



Food Safety Award for Colleges Goes to Trinity College/DIT

The FSAI held its annual competition for best food safety related project in Irish colleges on 24 June last.

The winning student was Tara Raftery, Trinity College, Dublin and DIT Kevin St. Her project, entitled 'Dietary fat intake, physical activity and metabolic profile of an adult cohort attending a hypertension clinic' aimed to investigate the relationship between dietary fat and ambulatory blood pressure in a cohort of hypertensive adults.

Dietary fat, in particular the type of fat, is important in the regulation of blood pressure. Controversy exists surrounding the role of dietary monounsaturated fatty acid (MUFA) whereby some studies show blood pressure reduction on a MUFA-rich diet whilst others show no effect. Intervention trials have shown that when dietary saturated fat is replaced by MUFA, both systolic and diastolic blood pressure decrease.

A cross-sectional study was performed to profile dietary intake, investigate the relationship between total dietary fat intake, dietary fatty acid composition, blood pressure and components of the metabolic syndrome. A semi-quantitative 3-day dietary record and questionnaire were used and 24h ambulatory blood pressure was measured using a SpaceLabs monitor. A fasting blood sample was collected for determination of serum lipids and plasma glucose, and waist circumference was measured.

Orla Condell, University College Dublin, was second with her project 'Evaluation of novel *Cronobacter* isolation methods and identification and characterisation of *Cronobacter* isolates from baby food'. *Cronobacter* are gram-negative facultative anaerobes and opportunistic pathogens causing meningitis, bacteraemia (bacteria in the blood) and gastrointestinal disease in premature and low birth

weight neonates. Transmission of *Cronobacter* has been associated with infant formula. The current ISO/TS 22964 for *Cronobacter* isolation is a long, five day protocol and recently it has been found that *Cronobacter* do not grow well in the enrichment broths recommended. In this study three novel isolation protocols were evaluated and compared to the ISO method, using spiked and unspiked samples as well as dilution to extinction and desiccation recovery assays.



Tara Raftery, winner of the FSAI food safety award, 2009.

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Food Safety Control in Difficult Economic Times

The current economic downturn is leading to a reduction in State resources available for public services. Staff numbers in the wider civil and public service are decreasing and indeed people are being actively encouraged to leave the sector. Food safety control is no exception. Reducing resources presents us all with key challenges; finding ways to minimise the impact and demonstrating that our services are deployed in a manner which is appropriate, effective and proportionate.

Investment in the State's food safety control systems over the past ten years has been money well spent as demonstrated by recent events in the food sector. Ireland now has one of the most modern and effective systems in place that assures consumers are protected and that there is confidence in the safety of foods produced and marketed in Ireland. However, there is no room for complacency. Ireland has more than 45,000 food premises and carrying out food inspections with a dwindling work force is likely to present major challenges in coming years. It is more important than ever to re-emphasise the primary responsibility of food businesses for food safety and to ensure that businesses have proper food safety management systems in place to assure that food is produced in a safe manner on the days when no inspector calls.

Working in cooperation with official agencies, the FSAI will ensure that the resources at its disposal are used to their best effect, and that the service contracts in place achieve an appropriate level of control and proper implementation of food laws. The FSAI is obliged to take measures to determine if an official agency is adequately carrying out inspections and to keep under review the scope for the better coordination and delivery of food inspection services. To achieve these goals, the FSAI engages in the use of audits, which serve both to identify areas for improvement and confirm good practice. While few will volunteer to be audited, it is an opportunity for official

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agencies to demonstrate their professionalism and effectiveness. It also allows the FSAI to provide reassurance to the public that by subjecting our services to regular scrutiny we are ensuring the best return for the tax payer and the consumer. The FSAI views audits as a critical and necessary aspect of the partnership between itself and the official agencies. Just as we expect high standards from the food industry which we supervise, we should demand equally high standards of ourselves.



Alan Reilly

Alan Reilly
CEO

New FSAI Board Member

Ms Eimear Killian, Deputy General Manager of Glenlo Abbey Hotel, Galway, has recently been appointed to the Board of the FSAI.

Eimear 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 to include Ferrycarraig Hotel, Wexford; Bellbridge House Hotel, Co. Clare; Jury's Hotel, Dublin; Shannon Oaks Hotel, Galway and Peacockes Hotel, Connemara.

Eimear is an active member of the 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.



National Focal Point

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) was established in January 2002 as an independent source of scientific advice and communication on risks associated with the food chain. Governed by an independent Management Board, it has established links which allow for close cooperation between organisations involved in areas within its remit i.e. food and feed safety, nutrition, animal health and welfare, plant protection and plant health.

EFSA's Advisory Forum connects EFSA with the national food safety authorities of all 27 EU Member States. Its members represent national bodies responsible for risk assessment in the EU. Ireland is represented on the Advisory Forum by the FSAI. Through the Advisory Forum, Ireland, EFSA and the other Member States can join forces in addressing European risk assessment and risk communications issues. Members use the Forum to advise EFSA on scientific matters, its work programme and priorities, and address emerging risk issues as early as possible.

To promote closer cooperation between EFSA and national food safety agencies, EFSA began establishing Focal Points in 2007, in line with its 2006 strategy for cooperation and networking. In Ireland, the FSAI is named as the national Focal Point. The role of the Focal Point includes providing support to the national member of EFSA's Advisory Forum by serving as a relay contact between risk managers, national authorities, research institutes, stakeholders and consumers in the Member States and to ensure the adequate and timely two-way exchange of all relevant information of national risk assessment and science developments.

In order to achieve the Focal Point goal of keeping EFSA and Advisory Forum members informed of national risk assessment and scientific developments, it is necessary to establish a network within Ireland of people/institutes interested in sharing information on their work on risk assessments in areas within the remit of EFSA and also to allow for the sharing of information from other Member States to interested Irish organisations. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please email focalpoint@fsai.ie expressing your interest.



Pictured during the visit were (L-R): Jelena Meštric, Ivona Babic, Eibhlin O'Leary, Ksenija Boroš, Patricija Hegeduši, Miriam McDonald and Carol Heavey.

Delegation from Croatia Visit the FSAI

The FSAI recently hosted a delegation from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development of the Republic of Croatia. The purpose of the visit was to gain an insight into the organisation of official controls in food safety in Ireland. The delegates were particularly interested in how Ireland develops and operates the Multi-annual National Control Programme, implements the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed and develops guidance for inspectors. They were also interested in HACCP flexibility and the microbiological criteria.

Training on Microbiological Criteria for LAVIs

The FSAI provided two workshops on Microbiological Criteria (EC Regulation 2073/2005) for Local Authority Veterinary Inspectors (LAVIs) in May 2009 at the Ashtown Food Research Centre, Dublin.

The aim of the programme was to provide LAVIs with a working knowledge of Regulation 2073/2005. Course presentations were supported by case studies that encouraged discussion on topics specific to the LAVIs. A practical session in the abattoir focusing on swabbing techniques and product sampling provided additional opportunity for discussions.

Feedback overall was extremely positive and attendees welcomed the interactive sessions which provided opportunity to raise and discuss issues.



Pictured are workshop attendees during the practical session in the abattoir.

National Microbiological Surveillance: Microbiological Quality of Ice for Cooling Drinks

This survey examined the microbiological quality of ice used for cooling drinks (n=1092 samples). Ice samples were obtained by Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) from public houses, restaurants, take-aways, cafés, hotels and other premises serving drinks cooled by the addition of ice, between January and April 2007. Samples were analysed for coliforms, enterococci and *Escherichia coli* in the Official Food Microbiology Laboratories (OFMLs) of the Health Service Executive (HSE).

Overall Microbiological Results

Coliforms were detected in 24.8% (271/1091), enterococci in 4.5% (47/1045) and *E. coli* in 2.0% (22/1091) of ice samples (Table 1). The incidence of coliforms and *E. coli* was lower than that recorded in a national microbiological survey undertaken in 2002. The incidence of enterococci was not determined in the 2002 survey.

95.6% (1044/1092) of ice samples were analysed for all three microbiological parameters (i.e. coliforms, enterococci and *E. coli*). One or more microbiological parameter was detected in 27.1% (283/1044) of samples (Table 2). Coliforms were detected in 92.6% (262/283) of these samples.

Questionnaire data

The survey included a questionnaire through which information was collated on the sample source, the water source used to prepare the ice, the method of preparation, the method of storage

etc. There was a 75.5% (825/1092) response rate to the questionnaire. Data collated for this subset of survey samples revealed that 64.7% of samples were obtained from public houses, 83% of samples were prepared using water from a public water supply, 96.6% of samples were prepared in an ice machine and 53.8% of samples were stored in the ice bin of the machine prior to use. Some storage and handling practices were identified which had a statistically significant effect on the presence/absence of coliforms. This study did not investigate the source of the coliform contamination; therefore, further research would be required to investigate if a causal relationship existed between these practices and the presence/absence of coliforms.

Conclusions/Recommendations

1. Water used to prepare ice must comply with the standards specified in the drinking water legislation (Council Directive 98/83/EC[‡]), i.e. absence of *E. coli*, enterococci and coliforms/100ml. It is recommended that the microbiological quality of potable water used by food businesses should be regularly assessed as outlined in I.S. 340:2007 (Hygiene in the Catering Sector) and I.S. 341:2007 (Hygiene in Food Retailing and Wholesaling).
2. There are no microbiological standards or national guidelines for ice. However, the microbiological standards specified in Council Directive 98/83/EC for potable water tend to be applied as guidelines. Applying these guidelines to the results of this survey show that:

[‡] Transposed into Irish law by S.I. No. 278 of 2007

Code of Good Practice for Farmers' Markets

A Code of Good Practice for Farmers' Markets was launched recently by Mr Trevor Sargent, T.D., Minister of State for Food and Horticulture at the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Minister Sargent's intention is that the Code of Good Practice will give consumers more confidence in what markets stand for and provide producers with a good route to market and opportunity to deal directly with consumers.

The Code will operate on a pilot basis for two years. Markets which can demonstrate compliance will receive certification and will be permitted to use a flag bearing the logo shown in Figure 1. Farmers' markets displaying the flag should have a range of stalls with a variety of produce including fruit and vegetables in season, horticulture, dairy, bakery and meat produce.

The Code of Good Practice is voluntary and all farmers' markets operating in the State are eligible to apply.

Following successful application, a certificate will be awarded to markets demonstrating on-going compliance with criteria such as:

- clear pricing and labelling of origin to be displayed by all stallholders for all products
- compliance with food safety legislation
- allocation of a substantial proportion (50%) of the food and horticulture sold at the market to be sourced from local/artisan producers from the county or adjoining counties
- commitment to hold markets regularly.



Figure 1: Logo displayed on flag which features a range of food produce to capture the best of what farmers' markets have to offer.

For further information on the Code, including an application form, see the Bord Bia website at <http://tinyurl.com/ng5u5v>. The closing date for the first round of applications is 31 July. Applications will be considered by an award committee and adherence to the code may be checked without prior notification.

See also FSAI Guidance Note No. 16 relating to food stalls: <http://tinyurl.com/kwo3he>

Table 1: Microbiological results (n=1092 ice samples)

Microorganism	No. of Samples Analysed	Number of samples (% of samples)		
		Not detected /100mls*	Detected but <100 cfu or MPN/100ml **, †	≥100 cfu or MPN/100ml ***, †
Coliforms	1091 [⊘]	820 (75.2%)*	200 (18.3%)	71 (6.5%)
Enterococci	1045 [⊙]	998 (95.5%)	46 (4.4%)	1 (0.1%)
<i>E. coli</i>	1091 [⊘]	1069 (98.0%)*	18 (1.6%)	4 (0.4%)

* i) Coliform and *E. coli* results reported by OFMLs as either 0 cfu/100mls or <1 MPN/100mls and ii) Enterococci results reported by OFMLs as 0cfu/100mls, were included in this category.

** i) Coliform and *E. coli* results reported by OFMLs as either >0 - <100 cfu/100ml or 1-<100 MPN/100ml and ii) Enterococci results reported by OFMLs as >0 - <100 cfu/100ml, were included in this category.

*** i) Coliform and *E. coli* results reported by OFMLs as either ≥100 cfu/100ml or ≥100 MPN/100ml and ii) Enterococci results reported by OFMLs as ≥100 cfu/100ml, were included in this category.

† 100 cfu or MPN/100ml was chosen as an arbitrary value to demonstrate the distribution of results.

⊘ 1 sample was not tested for *E. coli* and coliforms.

⊙ 47 samples were not tested for enterococci.

- 24.8% of ice samples did not meet the guideline criteria for coliforms
 - 4.5% of ice samples did not meet the guideline criteria for enterococci
 - 2.0% of ice samples did not meet the guideline criteria for *E. coli*
 - Of the 1044 ice samples which were analysed for all three microbiological parameters, 27.1% (283/1044) failed to meet one or more of the guideline criteria. Some authors have suggested that the microbiological standards for potable water are unrealistic guidelines for ice because it undergoes a handling process. A recommendation from this survey is that an appropriate set of national microbiological guidelines should be established for ice.
3. Managers and owners of food businesses should ensure that food workers are supervised and instructed and/or trained in food hygiene matters commensurate with their work activities, e.g. the

production, storage and handling of ice. In all instances food workers should be instructed in hand washing practices. Training of staff in matters commensurate with their activities is a legal requirement.

4. Manufacturer's instructions relating to the positioning, maintenance, storage and cleaning of ice machines should be followed.
5. It is good practice to prepare ice in an ice machine and store it in the storage bin of the ice machine until required for use. If the use of ice buckets/containers is unavoidable they should be maintained in a hygienic condition, ice should be transferred in a hygienic manner, ice buckets/containers should be covered and melt water should not be present.
6. The preparation and storage of ice should be considered in the food businesses Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan.

Table 2: Detection of coliforms, enterococci and/or *E. coli* (total number of ice samples = 1044)*

Microbiological parameter detected	Number of samples (% of samples)
Coliforms alone	219 (20.9%)
Enterococci alone	21 (2.0%)
<i>E. coli</i> & coliforms	17 (1.6%)
Coliforms & enterococci	22 (2.1%)
Coliforms, enterococci & <i>E. coli</i>	4 (0.4%)
Total number of positive samples	283 (27.1%)

* 1044 samples were tested for all three microbiological parameters

IFSTI Seminar

'Consumer Foods: Improving Health by Reducing/Eliminating Fat' was the title of a recent half day seminar organised by the Institute of Food Science and Technology Ireland (IFSTI) and held at the FSAI. The aim of the seminar was to give an insight into the latest information on fats and their health implications, including policies and campaigns to reduce saturated fat in foods.

Speakers at the seminar included Janis Morrissey, Dietician, Irish Heart Foundation, who covered topics such as cardiovascular disease, Irish and international fat recommendations, consumption data and Irish campaigns for fat reduction. Karl McDonald, Technical Executive, FSAI, spoke on trans-fats in foods and gave an overview of the surveys on trans-fats in consumer foods carried out by the FSAI in 2008 and 2009. Stephen Airey, Programme Manager, Food Standards Agency, UK, outlined the saturated fat and energy intake programme of the FSA, UK, which aims to improve UK diet and health. Damian O'Connor from Largo Foods spoke on how the snack industry has changed from oils high in saturated fat to oils high in mono- and poly-unsaturated fats.

The event was of specific interest to those marketing food products for the domestic or export markets, including the UK market, and those considering new business opportunities. Nutritionists, dieticians and caterers also attended.



Dr Karl McDonald, FSAI, gave an overview of trans-fats in consumer foods.

Legislation Update

Irish Legislation

Specific Purity Criteria Concerning Colours for Use in Foodstuffs

The Department of Health and Children has published the European Communities (Additives, Colours and Sweeteners in Foodstuffs) (Amendment) Regulations, 2009 (S.I. 126 of 2009). (See: <http://tinyurl.com/n2yabj>)

These Regulations amend the European Communities (Additives, Colours and Sweeteners in Foodstuffs) Regulations, 2000 (S.I. No. 437 of 2000) and give effect to Commission Directive 2008/128/EC of 22 December 2008 laying down specific purity criteria concerning colours for use in foodstuffs. Commission Directive 2008/128/EC is a codified version of the previous legislation (Directive 95/45/EC) on specific purity criteria concerning colours for use in foodstuffs which had been substantially amended several times.

S.I. 126 of 2009 requires the manufacturer of a product containing a colour to comply with the purity criteria for the relevant colour as set out in Annex I of Directive 2008/128/EC. A person may not place on the market any product which contains a colour, which, he or she knows, or in the circumstances ought to know, does not comply with purity criteria for the colour as set out in Annex I of Directive 2008/128/EC.

Marketing Standards for Eggs

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has published the European Communities (Marketing Standards for Eggs) Regulations, 2009 (S.I. 140 of 2009). (See: <http://tinyurl.com/nf9hgz>)

These Regulations repeal the European Communities (Marketing Standards for Eggs) Regulations, 2007 and give effect to Council Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007 as amended by Council Regulation (EC) No. 361/2008 in as far as it concerns eggs and to Commission Regulation (EC) No. 589/2008 as amended. The S.I. requires compliance with the standards set down in the European Union legislation on the marketing standards for eggs. These standards concern such matters as grading and labelling of eggs, standards for free range egg production and authorisation of egg packing centres.



The S.I. however *does not apply* to eggs sold directly by a producer to the final consumer in accordance with part A.I.2 of Annex XIV to Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2008 provided that:

- if the producer has a flock of more than 50 hens, the eggs are marked with the producer code, or
- if the producer has a flock of up to 50 hens, the name and address of the producer are indicated at the point of sale.

Veterinary Examination and Health Mark

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has introduced the Abattoirs Act, 1988 (Veterinary Examination and Health Mark) Regulations, 2009 (S.I. No. 154 of 2009).

This S.I. made under the Abattoirs Act 1988, provides for the possibility of meat from an animal, that is slaughtered in accordance with Chapter VI of Section I of Annex III to Regulation (EC) No. 853/2004 (emergency slaughter), being placed on the national market only, subject to it being certified fit for human consumption and marked with the special diamond shaped mark which is set out in the Schedule to the S.I.

Dietary Foods for Special Medical Purposes

The Department of Health and Children has introduced the European Communities (Dietary Foods for Special Medical Purposes) Regulations, 2009 (S.I. No. 187 of 2009). (See: <http://tinyurl.com/kvhdf2>)

These Regulations revoke the European Communities (Dietary Foods for Special Medical Purposes) Regulations, 2001 (S.I. No. 64 of 2001), the European Communities (Dietary Foods for Special Medical Purposes) (Amendment) Regulations, 2002 (S.I. No. 150 of 2002), and the European Communities (Dietary Foods for Special Medical Purposes) (Amendment) Regulations, 2007 (S.I. No. 241 of 2007).

This new S.I. gives further effect to Commission Directive 1999/21/EC on dietary foods for special medical purposes, as amended by Corrigendum of 5 January 2000, and by Commission Directive 2006/82/EC. The S.I. also gives effect for the first time to certain provisions relating to dietary foods for special medical purposes of Commission Directive 2006/141/EC on infant formulae and follow-on formulae.

Dietary foods for special medical purposes may be placed on the market only if they comply with the provisions laid down in the S.I. and in Directive 1999/21/EC as amended. However, certain transitional arrangements are in place regarding dietary foods for special medical purposes intended specifically for infants.

Schedule 1 to the S.I. sets out the essential composition of foods for special medical purposes. However, in relation to dietary foods for special medical purposes intended specifically for infants, the requirements of Regulation 4(4), (5) and (6) and Regulation 5(3) of the European Communities (Infant Formulae and Follow-On Formulae)



Regulations, 2007 (S.I. No. 852 of 2007) will not apply mandatorily to dietary foods for special medical purposes intended specifically for infants until 1 January 2012. Prior to that date, such foods shall, in the alternative, comply with the requirements of Regulations 4(3) and 5(3) of the European Communities (Infant Formulae and Follow-On Formulae Regulations, 2004 (S.I. No. 242 of 2004).

Table 1 of Schedule 1 sets out the values for vitamins, mineral and trace elements in nutritionally complete foods intended for use by infants. However, by way of a transitional period the S.I. permits trade in products containing manganese at the following values, until 31 December 2009:

Manganese (mg) Per 100 kJ:

Minimum - 0.012

Maximum - 0.05

Manganese (mg) Per 100kcal:

Minimum - 0.05

Maximum - 0.2

EU Legislation

Allergen Labelling: Wine

Commission Regulation (EC) No. 415/2009 (OJ L125, p52, 21/05/2009) of 20 May 2009, amending Directive 2007/68/EC, amending Annex IIIa to Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards certain food ingredients.



Wine operators are currently subject to two sets of labelling requirements, those provided under Directive 2007/68/EC (allergen labelling) and those of the implementing rules of Regulation (EC) No. 479/2008 of 29 April 2008 on the common organisation of the market in wine. However, the transitional

periods do not coincide in so far as Directive 2007/68/EC permits foodstuffs placed on the market or labelled before 31 May 2009 that comply with Directive 2005/26/EC to be marketed until stocks are exhausted, whilst the transitional date for Regulation (EC) No. 479/2008 is 31 December 2010. In order to ease the transition from the previous wine sector legislation, products covered by Regulation (EC) No. 479/2008 now have the transitional period extended to 31 December 2010.

European Update

The European Commission has published a 'Communication on Agricultural Product Quality Policy'. This Communication was drawn up based on the 560 contributions received in response to the Commission's Green Paper on agricultural product quality from October 2008 and input from the High Level Conference organised by the Czech Presidency in March 2009. In the Communication, the Commission is proposing options to:

- a progressive adoption of obligatory place-of-farming labelling (for agricultural products)

- a replacement of detailed marketing standards by a general standard and development of the 'reserved terms' instrument
- the establishment of non-binding guidelines covering private and national food quality certification schemes
- the creation of a unique register for all geographical indications (for wines, spirits and agricultural products and foodstuffs) while preserving the specificities of each system
- the improvement of international protection of geographical indications and the contribution to the development of international standards for marketing standards and organic product
- the replacement of the Traditional Specialties Guaranteed scheme.

The Communication does not entail any changes to the rules, but will pave the way for regulatory proposals in 2010.

Further information on the Communication can be accessed on the Europa website at: <http://tinyurl.com/o9bscw>.

The following Regulations have been introduced over the last few months in Ireland:

- » **S.I. No. 126 of 2009**
European Communities (Additives, Colours and Sweeteners in Foodstuffs) (Amendment) Regulations, 2009
- » **S.I. No. 140 of 2009**
European Communities (Marketing Standards for Eggs) Regulations, 2009

- » **S.I. No. 154 of 2009**
Abattoirs Act, 1988 (Veterinary Examination and Health Mark) Regulations, 2009

- » **S.I. No. 182 of 2009**
European Communities (Animal Remedies) (Amendment) Regulations, 2009

- » **S.I. No. 183 of 2009**
European Communities (Control of Animal Remedies and their Residues) Regulations, 2009

- » **S.I. No. 187 of 2009**
European Communities (Dietary Foods for Special Medical Purposes) Regulations, 2009

- » **S.I. No. 209 of 2009**
European Communities (Infant Formulae and Follow-on Formulae) (Amendment) Regulations, 2009

Cross-Agency Labelling Training Workshops



Dr Sarah Burke, FSAI, addressed delegates at the labelling training workshops.

A cross-agency labelling enforcement working group was set up in September 2007 with representation from the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF), the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) and the Local Authority Veterinary Service (LAVS). The scope of the working group covers general food labelling legislation, specific food legislation with labelling requirements and best practice across agencies regarding enforcement of the various pieces of labelling legislation.

One of the outputs from the terms of reference for this group was 'to agree recommendations to the relevant official agencies for an annual labelling programme'. The 2009 annual national labelling programme is the first of such programmes and will focus on nutrition and health claims and nutritional labelling legislation.

It is proposed that this programme will focus on food of animal origin which has been produced in Ireland and also imported products. Inspectors from DAFF, the SFPA and the LAVS will focus on the foodstuffs manufactured in Irish establishments under their supervision while the Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) from the HSE will focus on the retail sale of imported products.



Pat Farrell, FSAI, speaking at the workshop.

A number of labelling checks will consist of a visual examination of the product and, for verification, a laboratory analysis of the nutritional content. This analysis will be carried out by HSE Public Analyst Laboratories and DAFF Dairy Science Laboratories. A number of labelling checks will consist of visual checks only. It is envisaged that 350 samples of imported products and 350 samples of Irish produced product will be examined. The FSAI will compile and publish a report of all data received and this information will also be included in the 2009 Multi-annual National Control Plan report.

A checklist for this programme was developed by the working group but it was generally felt by members of the group that specialised training for enforcement officers should be provided to prepare for inspections as part of the annual labelling programme. The FSAI provided this training through a number of cross-agency labelling training workshops.

Five workshops were held in March 2009; three were held in Dublin, one in Galway and one in Cork. The workshops were divided into two parts: presentations and working groups. The presentations, given by FSAI staff, covered the following topics:

- Details of the Annual Labelling Programme
- Legislative Framework
- Nutrition and Health Claims and Nutrition Labelling

The second part of the workshop involved small workgroups of four to six people using the developed checklists to assess a number of sample labels for compliance with nutrition and health claims legislation and also nutrition labelling legislation. A total of 338 enforcement officers from all the official agencies attended the five workshops and the feedback was very positive.



Delegates attending the labelling training workshop.

New Scientific Opinion Published: *Mycobacterium avium* subsp. *paratuberculosis* and the Possible Links to Crohn's Disease

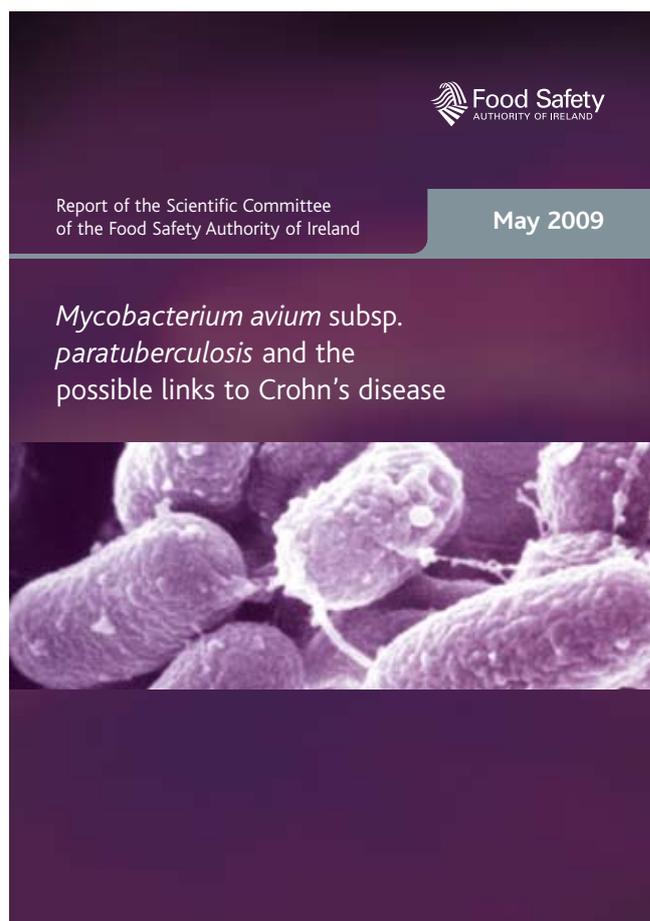
In May, the Scientific Committee of the FSAI adopted a draft opinion from its Microbiology Sub-committee on the ongoing debate surrounding whether the bacterium *Mycobacterium avium* subsp. *paratuberculosis* has a role in the development of Crohn's disease (CD).

CD is a form of chronic inflammatory bowel disease in which the wall of the bowel of humans becomes inflamed and thickened. Sometimes inflammation may also occur in other parts of the body. CD is a very variable and unpredictable condition. Some people affected by this disease have very severe problems with pain, inability to absorb food properly and diarrhoea almost continually unless they have treatment. Others have very long periods of relatively good health with occasional episodes of 'flare up' of the disease.

The pathogenic mechanisms leading to CD are poorly understood, but may involve a dysregulated immune response to commensal intestinal bacteria and possibly defects in mucosal barrier function or bacterial clearance. In a genome-wide association study, nine genes have been identified as being associated with a predisposition to CD. Some of these genes may affect host interactions with a chemical called lipopolysaccharide found in the bacterial cell wall and newly identified genes which are involved in eliminating intracellular bacteria. The implicated genes in CD patients are involved overall in mucosal barrier integrity and microbial clearance and/or homeostasis. The possibility of a link between *Map* and CD remains a subject of debate due to the similarities between the pathology of Johne's disease in cattle and that of human CD.

In 2000, the Scientific Committee of the FSAI adopted a report entitled '*Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis* (*Map*): Does it contribute to Crohn's Disease?' The principal conclusion of that report was that the available data were inconclusive and a direct link between *Map* and Crohn's disease could not be established. However, the report recommended that the Committee keep the issue under review. Since that time, the Committee has periodically revisited the subject as more research has been published.

In 2008, the Microbiology Sub-committee conducted a more formal review of the research and opinion published in the years since the original report in 2000. Fifty six key publications were identified between 2000 and 2008. Included in these were several reviews of the subject by other international and national health bodies, including some in the European Union, the USA, Australia and New Zealand. The most recent of these reports was from the American Academy of Microbiology. It noted that "there is a suspicion, supported by reports



of genetic inability to interact appropriately with certain bacteria or bacterial products in some patients, that CD may have a currently unrecognised infectious origin, perhaps environmentally derived".

CD is a form of chronic inflammatory bowel disease in which the wall of the bowel of humans becomes inflamed and thickened. Sometimes inflammation may also occur in other parts of the body.

Suspected bacterial agents were cited as *Map* and a variant of *E. coli*. It also noted that "the possibility of more than one infectious cause that leads to a similar set of symptoms confounds the research agenda to find both a cause and a cure for CD".

Based on the review of this and other reports and scientific publications 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.

The full report is available on our website at: <http://tinyurl.com/mftdvo>

Seminar on Gluten-Free Food

The Ashtown Food Research Centre, Teagasc, in conjunction with The Coeliac Society of Ireland, recently hosted a seminar entitled 'Gluten-Free Foods: New Developments for Bakery Products'.

The aim of the seminar was to raise awareness among food producers of the critical importance of the gluten-free diet for those affected by the coeliac condition and the implications of the new European regulations setting much stricter control on the gluten levels within 'gluten-free' and 'very low gluten' foods. A range of presentations were given on relevant topics, from recent research to the requirements for 'start up' gluten-free bakeries, packaging and labelling and the new coeliac food list.

Speakers at the event included Dr Mary Flynn, FSAI; Susan Zaidan, Odlum Group Ltd.; Dr Andrew Flanagan, Public Analyst Laboratory; Dr Eimear Gallagher, Ashtown Food Research Centre/UCC; John Redmond, Mulligan's Gluten-Free Bakery and Denise O'Callaghan, Delicious – The Gluten-Free Bakery.

Attending the seminar were those wishing to keep up-to-date with developments in relation to gluten-free products, specifically, gluten-free bakers, caterers, retailers, dieticians and entrepreneurs.



Pictured at the seminar are: Back (l-r): Dr Nicholas Kennedy, President, Coeliac Society of Ireland; Dr Andrew Flanagan, PAL, Galway and Dr Eimear Gallagher, Ashtown Food Research Centre. Front (l-r): Ms Susan Zaidan, Odlums Group Ltd.; Dr Mary Flynn, Chief Specialist Public Health Nutrition, FSAI and Ms Anne Manning, Coeliac Society of Ireland

Presentation on the Irish Dioxin Crisis



Pictured here are Alan Reilly, CEO, FSAI with Nick Gathergood, Chair, SCI Republic of Ireland Group and Lecturer in Organic Chemistry at DCU

'The Irish Dioxin Crisis: six days that shook the nation' was the title of a public lecture given by Mr Alan Reilly, CEO, FSAI, at the AGM of the Society of Chemical Industry (SCI) in the Chemistry Department of Trinity College Dublin recently.

In December last year, the Irish food sector faced a major food crisis that had public health, political and economic consequences. All pork products produced from animals slaughtered in Ireland between 1 September and 6 December 2008 were recalled from both the domestic and international markets; the largest recall of foods in the history of the State.

Mr Alan Reilly was invited by the SCI to give an overview of what happened during the six days of the pork dioxin crisis. The SCI is an international forum where science meets business on independent and impartial ground. The SCI offers information-sharing from food and agriculture, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and energy, to environmental science and safety.

FSAI-Sponsored IFSTI Competition in Memory of Ann Westby

Dyan Sari (pictured) was the winner of an essay competition in memory of the FSAI's late CEO, Ms Ann Westby. The competition was run by the Institute of Food Science and Technology of Ireland (IFSTI) and the €1,000 prize was sponsored by FSAI. Ms Sari was in her second year of the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) European MSc degree in Food Science, Technology and Nutrition when she entered the competition. The title of her essay was **'Cronobacter sakazakii: The importance of understanding the correct way to reconstitute powdered infant formula'.**

The essay explains the epidemiology of *Cronobacter sakazakii* (formerly known as *Enterobacter sakazakii*) which causes illness mainly in neonates and children from three days to four years old. It reviews the evidence for the link between illness in neonates and contaminated powdered infant formula, a product which many people mistakenly consider to be a sterile product. Finally, it describes the World Health Organization's guidelines for infant formula preparation, storage and handling and explores the practicalities of following these guidelines.

To view the winning essay, see www.ifsti.com.

For further information on this topic, see FSAI Guidance Note No 22 - Information Relevant to the Development of Guidance Material for the Safe Feeding of Reconstituted Powdered Infant Formula at: <http://tinyurl.com/mepb5l>



Dyan Sari, winner of the essay competition

FSAI QMS Makes an Impression on NSAI

On Monday, 22 June, the CEO of the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI), Mr Maurice Buckley, presented the FSAI with its Certificate of Registration to ISO 9001:2008. Mr Buckley complimented the FSAI on being one of the first public sector bodies to be certified to the 2008 revision of the Standard. Having taken the time to review the Quality Management System (QMS), Mr Buckley was impressed with the practical approach adopted by the FSAI in its design and implementation. He also commented on the inclusive nature of the system structure in that a cross-divisional Steering Committee reviews all changes to the QMS before final sign off

by senior management. Mr Buckley also referred to other areas of cooperation between the NSAI and the FSAI in the area of food safety and packaged water standards.

In reply, Alan Reilly, CEO, FSAI, thanked Mr Buckley and also thanked the staff of the FSAI for their commitment to the QMS since it was first certified in 2001. (The FSAI was the first public sector body to be certified to the 2001 revision of the Standard.) Mr Reilly committed to the continuing use of the QMS in the day-to-day operation of the FSAI as it provides confidence to stakeholders, such as the

Department of Health and Children and to consumers.

The QMS will continue to be subject to routine surveillance audits by the NSAI. The next audit will take place in November 2009.

Pictured at the presentation of the certificate, from left to right, are: Tom Costello and Maurice Buckley from NSAI and Celine Donoghue, Ruth Conefrey and Alan Reilly, FSAI.



Enforcement Orders Database

Search Results

Here are the results of your search. Click the details button to see full details for any item on the list. The list shown here is grouped by type of enforcement.

Note: For prosecutions, the Date column shows the date of hearing. For all other types of enforcement, this column shows the date of service.

Returns to the search page

Prosecutions

Agency Region	Date	Legislation	Served On	Process Address	Business Type
DETAILS ICE - Dublin North East	24/06/2008	EC (Hygiene of Foodstuffs) Regulations 2004	Mr. Austin Daniels	Alancharn's Honey pot 130 Parnell Street Dublin 8	Restaurant/Canteen
DETAILS ICE - Dublin No. Leinster	16/04/2008	EC (Hygiene of Foodstuffs) Regulations 2004	ANDRIS LIS	SENDER UNIT 2, Austin Friar Street Mullingar Wicklow	Restaurant/Canteen
DETAILS FSAI	13/05/2009	N/A	Weights of Foodstuffs of Harbour Galway Ltd	Weights of Foodstuffs of Harbour Galway Ltd Unit 2, Galway Harbour Enterprise Park	Fish processing

Prosecutions Listed on Website

Following discussion with official agencies, summary details of all successful prosecutions have been listed on our website, www.fsai.ie, since June. The information is available on the existing Enforcement Orders Database.

Blank templates for submission of the details to FSAI for publication have been distributed to official agencies and copies are also available on *Safety Net* (the FSAI/official agency extranet). The information contained is taken only from the official report received from the law agent and is published only after conclusion of the legal process.

Successful prosecutions concluded as and from 1 January 2009 will appear on the site. See: www.fsai.ie/enforcement/order/enf_criteria.asp

Official Agency 2008 Annual Reports

The FSAI would like to thank all the staff in official agencies who were able to deliver their 2008 Annual Reports (48(8)) within the 31 March deadline. The timely returns enabled the FSAI to draft Ireland's Multi-annual National Control Plan (MANCP) Annual Report which was sent out for comment mid-June and submitted to the EU by the 30 June deadline. Early receipt of this data has also allowed work to commence on those aspects of the FSAI Annual Report which is in progress at present.



Open Consultation on Salt Reduction Programme

The FSAI wants to assess the possible alignment of its Irish salt reduction programme with the revised UK targets. With this major proposal, we feel it is prudent to enter into a period of consultation with key stakeholders to ensure the continuing success of the salt reduction program with the food industry in Ireland.

In May 2009, following consultation and agreement with stakeholders, the United Kingdom Food Standards Agency (FSA) published revised salt reduction targets for 2012, for 80 categories of foods. These revised FSA targets are set at levels that the FSA believe will have a real impact on consumers' intakes, while taking into account the reductions that have already been achieved by the industry and the various technical and safety issues associated with salt in processed foods. These revised targets can be viewed at: <http://tinyurl.com/nmps2a>.

The FSAI welcomes submissions from all stakeholders, public authorities and other interested parties on this proposal to align the current FSAI salt reduction targets with those of the FSA, UK. If you require further information or wish to make a submission on this consultation please see our website at: www.fsai.ie/legislation/consultations.html.

All comments on this proposal should be submitted to the FSAI by **5pm on Tuesday, 18 August**. Submissions will only be accepted on an official form which can be accessed on our website at: <http://tinyurl.com/kvbuzw>.



Recent Publications

The following publications have recently been produced by the FSAI:

- Toxicology factsheets on:
 - Acrylamide
 - Aspartame
 - Pesticides
 - Mercury, Lead, Cadmium, Tin and Arsenic
 - Mycotoxins
 - Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs)
 - Residues of Animal Remedies
- Report: *Mycobacterium avium* subsp. *paratuberculosis* and the possible links to Crohn's disease

The publications are available on our website at www.fsai.ie/resources_publications.html






Editor: Edel Conway
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Please return this completed form to: Eleonore Donohoe, Food Safety Authority of Ireland, Abbey Court, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1.