

FSAI NEWS

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Features in focus



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FSAI Meets Small Food Business Start-ups in Cork

All food businesses, big or small, whether operating from a business premises, in the home or from a mobile unit or food stall, must be aware of the legislation regarding food hygiene and food safety. Ultimately, food businesses are responsible for ensuring the food they produce is safe.

In order to share information and advice with small food business operators and those considering setting up a small food business, the FSAI combined all the relevant topics into an event which covered everything a food business needs to know about setting up. The **Small Food Business Start-up Seminar**, which took place in Cork on 9 October,

was a one-stop-shop for anyone thinking about starting a small food business and/or who has recently gone into business in the food sector.

Experts from the FSAI outlined the information resources available from the FSAI, food safety training requirements, how to set up your food safety management system, labelling regulations and what you need to do in the case of a product recall. Bernadine Scanlan, Acting Principal Environmental Health Officer, detailed how to register your food business and what to expect from an inspection. Eddie O'Neill, Artisan Food Specialist, Teagasc, outlined what is involved in developing a new food product and David Walsh, Kartworld, Watergrasshill, Co. Cork, outlined his recent experience in setting up a food business.

To provide further information, the Health and Safety Authority, Cork Local Enterprise Offices and Cork County Council had stands in the exhibition area where they offered advice to attendees.



Pictured at the event in Cork were (l-r): Eddie O'Neill, Artisan Food Specialist, Food Industry Development Department, Teagasc; Bernadine Scanlan, Acting Principal Environmental Health Officer, HSE and Raymond Ellard, Director of Consumer Protection, FSAI.



Alan Reilly

Alan Reilly
Chief Executive

Food Allergens – More to be Revealed

Each day a small but significant proportion of Ireland's population must plan their meals, carefully selecting what they or those in their care will eat. Strict attention to the foods and the ingredients in the foods they choose to eat is a constant necessity and a way of life. For those amongst us who have food allergies, mistakes can result in severe allergic reactions, which can prove fatal. While precise numbers are unavailable, it is estimated that between 2 to 4% of our population have a clinically diagnosed allergic reaction to certain foods. Of further concern is that the group with highest prevalence of food allergen response is children.

Managing one's diet is a continual challenge for most of us, for those with food allergies and a fear of serious reaction, the challenge is all the more crucial. What are simple choices for most of us when supermarket shopping becomes more of a chore when avoiding allergenic foods is the priority. Many foods available nowadays are processed and contain multiple ingredients. Eating out in some form every week is the norm for most of us. Yet for allergen sufferers, the constant checking for allergenic ingredients can make the experiences of shopping or dining out a grind rather than a pleasure.

Some relief is in the pipeline. While up to now food labelling rules required that allergens are clearly indicated on packaged foods, from December, that requirement will extend to "loose" foods, that is unpackaged foods or drinks sold directly to consumers from shops, stalls, canteens, restaurants and virtually all food premises. Clear information about any of the 14 prescribed allergenic foods will have to be available in written format at the point of presentation, sale or supply. The requirements also extend to distance selling such as via websites or catalogues. This is good news for allergen sufferers, as it should take some of the anxiety out of shopping and eating out, but it will make them all the more dependent on food business owners who will need to make sure the information they provide is accurate. Choosing foods which are allergen free cannot be a matter of guesswork.

Even amongst experienced food business operators, who have been required to put allergen labelling on packaged foods, mistakes occur. The FSAI is frequently notified or discovers foods which are improperly labelled regarding food allergens. Recalls and withdrawals of packaged foods for this reason average two per month. This can be the result of a failure in the review and approval of product labels, use of incorrect packaging, inadequate separation of foods or tools during manufacture or failure to check supplier certificates. The challenge of allergen management and allergen information will become all the greater, now that providing accurate allergen information in writing is being extended to a much wider sector. The FSAI will make guidance available to assist in implementing the new rules.

Allergen management by the food industry and regulators still faces some practical challenges. For instance, allergens may be present in foods at low levels, a result of cross-contamination in the manufacturing plant. In such instances, the presence of the allergen will not be declared on the label as it was not intentionally added as an ingredient. The effect on allergic consumers can be just as severe. Low level cross-contamination may not result in reactions, but until the scientific evidence is available and accepted, zero tolerance for undeclared allergens will remain. For this reason, the FSAI has posed a number of food allergen related questions the European Food Safety Authority, one of which is to make recommendations for threshold concentrations of each allergen in food that would provide an acceptable level of protection for at-risk consumers.

The possible presence of allergens as a result of cross-contamination in a production plant has led to the adoption of precautionary labelling by many food companies. Whilst this might offer them some legal protection, the net result can often be to confuse consumers as to what is actually safe to eat, or cause them to ignore labels thus increasing their risk or unnecessarily limit the choice of foods available. This practice of placing voluntary information regarding the possible presence of allergens in food may be regulated for in the future.

For the moment, we can welcome the new rules which are intended to make life easier for people who have food allergies. For the regulation to succeed as it is intended, food business operators will need to become familiar with the needs of allergy sufferers, and take due care that the information they must provide for foods sold "loose" or unpackaged is scrupulously accurate. The FSAI and our official agencies, in particular the environmental health service of the HSE, will work with the food sector to ensure a smooth transition as possible in the adoption of the new practices.

Allergenic ingredients (including those carried over in processing aids, additives and solvents) must be indicated on the label of a foodstuff. The full list of allergenic ingredients is available at: http://bit.ly/allergen_list.

New Training Resources for Food Businesses

Level 1 – Food Safety Training Skills Cards

The FSAI has developed training skills cards based on the food safety skills outlined in its 'Guide to Food Safety Training Level 1 – Induction Skills'. The cards are designed to be a training aid for food business trainers and can be used as the basis for a training programme, as a recap activity at the end of a training course or as a refresher training exercise at any time.

The packs of cards come in a variety of colours and each pack contains 24 cards with statements on both sides. For each card, trainees need to determine which statement is the 'correct' one or the 'most correct' one. All packs contain the same information on the cards. Depending on the number of trainees in a training session, food business trainers can decide whether to use one pack or a number of packs.

Each pack of cards comes with a comprehensive explanation sheet that:

- details which statements are the 'correct' or 'most correct' and outlines points for the trainer to highlight and discuss
- gives tips on how food businesses can customise the training specifically for their business needs
- gives suggestions on how to use the cards with a small group using just one pack or with larger groups using a number of packs
- explains how to check and monitor that trainees are implementing the training skills in the workplace



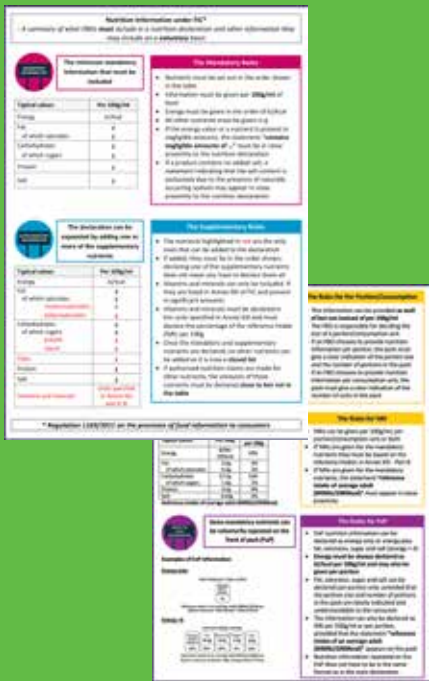
A cost of €7.50 applies to each pack of cards. To purchase a pack, or for more information, please contact our advice-line on 1890 33 66 77.

E-learning Resource on Nutrition Information

A new e-learning module on 'Nutrition Information under FIC' (Regulation 1169/2011) has just been published on our website. It is designed to guide food businesses through the new rules on nutrition labelling requirements and clearly explains:

- mandatory nutrition labelling requirements that must be declared
- other information that may be included on a voluntary basis
- key dates when the legislation applies to food businesses
- foods that are exempt from the requirements of the legislation

The module contains a number of exercises that give users the opportunity to check compliance of sample labels against the requirements of the legislation. There are a number of supporting documents available to download, as well as a comprehensive summary sheet of the rules. The module takes about 20-30 minutes to complete but doesn't have to be completed in one sitting. To access the module click onto: www.fsaie.ie/food_businesses/food_safety_training/online.html



Pat O'Mahony, Chief Specialist in Food Technology represented the FSAI at the meeting.

FSAI attends European Parliament Workshop on Novel Foods

Novel foods are foods and food ingredients that have not been on the EU market to a significant degree prior to 15 May 1997 and which must be authorised before being placed on the market. The Economy and Science Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) of the European Parliament is currently examining a proposal to revise the novel food legislation.

The ENVI Committee held a workshop on 7 October at the European Parliament in Brussels where speakers from the Council, the European Commission, the food industry, consumer groups and Member State regulatory authorities presented their views on the existing legislation and its proposed revision. As a Member State with considerable experience in assessing novel food dossiers, the FSAI was asked to provide a perspective from the regulatory point of view along with its counterpart from the Council Presidency, Italy.

To view the full workshop online, please see: bit.ly/ENVI0ct14

Zoonoses in Ireland for 2011 and 2012

Zoonoses are diseases and infections which are naturally transmittable, typically through food, water or direct contact, between vertebrate animals and humans. Each year, the FSAI publishes a report on zoonoses in Ireland. This report brings together the results of thousands of tests carried out nationwide on samples of food and feed, as well as tests on material of animal or human origin, in an effort to determine the pattern and extent of infection by zoonotic pathogens transmitted to humans from animals.

Since 2010, the Zoonoses Report for Ireland has been streamlined to an online publication that is easier to interrogate and navigate. The most recent data for Ireland covers 2011 and 2012, a summary of which is presented below.

Campylobacteriosis

Campylobacteriosis continued to be the most commonly reported zoonoses in Ireland (Fig 1). Eleven outbreaks were reported over the two years, with person-to-person and foodborne transmission routes identified (Fig 2). However, with Campylobacter most human cases are not part of outbreaks. Broilers were a significant reservoir of infection with 80.6% of broilers and 35% of broiler meat positive for *Campylobacter*. Species identified

from broilers included *Campylobacter jejuni*, *Campylobacter coli* and *Campylobacter lari*. *C. jejuni* was identified in 2.3% of broiler meat isolates, however, the species of the remaining isolates was unknown. *Campylobacter* was detected in other animals including cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and horses; all isolates were identified as *C. jejuni*.

Salmonellosis

The number of human salmonellosis cases was similar for both years (Fig 1). Nineteen salmonellosis outbreaks were reported over 2011 and 2012 (Fig 2). Known transmission routes included person-to-person, foodborne and animal contact. *Salmonella* Typhimurium was the most common serotype

identified from human isolates, followed by *Salmonella* Enteritidis. *Salmonella* was found predominantly in poultrymeat and pork (Fig 3). Serotypes identified in pork and poultrymeat included the same serotypes identified from humans. Animal reservoirs for *Salmonella* included cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, horses, dogs, birds and goats. Serotypes identified from animals were mostly *Salmonella* Dublin and *S. Typhimurium*. Antimicrobial resistance in *Salmonella* isolated from humans and animals was highest towards ampicillin, sulphonamides and tetracyclines.

VTEC

There was a 95% increase in the number of verocytotoxinogenic *Escherichia coli* (VTEC)

notifications in 2012 compared to 2011 (Fig 1). The number of reported VTEC outbreaks almost doubled from 2011 (51 outbreaks) to 2012 (97 outbreaks) (Fig 2). The most commonly identified transmission route was person-to-person, while waterborne transmission was the second most common. In Ireland outbreaks involving VTEC are actively investigated with screening of contacts of cases. The majority of VTEC serotypes from humans were O157, O26 and O145. Testing of foodstuffs in 2011 also detected these serotypes in fresh beef, minced beef and beef preparations.

Listeriosis

Seven cases of human listeriosis were reported in 2011 which increased to 11 in 2012 (Fig 4). One listeriosis outbreak was reported in 2012. Foodstuffs positive for *Listeria monocytogenes* included ready-to-eat beef, pork and poultrymeat products, fish and fishery products, dairy products and ready-to-eat salads (Fig 3). In animals, *Listeria monocytogenes* was found in cattle and sheep.

Cryptosporidiosis

There was a 30% increase in the number of human cryptosporidiosis cases from 2011 to 2012 (Fig 1). Exposure to farm animals or their faeces was reported as a common risk factor among cases for both years. Individuals with private water supplies also appeared to be at increased risk; however, these persons are more likely to be rural dwellers who may also have a higher risk of exposure to farm animals and rural environments. There were 30 cryptosporidiosis outbreaks in 2011 and 24 in 2012 (Fig 2). Person-to-person spread was the most common mode of outbreak transmission, followed by animal contact.

Tuberculosis

The decreasing trend of human tuberculosis (TB) in Ireland continued over 2011 and 2012 (Fig 1). *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* was identified in over 90% of culture confirmed cases. A total of 12 TB outbreaks were reported over the two year period (Fig 2). The prevalence of bovine TB in cattle herds was similar for both years (4.2% in 2011 and 4.3% in 2012). *Mycobacterium* was also found in deer, badgers, sheep and poultry; the majority of isolates were identified as *Mycobacterium bovis*.

Toxoplasmosis

The incidence of human toxoplasmosis remained steady over the two years (Fig 4), with sheep identified as a reservoir for *Toxoplasma gondii*.

Other

The number of human leptospirosis cases was similar for both years (Fig 4). Yersiniosis, Q fever and brucellosis were among the least prevalent zoonoses reported in Ireland in both years (Fig 4). Low prevalence in animals was also reported for *Yersinia* and *Coxiella* (Q fever) in cattle, while *Brucella* was not detected in any of the cattle herds tested. No human cases of trichinellosis were reported while a small proportion (<1%) of foxes were positive for *Trichinella spiralis*. No human cases of echinococcosis were reported for either year and testing of foxes in 2011 was negative.

No new human cases of vCJD were reported in either year, while a total of six BSE cases were reported over the two year period. The number of sheep positive for scrapie was lower in 2012 (12 cases) compared to 2011 (40 cases).

Zoonoses reports and data, up to and including 2012, for Ireland are available on our website at: http://bit.ly/zoonoses_reports.

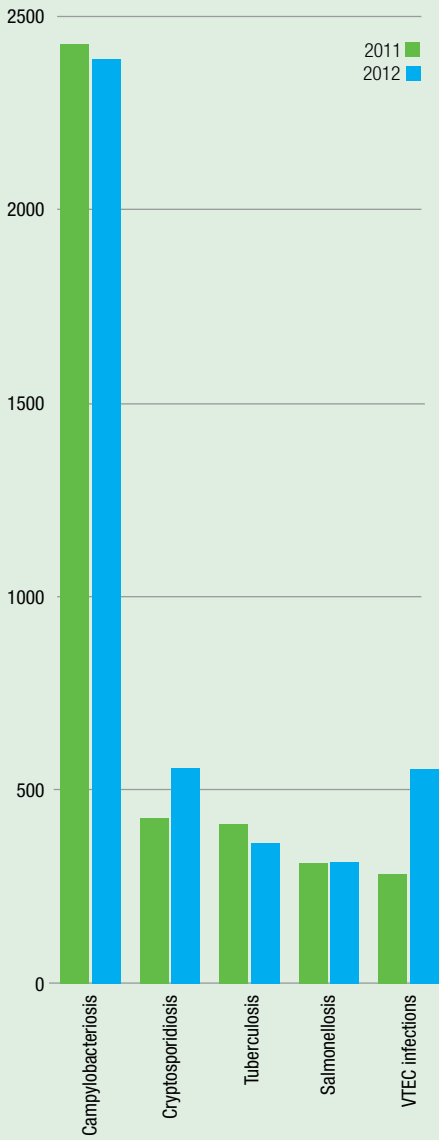


Figure 1: Most prevalent human zoonotic infections reported in Ireland

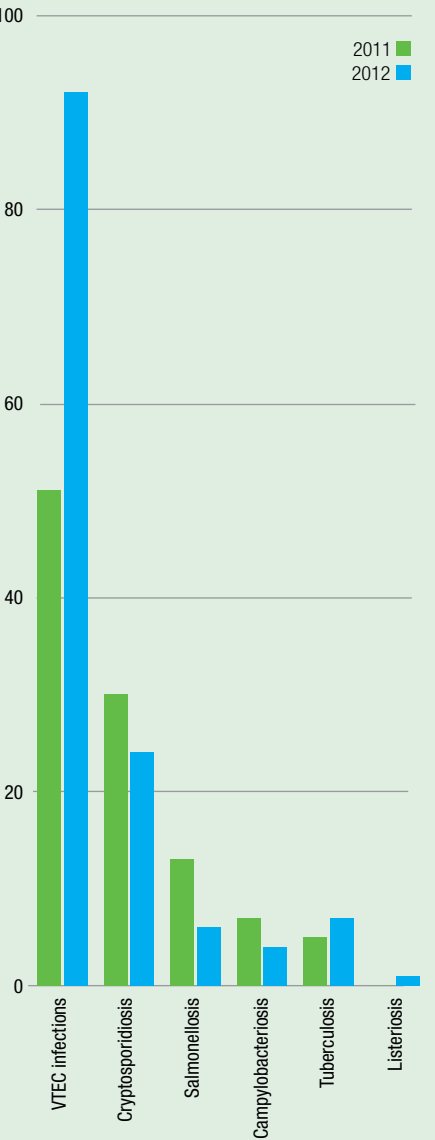


Figure 2: Zoonotic outbreaks

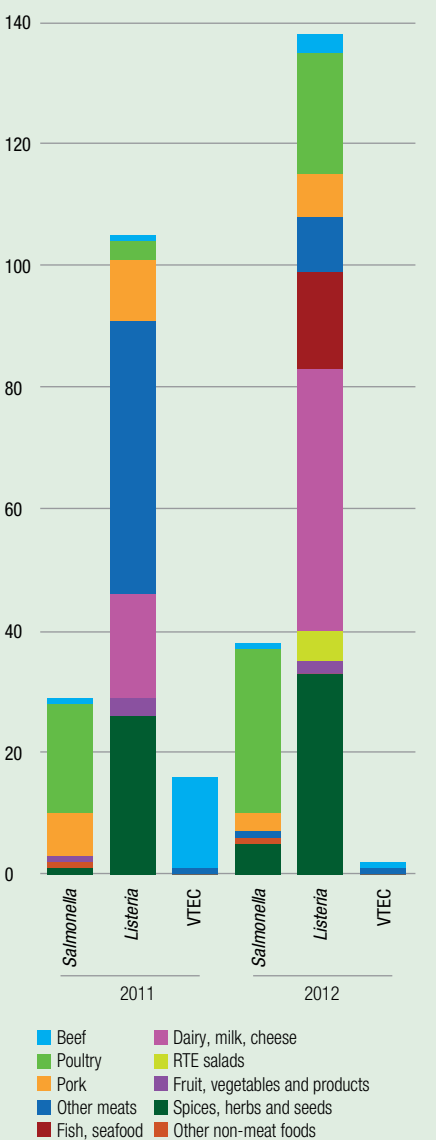


Figure 3: Zoonotic bacteria in foods

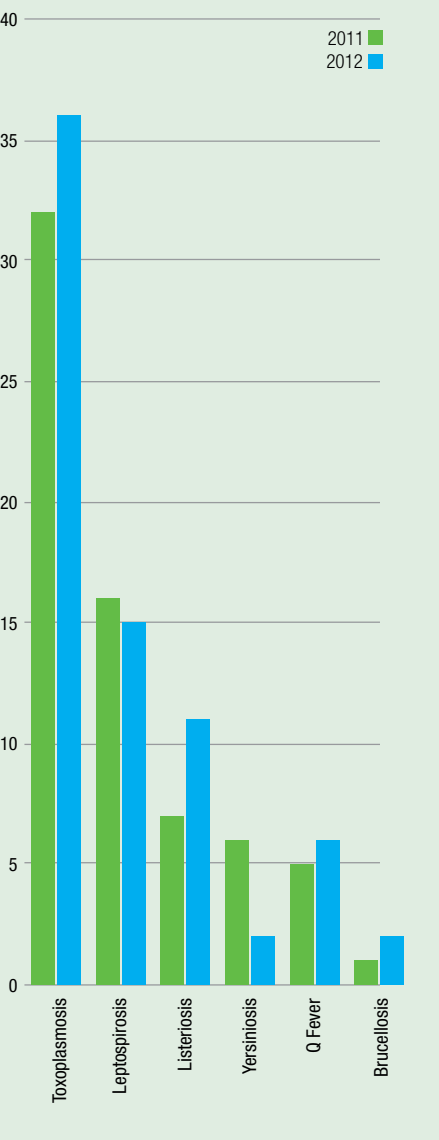


Figure 4: Less prevalent human zoonotic infections reported in Ireland



Legislation Update



FSAI Act Amended

The Department of Health has published the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 (Amendment of First and Second Schedules) Order, 2014 (S.I. No. 390 of 2014). The FSAI Act places responsibility on the FSAI to enforce food legislation which is either

- a) specified in Part I, II or III of the First Schedule of the FSAI Act, or
- b) is an Act or Statutory Instrument made under the European Communities Act, 1972, and deemed to be food legislation.

This S.I. amends the list of legislation which is specified in the First Schedule of the Act in order to reflect newly introduced EU Regulations or newly published Irish Statutory Instruments which transpose EU legislation, or which revokes and replaces previous Statutory Instruments.

The S.I. also amends the Second Schedule by removing the National Consumer Agency as one of the official agencies for the purposes of the Act as it no longer provides any food law enforcement services.

Increased Official Controls

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 1021/2014 of 26 September 2014 amending Annex I to Regulation (EC) No. 669/2009 implementing Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the increased level of official controls on imports of certain feed and food of non-animal origin was published in the EU Official Journal at the end of September.

Commission Regulation (EC) No. 669/2009 lays down rules concerning the increased level of official controls to be carried out on imports of feed and food of non-animal origin listed in its Annex I at the points of entry into the territories referred to in Annex I to Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004. As a result of satisfactory results from controls performed at EU borders on the basis of this Regulation, the EU has removed frozen strawberries and pomelos from China from the list of foods subject to an increased level of official border controls. However, the following commodities are now added to the list and will be subject to reinforced border checks: aubergines, Chinese celery and yardlong beans (food) originating from Cambodia at a control frequency of physical and identity checks of 50% due to the possible occurrence of pesticide residues; sesamum seeds (food) originating from India at a control frequency of 20% due to their possible contamination with *Salmonella*; and dragon fruit (food) from Vietnam at a control frequency of 20% due to the possible occurrence of pesticide residues.

Okra and Curry Leaves from India

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 885/2014 laying down specific conditions applicable to the import of okra and curry leaves from India and repealing Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 91/2013 has been published in the EU Official Journal.

Article 53 of Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 on the general principles of food law provides for the possibility to adopt appropriate EU emergency measures for feed and food imported from a third country in order to protect human health, animal health and the environment. An increased frequency of official controls on import has been established for more than two years on curry leaves (*Bergera/ Murraya koenigii*) and for nearly two years on okras from India as regards pesticide residues. However, the results from these controls show a continuous high frequency of non-compliance with maximum residue levels of pesticide residues established in EU legislation. These results provide evidence that the import of these foods constitutes a risk for human health.

This Regulation shall therefore apply to consignments of:

- a) okra (food, fresh and frozen) originating in or consigned from India
- b) curry leaves (food, herbs) originating in or consigned from India
- c) compound food, containing any of the food referred to in (a) and (b) in a quantity above 20%.

The Regulation does not apply to consignments of food which are destined to a private person for personal consumption and use only. In case of doubt, the burden of proof lies with the recipient of the consignment.

This Regulation requires that all consignments of curry leaves and okra from India must be accompanied by a certificate stating that the products have been sampled and analysed for the presence of pesticide residues and have been found compliant with EU legislation. The consignments must also be accompanied by a health certificate which must be completed, signed and verified by an authorised representative of the competent authority of the country of origin or the competent authority of the country where the consignment is consigned from if that country is different from the country of origin.

Poppy Seeds and Poppy Seed Products

Commission Recommendation 2014/662/ EU (OJ L271, p96, 12/09/2014) of 10 September 2014 on good practices to prevent and to reduce the presence of opium alkaloids in poppy seeds and poppy seed products has been published by the EU.

Poppy seeds are obtained from the opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum L.*) and are used in bakery products, on top of dishes, in fillings of cakes and in desserts and to produce edible oil. The opium poppy plant contains narcotic alkaloids such as morphine and codeine. Poppy seeds do not contain the opium alkaloids or contain only very low levels, but can become contaminated with alkaloids as a result of insect damage, or through external contamination of the seeds during harvesting, when particles of dust from the straw (including capsule wall) adhere to the seeds.

Commission Recommendation 2014/662/ EU recommends that EU Member States take measures to ensure that good practices for preventing and reducing the presence of opium alkaloids in poppy seeds and poppy seed products are implemented by all operators involved in the production and processing of poppy seeds. The Annex to the Recommendation sets out measures which can be taken at various stages, namely:

- good agricultural practices to prevent the presence of opium alkaloids during growing, harvesting and storage
- good practices to prevent the presence of opium alkaloids during processing
- recommended pre-treatments and processing methods reducing the alkaloid content of poppy seeds and poppy seed products.



Fruit Juices

The EU has published Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No. 1040/2014 amending Council Directive 2001/112/EC relating to fruit juices and certain similar products intended for human consumption.

This amending Regulation adapts Annex I to Directive 2001/112/EC. Annex I relates to product names, definitions of products and characteristics of fruit juices and nectars. It also includes a list of treatments and substances which are authorised for use in the production of products which fall within the scope of the Directive. Due to technical developments, new substances for clarification of juices are now available. Those substances are plant proteins derived from either wheat, peas or potatoes, which can be an alternative to the currently authorised substance gelatine, derived from animal products. This amending Regulation adds these substances to point 3 of Part II of Annex I to Directive 2001/112/EC, thus authorising their use.

New Consultation on the Fishery and Aquaculture Products Commercial Designation List

All EU Member States are required to publish a list of the commercial designations together with their scientific names of fishery and aquaculture products, accepted in their territory. This list must indicate the scientific name for each species, its name in the official language or languages of the Member State and, where applicable, any other name or names accepted or permitted locally or regionally. Commercial designations must be used when marketing fish in the EU and are provided to consumers at the point of retail. The inclusion of the common names or local names of fish or aquaculture products in the commercial designation list helps ensure that consumers are provided with accurate and consistent information and are then able to make informed choices.

On 13 December 2014, the current legislation, S.I. 320 of 2003 and its associated list of commercial designations, will be replaced with EU Regulation No. 1379/2013. It is therefore now an appropriate time to ensure that the commercial designation list includes all the relevant species.

The consultation can be accessed on our website at: <http://www.fsai.ie/consultations> and comments are required by **Wednesday 26 November 2014**.



New Regulations

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

- S.I. No. 290 of 2014**
European Union (Protection of Animals at the Time of Killing) (Amendment) Regulations, 2014
- S.I. No. 343 of 2014**
European Communities (Official Controls on the Import of Food of Non-Animal Origin for Pesticide Residues) (Amendment) (No.3) Regulations, 2014
- S.I. No. 361 of 2014**
European Communities (Animal Remedies) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations, 2014
- S.I. No. 390 of 2014**
Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 (Amendment of First and Second Schedules) Order, 2014

Updated Guidance Notes

Microbiological Criteria – Guidance on Enforcement



Food business operators must make sure that the food they handle, supply or process complies with any relevant microbiological criteria set in Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2073/2005. As an aid to assessing a

food business operator's compliance with the Regulation, the FSAI, working with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, the Health Service Executive, the Local Authority Veterinary Service and the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, has produced Guidance Note No. 27 on the enforcement of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2073/2005.

Guidance Note No. 27 contains a checklist for assessing compliance along with supporting information for the checklist. The checklist guides enforcement officers to look at how a food business operator has:

1. identified relevant criteria
2. sampled and tested food
3. taken action if test results were unsatisfactory
4. analysed trends in test results
5. conducted environmental monitoring
6. complied with the Regulation's labelling requirement for minced meat and meat preparations
7. demonstrated compliance with criteria throughout the shelf-life.

The Guidance Note also contains information specific to the main food business types: primary producers, manufacturers and packers, wholesalers and distributors, caterers and retailers.

The steps a food business operator must take in order to comply with the Regulation will vary depending on the activities it carries out. Some food businesses need to sample and test food at the frequency set in the Regulation, while others may simply be required to maintain good hygiene practice and adequate temperature control, and some may only handle food for which no relevant criteria are set in the Regulation. As such, enforcement officers consider food businesses on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the type of activities they carry out, when assessing their compliance with this Regulation.



Guidance Note No. 27 is available from the publications section of our website, www.fsai.ie. To order a hardcopy, please contact our advice-line on 1890 33 66 77 or info@fsai.ie.

Guidance Note No. 3 Revised

The FSAI recently revised its Guidance Note No. 3: Guidelines for the Interpretation of Results of Microbiological Testing of Ready-to-Eat Food Placed on the Market (Revision 1).

Guidance Note No. 3 sets guideline microbiological limits for pathogens, microbial toxins, hygiene indicators and aerobic colony counts. These guideline limits



can be used to assess the acceptability of ready-to-eat food, if legal microbiological criteria do not exist for the particular microorganism of interest. Guidance Note No. 3 is intended to be used by food business

operators, enforcement officers and food testing laboratories.

The revised guideline limits were adapted from the UK's Health Protection Agency Guidelines for assessing the microbiological safety of ready-to-eat food placed on the market, while taking into account legal microbiological criteria set in Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2073/2005.

Meeting of the Food Fraud Task Force

The final meeting for 2014 of the FSAI Food Fraud Task Force took place on 27 September. The meeting was addressed by Ms Bérengère Dréno from the Economic Crime Unit of Europol. Ms Dréno updated the task force members on Operation OPSON, a Europol INTERPOL joint operation targeting fake and substandard food and beverages.

In June of this year, 33 countries, including Ireland, attended a meeting in Madrid during which countries presented the final results of the operational phase of OPSON III and commenced planning for OPSON IV.

Operation OPSON was initiated in 2011 with 10 participating countries. OPSON III in 2013 welcomed the involvement of 31 countries, among them 18 EU Member States. Conducted throughout December 2013 and January 2014, and supported for the first time by the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Consumers, OPSON III involved police, customs, national food regulatory



Attending the meeting were (l-r): Bérengère Dréno, Economic Crime Unit Europol; Peter Whelan, FSAI; Paul Meehan, Detective Garda, National Bureau of Criminal Investigation; and James Stack, Investigation and Prosecution Division, Revenue and Customs.

bodies and partners from the private sector. Checks were carried out at shops, markets, airports, seaports and private homes. It involved 8,660 inspections; 1,813 cases and 103 suspects were reported. In total, 5,661

tonnes of food and 681,000 litres of beverages were seized or withdrawn from markets. Ireland will participate for the first time in OPSON IV, which takes place later this year.



National Q Mark Awards 2014

The FSAI proudly supported the National Q Mark Awards 2014, which were held on 26 September in Dublin. The National Q Mark Awards recognises companies and organisations that have successfully implemented their Q Mark programme of choice. The photograph shows Irene Collins (Managing Director, Excellence Ireland Quality Association, third from left), Bernard Hegarty (FSAI, fourth from left), and Minister Richard Bruton (fourth from right) presenting the National Title for Hygiene and Food Safety to the Glanmore Foods team.

Seminar on New Allergy Law

"New Allergy Law – What Caterers Need To Know" was the title of an event organised jointly by *safeFood* and the Food Allergy and Food Intolerance Network. The seminar took place on 18 September at Loughry College in Cookstown, Co Tyrone. Pictured at the event were (l-r): Pat O'Mahony, FSAI; Joy Alexander, DARD NI; Michael Walker, Facilitator; Sharon Gilmore FSA NI and David McCleery, Chair IFST NI.



Event Round-up

Taking Care of Business

This event on 16 October was specifically targeted at people thinking of starting a business as well as small business owners and managers. By attending the event, entrepreneurs should have a better understanding of the key regulations that affect them so that they can focus on the main task of running their business. Attendees met experts from a broad range of public bodies in an informal setting and were able to find out about advice and supports available to them from across the public sector.



Attending the event, from left to right, are: Elaine Connolly, FSAI; Richard Bruton, TD, Minister of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; Clodagh Crehan, FSAI; and Ged Nash, TD, Super Junior Minister of State for Business and Employment.



Senator Feargal Quinn is pictured here with Helen Crowley, FSAI, at the TCOB event in Dublin Castle.

This initiative of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation brought together 27 State bodies, which included the FSAI. The event was opened by Minister Richard Bruton. Donal de Buitléir, Director of publicpolicy.ie chaired the first set of presentations and Gina Quinn, CEO of Dublin Chamber of Commerce and Senator Feargal Quinn chaired the remaining sessions.

The FSAI had an information stand at the event, providing information on starting up a food business, food labelling, food safety requirements, food safety legislation and HACCP.

Breakfast Bites

Making Nutrition and Health Claims on Foods

Prof. Mary Flynn, Chief Specialist Public Health, FSAI, outlined what a food business needs to know to make nutrition and health claims on its food products. She explained where to find lists of approved claims, how to figure out if a product can make claims, and what way claims should be worded on the pack.

'Breakfast Bites' are a series of free, informal breakfast meetings for food businesses. For further information on upcoming sessions, see our website at: www.fsai.ie.



John Greene and Emma Buckley, Gourmet Fuel attended the Breakfast Bite on nutrition and health claims.



Attending the Breakfast Bites session were Ronan Gormley, UCD, Carmel Farrell, Teagasc and Gabriella Guede, Merengue



Gerry Finn and Carmel Connolly, Beeline, attended the most recent Breakfast Bite.



Vanessa Cooling and Elaine Connolly, Advice-Line Assistants, FSAI are pictured here with Elaine Fogarty, environmental health officer, North Tipperary.

Who to Talk to Event 2014

The FSAI participated at the 'Who to Talk To' enterprise exhibition, on Wednesday 10 September in the Limerick Institute of Technology Campus, Thurles. The event was aimed at individuals who are considering starting or expanding their business. It provided an opportunity for existing businesses to network and hear about supports and finance available. The event featured over 30 information desks/stands, a funding workshop, keynote address and a showcase of businesses set up in Tipperary over the past 18 months.

Visitors came to our stand requesting information on starting up a food business, food labelling, food safety requirements, food safety legislation and HACCP.

Save the Date!

The Food Safety Consultative Council open meeting will take place on 5 November in Dublin. For further information and to register for the event, please visit our website at: www.fsai.ie/events.



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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 Honey?



Legislation

Compositional and labelling requirements for honey are set out in Directive 2001/110/EC relating to honey. In addition to the specific labelling requirements set out in this Directive, honey must also comply with the general labelling requirements for pre-packed foods set out in Directive 2000/13/EC on the labelling, presentation and advertising of foodstuffs, as amended.

However, food businesses should be aware that from 13 December 2014, new legislation on labelling will apply. Regulation (EU) No. 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers (generally referred to as FIC) will replace Directive 2000/13/EC. This FAQ will deal only with the requirements under this new legislation as all food businesses should be preparing for the changes that will come into effect in December.

Use of the Term 'Honey'

In order to use the term 'honey' a product must meet the requirements set out in Directive 2001/110/EC. 'Honey' is defined as *'the natural sweet substance produced by Apis mellifera bees from the nectar of plants or from secretions of living parts of plants or excretions of plant-sucking insects on the living parts of plants, which the bees*

collect, transform by combining with specific substances of their own, deposit, dehydrate, store and leave in honeycombs to ripen and mature'.

Product Name

- according to origin – blossom or nectar honey; honeydew honey
- according to mode of production – comb honey; chunk honey or cut comb in honey; drained honey; extracted honey; pressed honey; filtered honey
- baker's honey – honey which is suitable for industrial uses or as an ingredient in other foodstuffs which are then processed and may:
 - have a foreign taste or odour, or
 - have begun to ferment or have fermented, or
 - have been overheated.

The product names above can only be used for products that meet the definitions set out in Annex I and must be used in trade as the product name. These names may be replaced by the simple product name 'honey', except in the case of filtered honey, comb honey, chunk honey or cut comb in honey and baker's honey. However:

- in the case of baker's honey, the words 'intended for cooking only' must appear on the label in close proximity to the product name
- except in the case of filtered honey and baker's honey, the product names may be supplemented by information referring to:
 - floral or vegetable origin, if the product comes wholly or mainly from the indicated source and possesses the organoleptic, physico-chemical and microscopic characteristics of the source,
 - regional, territorial or topographical origin, if the product comes entirely from the indicated source,
 - specific quality criteria

Compositional Criteria

Compositional criteria are set out in Annex II to Directive 2001/110/EC as regards sugar, fructose, glucose, moisture and water insoluble content, electrical conductivity, free acid, diastase activity and

hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF) content. It is not permitted to add anything to honey, including additives

Country of Origin

The country or countries of origin where the honey has been harvested must be indicated on the label. However, if the honey originates in more than one Member State or third country that indication may be replaced with one of the following, as appropriate:

- 'blend of EC honeys',
- 'blend of non-EC honeys',
- 'blend of EC and non-EC honeys'.

General Labelling Requirements

In addition to the specific requirements set out for honey in Directive 2001/110/EC, there is certain mandatory information set out in FIC that must appear on the label of all pre-packed foods. In the case of honey, there are certain exemptions from some of these mandatory requirements and only the following information must be indicated:

- the name of the food – this will be the name as specified in Directive 2001/110/EC
- the net quantity of the food
- the best before date
- any special storage conditions and/or conditions of use
- the name or business name and address of the food business operator

Further Information

You can access the legislation on honey at www.fsai.ie/legislation and get more information and guidance on the new labelling rules at <http://bit.ly/1qUGv7s>.

New Appointments to the FSAI Board



Margaret Moran was appointed in June as a member of the FSAI Board. Margaret was Head of the Home Economics Department and Lecturer in Food Studies in the former St. Catherine's College of Education for Home Economics. For many years she provided advisory services to Fáilte Ireland and worked as a Regional Food Advisor with Bord Bia. Her post-graduate qualifications include M.Sc. Agr (Food Science) from University College Dublin, Certificate in Food Safety from University College Dublin, Diploma in Food Policy from City University, London and Advanced Culinary Skills Certificate from Dublin Institute of Technology. She is a member of the International Federation for Home Economics and previously chaired the Food Security and Nutrition Programme Committee. Margaret currently provides consultancy services to various institutions and organisations within teacher education, further education and consumer education.



Ciaran Byrne is the most recent appointment to the FSAI Board, joining in July this year. He has served as a member of the HSE's Dublin North East Regional Health Forum (2009-2011), the Governing Authority of Dublin City University (2011-2014) and the university's Risk Management Committee. A public representative on Fingal County Council (2001-2014), he was Mayor in 2009/10, a member of the Council's Audit Committee (2011-2014), and a member of the Corporate Policy Group. He chaired the Fingal County Development Board (2004-2009) and was Chairman of the Fingal Leader Partnership (2009-2011). He was a founding member of the Board of the Balbriggan Enterprise and Training Centre 2000-2014. Ciaran has worked in Voluntary Service Overseas in London, in Glockenspiel software engineers and as a partner in STS management consultants in Dublin. Ciaran is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin (Economic and Social Studies) and holds Masters degrees in science, in arts and in media from TCD and IADT.

Recent Publications

The following publications were recently produced by the FSAI:

- Guidance Note No. 3 - Guidelines for the Interpretation of Results of Microbiological Testing of Ready-to-Eat Foods placed on the Market (Rev 1)
- Guidance Note No. 27 on the Enforcement of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2073/2005 on Microbiological Criteria for Foodstuffs
- Checklist to Assess Compliance with Regulation (EC) No. 2073/2005 (GN No. 27)
- Food Safety Authority of Ireland Annual Report 2013
- Údarás Sábháilteachta Bia na hÉireann - Tuarascáil Bhliantúil 2013

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



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