

# FSAINews

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## Memorandum of Understanding with the EPA

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was recently signed between the FSAI and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Previous to this MoU, the FSAI had an agreement in place with the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII), which covered cooperation on the protection of the food chain from radioactive contamination.

Following the merger of the EPA and the RPII in 2014, it was recognised that it would be appropriate to widen the scope of the MoU to fully reflect the range of areas of mutual responsibility and shared interests in which the FSAI and the EPA collaborate.

The new MoU outlines a framework for cooperation which encourages and fosters the establishment and maintenance of high standards of food safety in the interests of, and for the protection of public health. It focuses on maintaining a healthy environment which is essential to a sustainable and healthy food supply. The new memorandum continues to include the responsibility of the EPA for radiation



Pictured signing the Memorandum of Understanding are Dr Pamela Byrne, CEO, FSAI and Laura Burke, Director General, EPA

monitoring in food and the responsibilities of both the FSAI and the EPA in the area of emergency planning. The additional areas of shared interest reflected in the agreement include the minimisation of food waste, drinking water and water quality, organic waste as soil improvers and fertilisers, GMO technology in food production, Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), PCBs and dioxins in food and nanotechnology.

The MoU is available at [www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie).



## Shaping our Future, Together

**It is time to review and renew the FSAI's current Statement of Strategy. Our current Strategy concludes at the end of this year and in order to ensure that the FSAI continues to fulfil its overall objective of protecting consumers' health and consumers' interests; a strategy for the period 2016-2018 is required.**

The FSAI and many of the official agencies in the Irish food safety control system have been operating with limited resources for a number of years. The systems and processes in place have worked very well to date, but in an era where the demands on the public purse have grown and public sector resources have decreased, there is a need to review our strategy at a time when the health and interests of the consumers of Irish food is of paramount importance.

We are also at a pivotal and very exciting time in Ireland, with rapid growth in the food industry, further growth anticipated resulting from the removal of milk quotas and the opening of new markets for Irish produce - all of which offer tremendous opportunity for Ireland's economic recovery. But expansion in the food industry places a new duty of care on food businesses to ensure the highest standards in food safety and hygiene are in place in line with that anticipated growth. It also places an onus and a renewed pressure on the FSAI and the official agencies to make sure the systems and processes in place are robust, but are also reviewed and revised, where needed. The stakes for Ireland's reputation as a producer of safe food can so easily be lost by a serious food incident. Therefore, a strong regulatory food safety control system is required, but we also need to ensure that it is one that can adapt to meet the expansion of the industry.

There are many challenges facing success in this area – an evolving regulatory landscape; globalisation of trade in food and feed; longer and more complex food supply chains; integrity and authenticity of supply chains; the impact of climate change on food production systems; food and nutrition security; public health nutrition; new technologies; as well as new and emerging food pathogen risks. The environment within which we are operating is continuously changing and the FSAI must consider the impact of these challenges on our ability to fulfill our role. Our new strategy must be cognisant of the challenges of today, whilst being robust, flexible and innovative to ensure readiness for the opportunities and possible threats of the future.

Within this constantly evolving and challenging environment, it is important that our regulatory approach, tools and resources continue to adapt to keep apace, whilst at the same time, ensuring that the protection of consumers' health and their interests are at the core of all our decisions and actions.

Our next statement of strategy will clearly set out our purpose and objectives, and will identify how we intend developing the FSAI's capabilities to achieve these. The strategy must take account of our obligations as set out in our founding legislation, the external influences in food safety and the challenges and opportunities that the FSAI will encounter. It will aim to achieve a high level of consumer protection and trust.

Our priority work areas will include enforcing food law, using best scientific advice to underpin our decisions and improving standards and compliance. The strategy will provide a framework for anticipating and addressing risks. It will seek to ensure that the FSAI is responsive, proactive, adaptable, efficient and effective.

The FSAI's aim is to ensure that Irish consumers and the consumers of Irish food at home and abroad are fully protected and we must keep potential threats under control. However, we must be mindful that ensuring food safety is a responsibility shared by many, including the official agencies, the food industry and consumers. As such, in developing our new strategy we want to engage with all our stakeholders (including food industry representatives, the scientific community, consumer organisations, Government departments and non-governmental organisations).

A part of the overall approach to developing our strategy includes a public consultation hosted on our website. I would like to invite interested parties to give us their views which will inform our planning process for our Strategic Plan 2016-2018. This is an important element to ensure that our strategic objectives are in line with the expectations and priorities of our stakeholders. We are actively encouraging submissions and will review all feedback and comments received. Engagement is key to the success of this strategy.

**For further information and/or to make comments on our Strategic Plan 2016-2018, please see our website at [www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie).**

**Dr Pamela Byrne**  
Chief Executive





Pictured are attendees at the FVO fact finding mission on High Pressure Processing

## FVO Fact Finding Mission

The European Commission Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) carried out a fact finding mission on High Pressure Processing (HPP) in Ireland from 15-18 September. The mission team consisted of three FVO auditors with Ancuta-Paula Nicodim as the team leader. The main objective of the mission was to gather information on the current state of play as regards HPP - the use of HPP technology by the food industry, including its benefits and implications; available guidance; legislation and policy as well as on the related controls in place.

HPP or pascalisation, is a technology/treatment increasingly applied for different types of foodstuffs (fishery products, shellfish, meat and dairy products, fruit and vegetable juices etc.) in several countries including EU Member States. This technology presents substantial opportunities for the food processing industry to prolong shelf-life and maintain/improve food safety. It consists of the application of high isostatic pressure (transmitted through water) to foodstuffs for variable amounts of time.

In order to gather the relevant information on HPP, the FVO carried out questionnaires with the competent authorities in Member States. It also

facilitated consultations with stakeholders and fact finding missions in selected Member States.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Health Service Executive assisted the FSAI in facilitating this fact finding mission. Technical experts from University College Cork and the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute in Northern Ireland also assisted with the mission. At the closing meeting, the lead auditor expressed her gratitude for the high level of cooperation which the mission team received both before and during the mission. Patrick Farrell (FVO Coordinator) facilitated the mission on behalf of the FSAI.

## Flavouring Substance (Perilla aldehyde) Prohibited

EU Member States have voted in favour of prohibiting the use of the flavouring substance p-mentha-1,8-dien-7-al (also known as Perilla aldehyde (FL 05.117)) from the EU list of authorised flavouring substances set out in Annex I of Regulation 1334/2008/EC. This follows on from the safety assessment of the substance which the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published on 23 July. In this opinion, EFSA noted that p-mentha-1,8-dien-7-al has been shown to be genotoxic (damaging to DNA) in a new study on animals. Perilla aldehyde occurs naturally in the peel of citrus fruits. It is produced in limited quantities and is added to some baked foods, puddings, meat products and both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks to produce a pungent citrus smell and a woody, spicy citrus taste.

Commission Regulation (EU) 2015/1760 was published in the Official Journal on 2 October 2015 and entered into force on 3 October 2015. According to the Regulation, foods to which this flavouring substance has been added and which were lawfully placed on the market before 3 October 2015 will be allowed to be marketed until their date of minimum durability or use-by date. Foods imported into the EU will be allowed to be marketed until their date of minimum durability or use-by date, if the importer can demonstrate that they were dispatched from the Third country and were on their way to the EU before 3 October 2015.

See EFSA's opinion at: <http://bit.ly/1VDk0Yq>



Pictured at the China-Ireland Food Safety Forum are Chinese Minister Bi Jingquan and Minister for Health, Leo Varadkar T.D.

## Cooperation Between Ireland and China on Food Safety

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney T.D. recently hosted a major China-Ireland Food Safety Forum in the dairy and infant formula sectors. The event took place at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's (DAFM) complex in Backweston, Co. Kildare and was jointly hosted with Chinese Minister Bi Jingquan, the Minister with responsibility for the China Food and Drug Administration (CFDA).

Both Ministers signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) setting out future cooperation between the countries in the area of food safety. The MoU signifies that our agri-food partnership with China is about much more than trade and includes exchanges of ideas and knowledge on areas of mutual interest.

During the visit, Minister Bi Jingquan also had a bilateral meeting with the Minister for Health, Leo Varadkar T.D. and senior managers from the FSAI and the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA). The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the control of food safety and the control of medicines and medicinal devices with the respective agencies.

# Legislation Update



## Beef and Beef Products Labelling

**European Communities (Labelling of Beef and Beef Products) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 404 of 2015) has been published by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.**

In 2014, the European Commission published Regulation (EU) No. 653/2014 amending Regulation (EC) No. 1760/2000 as regards electronic identification (EID) of bovine animals and the labelling of beef. This Regulation recognised that the administrative burden and the costs incurred in applying the voluntary beef labelling system introduced in 2000 was not proportionate to the benefits of the system. It also acknowledged that the right of operators to inform consumers through voluntary labelling of the characteristics of the meat and the right of the consumers to receive verifiable information should not be compromised.

The European Communities (Labelling of Beef and Beef Products) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 404 of 2015) gives effect to Regulation (EU) No. 653/2014. Under this legislation the specific rules for the voluntary labelling of beef which are set out in Articles 16, 17 and 18 of Regulation (EC) 1760/2000 are deleted. Therefore, food information such as age indication at slaughter, breed of animal etc. which is added to labels voluntarily by operators or organisations marketing beef will no longer require 'approval'. However, such information must comply with the rules set out in Regulation (EU) No. 1169/2011 on the provision of information to consumers. Under these rules food information must not be misleading and must be objective, verifiable by the competent authorities and comprehensible for consumers.

Mandatory requirements for beef labelling (i.e. information on the origin of the cattle) remain unchanged.

## Recycled Hot Water to Remove Microbiological Surface Contamination from Carcasses

**Commission Regulation (EU) 2015/1474 concerning the use of recycled hot water to remove microbiological surface contamination from carcasses was published in the EU Official Journal at the end of August.**

On 30 September 2010, the Panel on Biological Hazards of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) adopted a Scientific Opinion on the safety and efficacy of using recycled hot water as a decontamination technique for meat carcasses. In that Opinion, EFSA identified and defined HACCP criteria in order to obtain the expected efficacy of recycled hot water and to control the possible risks.

In view of the EFSA Opinion, and accepting that recycled hot water can be an additional tool in achieving the food safety and hygiene objectives of Regulations (EC) No. 852/2004, (EC) No. 853/2004, (EC) No. 854/2004 and (EC) No. 2073/2005, the European Commission has approved the use by food business operators of recycled hot water to remove microbiological surface contamination from carcasses, once certain criteria are met.

The food business operator's duty to comply with the requirements of EU legislation on food hygiene, as laid down in Regulations (EC) No. 852/2004, (EC) No. 853/2004, (EC) No. 854/2004 and (EC) No. 2073/2005 remains in place. This new Regulation, whilst permitting the reuse of recycled hot water, requires

that where it is used it should be integrated into HACCP-based systems and must not be considered as a substitution for good hygienic slaughtering practices and operating procedures or as an alternative to comply with the requirements of those Regulations.

The conditions for use of recycled hot water are set out in the Annex to the Regulation, and require the following minimum HACCP criteria and control parameters:

1. Sampling of carcasses for the purpose of assessing compliance within the meaning of Regulation (EC) No. 2073/2005 must be carried out before the application of recycled hot water on carcasses
2. The minimal heating temperature/time regime applied to recycled water before its application on carcasses must be continuously monitored by instrumental measurements, documented and recorded
3. The compliance of the recycled water applied on carcasses with the microbiological and chemical parameters set up for potable water must be verified periodically by testing of water, documented and recorded
4. The compliance of the recycled water applied on carcasses with indicator parameter of *Clostridium perfringens* set up for potable water be verified by periodic monitoring, documented and recorded

## EU Food Labelling Database

**During 2014, a study funded by DG GROW and DG SANTE in the European Commission analysed the feasibility of setting up a dedicated database containing all EU and**





national food labelling rules with the aim of providing a simple way to identify labelling requirements per product. The study found that the majority of stakeholders (including competent authorities) clearly expressed their interest in such a dedicated database.

After analysing the results of the study, the Commission decided to set up a Food Labelling Information System. It is hoped that the creation of this electronic system will particularly benefit small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and will contribute to the improvement of the business environment and ease of market access, particularly for such enterprises.

The objective of the food labelling information system is to provide a user friendly IT solution which will automatically retrieve the mandatory EU and national labelling indications required for a particular food in the Member State in which the food business operator (FBO) wants to market that food.

The Commission intends that the system will also provide other practical information such as legal summaries, explanatory notes and other relevant information which will provide for correct implementation by FBOs of the relevant legislation and facilitate the work of national enforcement authorities.

**Next Steps:** The European Commission opened a call for tender concerning the collection of complete data from EU and Member States food labelling legislation for certain foods and their transfer to an EU food labelling information system. The tender closed at the end of September and it is expected that once the contract with the successful vendor is signed the project will take up to 18 months.

Further details on the content of the EU tender and proposed structure of the database can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1P6YuWV>



## National Consultation on Calories on Menus Legislation

A national consultation by the Department of Health to seek views on the legislation for the introduction of mandatory posting of calories on menus has been published on the FSAI website. The consultation is based on the Government's proposed Health and Wellbeing Bill, which will apply to non-prepackaged food served by food businesses for immediate consumption on or off the premises.

The proposed legislation will apply to food businesses regardless of size, type of food sold, type of ownership or location. It will require all menus, including boards, leaflets and digital menus to display calorie details alongside the price in the same font size and colour. It is proposed that calorie amounts will be displayed in kcal (kilocalories) and

kJ (kilojoules) using a verifiable tool for calorie counting, such as MenuCal (a free online calorie calculator developed by the FSAI to assist food businesses).

As part of the consultation, the Department of Health is seeking opinions on specific aspects of the proposed legislation and its implementation. For example, views are sought in relation to calculating and displaying calorie information for food served at self-service buffets; menu specials for sale less than 30 days of the year; loose food, such as sandwich fillings served in delis; food meant for sharing; and multi-portion or 'combo meals'.

All interested parties are invited to communicate their views by completing an online questionnaire, available on our website [www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie). The consultation will close on **28 October 2015**.



## New Regulations

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

### S.I. No. 330 of 2015

European Union (Food Additives) Regulations 2015

### S.I. No. 404 of 2015

European Communities (Labelling of Beef and Beef Products) (Amendment) Regulations 2015

# Event Round-up

## Taking Care of Business

'Taking Care of Business' (TCOB) is a joint initiative of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Health and Safety Authority, as part of the Action Plan for Jobs. The TCOB events are specifically designed to help small and start-up businesses understand and benefit from the services provided by many State offices and agencies.

The most recent TCOB event took place on 8 October in Drogheda. It featured two separate strands running concurrently with presentations from State bodies in one area and information stands manned by staff from these bodies in a separate area. The concise presentations focused on key regulatory requirements as well as assistance available to help entrepreneurs develop their businesses. Experts were available at the information stands to speak directly to attendees and answer questions throughout the event. The FSAI participated at the event and Helen Crowley, Information Executive, FSAI, gave an overview on the requirements when starting up a food business and the FSAI's available resources. Gerald Nash, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, closed the session, emphasising the importance and value of the events for small and start-up businesses.

For further information, please visit [www.takingcareofbusiness.ie](http://www.takingcareofbusiness.ie).



Pictured at the event are Sinead Gilligan, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and Emma Reinhardt, FSAI, both on the TCOB organising committee

### The State offices and agencies represented provided information across a wide range of areas, including:

- Tax, employment and health and safety obligations
- Legal requirements for setting up and running a business
- Requirements in areas such as food and environmental safety
- Advice on government procurement and intellectual property
- Assistance and supports from enterprise agencies and local authorities



Pictured at the TCOB event are Gerald Nash, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and Susan Durnin, FSAI

## Breakfast Bites

The most recent Breakfast Bite took place at the end of August and focused on food marketing terms. Food marketing terms are the words used to describe food in a way that resonates with consumers and differentiates a product from competitor's products. Dr Wayne Anderson of the FSAI presented an outline of the general legal requirements that food businesses must follow when using marketing terms on food. He also covered the agreed guidance for the specific marketing terms: artisan/artisanal, farmhouse, traditional and natural.



Pictured at the most recent Breakfast Bites event are Rosemary Kelly and Sharon Wall



Latifat Olagok, Latifat Consulting and Orla Jordan, BWG Foods attended Breakfast Bites



## IFSTI Annual General Meeting

The Institute of Food Science and Technology of Ireland (IFSTI) is the professional body representing the interests of Irish food scientists and food technologists. It does this by promoting its professional standing and continuing professional development through further education and training. The annual general meeting of the IFSTI was recently held in the FSAI.

The International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFOST) has granted IFSTI the 2016 IUFOST World Congress – an event to look forward to next year.

For further information, see [www.ifsti.ie](http://www.ifsti.ie).



Speakers at the IFSTI AGM are (from l-r) James Conway, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; Aileen Connolly, Creme Global; Mary Hughes, Food and Drinks Industry Ireland; Charlene Connolly, Monaghan Mushrooms Group and Lisa O'Connor, FSAI



Addressing the IFSTI AGM is Dr Lisa O'Connor, Chief Specialist in Food Science, FSAI



Pictured with an attendee at the event is Kevin Mullaney, FSAI Customer Advisor

## Ireland's National Start-up Week

The Central Library in the Ilac Centre hosted an open day on 7 October as part of Ireland's National Start-up Week (October 5-10). The event was directed at people who may be thinking of starting a business, including food businesses. The FSAI attended the event and provided an information stand, together with the Companies Registration Office, the Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement and Inner City Enterprise.



## Subscribe to our Events

For further information on upcoming events, see our website at: [www.fsai.ie/events](http://www.fsai.ie/events). You can subscribe to our email alerts to receive further details when they are available.



## FAQ

Many people contact our advice-line each month to ask questions on a variety of food safety issues. Some questions get asked time and time again – so in each issue of FSAINews, we feature a Frequently Asked Question. This issue's question is:

# What are the **Compositional and Labelling** Requirements for Jam?

## Legislation

In order to be marketed as jam, there are certain compositional and labelling requirements which must be met. These are set out in Directive 2001/113/EC relating to fruit jams, jellies and marmalades and sweetened chestnut purée intended for human consumption. The general labelling rules for pre-packed food set out in Regulation (EU) No. 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers must also be taken into account.

## Definition

'Jam' is defined as a mixture brought to a suitable gelled consistency of sugars, the pulp and/or purée of one or more kinds of fruit and water. Citrus jam may be obtained from the whole fruit cut into strips and/or sliced.

It should be noted that the legislation also defines 'extra jam', 'jelly', 'extra jelly', 'marmalade' and 'sweetened chestnut purée' and provides definitions for the following raw materials which may be used in the manufacture of these products: fruit, fruit pulp, fruit purée, aqueous extracts of fruit and sugars.

## Composition

In order to be called jam a product must have a certain amount of fruit and sugar. The legislation requires that for jam the quantity of pulp and/or purée used for the manufacture of 1000g of finished product must not be less than:

- 350g as a general rule
- 250g for redcurrants, rowanberries, sea-buckthorns, blackcurrants, rosehips and quinces
- 150g for ginger
- 160g for cashew apples
- 60g for passion fruit

Where fruits are mixed together, the minimum contents laid down for different kinds of fruits must be reduced in proportion to the percentages used. For example, if making a strawberry and ginger jam using a mixture of 75% strawberries and 25% ginger the minimum quantities of fruit would be adjusted as follows:

**Strawberry** General minimum required is 350g

Adjusted minimum required is  
 $350\text{g} \times 75\% = \mathbf{262.5\text{g}}$

**Ginger** General minimum required is 150g

Adjusted minimum required is  
 $150\text{g} \times 25\% = \mathbf{37.5\text{g}}$

The total minimum fruit to be used is 300g ( $262.5 + 37.5$ ) per 1000g of finished product.

Jam must have a soluble dry matter content of 60% or more as determined by a refractometer, except for those products in respect of which sugars have been wholly or partially replaced by sweeteners. A jam which has a soluble dry matter content (that has not been replaced or partly replaced by a sweetener) of 50% or less may be described as 'reduced-sugar jam' or 'low sugar jam'.

## Permitted Additional Ingredients

When making jam, there are certain ingredients that can be used in addition to sugar and fruit. These are: honey; fruit juice; citrus fruit juice; red fruit juices (in certain cases); red beetroot juice (in certain cases); edible oils and fats as anti-foaming agents; liquid pectin; citrus peel; leaves of *pelargonium odoratissimum* (for quince jam); spirits, wine and liqueur wine, nuts, aromatic herbs, spices, vanilla and vanilla extracts and vanilline. There are also certain colours and sweeteners allowed and these are set out in Regulation (EC) No. 1333/2008 on food additives.

## Labelling

There is certain mandatory information which must appear on the label of a jam:

- The name under which the product is sold i.e. jam
- The name 'jam' must be accompanied by an indication of the fruit or fruits used, in descending order of weight of the raw materials used. However, for products manufactured from three or more fruits, the indication of the fruits used may be replaced by the words 'mixed fruit' or a similar wording, or by the number of fruits used
- The list of ingredients in descending order of weight
- The fruit content by including the words 'prepared with Xg of fruit per 100g'

- The total sugar content by including the words 'total sugar content Xg per 100g'
- Where the residual sulphur dioxide content exceeds 10mg/kg the presence must be indicated in the list of ingredients and highlighted
- The net quantity
- The date of minimum durability and any special instructions or conditions for use
- The name or business name and address of the food business under whose name the food is marketed
- Place of origin if its absence might mislead the consumer

The name of the product, the fruit content and the total sugar content must appear in the same field of vision and in clearly visible characters.

## Further Information

For more information on the legislation concerning jams, jellies, marmalades and sweet chestnut purée please visit the legislation section of our website at <http://bit.ly/1F3YBJS>







Pictured here are: Dr Bernard Hegarty, Director of Service Contracts, FSAI; Ms Cait Moran, Ireland's Ambassador to Vietnam; Dr Pamela Byrne, CEO, FSAI; Mr Bui Quang Vinh, Minister of Planning and Investment, Vietnam, and senior officials from the Ministry with Dr Jim Fitzpatrick, Fitzpatrick Associates (2nd from right) and Mr Eoghan Caffrey, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

## Delegation from Vietnam

The FSAI recently hosted a high-level delegation from Vietnam, as part of a visit to Ireland arranged by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The delegation, including the Minister for Planning and Investment and senior officials from the Ministry, discussed Ireland's official controls on food and the experience of working with a multi-agency food safety system.

Vietnam also has several Ministries and agencies involved in controls on the agri-food sector and is keen to improve its food safety system and to increase food exports. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has assisted Vietnam through its bilateral foreign aid programmes. The delegation's visit to Ireland also included meetings with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Teagasc, Bord Bia and Enterprise Ireland.



Pictured are attendees at the Food Safety Training Skills Workshop

## Identifying Relevant Microbiological Criteria - Online

A new online learning module 'Regulation 2073/2005 Module 1: Identifying Relevant Microbiological Criteria' has been published on our website, [www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie). The aim of the module is to help food businesses identify foods that fall under the food categories in Regulation (EC) No. 2073/2005 on Microbiological Criteria for Foodstuffs.

The module is based on Questions 1 and 2 of the FSAI's Guidance Note No. 27 checklist for assessing compliance with Regulation (EC) 2073/2005 i.e.

1. Does the food business operator produce, manufacture or package foods for which there are relevant criteria in the Regulation?
2. Does the food business operator produce, manufacture or package ready-to-eat food?

It contains a number of exercises and activities along with supporting documents that are available to download. It takes about 60 minutes to complete but doesn't have to be done all at the one time. The menu can be used to access where you left off so you can fit it around your own schedule.

When you have completed the module, you will be able to:

- List the differences between process hygiene criteria and food safety criteria
- Select which food safety criteria are relevant to particular foods
- Select which process hygiene criteria are relevant to particular foods
- Determine if a food is ready-to-eat or not
- Determine if a ready-to-eat food falls into food category 1.1, 1.2 or 1.3

Further modules based on the other questions in Guidance Note No. 27's checklist e.g. sampling, sampling frequency and shelf life testing are planned for the future.

## Food Safety Training Skills Workshop

The FSAI's Food Safety Training Skills Workshop took place in Dublin on 8-9 September. The two-day workshop was designed to provide participants with the skills to deliver induction training in their workplace using the FSAI's three-hour induction training programme 'Food Safety and You'. The FSAI certification process requires the trainers to complete a skills demonstration assessment and successfully compile a collection of practical work in their workplace.

The 'Food Safety and You' induction programme is based on the skills outlined in the FSAI's Guide to Food Safety Training - Level 1, and has been designed to promote active learning and the application of training in the work environment. The target group for this training programme is employees at induction level in all sectors of the food industry including retail, manufacturing and food service.

# FSAI Poster Display at EFSA Conference

Transparency, cooperation and the need to strengthen public engagement in risk assessment were the recurring themes of a European Food Safety Authority conference, which took place in Milan from 14-16 October. The conference, 'Shaping the future of food safety, together', was attended by 1,100 people from 70 countries over three days. Delegates, which included FSAI staff members, examined topics such as open data, weighing uncertainty in risk assessments, emerging issues in animal and plant health, and developing expertise for the future.

Thematic poster sessions formed part of the conference, which allowed scientists to actively contribute by showcasing their work. The FSAI had two posters on display, as follows:

## 'Expose the Gaps not the Consumer': The need to implement all aspects of nutrition regulations

This study explored consumer protection issues arising from two key gaps in nutrition regulation – the absence of nutrient profiles and maximum safe levels. Claims on foods are regulated in Europe but nutrient profiles provided for in legislation have not been set by the European Commission. Nutrient profiles would disqualify foods that should be limited in a healthy diet ('treat foods') from making claims. Addition of micronutrients to food supplements is regulated in Europe but maximum safe levels provided for in legislation have not been set by the European Commission. Maximum safe levels protect consumers from adverse effects of excessive consumption of micronutrients.



Foods fitting the definition of a 'treat food' in Ireland were identified from composition data<sup>1</sup>. The micronutrient composition of these foods was compared with the value required to meet a 'source of' claim for that micronutrient (i.e. 15% labelled daily reference intake /100g). Three quarters of

these 'treat foods' were found to be a 'source of' at least one micronutrient. Currently there are 164 authorised health claims that can be made on these foods (April 2015). For example, a potential legal claim for these foods is: 'sherbet sweets contain magnesium which contributes to the maintenance of normal teeth'.

Food supplements notified as being on the Irish market between 2007 and 2014 were assessed to identify vitamin D containing products. Daily amounts of vitamin D provided were examined according to year notified. Laboratory testing for a limited range of products facilitated comparison with labelled values. From 2007 to 2014 there was a significant increase in both the number of vitamin D supplements available and the daily amount of vitamin D provided. Some supplements exceeded the adult tolerable upper level for vitamin D (100µg) and laboratory testing found that products providing higher amounts were less likely to be within acceptable tolerance levels for labelling.

These regulatory gaps urgently need to be closed to ensure consumer protection. Authorising claims without nutrient profiles in place potentially misleads the consumer about health benefits of foods. Safe maximum levels for micronutrients need to be established to protect consumers against excessive intakes.

## The 'hit and miss' of voluntary folic acid food fortification in Ireland

During the 1980s, voluntary folic acid food fortification was introduced in Ireland and as a result the rate of pregnancies affected by neural tube defects (NTDs) declined.

<sup>1</sup>FSA (2002) McCance and Widdowson 6th Edition (CoF IDS)



Pictured with their scientific poster at the event in Milan are Oonagh Lyons, Prof. Mary Flynn and Frances Douglas, all of the FSAI.



However, in 2008, high blood folate levels found in children and older adults (non-target population groups) were related to the widespread voluntary folic acid food fortification in place. As a result the proposed introduction of mandatory fortification of foods with folic acid was postponed. In Ireland, recent research reports the rate of NTDs has increased since 2009. This study examines the changes in voluntary folic acid food fortification in 2007 compared with 2014, which may contribute to the increase in NTDs.

In both 2007 and 2014, all foods voluntarily

fortified with folic acid on the Irish market were identified in supermarket surveys. These surveys included the number of different types of folic acid fortified foods as well as the amounts of folic acid in different brands. Daily meal plans that provided 400µg folic acid using folic acid fortified foods were developed in 2007, and were re-examined in 2014 to estimate changes in the amount of folic acid provided.

The numbers and types of folic acid fortified foods and the amounts of folic acid in different brands identified in the 2014 survey were

lower compared with the 2007 survey. This was particularly significant for fat spreads, while levels in cereals remained comparable at the two time points. All seven daily meal plans developed in 2007 to provide 400µg folic acid provided lower amounts in 2014, with differences ranging from 6-365µg/day.

This study shows that the numbers, types and brands of foods voluntarily fortified with folic acid (along with the level of folic acid provided) are continuously changing in Ireland, making it very difficult for women of childbearing age to meet their needs. More critically, some women in the target group are completely excluded from the benefits of voluntary folic acid fortification due to their food choice. Introduction of a mandatory folic acid fortification programme of a staple food consumed by most women (e.g. bread), would address this public health issue and be easier to monitor. This would require legislative controls on voluntary food fortification.

## Expose the gaps not the consumer: The need to implement all aspects of nutrition regulations



By F.E. Douglas<sup>1</sup>, D.C. Lyons<sup>2</sup>, K.A. Emerson<sup>3</sup>, G.D. Ussher<sup>4</sup>, S.E. Kiehlty<sup>4</sup> and M.A.T. Flynn<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Public Health Nutrition, Food Safety Authority of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland; <sup>2</sup>Northern Ireland Centre for Food and Health, University of Ulster, Coleraine, BT52 1SA, UK

### 1. Background

- Regulation 1924/2006/EC on nutrition and health claims makes a provision for nutrient profiles to be established;
- EU Directive 2002/46/EC on food supplements makes a provision for maximum safe levels of micronutrients to be established;
- Nutrient profiles and maximum safe micronutrient levels have not been established by the European Commission.

### 2. Aim

To explore the potential for these gaps in nutrition related food legislation, to lead to consumer protection issues.

### 3. Methods

#### Nutrient Profiles

- Foods fitting the definition of a 'treat' food<sup>1</sup> were identified from food composition tables<sup>2</sup>;
- The micronutrient composition of the 'treat' food was compared with the value required to make a 'source' of claim for that micronutrient (15% of the labeling reference intake value /100g).

#### Maximum Safe Levels

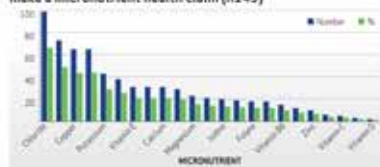
- Food supplements notified as being available on the Irish market between 2007 and 2014 were assessed to identify Vitamin D containing products;
- Amounts of Vitamin D provided in a daily dose were examined according to year;
- Laboratory testing for a limited sample facilitated comparison with labeling Vitamin D values.

### 4. Results

#### Nutrient Profiles

- 202 'treat' foods were identified;
- Three quarters of these foods (n=149) were a source of at least one micronutrient (see Figure 1);
- 164 authorised health claims can be made on these foods (assessed up to April 2015, see Figure 2).

Figure 1: Number and percentage of 'treat' foods that can make a micronutrient health claim (n=149)



#### REFERENCES

1. Regulation (EC) 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims. 2. European Directive 2002/46/EC on food supplements. 3. The Composition of Foods Integrated Database (CiF IDB). 4. Food Safety Authority of Ireland (2015) Scientific Recommendation

Figure 2: Examples of health claims (n=164)



#### Maximum Safe Levels

- 1,435 Vitamin D containing products were identified;
- There was a significant increase in available and daily amount time (see Figures 3 & 4);
- Some supplements (n=13) for adults for Vitamin D (15% of the labeling reference intake value /100g);
- Higher dose Vitamin D supplements acceptable tolerance level.

Figure 3: Vitamin D content of supplements (n=1,435)

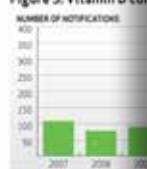
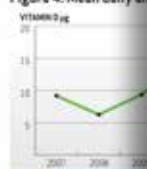


Figure 4: Mean daily intake of Vitamin D (µg)



### 5. Conclusion

- Authorising claims without the consumer about health;
- Safe maximum levels for European level to protect

## The 'hit and miss' of voluntary folic acid food fortification in Ireland



By D.C. Lyons<sup>2</sup>, F.E. Douglas<sup>1</sup>, S.E. Kiehlty<sup>4</sup>, G.D. Ussher<sup>4</sup>, K.A. Emerson<sup>3</sup>, M.A.T. Flynn<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Public Health Nutrition, Food Safety Authority of Ireland, Dublin 1, Republic of Ireland; <sup>2</sup>Northern Ireland Centre for Food and Health, University of Ulster, Coleraine BT52 1SA, UK

### 1. Background

- Introduction of voluntary folic acid food fortification in Ireland;
- Reduction in the number of pregnancies affected by neural tube defects (NTDs)

#### 2008

- High blood folate levels found in children and older adults<sup>1</sup> related to widespread voluntary folic acid food fortification in place<sup>2</sup>;
- Proposed introduction of mandatory fortification of foods with folic acid was postponed<sup>3</sup>.

#### 2009

- Research reports the rate of NTDs in Ireland has increased<sup>4</sup> (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Rate of NTDs per 1,000 births in Ireland and Europe, 2000 - 2011



### 2. Aim

To examine the changes in voluntary folic acid food fortification in 2007 compared with 2014, which may contribute to the increase in NTDs

### 3. Methods

- Supermarket surveys (both in 2007 and 2014) identified all foods voluntarily fortified with folic acid on the Irish market;
- Surveys recorded the:
  - Number of different types of folic acid fortified foods;
  - Amounts of folic acid in different brands;
- In 2007, daily meal plans that provided 400µg folic acid using folic acid fortified foods were developed;
- In 2014, daily meal plans were re-examined to estimate changes in the amount of folic acid provided.

### 4. Results

- Amounts of folic acid in different brands identified in the 2014 survey were lower compared with the 2007 survey;
  - Particularly significant for fat spreads (Figure 2);
  - Levels in cereals remained comparable at the two time points;
- All seven daily meal plans developed in 2007 to provide 400µg folic acid provided lower amounts in 2014;
  - Differences ranging from 6 µg/day (Figure 3a) to 365 µg/day (Figure 3b).

#### REFERENCES

1. Flynn MA et al. (2008) Proc. Nutr. Soc. 67, 38E-3893  
2. FSAI (2008) [https://www.fsai.ie/publications/folic\\_acid.pdf](https://www.fsai.ie/publications/folic_acid.pdf)  
3. McDowell E et al. (2014) J Public Health 37, 57-63

Figure 2: Levels of folic acid in fortified foods, 2007 vs 2014

Food Category	2007	2014
	Median (range) µg/100g	Median (range) µg/100g
Cereals (n=6)	200 (111-400)	212 (0-741)
Cereal bars (n=3)	135 (90-200)	135 (90-290)
Fat spreads and oils (n=4)	1,000 (500-1,000)	0 (0-500)*
Milks (n=2)	70 (70-70)	70 (70-70)
Miscellaneous (n=7)	30 (18-200)	18 (0-200)

\*p<0.05

Figure 3a: Example of a meal plan, 2007 vs 2014

2007	2014
Folic Acid Fortified Food	Folic Acid Fortified Food
Portion size (weight in g or ml)	Portion size (weight in g or ml)
<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>
Breakfast cereal (40g)	Breakfast cereal (40g)
Orange juice (200ml)	Orange juice (200ml)
Fortified milk (100ml)	Fortified milk (100ml)
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
Baked beans (150g)	Baked beans (150g)
Fat spread (20g)	Fat spread (20g)
<b>Snack</b>	<b>Snack</b>
Cereal bar (23g)	Cereal bar (23g)
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>
394	388

Figure 3b: Example of a meal plan, 2007 vs 2014

2007	2014
Folic Acid Fortified Food	Folic Acid Fortified Food
Portion size (weight in g or ml)	Portion size (weight in g or ml)
<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>
Breakfast cereal (40g)	Breakfast cereal (40g)
Orange juice (200ml)	Orange juice (200ml)
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
Fat spread (12g)	Fat spread (12g)
Fortified milk (30ml)	Fortified milk (30ml)
<b>Snack</b>	<b>Snack</b>
Flavoured milk drink (200ml)	Flavoured milk drink (200ml)
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>
439	74

### 5. Conclusions

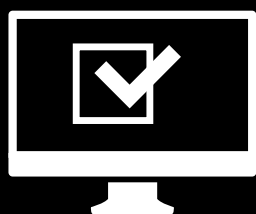
- Numbers, types and brands of foods voluntarily fortified with folic acid (including level of folic acid provided) are continuously changing;
  - Very difficult for women to meet their needs via food intake alone;
- Some women completely excluded from the benefits of voluntary folic acid fortification due to their food choice;
- If food, other than food supplements, is to be a means of delivery of the folic acid needs of women of childbearing age, mandatory fortification of a staple food, e.g. bread, may be a better approach;
  - However, this would require amendment of current legislative controls on voluntary fortification.

The research work on both topics was carried out by the FSAI in conjunction with the University of Ulster, Coleraine. (Oonagh Lyons, Frances Douglas, Shauna Kiehlty, Gillian Ussher, Karen Emerson and Prof. Mary Flynn)



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- Guidance Document: Nitrate and Nitrite Sampling of Meat Products (update)
- Factsheet: High Pressure Processing of Foods



## Public Consultation on the EFSA Strategy 2020

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is asking its partners and stakeholders to help shape the Authority's strategic direction for the next five years. The draft EFSA Strategy 2020 is open for public consultation, during which time interested parties are invited to comment on and contribute to the document.

The document examines a number of emerging "drivers of change" that will directly influence the direction of EFSA's work between now and 2020. These include: the continuing globalisation of food production and trade; the emergence of new risks and hazards that ask difficult questions of risk assessors and scientists; the evolution of scientific knowledge and proliferation of new sources of data; and expectations from



society for public bodies to be more open in the way they work.

Written comments are invited by 20 November 2015, using an electronic template available on the EFSA website. For further information, or to comments on the draft strategy document, see: <http://bit.ly/1Lst6fz>.



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