-fatty acids, and to employ new processes and technologies which can assist in this area.

## Salt Reduction Programme

The Authority continued with its commitment to reduce salt in the Irish diet, from 10 g to 6 g per day by 2012, through partnership with the food industry and State bodies charged with communicating the salt and health message to consumers. High levels of salt intake are considered a contributory factor in a number of deaths



A guidance document on contaminants was launched at a seminar for enforcement officers and food businesses. A wide range of chemical substances or contaminants may accidentally be present in food, including persistent organic pollutants (e.g. dioxins, furans and PCBs); metals (including lead, cadmium and mercury); and agricultural contaminants such as mycotoxins and industrial contaminants. The guidance document contains up-to-date information on the legislation controlling the presence of contaminants in food. Pictured at the seminar are (l-r): Dr Simon Edwards, Harper Adams University College, UK; Dr Iona Pratt, Food Safety Authority of Ireland; Dr Claudia Heppner, European Food Safety Authority; and Dr Rhodri Evans, Food Safety Authority of Ireland.



from cardiovascular disease and stroke caused by high blood pressure and hypertension. Sixty three food companies and trade associations have signed up to the Authority's voluntary Salt Reduction Programme. Since 2003, great success has been achieved across key sectors in reducing salt levels in processed foods. Reductions of over 31% in spreading fats, 10% in breads and 9% in cured processed meats and meat products have been achieved, with reductions of over 7% across all food products.

In light of the achievements of the Salt Reduction Programme, the Authority, in conjunction with Food and Drink Industry Ireland and Retail Ireland, hosted a seminar in September to discuss the achievements of the programme so far, problems encountered and what issues the industry faces if it is to further reduce the salt concentration of processed and prepared foods.

The Authority also held an open consultation for a proposal to align the Irish Salt Reduction Programme with revised targets for salt reduction set by the Food Standards Agency in the UK. The consultation resulted in a rejection of the proposal by 48% to 44%. Primarily, respondents indicated a rejection of the proposal because significant progress has already been made with the voluntarily process, the setting of specific goals for particular sectors has been successful, and many respondents felt the proposed UK targets were not achievable.

### Scientific Collaboration with the European Food Safety Authority

The Authority represents Ireland on the European Food Safety Authority's Advisory Forum. This Advisory Forum brings together representatives from national authorities

of all 27 EU Member States and provides a platform for cooperation between the European Food Safety Authority and national authorities, and between national authorities themselves. With the support of the Advisory Forum, the European Food Safety Authority and the Member States jointly address European risk assessment and risk communications issues. Members of the Advisory Forum advise the European Food Safety Authority on scientific matters, its work programme and priorities, and address emerging risk issues as early as possible.

Staff from the Authority participated in various European Food Safety Authority working groups, forums and panels in 2009, providing input into important areas of activity such as harmonising data collection methodologies for national data on zoonoses, and for food contaminants, food consumption and food classification. The compilation of chemical occurrence data and the development of a concise food consumption database underpin EU-wide risk assessments to be carried out.

Other areas of the Authority's collaboration with the European Food Safety Authority during 2009 included chairing a working group on the development of their emergency planning manual, which provides guidance on the practical arrangements necessary to ensure responsiveness of the European Food Safety Authority to the need for urgent advice on food and feed safety. The report from the European Food Safety Authority's Scientific Cooperation Working Group on the analysis of risks and benefits of fortification of food with folic acid, which was chaired by the Authority, was published in 2009.



The Authority's Scientific Committee published a new scientific opinion on *Mycobacterium avium* subsp. *paratuberculosis* and the possible links to Crohn's disease. Crohn's disease is a form of chronic inflammatory bowel disease in which the wall of the bowel in humans becomes inflamed and thickened. The implicated genes in Crohn's disease patients are involved overall in mucosal barrier integrity and microbial clearance and/or homeostasis. Based on the review of research and opinion by other international and national health bodies, the Scientific Committee concluded that on balance, the available evidence did not support a causal relationship between *Mycobacterium avium* subsp. *paratuberculosis* and the incidence of Crohn's disease.



## Communication

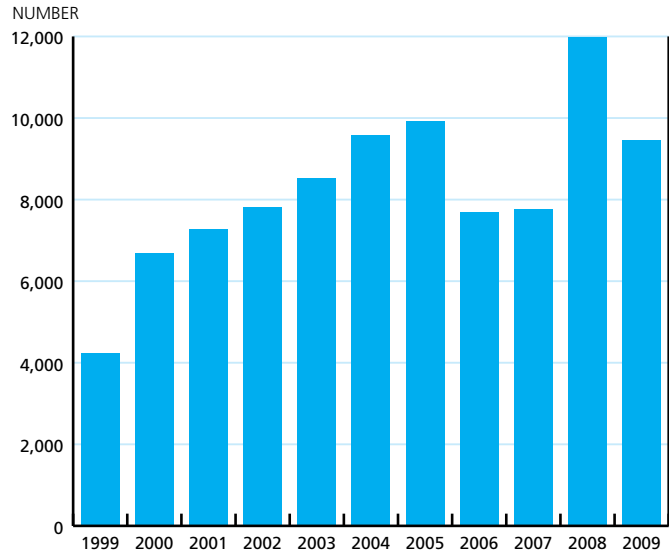
An important function of the Authority is to provide information on food safety for all stakeholders. Disseminating accurate information to key sectors of the food chain facilitates the development of high food safety standards in Ireland.

### Information Services

The Authority's Advice Line, website, extranet, and Information Centre play a large part in facilitating this exchange of information, providing up-to-date information on a wide range of food safety issues.

In its ten years of operation, the Authority's Advice Line has answered over 90,000 queries. There was a peak of queries in 2008, directly related to dioxin contamination of Irish pork, where the Advice Line received over 3,000 calls on one day. The Advice Line also received an increased volume of calls in 2000, due to a recall of cooked ham (over 420 consumers contacted us for advice over a two day period), and in 2005 (approximately 400 calls were received following a recall of various food products due to the presence of Sudan Red, an illegal food colourant).

### Queries to the Advice Line, 1999-2009

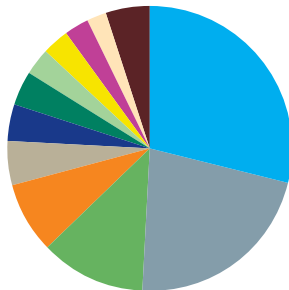


In 2009, a total of 9,444 queries were received, averaging 787 queries per month. The majority (71%) of requesters contacted the Advice Line by telephone, followed by email (25%). The most popular categories of query were: requests for copies of the Authority's publications; food complaints; business start-up information; and food labelling. In fact, requests for information on how to set up a new food business increased by 50% in 2009, compared to 2008 – a trend which echoed the downturn in the economy with many requesters possibly forced to follow an alternative career path.



The 2009 Food Safety Consultative Council open meeting discussed the position for and against the merits of food supplements. Details of new developments in European legislation which regulates food supplements and food fortification were discussed. The meeting outlined the rationale behind proposed EU regulations to safeguard consumer health in relation to food supplements, and gave an insight into why consumers take supplements and their understanding of the perceived health benefits. Pictured at the open meeting are (l-r): Ms Veronica Campbell, Food Safety Consultative Council; Dr Robert Verkerk, Alliance for Natural Health (UK); Dr Alan Ruth, Irish Health Trade Association; and Dr Mary Flynn, Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

**Types of Query to the Advice Line in 2009**



Publication request	29%
Complaints	22%
Business start-up	12%
Labelling	8%
Standards	5%
Nutrition	4%
Training	4%
Legislation	3%
Domestic practice	3%
FSAI action	3%
Imports	2%
Other	5%

Most queries were from people working in the food industry (44%), who predominantly asked for copies of the Authority's publications or for advice on labelling or training. Consumers, the second most frequent category of requester (27%), mainly contacted the Advice Line to report issues with food or food establishments. The types of issues consumers complained about were poor hygiene standards; food that was unfit to eat; suspected food poisoning; or labelling.

Many consumers contact the Advice Line to complain about or question the labelling on food products. In December, the Authority published *A Research Study into Consumers Attitudes to Food Labelling*. The nationwide survey of over 1,000 consumers revealed that although nearly three quarters of consumers believe food labels are informative, 27% said they rarely or never consulted food labels. The survey also found that the main reason consumers read labels is to find nutritional and calorific information about the product. Consumers find some elements of labelling confusing, such as the use of scientific terms for ingredients or nutrients, and the use of non-standardised measurements for nutritional information. Over half agreed that making the information easier to understand and using larger text size would make it easier to choose food products.

The website received a new look in 2009, to celebrate the Authority's tenth anniversary. To make information more accessible to all, the website underwent a complete restructure, including an updated design and simplified layout. In 2009, the website received 343,096 visits, with 148,617 absolute unique visitors and 1,190,091 page views. The home page, followed by the resources and publications, legislation and the food businesses sections were the most popular areas of the site. Visitors came to the site from 210 different countries, with 68% of visits from Ireland, followed by the UK, the US, France, Canada, Germany and Austria.

The extranet site, *Safety Net*, is accessible by staff of the Authority and the official agencies. There was a 5% increase of use in 2009 compared to 2008, with a total of 15,796 visitors, averaging 1,316 per month.



Following a survey of readers, *fsainews* was redesigned in 2009. The bi-monthly newsletter has a distribution list of approximately 4,000 and a further 2,500 subscribers receive an online version by email, through the subscription service on the Authority's website.

## working together... at a local level

“More and more people are enjoying buying their food directly from the farmer and small-scale producers at local food markets. We provide advice on business start-up, training requirements, HACCP, labelling and traceability for these artisan food producers.”

**Ruth Conefrey**  
Audit Manager, Food Safety Authority of Ireland









## Communication

### Publications

New publications in 2009, all of which are available from the website, included the *Safe Catering Pack*; leaflets on nanotechnology and food, and on animal cloning in food production; a series of toxicology factsheets; a report on *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis* and the possible links to Crohn's disease; a report on zoonoses in Ireland; a report on bottled water; and a guidance document on legislation on chemical contaminants. Also, six editions of the re-designed newsletter, *fsainews*, were published.

### Media Relations

In 2009, the Authority issued 32 press releases to the media in order to communicate information on food safety to the food industry via these channels. Also, 265 queries from the media, on a wide range of food safety and nutrition issues, were dealt with during the year.

### Training

Training is an important means of communicating food safety messages, and in 2009 the Authority provided training for official agency staff and for people working in the food industry. In order to meet the changing face of the Irish food industry, the Authority delivered two new training programmes in 2009: one for staff working in African food businesses and one for environmental health officers who are responsible for inspecting these businesses. The training was customised to take into account the food types and practices associated with African food businesses. The Authority is compiling a photographic catalogue of ethnic food products, along with the product name, typical use, shelf-life and any associated food safety risks.

The established *Food Safety and You* and the *Food Safety Training for Management in the Chinese Food Sector* training programmes continued in 2009. Both programmes are aimed at managers or trainers working in the food industry.

The Authority also provided workshops on microbiological criteria for local authority veterinary inspectors, which included a practical session in an abattoir, focusing on swabbing and sampling techniques. Interactive training was provided for sea-fisheries protection officers and staff from Bord Iascaigh Mhara, on the impact of new EU legislation. Also, specialised training on labelling was provided to over 300 enforcement officers. This training was intended to prepare enforcement officers who took part in the 2009 national labelling programme, which aims to assess nutrition and health claims, and nutritional information labelled on food of animal origin on sale in the Ireland.

The Authority is represented on the EU Expert Group on Better Training for Safer Food and coordinates participation for official agency staff on training programmes run by the Commission.

### Seminars

The Authority held a number of food safety seminars during the year, the largest of which was a two day conference in October, organised to celebrate its tenth anniversary. Entitled: *The Evolution of Food Safety from 1999 to 2009*, the conference saw national and international experts reflect on food safety over the past ten years and explore the changing landscape on all aspects of food safety. The conference offered an



The Authority has been working with the food industry since 2003, to achieve gradual, sustained and universal reductions in the salt content of processed and prepared foods. The long term goal of the Salt Reduction Programme is to reduce the average population intake of salt from 10g a day, to 6g a day by 2012, through partnership with the food industry and State bodies charged with communicating the salt and health messages to consumers. Pictured is Prof Alan Reilly, Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

opportunity to examine the key food safety challenges that lie ahead and to discuss experiences that can provide insights into enhancing food safety policies and practices. The event was opened by Mary Harney, T.D., Minister for Health and Children and was concluded by *The Great Food Safety Debate*; a lively debate in which an expert panel of opinion leaders aired their views from a consumer, industry and regulatory standpoint. During the debate, the audience had the opportunity to vote on the topics discussed, and 80% believed that food is safer now than it was ten years ago.

Seminars on salt; meat traceability; and contaminants in food were held during the year. In September, in conjunction with Food and Drink Industry Ireland and Retail Ireland, the Authority hosted a seminar to discuss the achievements, problems and issues encountered so far in the implementation of the Authority's Salt Reduction Programme. The programme aims to reduce the average population intake of salt from 10 g a day to 6 g, by 2012, through partnership with the food industry and State bodies charged with communicating the salt and health message to consumers.

Over 80 delegates attended the seminar on contaminants in food, in November, where the Authority's guidance document on *Legislation on Chemical Contaminants* was launched. The document contains up-to-date information on legislation controlling the presence of contaminants – such as persistent organic pollutants, metals, agricultural and industrial contaminants – in our food. Also in November, the Authority, in association with GS1 Ireland, hosted a seminar to discuss meat traceability, which was attended by over 100 delegates from the food processing, distribution and retail industries.

## Industry Fora

The Authority operates a number of schemes through which it effectively engages with the food industry – promoting best food safety practices, a shared approach to safe food production and communicating the need to comply with food legislation. The four industry fora created by the Authority continue to function as a platform for specific industry sectors to access the Authority and progress issues concerning food safety and hygiene.

## Artisan Food Producer's Forum

The Artisan Food Producer's Forum provides an opportunity to focus on food safety issues of relevance to artisan food producers. The two meetings in 2009 provided further opportunity for staff from the Authority's official agencies to brief artisans on their enforcement work in the artisan sector, allowing for two way dialogue and mutual understanding of issues in the sector. The Food Standards Agency, UK was invited to present its work in implementing controls for hunters of wild game. Similar training and controls are being implemented in Ireland as part of the hygiene package. The work of the artisan food technologists in Teagasc was also discussed and valuable feedback was provided by members to further develop the important service that the technologists provided in 2009. Finally, the Forum provided an opportunity for the Authority to discuss rules for small food production, especially in the areas of egg sales, small scale poultry production and small scale meat production.



The Authority worked with environmental health officers involved with inspecting ethnic food premises to design, develop and deliver a training programme for African food businesses. The aim of the programme is to provide staff working in African food businesses with the necessary food safety knowledge to comply with Irish food law. The programme was customised to take into account food types and practices associated with African food businesses. The training programme is interactive to allow for discussion and demonstration of food safety practices. Pictured are the participants who attended one of the training programmes.

## Communication

### Retail Forum

The Retail Forum focuses on the food retail sector, hosting members from the main supermarkets and the major symbol groups. This group met three times in 2009 and was joined by representatives from Lidl Ireland and Gala Retail Services. A major issue discussed in 2009 concerned the sale of chicken breast fillets, which are sold loose, but which were delivered in modified atmosphere bulk packs. Following discussions, it was clear that retailer's practices were not appropriate for the prevention of microbiological spoilage. Over the three meetings, retailers were able to report changes to their practices and shortening of shelf-life to ensure these products were fit for consumption. The Forum also discussed the impact of the Irish pork dioxin crisis on retailers. A report on the experiences was agreed containing recommendations for future improvements in communication during crises. This report is available from the Retail Forum section on the Authority's website. The Forum also provided an opportunity for the Irish Farmers Association to engage with retailers over country of origin labelling. They challenged the retailers to display Irish products in a manner that did not mislead the consumer. The retailers provided a robust response to the Irish Farmers Association, clarifying issues surrounding product placement and shelf labelling. Finally, the Authority was able to discuss the findings of a study of *Campylobacter* on the outside of poultry packaging and challenged retailers to adopt leak-proof packaging for whole chickens, to reduce the risk of cross-contamination.

### Food Service Forum

The revised Food Service Forum met twice in 2009, following its review in 2008. Subway Ireland and O'Briens Sandwiches joined the Forum and Mr Henry O'Neill, long serving member from the Irish Restaurants Association, retired and was replaced by Mr Adrian Cummins. The Forum discussed healthy food options – the Authority presented its work on trans-fat content of fast-food, whilst the Irish Hotels Federation presented its nutrition programme for children. The issue of chicken fillets originating from modified atmosphere packaging was also discussed with the Forum to ensure that these products were being handled correctly. The Salt Reduction Programme was discussed in detail, as was the impact of the pork dioxin crisis. The group also took the opportunity of addressing the Authority on the issue of publicising inspection reports for catering

outlets. Similar schemes have been adopted in the UK, including Northern Ireland. It was agreed towards the end of 2009, that the Authority would seek to further expand the membership of the Forum.

### Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee

The Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee, chaired by the Authority, is the national stakeholder committee for the production and placing on the market of bivalve molluscs. During 2009, the Committee met five times. The Committee was involved in planning for and managing incidents involving bivalve shellfish; reviewing the work carried out by the European Food Safety Authority in relation to shellfish; examining test methods used to assure the safety of wild and cultivated shellfish; and monitoring and contributing to ongoing research work carried out in Irish and international academic institutions. In terms of specific hazards, the Committee dealt with issues associated with biotoxins, viruses, microbiology and traceability.

### Food Safety Consultative Council

Established under the FSAI Act 1998, the Food Safety Consultative Council is one of the key elements of the Authority's structure. Half of the members are appointed by the Authority and half by the Minister for Health and Children. The current Council holds office until the end of 2010.

The Council comprises twenty members from a wide variety of backgrounds including, food processing, catering, vintners, quality certification, education and research. The Council's main purpose is to allow the Authority to meet its obligation to consult widely about its activities. Matters are referred for consideration to the Council, but it may also bring issues to the attention of the Authority.

Five meetings took place during 2009, the first of which was a public meeting on the topic of food supplements. The audience heard presentations from the European Commission, the Authority, the Irish Health Trade Association and the Alliance for Natural Health. The meeting discussed why people take supplements, the contrast between actual consumption versus recommendations, and the challenges with the current and proposed EU legislation.

At its remaining meetings, the Council considered other issues including, controls on food packaging; sports nutrition; the implication of the *E. coli* O157 outbreak in Wales; consumer food choices in the changing economic times; and the implementation of legal requirement set down in Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 for the imposition of fees for the supervising of food business operations. In May, the Council Chair and a number of members, at the invitation of the Food Standards Agency, Northern Ireland, met with members of the Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee and later participated in a stakeholder consultation with regard to the Agency's strategy for 2010-2015.

### Collaboration with Other Organisations

In 2009, the Authority continued to liaise closely with the Food Standards Agency, Northern Ireland, on cross-border enforcement activities. The staff of the Authority serve on *safe food's* Scientific Advisory Committee. From a nutrition and health point of view, the Authority was on the Advisory Committee of Healthy Food For All (an all-island multiagency initiative which seeks to combat food poverty), was a participant of the National Heart Alliance, and continued its work with the Irish Heart Foundation in relation to the Salt Reduction Programme.

In 2009, the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Authority and Bord Iascaigh Mhara was reviewed and extended for a further year. Both organisations have worked to encourage and support a range of initiatives in the seafood sector, with co-operation extending to the sharing of technical expertise and information. In conjunction with other State and official agencies associated with the country's marine resources, for example the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority and the Marine Institute, the Authority and Bord Iascaigh Mhara have endeavoured to provide a high level of consumer protection whilst highlighting the quality of Irish seafood and supporting businesses, particularly exporting businesses, in their marketing of safe, healthy and wholesome food.

The Authority interacts with Bord Bia to support its Quality Assurance Schemes, by providing technical input via its technical advisory committees. In 2009, the Authority provided advice on the merging of Bord Bia's beef and lamb standards. The Authority was also involved in preparatory work for the proposed Feed Quality Assurance Scheme, the revision of the mushroom casing standard and the development of the mushroom substrate standard. By ensuring that the correct food safety elements are included in the quality assurance schemes, the Authority can be confident that compliance with Bord Bia's standards brings with it high levels of food safety and hygiene.

In addition to its scientific collaboration with the European Food Safety Authority, the Authority also participated in its Advisory Forum Communication Working Group, which works with the communications departments of national food safety agencies to build a more collaborative and informed approach to communicating risk in the food chain and to promote a coherence of food safety messages across the Community. During 2009, work began on creating risk communications guidelines and these are expected to be published in 2010. The Authority also acts as the national Focal Point, which facilitates cooperation and data sharing between the European Food Safety Authority and all EU food safety agencies. During 2009, work areas included collecting and sharing information, supporting networks, participating in the Information Exchange Platform, as well as promoting the establishment of a European Expert Database.

An agreement between the Authority and the New Zealand Food Safety Authority was signed in 2009, which will forge stronger scientific links between the two agencies. The New Zealand Food Safety Authority has a similar role to the Authority in that it is responsible for protecting consumers' health and interests in relation to food safety and food standards. Under the agreement, both agencies will share information and cooperate in areas of mutual interest, such as science, risk assessment, food consumption and composition.



## Corporate Governance

The management of corporate functions continues to be central in ensuring the effectiveness of systems to facilitate the delivery of the Authority's services to all stakeholders, whilst ensuring high levels of corporate governance are developed and maintained.

An Internal Audit Committee is in place to review the effectiveness of the Authority's systems of control, including financial, operational and compliance controls and risk management. During 2009, the audit programme concentrated on the close-out of all outstanding issues identified during previous audits. All issues identified are being addressed to the satisfaction of the Authority's management, Board and external auditors.

In collaboration with the Board, a key task initiated during the year was the strengthening of the Authority's corporate governance structure, to bring its governance systems in line with the revised Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies. Practices in good governance indicate that organisational risks should be considered in all planning and service delivery activities. In the latter end of 2009, the Authority developed a Risk Management Policy and Risk Register, in order to have a comprehensive organisation-wide approach to managing risks, which will enhance the Authority's ability to achieve objectives. This will be regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure its relevance to the work of the Authority.

An efficient finance function is in place which ensures that the highest accounting standards are met and that effective financial management systems are in place. The Authority uses formalised tendering procedures to purchase a wide range of goods and services. During 2009, an in-house training programme was conducted to ensure that staff involved in procurement on behalf of the Authority are up to date with national and EU procurement guidelines. The Authority also ensured that Department of Finance budgetary measures were implemented, in terms of salary and other expenditure savings. A Fixed Asset Register was developed, which details all assets held by the Authority and which is capable of producing the reports necessary for auditors and for the production of the financial statements.

Benefits are achieved from the use of IT in the delivery of services, managing resources and streamlining work processes. During 2009, the core IT systems were upgraded with the implementation of a large scale storage area network. This network allows for the continued growth and development of the corporate IT network, to meet the demands of the Authority over the coming years. The protection of confidential data and increasing IT security remained an important issue. This resulted in a project to roll-out encryption software to all portable laptops and computers. The database infrastructure was also upgraded in 2009 to the latest industry technologies. This has allowed the Authority to support the ever increasing volume of data submitted from official food microbiology laboratories and public analyst's laboratories around the country.



To mark its 10th anniversary, the Authority held a two-day conference which featured leading national and international experts in the food safety arena. The experts discussed improvements in Ireland's food safety protectorate regime over the past decade and analysed the potential new threats in the future. The conference was opened by Mary Harney, T.D., Minister for Health and Children who stressed the importance of food safety and the role played by the Authority in ensuring that the main stakeholder in the food chain, the consumer, was protected. Pictured at the conference are (l-r): Dr Robert Madelin, European Commission; Dr Jørgen Schlundt, World Health Organization; Dr Karen Hulebak, United States Department of Agriculture; Mary Harney, T.D., Minister for Health and Children; and Prof Alan Reilly, Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

In the light of the embargo on recruitment in the public service, staffing was managed so as to ensure the best and most appropriate use of resources and to enable the organisation discharge its statutory mandate. A Partnership Committee is in place which facilitates dialogue and gives staff at all levels a collaborative forum for exchanging ideas on all aspects of the Authority's operations. There continues to be an emphasis on the professional and personal development of staff, by continually developing skills and expertise in all key relevant areas.

The Authority operates a quality management system, which is externally evaluated and audited annually by the National Standards Authority of Ireland. The quality management system is an integral part of the Authority's management structure and is a driver of consistency and continual improvement to ensure the Authority continues to meet its statutory responsibilities and customer/ stakeholder expectations. The Authority was subject to a surveillance audit during 2009, and maintained its registration to the quality management standard.

The Authority continues to meet its obligations in relation to responding to Freedom of Information requests and parliamentary questions. The Authority received thirteen Freedom of Information requests in 2009. Eleven were from journalists, one from a food business and another from a solicitor (on behalf of a food business). Request topics included: dioxins in animal feed; enforcements; the Authority's Board fees and expenses; information about reports on infant formula and on bottled water; information about a named food business; and CEO correspondence. One of the thirteen requests was appealed to the Office of the Information Commissioner

and was still under consideration at year-end. Twenty five parliamentary questions from various political representatives were submitted to the Authority in 2009. Questions received included those on financial or staffing arrangements, labelling, inspections and enforcements.

The success of the Authority in delivering on its key strategies and initiatives is due to the significant input of all staff throughout the organisation. In addition to their contribution to the Authority, staff continue to contribute to and participate in many aspects of the work of the European Food Safety Authority; the European Commission; the World Health Organization; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; and Codex Alimentarius.



The Authority achieved certification to ISO 9001:2008. Mr Maurice Buckley, CEO, National Standards Authority of Ireland complimented the Authority on the practical approach it adopted on the design and implementation of its quality management system. This system is subject to routine surveillance and audits by the National Standards Authority of Ireland. Pictured at the presentation of the certificate are (l-r): Mr Tom Costello and Mr Maurice Buckley, National Standards Authority of Ireland; Ms Celine Donoghue, Ms Ruth Conefrey and Prof Alan Reilly, Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

## Official Agencies

with which the Authority had Service Agreements in 2009

The Authority is responsible for the enforcement of food legislation in Ireland, and carries out this enforcement function through service contracts with official agencies. Section 48 of the FSAI Act, 1998 provides the legislative basis for this. The contracts drawn up between the Authority and official agencies outline the level and standard of food safety activity that the agencies will perform, as agents of the Authority. The current contracts came into effect from 2006 or later, and have a minimum duration of three years. They may be reviewed at anytime on the request of either party.

### Official Agencies with which the Authority had Service Contracts in 2009



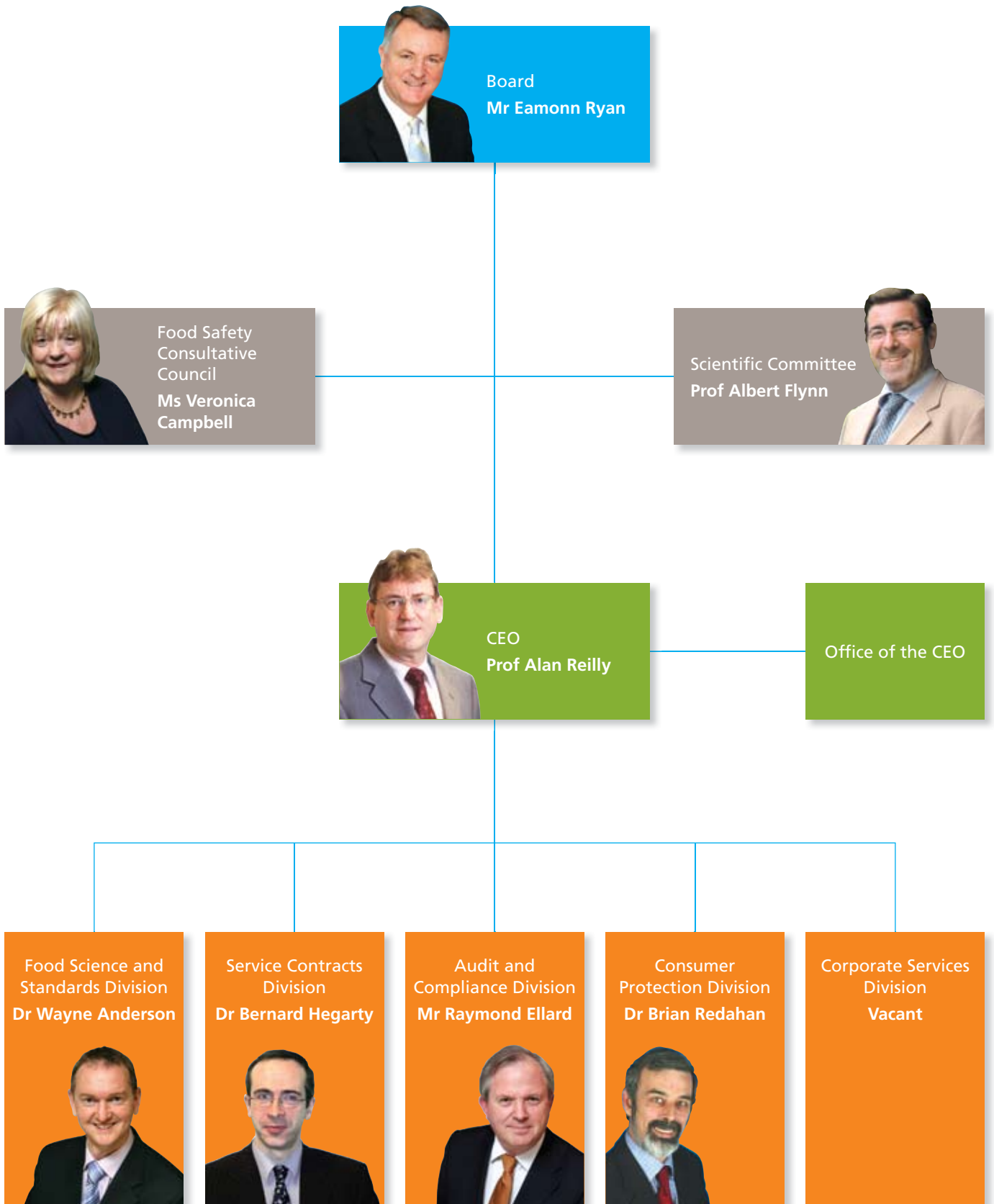
The Authority has also signed a memorandum of understanding with various other organisations, in order to facilitate cooperation and the exchange of information related to food safety. A service contract is a legal agreement to enforce food safety legislation, whereas, a memorandum of understanding sets out a framework for co-operation between organisations in their food safety activities.

### Organisations with which the Authority has signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2009



# Management Structure

At 31st December 2009





## Board Members

At 31st December 2009



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### 1. Mr Eamonn Ryan (Chairman)

Prior to his appointment as Chairman of the Authority in March 2007, Mr Eamonn Ryan was Executive Director of IDA Ireland. In a career spanning three decades of Ireland's economic transformation, he played a pivotal role in shaping and implementing strategy for the phenomenal growth of the Irish economy. Mr Ryan has a long and distinguished career in Ireland's public sector and has a wide knowledge and experience of business in the domestic and international arena. He was Executive Director International of IDA Ireland's global operations based in New York, where under his leadership and management, the agency attracted substantial levels of the most technologically-advanced foreign direct investment from the USA, Europe and Asia Pacific. Mr Ryan is a graduate of University College, Dublin, with further academic pursuits in Columbia University and Carnegie Mellon.

### 2. Prof John Daniel Collins

Prof John Daniel Collins, M.V.B., M.V.M., M.S. (Calif.), Ph.D., M.R.C.V.S. is Professor Emeritus of Farm Animal Clinical Studies at University College, Dublin. He is an Honorary Member of the European College of Veterinary Public Health and an Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Food Science and Technology of Ireland. Formerly he was the Chair of the Centre for Food Safety and Director of the Centre for Veterinary Epidemiology and Risk Analysis in University College Dublin. Prof Collins is a member of the European Food Safety Authority's Scientific Committee and Chair of its Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards. He is a member of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's Scientific Committee.

### 3. Mr Tom Collins

Mr Tom Collins, M. Agr. Sc., is former Chief Agricultural Officer for Teagasc in Co. Offaly. He qualified from University College, Dublin in 1971 and joined the Agricultural Advisory Service in Co. Meath. In 1978, he completed a Masters in Agricultural Extension under a Kellogg's Foundation Funded Programme. In 1983, he was appointed Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer in Co. Kerry and in 1988 took up his post in Co. Offaly. He has particular interest in training programmes for primary producers in the area of food safety and quality assurance. He is a strong advocate of a national quality assurance scheme for Irish food.

### 4. Mr Eamon Corcoran

Mr Corcoran has 32 years experience in the civil service, where he started out his career in the former Department of Labour and subsequently, as an Industrial Relations Officer in the Conciliation Service of the Labour Court. He joined the Department of Health and Children in 1990 and served in a number of areas - including the Public Health Division (which included the food safety brief). Mr Corcoran was head of the Food Unit in the Department of Health and Children from September 2002 until March 2008. During the same period, he also headed the Tobacco Control Unit and was involved in the successful introduction of smoke-free at work (the workplace smoking ban) in March 2004. He was previously a board member of the National Cancer Registry and of the Institute of Public Health.

### 5. Prof Charles Daly

Prof Charles Daly is Emeritus Professor of Food Science and Technology at University College, Cork. He has B.Sc. and M.Sc. (Dairying) degrees from the University College, Cork and a Ph.D. in Food Microbiology from Oregon State University, USA. His main research interests are in food fermentations and food safety. He has an active record of participation in national and EU Framework Research Programmes, and has served as coordinator of major transnational EU food biotechnology projects. Prof Daly has received international awards from the American Dairy Science Association; the Danone Foundation; the Dutch Dairy Nutrition Foundation and the International Union of Food Science Associations.

### 6. Ms Mary Falvey

Ms Mary Falvey is a Principal Environmental Health Officer with the Health Service Executive - Southern Region. She has over 30 years food safety experience and has particular expertise of relevance to the catering sector and an interest in the regulation of nursing homes and pre-schools. She has lectured on the B.Sc. Environmental Health course in the Dublin Institute of Technology, and has served on the Authority's Scientific Committee and its Additives, Chemical Contaminants and Residues Sub-committee. She is currently a member of the Cork Zoonoses Committee. Within the former Southern Health Board, Ms. Falvey was instrumental in promoting food hygiene training within the catering sector and other local food industries in the Cork region. She recently served on a number of committees producing interdisciplinary protocols on the investigation of both sporadic and general outbreaks of foodborne illness, and protocols on the regulation of nursing homes and pre-schools.



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### 7. Prof Albert Flynn

Prof Albert Flynn, B.Sc., Ph.D. (National University of Ireland, Galway), is Professor in Nutrition in the Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences, University College, Cork. His areas of particular interest include food safety risk assessment; gene-nutrient interaction in bone metabolism; food fortification and risk benefit assessment of nutrients. Prof Flynn is Chair of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's Scientific Committee. He is also a member of the European Food Safety Authority's Scientific Committee and is Chair of its Panel for Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies.

### 8. Ms Eimear Killian

Ms Eimear Killian is Deputy General Manager of Glenlo Abbey Hotel, Galway. Ms Killian is a graduate of the Dublin Institute of Technology, Cathal Brugha Street, with a Diploma in Hotel Management (1996). She also holds a Certificate in Food Hygiene Management and delivers training in food hygiene. She has a wealth of management experience in many established hotels throughout Ireland including the Ferrycarraig Hotel, Wexford; Bellbridge House Hotel, Co. Clare; Jury's Hotel, Dublin; Shannon Oaks Hotel, Galway; and Peacockes Hotel, Connemara. Ms Killian is an active member of Irish Hotels Federation and is a member of the Board of the Office of Tobacco Control. She has also sat on the Board of Connemara Toursim. She is currently the coordinator of the Fáilte Ireland Optimus 'Mark of Best Practice' Programme and team leader of the Green Hospitality Awards at Glenlo Abbey Hotel.

### 9. Ms Anne Nolan

Ms Anne Nolan, B.Sc. (Pharm), M.B.A., M.P.S.I. is Chief Executive of the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association. She qualified as a pharmacist in 1982 and became a member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland in 1983. She obtained a masters degree in Business Administration from University College, Dublin in October 1993. In recent years, she has completed a number of the modules in the Director Development Programme at the Centre for Corporate Governance, University College, Dublin. From 1982 to 1987, she worked in retail pharmacy and pharmaceutical wholesaling and from 1987 to 1994, she was Healthcare Group Director and Company Secretary with the Federation of Irish Chemical Industries. She was a member of the Irish Medicines Board from 1996 to 2005. In addition to her board commitments in the healthcare sector, she is currently Acting Chairman of the Irish Aviation Authority and is a member of the Irish Advisory Board of the University College, Dublin Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School. Ms. Nolan is also a part-time lecturer in the School of Pharmacy at Trinity College, Dublin.

### 10. Mr Pat O'Mahony

Mr Pat O'Mahony, M.V.B., M.V.M., A.M.D., M.B.A., M.R.C.V.S. is Chief Executive of the Irish Medicines Board, a position he took up in December 2002. Having spent a number of years in private veterinary practice and as technical manager in the pharmaceutical industry in Ireland and the UK, he worked in public health and was Director of Consumer Protection at the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. Mr O'Mahony was awarded an M.B.A degree from the University College, Dublin Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School in 2001. He is Chairman of the Management Board of the European Medicines Agency and a member of the Board of the Irish National Accreditation Board.

## Scientific Committee Members

At 31st December 2009

### Scientific Committee

**Prof Albert Flynn (Chair)**  
University College, Cork

**Dr Catherine Adley**  
University of Limerick

**Dr Paula Barry Walsh**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food

**Dr Collette Bonner**  
Department of Health and Children

**Prof John Daniel Collins**  
University College, Dublin

**Prof Martin Cormican**  
University College Hospital, Galway

**Prof Colin Hill**  
University College Cork

**Prof Brian McKenna**  
University College, Dublin

**Dr Paul McKeown**  
Health Protection Surveillance Centre

**Mr Terry McMahon**  
Marine Institute

**Dr Michael O'Keeffe**  
Residue Specialist

**Dr Dan O'Sullivan**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food

**Mr Ray Parle**  
Health Service Executive

**Dr Iona Pratt**  
Consultant Toxicologist

**Prof Michael Ryan**  
University College, Dublin

### GMO and Novel Foods Sub-committee

**Prof Colin Hill (Chair)**  
University College, Cork

**Prof Philip Dix**  
National University of  
Ireland, Maynooth

**Dr Thomas F Gallagher**  
University College, Dublin

**Prof Matthew A Harmeey**  
University College, Dublin

**Dr Liam Hyde**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food

**Dr Brendan Lynch**  
Teagasc

**Dr Thomas McLoughlin**  
Environmental Protection Agency

**Mr Gerry McMahon**  
Department of Health and Children

**Dr Ewen Mullins**  
National Crops Research Centre

**Dr John O'Neill**  
Department of Environment,  
Heritage and Local Government

**Prof Paul Ross**  
Teagasc

**Dr Douwe van Sinderen**  
University College, Cork

**Dr Edward J Walsh**  
University College, Dublin

**Mr Gerry McMahon**  
Department of Health and Children

### Food Additives Sub-committee

**Prof Michael Ryan (Chair)**  
University College, Dublin

**Dr Thomasina Barron**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food

**Dr Pdraig Burke**  
University College Hospital, Galway

**Dr Claire Chambers**  
Chambers Toxicological Consulting

**Dr Edel Healy**  
Health and Safety Authority

**Dr Liam Hyde**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food

**Dr Evin McGovern**  
Marine Institute

**Dr Terry McMahon**  
Marine Institute

**Dr John Moriarty**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food

**Dr Michael O'Keeffe**  
Ashtown Food Research Centre

**Dr Dan O'Sullivan**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food

**Dr Iona Pratt**  
Consultant Toxicologist

**Microbiology Sub-committee**

**Prof Martin Cormican (Chair)**  
National University of Ireland, Galway

**Dr Catherine Adley**  
University of Limerick

**Dr Paula Barry Walsh**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food

**Dr Tom Beresford**  
Teagasc

**Dr Cyril Carroll**  
University College, Galway

**Prof Dan Collins**  
University College, Dublin

**Ms Helen Cowman**  
Formerly Health Service Executive

**Dr Bill Doré**  
Marine Institute

**Dr Geraldine Duffy**  
Teagasc

**Dr Michael Fallon**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food

**Prof Seamus Fanning**  
University College, Dublin

**Dr Paul McKeown**  
Health Protection Surveillance Centre

**Mr David Nolan**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food

**Mr Ray Parle**  
Health Service Executive

**Dr Neil Rowan**  
Athlone Institute of Technology

**Nutrition Sub-committee**

**Prof Albert Flynn (Chair)**  
University College, Cork

**Dr John Kearney**  
Dublin Institute of Technology

**Dr Mairead Kiely**  
University College, Cork

**Dr Sinead McCarthy**  
Trinity College, Dublin

**Dr Helene McNulty**  
University of Ulster, Coleraine

**Dr Celine Murrin**  
University College, Dublin

**Ms Ursula O'Dwyer**  
Department of Health and Children

**Prof Ivan Perry**  
University College, Cork

**Dr Helen Roche**  
Trinity Centre for Health Studies

**Dr Ita Saul**  
Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children

**Prof John Scott**  
Trinity College, Dublin

**TSE Sub-committee**

**Prof Dan Collins (Chair)**  
University College, Dublin

**Dr Paula Barry Walsh**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food

**Dr John Griffin**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food

**Dr Colm Henry**  
Mercy Hospital, Cork

**Dr Declan Mulhare**  
Health Service Executive

**Mr Sean O'Laoide**  
Westmeath County Council

**Dr Margaret O'Sullivan**  
Health Service Executive

**Dr Mark Rogers**  
University College, Dublin

**Mr Michael Sheridan**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Food



## Food Safety Consultative Council Members

At 31st December 2009

Chair	Members	
<b>Ms Veronica Campbell</b> Campbell Bewley Group	<b>Ms Darina Allen</b> Ballymaloe Cookery School	<b>Ms Fiona Lalor</b> University College, Dublin
	<b>Dr J Gerard Barry</b> Ashtown Food Research Centre	<b>Ms Margaret Leahy</b> Organic Farmer
	<b>Mr Kevin Bracken</b> Brackens Butchers	<b>Mr Peter Marshall</b> Irish Food Quality Certification
	<b>Ms Marie Brady</b> Former Secondary School Vice-principal	<b>Ms Sara Morris</b> Communications and Public Affairs Specialist
	<b>Mr Eddie Byrne</b> Byrne Group	<b>Mr Martin Mullane</b> Dairy and Meat Industry Specialist
	<b>Ms Anne-Marie Crowley</b> National Standards Authority of Ireland	<b>Mr Eoin McBennett</b> Dairy Industry Expert
	<b>Dr Fred Davidson</b> Public Analyst's Laboratory, Cork	<b>Mr Tim O'Brien</b> Franzini's Restaurant
	<b>Mr Derek Deane</b> Irish Farmers' Association	<b>Mr Henry O'Neill</b> Formerly Restaurants Association of Ireland
	<b>Mr Dermott Jewell</b> Consumers Association of Ireland	<b>Mr Bill Paterson</b> Consultant
	<b>Mr Muiris Kennedy</b> Marketing Consultant	<b>Ms Anne Quirke</b> Consumer
		<b>Ms Breda Raggett</b> Consumer

## Industry Forum Members

At 31st December 2009

### Artisan Food Producers' Forum

**Ms Darina Allen**  
Ballymaloe Cookery School

**Ms Myrtle Allen**  
Ballymaloe House

**Ms Sally Barnes**  
Woodcock Smokery

**Ms Esther Barron**  
Barron's Bakery and  
Coffee House Ltd.

**Mr John Brennan**  
Leitrim Enterprise Centre

**Mr Jim Buckley**  
Cork County Council

**Ms Mary Burns**  
Ardrahan Dairy  
Products Ltd

**Ms Martina Clarke**  
Irish Association of  
Seafood Companies

**Mr Paul Fletcher**  
Premier Game

**Ms Jeffa Gill**  
Durrus Cheese

**Mr Frank Hederman**  
Belvelly Smokehouse

**Mr Dave Lang**  
(alternate **Mr Liam Handy**)  
Associated Craft  
Butchers of Ireland

**Mr David Llewellyn**  
Fruit of the Vine

**Mr Raymond O'Rourke**  
Taste Council

**Ms Caroline Robinson**  
Farmers' Markets

**Declan Ryan**  
Arbutus Breads

**Mr Michael Woulfe**  
(alternate  
**Mr Michael Gleeson**)  
Beekeeper

### Food Service Forum

**Ms Sinead Brennan**  
Subway Development  
Ireland

**Ms Louise Collins**  
Rocket Restaurant Ireland

**Mr Adrian Cummins**  
Restaurants Association  
of Ireland

**Ms Martina Donoghue**  
Campbell's Catering

**Ms Ruth Hegarty**  
Euro-Toques

**Ms Edel Jones**  
McDonald's Restaurants  
of Ireland Limited

**Mr Dermot Keenan**  
O'Brien's Sandwich  
Bars Limited

**Ms Natasha Kinsella**  
Irish Hospitality Institute

**Mr Myles Moody**  
Executive Chefs of Ireland

**Ms Helena O'Brien**  
Catering Management  
Association

**Mr Donal O'Meara**  
Irish Hotels Federation  
(Retired September 2009)

**Mr Conor O'Kane**  
Irish Hotels Federation

**Mr Donnacha Walsh**  
Irish Prisons Association

### Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee

**Food Safety Authority  
of Ireland**  
(Chair)

**Dr Terence O'Carroll**  
**Ms Vicky Lyons**  
Bord Iascaigh Mhara

**Mr Andrew Peterson**  
Enforce Labs

**Mr Paul Hickey**  
Health Service Executive

**Mr Richie Flynn**  
**Mr John Harrington**  
**Mr Finian O'Sullivan**  
Irish Shellfish Association

**Dr Bill Doré**  
**Mr Conor Duffy**  
**Mr John Evans**  
**Mr Joe Silke**  
Marine Institute

**Mr John Falvey**  
**Mr Brian Nolan**  
**Mr Daniel O'Callaghan**  
**Mr Micheál O'Mahony**  
Sea-Fisheries Protection  
Authority

### Retail Forum

**Ms Josephine Aylward**  
RGDATA

**Mr Ray Bowe**  
Musgrave Food Services

**Ms Elaine Clohosey**  
BWG Foods

**Ms Suzanne Cullen**  
Superquinn

**Mr Kevin Curran**  
Lidl

**Ms Mary Daly**  
Dunnes Stores

**Mr Allan Davies**  
Tesco Ireland

**Mr Torlach Denihan**  
IBEC

**Mr Peter Jackson**  
Barry's of Mallow

**Ms Lynda Kenny**  
Musgrave Wholesale  
Services

**Ms Denise Lord**  
Gala

**Ms Elizabeth McGrath**  
Londis ADM

**Mr Peter Wight**  
Marks and Spencer

## Board Members'/Chief Executive's Statement of Interests

At 31st December 2009

Board Member	Commercial Interests		Non-Commercial Interests	
	Name of Organisation	Nature of Interests	Name of Organisation	Nature of Interests
Prof John Daniel Collins	None	–	European Food Safety Authority	Chair, Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards Member, Scientific Committee
Mr Tom Collins	None	–	None	–
Mr Eamon Corcoran	None	–	None	–
Prof Charles Daly	Clongeel Ltd. Alimentary Health Ltd., Cork Eolas International, Cork	Joint Owner / Director Executive Director Non-Executive Director	None	–
Ms Mary Falvey	None	–	None	–
Prof Albert Flynn	Kraft Foods North America, Inc. Kraft Foods International, Inc.	Scientific Advice	Danone Kellogg's (Ir/UK) ILSI Europe  European Food Safety Authority	Support for Departmental Research Member (occasional), Scientific Expert Groups  Member, Scientific Committee Chairman, Scientific Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies
Ms Eimear Killian	None	–	None	–
Ms Anne Nolan	None	–	None	–
Mr Eamonn Ryan (Chair)	None	–	None	–
Mr Pat O'Mahony	None	–	None	–
<b>Chief Executive</b> Prof Alan Reilly (from June 2009)	None	–	None	–
Dr John O'Brien (until June 2009)	None	–	None	–

## Scientific Committee Members' Statement of Interests

At 31st December 2009

Scientific Committee Member	Commercial Interests		Non-Commercial Interests	
	Name of Organisation	Nature of Interests	Name of Organisation	Nature of Interests
Dr Catherine Adley	None	–	iControl Solutions, Limerick	Spouse of Director / Consultant to Company
Ms Paula Barry-Walsh	None	–	None	–
Dr Colette Bonner	None	–	None	–
Prof John Daniel Collins	None	–	European Food Safety Authority	Chair, Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards Member, Scientific Committee
Prof Martin Cormican	None	–	None	–
Prof Albert Flynn	Kraft Foods North America, Inc. Kraft Foods International, Inc.	Scientific Advice	Danone Kellogg's (Irl/UK) ILSI Europe  European Food Safety Authority	Support for Departmental Research Member (occasional), Scientific Expert Groups  Member, Scientific Committee Chairman, Scientific Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies
Prof Colin Hill	None	–	Kerry Group Glanbia Dairygold Carbery Friesland Foods Nestle	Research
Prof Brian McKenna	None	–	None	–
Dr Paul McKeown	None	–	None	–
Dr Terry McMahon	None	–	None	–
Dr Michael O'Keefe	Food Safety Authority of Ireland	Consultancy / Auditing	None	–
Dr Dan O'Sullivan	None	–	None	–
Mr Ray Parle	None	–	None	–
Dr Iona Pratt	Food Safety Authority of Ireland	Consultant Toxicologist	European Food Safety Authority	Member, Expert Panel
Prof Michael Ryan	No declaration received	–	–	–



# Index to Financial Statements

## Financial Statements

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## Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas

I have audited the financial statements of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland for the year ended 31 December 2009 under Section 26 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998.

The financial statements, which have been prepared under the accounting policies set out therein, comprise the Statement of Accounting Policies, the Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes.

### **Respective Responsibilities of the Members of the Authority and the Comptroller and Auditor General**

The Authority is responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 and for ensuring the regularity of transactions. The Authority prepares the financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland as modified by the directions of the Minister for Health and Children in relation to accounting for superannuation costs. The accounting responsibilities of the Members of the Authority are set out in the Statement of Responsibilities of the Authority.

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

I report my opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland. I also report whether in my opinion proper books of account have been kept. In addition, I state whether the financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

I report any material instance where moneys have not been applied for the purposes intended or where the transactions do not conform to the authorities governing them.

I also report if I have not obtained all the information and explanations necessary for the purposes of my audit.

I review whether the Statement on Internal Financial Control reflects the Authority's compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and report any material instance where it does not do so, or if the statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information of which I am aware from my audit of the financial statements. I am not required to consider whether the Statement on Internal Financial Control covers all financial risks and controls, or to form an opinion on the effectiveness of the risk and control procedures.

I read other information contained in the Annual Report, and consider whether it is consistent with the audited financial statements. I consider the implications for my report if I become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the financial statements.

**Basis of Audit Opinion**

In the exercise of my function as Comptroller and Auditor General, I conducted my audit of the financial statements in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board and by reference to the special considerations which attach to State bodies in relation to their management and operation. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures and regularity of the financial transactions included in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgments made in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Authority's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

I planned and performed my audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations that I considered necessary in order to provide me with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming my opinion I also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

**Opinion**

In compliance with the directions of the Minister for Health and Children, the Authority recognises the costs of superannuation entitlements only as they become payable. This basis of accounting does not comply with Financial Reporting Standard 17 which requires such costs to be recognised in the year the entitlements are earned.

Except for the non-recognition of the Authority's superannuation costs and liabilities in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 17, the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, of the state of the Authority's affairs at 31 December 2009 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended.

In my opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the Authority. The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

**Andrew Harkness**

For and on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General

(23rd November 2010)

## Statement of Responsibilities of the Authority

The Authority presents its report for the year ended 31 December 2009.

### Responsibilities of the Board Members

Section 26(5) of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998, requires the Authority to prepare financial statements in such form and manner as may be specified by the Minister for Health and Children. In preparing those financial statements, the Board is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Authority will continue in operation.
- Disclose and explain any material departures from applicable accounting standards.

The Board members are responsible for keeping proper books of account which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Authority and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with Section 26(5) of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998. The Board is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Authority and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### Health and Safety

The well-being of Authority employees is safeguarded through the strict adherence to health and safety standards in accordance with the requirements of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989.



**Mr Eamonn Ryan**  
Chairman

(16th October 2010)



**Mr Eamon Corcoran**  
Board Member



## Statement on Internal Financial Control

### Responsibility for system of Internal Financial Control

On behalf of the Board of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland I acknowledge our responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated.

The system can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely period.

### Key Control Procedures

The Board has taken steps to ensure an appropriate control environment by:

- clearly defining management responsibilities;
- establishing formal procedures for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.

The Board has established processes to identify and evaluate business risks by:

- identifying the nature, extent and financial implication of risks facing the body including the extent and categories which it regards as acceptable;
- assessing the likelihood of identified risks occurring;
- assessing the body's ability to manage and mitigate the risks that do occur;
- assessing the costs of operating particular controls relative to the benefit obtained.

The system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information, administrative procedures including segregation of duties, and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular it includes:

- comprehensive budgeting system with an annual budget which is reviewed and agreed by the Board;
- regular reviews by the Board of monthly and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts;
- setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- clearly defined capital investment control guidelines;
- formal project management disciplines.

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland has outsourced the internal audit function, which operates in accordance with the Framework Code of Best Practice set out in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. The work of internal audit is informed by the analysis of the risk to which the body is exposed, and annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. The analysis of risk and the internal audit plans were endorsed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board.

The Board's monitoring and review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial control is informed by the work of the internal auditor, the Audit Committee which oversees the work of the internal auditor, the executive managers within the Food Safety Authority of Ireland who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the financial control framework, and comments made by the Comptroller and Auditor General in his management letter or other reports.

### Annual Review of Controls

I confirm that for the year ended 31st December 2009 the Board carried out a review of internal financial controls.



Mr Eamonn Ryan  
Chairman

(16th September 2010)

## Statement of Accounting Policies

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the financial statements.

### A. Basis of Accounting

The financial statements are prepared under the accruals method of accounting, except as stated below, and under the historical cost convention in the form approved by the Minister for Health and Children with the concurrence of the Minister for Finance in accordance with Section 26(5) of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998.

Financial Reporting Standards recommended by the recognised Accountancy Bodies are adopted, as they become operative, with the exception of FRS 17 (Retirement Benefits) see note E below.

### B. State Grants

Grants from the Department of Health and Children are accounted for on a cash receipts basis.

### C. Taxation

The Board is exempt from Corporation Tax.

### D. Assets and Depreciation

#### (1) Tangible Fixed Assets

Tangible fixed assets are shown at cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is charged in the income and expenditure account, on a straight line basis, at the annual rates as set out below, so as to write off the assets, adjusted for estimated residual value, over the expected useful life of each appropriate category.

(i)	Leasehold Improvements	15%
(ii)	Computer Equipment	33%
(iii)	Office Furniture	15%
(iv)	Office Equipment	15%
(v)	Scientific Equipment	15%

#### (2) Intangible Fixed Assets

Intangible fixed assets are shown at their net book value having been depreciated at 33% on a straight line basis. The depreciation for the year is charged to the Income and Expenditure Account.

A full year's depreciation is provided for in the year of acquisition.

### E. Superannuation

A superannuation scheme has been approved by the Minister in accordance with Section 39 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998. The scheme provides for a contributory defined benefit pension scheme for all employees. Deductions from salaries are retained and are treated as income by the Authority. The Department of Health & Children's annual grant-in-aid to the Authority is net of the deductions retained. By direction of the Minister for Health and Children no provision has been made in the Financial Statements for future pension liabilities. Payments under the scheme are charged to income and expenditure account when paid.

### F. Capital Account

The Capital Account represents the unamortised value of income used by the Authority to acquire fixed assets.

### G. Operating Leases

Rental payments under the operating leases are charged to the Income and Expenditure Account on an accruals basis.

## Income and Expenditure Account

For the Year Ended 31 December 2009

	Notes	2009 €	2008 €
Grant Income	1	18,032,000	18,505,000
Sundry Income	2	521,525	426,134
		18,553,525	18,931,134
Transfer (to)/from Capital Account	9	57,806	64,373
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets		(6,811)	–
<b>Total income</b>		<b>18,604,521</b>	<b>18,995,507</b>
Salaries, Pensions and related expenses	3	5,893,248	5,886,237
Other Operating Costs	4	4,037,036	5,171,697
Local Authority Veterinary Service	5	8,183,922	8,024,958
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>18,114,207</b>	<b>19,082,892</b>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		490,314	(87,385)
Balance at 1 January		(418,402)	(331,017)
<b>Balance at 31 December</b>		<b>71,912</b>	<b>(418,402)</b>

The Statement of Accounting Policies on page 73, and notes 1 to 16 form part of these Financial Statements.

The Authority has no recognised gains or losses other than those dealt with in the Income and Expenditure Account.



**Mr Eamonn Ryan**  
Chairman



**Mr Eamon Corcoran**  
Board Member



**Prof Alan Reilly**  
Chief Executive  
(from June 2009)

## Balance Sheet

As at 31 December 2009

	Notes	2009 €	2008 €
Intangible Assets	10	18,537	42,109
Tangible Assets	6	229,351	263,587
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors and Prepayments	7	342,457	7,772
Cash at Bank and on Hand		0	9,236
		342,457	17,008
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Creditors - Amounts falling due within one year			
Creditors and Accruals	8	223,202	435,409
Bank Overdraft		47,341	0
Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)		71,914	(418,401)
<b>Total Net Assets/(Liabilities)</b>		<b>319,802</b>	<b>(112,705)</b>
Financed by			
Income and Expenditure Account		71,912	(418,402)
Capital Account	9	247,890	305,696
		<b>319,802</b>	<b>(112,706)</b>

The Statement of Accounting Policies on page 73 and notes 1 to 16 form part of these Financial Statements.



**Mr Eamonn Ryan**  
Chairman



**Mr Eamon Corcoran**  
Board Member



**Prof Alan Reilly**  
Chief Executive  
(from June 2009)



## Cash Flow Statement

For the Year Ended 31 December 2009

	Notes	2009 €	2008 €
<b>Reconciliation of Surplus for Year to Net Cash Flow from Operating Activities</b>			
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		490,314	(87,385)
Transfer to/(from) Capital Account		(57,806)	(64,373)
Depreciation charge			
- Intangible Fixed Assets	10	30,331	57,448
- Tangible Fixed Assets	6	109,008	131,175
(Increase)/Decrease in Debtors		(334,685)	69,793
(Decrease)/Increase in Creditors		(212,207)	37,997
Loss on disposal of fixed assets		6,811	0
<b>Net Cash / Flow from Operating Activities</b>		<b>31,766</b>	<b>144,655</b>
<b>Cash Flow Statement</b>			
Net Cash Flow from Operating Activities		31,766	144,655
Return on Investments and Servicing of Finance			
Capital Expenditure			
Reclassification in respect of prior years	6,10	0	16,184
Payments to Acquire Intangible Fixed Assets	10	(6,759)	(39,961)
Payments to Acquire Tangible Fixed Assets	6	(81,585)	(100,473)
<b>Increase/(Decrease) in Cash</b>		<b>(56,578)</b>	<b>20,405</b>
<b>Reconciliation of Net Cash Flow to Movement in Net Funds</b>			
Net funds at start of year		9,236	(11,169)
Net cash inflow/(outflow)		(56,578)	20,405
<b>Net funds at end of year</b>		<b>(47,342)</b>	<b>9,236</b>

## Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 December 2009

<b>1. Grant Income</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
	€	€
Department of Health and Children Grant	18,032,000	18,505,000
	<b>18,032,000</b>	<b>18,505,000</b>

<b>2. Sundry Income</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
	€	€
Superannuation Deductions	357,977	343,136
Sale of Publications	63,116	4,238
Funded Projects	0	20,702
Sundry Income	100,432	58,058
	<b>521,525</b>	<b>426,134</b>

<b>3. Salaries, Pensions and Related Expenses</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
	€	€
Staff costs comprise		
Salaries and pensions	5,448,207	5,425,224
Social Welfare Costs – Employers' Contribution	445,041	461,013
	<b>5,893,248</b>	<b>5,886,237</b>

The average number of staff employed during the year

91 91

Salaries costs comprise the gross cost per employee plus employer's PRSI.

A Pension Levy deduction of €273,245 was made from staff salaries and paid over to the Department of Health and Children.

<b>4. Other Operating Costs</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
	€	€
Recruitment Costs	13,738	153,977
Board Members Fees and Expenses	68,172	89,307
Travel Expenses	192,569	269,771
Insurance	52,704	39,384
Stationery, Publications and Postage	531,463	588,365
Telephone and Internet	107,259	121,484
Research Costs	159,832	336,322
Cleaning and Catering	204,374	229,916
Repairs and Maintenance	36,667	67,434
Rent and Rates	1,195,272	1,290,414
Legal and Consulting Fees	510,902	508,404
Conferences	14,606	42,850
Communications Activities	187,603	424,103
Audit Fee	15,000	15,000
Depreciation Tangible Assets	109,008	131,200
Depreciation Intangible Assets	30,331	57,448
* Other operating costs	607,536	806,318
	<b>4,037,036</b>	<b>5,171,697</b>

\* Other operating costs includes €11,661 entertainment expenditure to mark the 10th Anniversary of the establishment of the FSAI.

<b>4(a). Communications Activities</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
	€	€
Public Relations	113,699	98,981
Industry Events	43,589	202,562
Industry Liaison	30,315	122,560
	<b>187,603</b>	<b>424,103</b>

### 5. Local Authority Veterinary Service

The Government decided, in December 2002, that the Local Government Veterinary Service should continue to be discharged by the Local Authorities and that funding for the service would be channelled through the Department of Health & Children and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. Previously the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food had funded the service.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 December 2009

6. Tangible Fixed Assets	Computer Equipment €	Office Equipment €	Office Furniture €	Leasehold Improvements €	Scientific Equipment €	Total €
<b>Cost</b>						
At 1 January 2009	777,997	239,866	403,895	65,663	136,188	1,623,609
Additions	70,353	7,595	3,637	0	0	81,585
Disposals	(74,651)	(98,359)	(26,353)	(3,728)	(00)	(203,090)
<b>At 31 December 2009</b>	<b>773,699</b>	<b>149,102</b>	<b>381,179</b>	<b>61,935</b>	<b>136,188</b>	<b>1,502,103</b>
<b>Accumulated Depreciation</b>						
At 1 January 2009	715,278	191,885	371,293	40,610	40,956	1,360,022
Charge for the year	59,341	14,404	9,250	5,585	20,428	109,008
Depreciation on Disposals	(74,485)	(92,880)	(25,676)	(3,237)	(00)	(196,278)
<b>At 31 December 2009</b>	<b>700,134</b>	<b>113,409</b>	<b>354,867</b>	<b>42,958</b>	<b>61,384</b>	<b>1,272,752</b>
<b>Net Book Value</b>						
<b>At 31 December 2009</b>	<b>73,565</b>	<b>35,693</b>	<b>26,312</b>	<b>18,977</b>	<b>74,804</b>	<b>229,351</b>
<b>At 31 December 2008</b>	<b>62,719</b>	<b>47,981</b>	<b>32,602</b>	<b>25,053</b>	<b>95,232</b>	<b>263,587</b>

7. Debtors and Prepayments	2009 €	2008 €
Amounts falling due within one year		
Sundry Income	8,378	7,772
Prepayments	334,079	0
	<b>342,457</b>	<b>7,772</b>

8. Creditors and Accruals	2009 €	2008 €
Amounts falling due within one year		
Trade Creditors	138,264	188,817
Accruals	15,000	36,339
Payroll Accruals	9,916	3,882
Pension Levy	26,988	0
Tax Creditor PAYE/PRSI	0	138,543
Tax Creditor - VAT	(80)	19,735
Tax Creditor - PSWT	33,114	48,093
Capital Accruals	0	0
	<b>223,202</b>	<b>435,409</b>

## Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 December 2009

9. Capital Account	2009	2009	2008	2008
	€	€	€	€
At 1 January		305,696		370,069
Transfer from/(to) Income and Expenditure Account				
Funds allocated to acquire Fixed Assets	81,585		100,473	
Funds allocated to acquire Intangible Assets	6,759		39,961	
Amount released on disposal	6,811		0	
Reclassification in respect of prior years	(0)		(16,184)	
Amount amortised in line with asset depreciation	(139,339)	(57,805)	(188,623)	(64,373)
<b>Balance at 31 December</b>		<b>247,891</b>		<b>305,696</b>

10. Intangible Fixed Assets	2009	2008
	€	€
1 January, Opening Net Book Value	42,109	75,730
Reclassification in respect of prior years	(0)	(16,134)
Additions at Cost	6,759	39,961
Less Depreciation Charge for the year	(30,331)	(57,448)
<b>31 December, Closing Net Book Value</b>	<b>18,537</b>	<b>42,109</b>

Intangible fixed assets consist of software licences which are written off over their useful life.

### 11. Operating Leases

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland occupies premises at Abbey Court, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1 under three leases.

(a) The Food Safety Authority of Ireland has two commitments in respect of leases on office accommodation at Abbey Court, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1.

These leases are held by the Office of Public Works and by way of the following:

- (i) A 20 year lease which commenced in 1997 with five yearly rent reviews
- (ii) A 20 year lease which commenced in 1997 with five yearly rent reviews

The annual cost of the leases excluding service charges is €583,000 (2008 €511,500).

(b) The third lease is between The Food Safety Authority of Ireland and Irish Life Assurance plc for an 18 year 7 month term commencing October 1998 with five yearly rent reviews. The current annual rental charge of this lease amounts to €211,000.

	2009	2008
	€	€
Expiring within 1 year	0	0
Expiring during the years 2 to 5	0	0
Expiring thereafter	211,000	180,000



## Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 December 2009

12. Board Remuneration	2009	2008
	€	€
Eamonn Ryan - Chairman	18,667	20,000
Charles Daly - Board Member	8,400	9,000
Michael Gibney - Board Member	0	9,000
Daniel Collins - Board Member	8,400	9,000
Tom Collins - Board Member	8,400	9,000
Peter Dargan - Board Member	0	9,000
Albert Flynn - Board Member	8,400	9,000
Anne Nolan - Board Member	8,400	9,000
Eimear Killian - Board Member	5,684	0
	<b>66,351</b>	<b>83,000</b>

Expenses paid to the Chairman and Board Members in 2009 amount to €1,821 (2008 €6,307).

13. CEO Remuneration	2009	2008
	€	€
Outgoing Chief Executive's Remuneration	79,311	191,550
Incoming Chief Executive's Remuneration	89,584	0
	<b>168,895</b>	<b>191,550</b>

The Outgoing Chief Executive's Remuneration in respect of 2008 included a payment under the PRA scheme in the amount of €29,900.

The CEO did not receive any Performance Related Award in 2009. The pension entitlements of the CEO do not extend beyond the standard entitlements of the Public Sector Defined Benefit Scheme.

### 14. Going Concern

In October 2008, the Minister for Finance, announced that, under forthcoming legislation, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland will be merged into a Public Health and Medicines Safety Authority on terms and at a date yet to be determined but anticipated to be 1st January 2011.

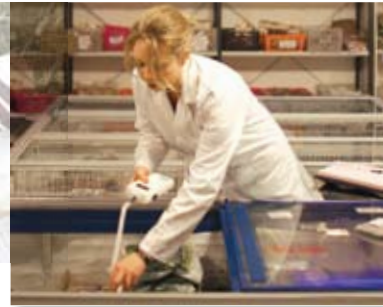
In the mean time, the Authority does not consider that any material adjustment to the financial statements is needed to take account of this decision and, therefore, the financial statements continue to be prepared on a going concern basis.

### 15. Board Members' Interests

The Board adopted procedures in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Finance in relation to the disclosure of interests by Board Members and these procedures have been adhered to in the year. There were no transactions in the year in relation to the Board's activities in which a Board Member had any beneficial interest.

### 16. Approval of Financial Statements

The Financial Statements were approved by the Board on 16th September 2010.





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