

FSAI NEWS

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Small Food Business Start-up Seminar

The FSAI recently held a free half-day 'Small Food Business Start-Up Seminar' in Galway to assist those working in small food businesses or those who are thinking of setting up a food business. This followed on from the very successful business start-up seminar held in Dublin in January of this year.

Starting a food business involves more than just food safety considerations but sometimes this can be overlooked with all the other things to think about. The aim of this seminar was to bring together experts from the FSAI, the Health Service Executive and Teagasc to provide assistance for new businesses and provide advice on compliance with food safety legislation. In addition, a local business owner, Shoba Thyarala of 'Curry and Spice' Galway, spoke to attendees of her experience setting up a food business; from giving cookery demonstrations of Indian cooking, to now having her ready-prepared meals stocked in local supermarkets.

Topics covered on the day included registering a new food business, food product development, food safety training requirements, setting up a food safety management system, labelling regulations, traceability, the food recall process, inspections and the information resources available from the FSAI. There were also Q&A sessions throughout the morning and experts



Pictured at the seminar were speakers Shoba Thyarala, Curry and Spice; Carol Griffin, Teagasc; Vanessa Cooling and Helen Crowley, FSAI

were available after the event for further discussion. Representatives from the Health and Safety Authority, the Veterinary Services of Galway County Council and the Galway Enterprise Board had stands at the event to answer questions and provide information.

This seminar is one of a number of supports the FSAI provides on an ongoing basis. We have a free Advice-line (1890 336677) and a dedicated online resource to assist anyone looking to start a food business at www.fsai.ie/food_businesses/starting_business.html



Alan Reilly
Chief Executive

Tackling Food Crime – a History Lesson

The oft quoted phrase; “those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” might easily be applied to the food chain, particularly given the renewed attention being paid to food fraud. There are parallels between the recent incidences of food fraud and the malpractices in the food trade in the mid 19th century. Each was followed by new legislation and new arrangements for food control. In 1860, an “Act for Preventing the Adulteration of Articles of Food and Drink” came into force and this was followed in 1875, by the Sale of Food & Drugs Act. This made it an offence to mix, colour, stain or powder any article of food with any ingredient or material, so as to render the article injurious to health, with intent to sell the article in that State, or to sell to the prejudice of the purchaser any article of food which is not of the nature, substance and quality of the article demanded. These provisions are as relevant today as they were 150 years ago, especially given the increasing evidence of counterfeit foods, adulteration or substitution.

The substitution of frozen horsemeat trimmings for frozen beef trimmings uncovered first in Ireland last year is a stark reminder of times past and the menace to consumers and the industry alike, posed by people who set out to deliberately deceive. In the wake of the EU-wide horsemeat incident, the European Commission (EC) and Member State are in the process of strengthening the fight against food crime. Food authorities, police forces and finance authorities are mindful now of the need to work together. The risks to the food supply are no longer those posed by chemical, biological, or physical hazards. Criminal intent or opportunity and intentional violation of the law must be taken into account when assessing risk. Food inspectors have to learn the ways of the criminal and the criminal investigator.

The EC is responding and legal changes are in the pipeline. It has established a special working group of Member States, in which Europol participates, to deal with issues associated with food fraud and to drive the implementation of an action plan on fraudulent food practices. An Administrative Assistance and Cooperation System (AACS) is also being established by the EC which will be an IT network to provide a structured communication mechanism to support the exchange of food fraud information among Member States. The AACS will operate in a similar fashion to the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), a mechanism for Member States to exchange information when unsafe foods pose a risk to consumer health.

Across the EU a second programme of sampling and testing the authenticity of processed meat products is underway. This will be followed by further testing programmes for counterfeit honey and the authenticity of fishery products on the market. To this end, a harmonised laboratory testing regime is currently under discussion and monitoring work is expected to get underway in early 2015.

Some EU Member States, such as Italy and the Netherlands, already have dedicated specialist investigative “food police” units dealing with food crimes. They bring a different perspective to the world of food safety, using police techniques such as intelligence gathering, forensic accounting, financial investigation and communications, digital and internet proficiency. The experience of these countries is now being examined for relevance elsewhere in the EU. Of course Ireland is not without some experience in this field. For many years, the Special Investigation Unit of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine has been active. This Unit has been to the forefront of investigating food crime and enforcing legislation on such matters as animal remedies and animal identification, in respect of the small subset of those involved in the sector who attempt to profit from illegal activities.

More recently in Ireland, the FSAI established a Food Fraud Task Force (FFTF) consisting of representatives from national agencies across different enforcement arms of the State. The FFTF is an advisory group which acts as a coordination and networking group where intelligence and research can be shared at national and international level. The work of the FFTF includes raising awareness, improving mechanisms for monitoring and surveillance and training of enforcement officers. The Special Investigation Unit and the Gardaí are part of the FFTF. The aim is to better coordinate the activities of all stakeholders to provide more enhanced levels of protection.

These new developments should strengthen the work of the considerable inspection and laboratory services already engaged in the enforcement of food law, whose work is coordinated and overseen by the FSAI through the service contract process. The combined work of the staff in the various official agencies ensures the safety and authenticity of food, from primary production to the sale and marketing of food to the consumer. The official agencies and the FSAI also cooperate with the Custom and Excise Service of the Revenue Commissioners and the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation of An Garda Síochána, leading to the recent detection of the marketing of counterfeit vodka and the fraudulent re-labelling of foods with new “use by” dates.

While official food control services are regrouping in response to the new threats to the food supply, the food industry has to do likewise and assess potential food fraud threats. Changes are already taking place. Over the past year, retailers and the meat processing sector introduced meat speciation testing for all processed meat products as part of their routine food safety management programmes. This is a welcome development. The industry also needs to ensure the validity of information provided on labels and for guaranteeing the authenticity of ingredients used in the manufacture of foods.

Uncovering the horsemeat scandal was a clear reminder of times past, of the origins and reasons for our food laws, the need for continuing vigilance and the importance of learning the lessons of history.

FAQ for Hunters of Wild Game

We have added a new FAQ to our website specifically geared towards hunters supplying wild game for human consumption. The FAQ looks at the legal obligations of hunters in terms of food law. It covers registering as a food business, records that must be kept, traceability and general hygiene requirements. It also talks about evisceration and transport of wild game, how it must be stored, what training must be undertaken and who provides this training.

The FAQ points out that hunters of wild game should be aware that since January this year all game supplied to an approved game handling establishment must have

been inspected by a trained hunter and be accompanied by a trained hunter declaration.

You can read the full FAQ at www.fsai.ie/faqs/all_faqs.html

FSAI/Local Authority Veterinary Service National Seminar 2014



Captain Sergio Tirrò, Carabinieri NAS, speaks to Local Authority Veterinary Inspectors

The FSAI held a National Seminar for the local authority veterinary inspectors on the 22 May in the Gibson Hotel, Dublin. The meeting was attended by local authority (LA) veterinary inspectors engaged in official controls on behalf of the FSAI.

Dr Martin Blake, Chief Veterinary Officer, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), opened the meeting and provided an update on the implementation of the Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013. The enforcement of this legislation is the responsibility of both DAFM and the LAs.

Tackling food fraud is one of the main concerns at European level and Captain Sergio Tirrò, Carabinieri NAS (Anti-Fraud Squad) spoke on the Italian systems in place to tackle it. Captain Tirrò outlined examples of food fraud cases in Italy from 2012 and 2013 which resulted in multiple prosecutions and fines of €40 billion.

Dr Chris Thomas, Auditor, National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI), provided an update on the work of the NSAI in relation to official controls in suppliers and manufacturers of food contact material. Mr Andrew Collins, HACCP Specialist, Campden BRI outlined the HACCP flexibility options which can be availed of under the food hygiene legislation. Similarly, Mr Javier Tellechea, Auditor, Food and Veterinary Office (FVO), outlined the areas of the hygiene legislation where flexibility can be applied in establishments under LA supervision. Mr Tellechea provided very useful examples of flexibility currently being applied in establishments across the EU.

Updates were also provided by the FSAI on the new labelling legislation (Food Information to Consumers), on current FVO reports and on food incidents. During the course of the seminar there were a number of question and answer sessions which resulted in useful and constructive discussion of the agenda items outlined above.



New Online Training Module for Food Labelling

The FSAI has published an online module on general food labelling. The module provides information on the general labelling rules that apply to pre-packaged food and highlights the additions and amendments that will be introduced by the new Food Information to Consumers Regulation 1169/2011/EC. This new Regulation will apply from 13 December 2014.

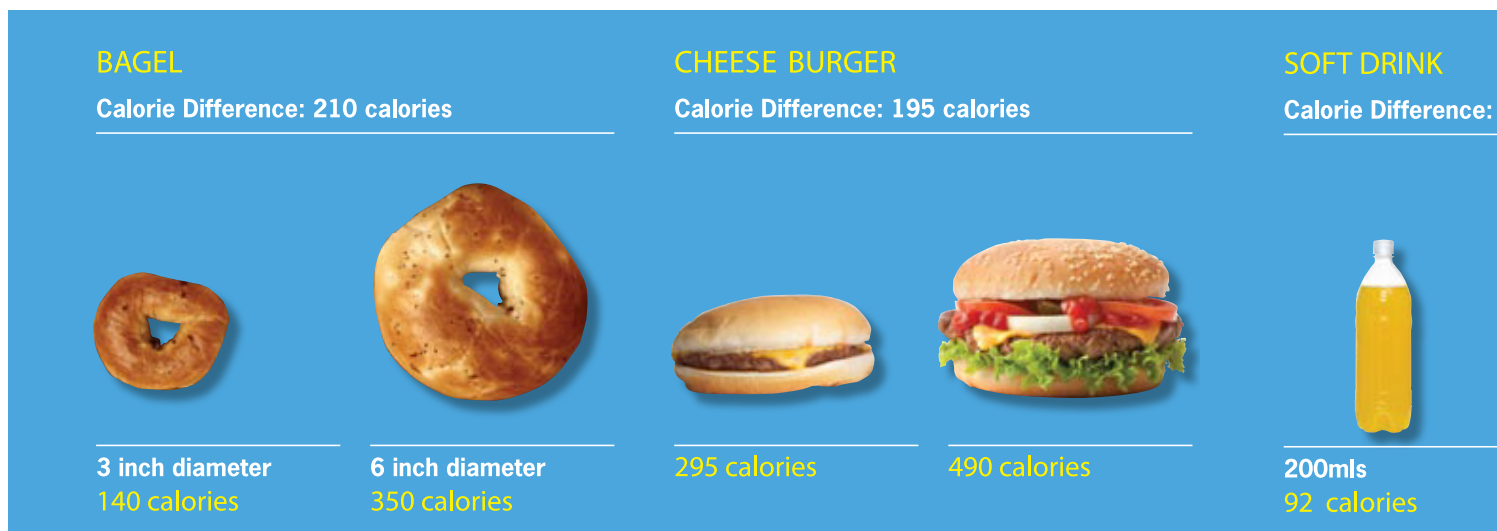


The module contains a number of exercises and activities along with supporting documents that are available to download. It takes about 40-50 minutes to complete but doesn't have to be done all in one sitting. The menu can be used to access where you left off each time.

For more information on how to:

- interpret the principles and objectives of food labelling
- determine compliance with the general labelling requirements
- identify the derogations from general labelling requirements
- construct compliant labels for two pre-packaged products
- identify the changes that will be introduced by the new Food Information to Consumers Regulation 1169/2011,

log on to www.fsai.ie/food_businesses/food_safety_training/online



Putting Calories on Menus

A Call to Action to Enhance and Protect Ireland's Food Environment

The numbers of people in Ireland affected by overweight and obesity have been increasing dramatically since 1990. No age group is protected against this fattening trend. The greatest concern quite rightly focuses on children, teenagers and young adults because overweight at younger ages has the worst impact on health.

However, it is men aged 50 years and older that show how shocking the extent of overweight and obesity has become in Ireland. It is hard to believe that only 13% of this age group remain unaffected by overweight and obesity. The situation is only marginally better in men aged 35 and over, where less than one fifth (19%) are of normal weight. Unfortunately research shows that men in Ireland do not count calories. While women in Ireland are more likely to be calorie-conscious, they are fast catching up with their male counterparts in the overweight and obesity stakes.

There is no single 'silver bullet' solution that will reverse the increasing levels of overweight and obesity in Ireland. A large number of strategies at all levels of society are needed if the rising 'obesity tide' is to be turned around or even just halted.

The increase in overweight and obesity has happened in tandem with big changes in our food environment as a response to the growing numbers of people eating out and 'on-the-go'. Hallmarks of these changes are the massive increase in portion sizes of food and drinks and their availability everywhere at all times.

Thus, our current food environment is dominated by high calorie 'treats' and 'snacks' in huge quantities – often offering better value for money when more is bought.

There is no escape as this type of food is prevalent everywhere - in high streets, train

stations, airports, retail outlets, cinemas etc. Such high calorie foods are often consumed unconsciously. Because they are regarded as a 'treat' or 'snack' no allowances are made for their consumption when it's time for lunch or dinner. There is no doubt that Ireland has become an obesogenic environment - an environment where becoming overweight and obese is much easier than staying slim.

Everyone knows that food plays one part in the obesity crisis, while reduced activity levels in all aspects of life in modern Ireland is also critical. Nonetheless, massive portion sizes of foods high in fat and sugar lead to a consumption of calories way beyond what can be matched by most people's activity levels. Addressing our food environment is a crucial part of the solution.

When food and drink is prepared outside of the home, consumers simply do not know how many calories they contain. Foods and drinks that may be perceived as 'healthy' are often much higher in calories than consumers realise. Putting calories on menus will help consumers make more informed food choices and allow them to keep an eye on their overall consumption of calories.

In 2012, a National Public Consultation on calorie menu labelling found overwhelming demand for this in Ireland where 96% of consumers want this information made available and most (83%) want to see it in all places where food is sold. However, it was clear at this time that the food industry needed support, including technical tools, to get started with calorie menu labelling. A follow-up evaluation among food businesses



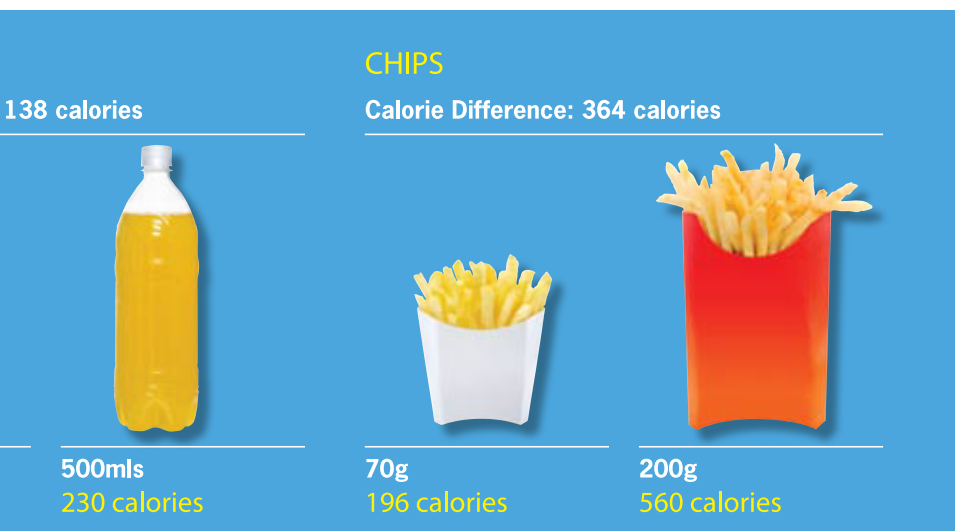
during 2012/13 revealed that 60% of the businesses surveyed were in favour of putting calories on their menus as long as they had the tools to calculate the calories in the food they prepared.

In light of this, the FSAI has developed MenuCal, a calorie calculator designed to enable food businesses to calculate the calorie content of their menu items themselves. MenuCal has an in-built interactive training guide that brings food businesses step-by-step through all the processes involved in putting calories on their menus. MenuCal was launched on 9 April 2014 by the Minister of Health, Dr James Reilly. It is completely free and is available online at www.menucal.ie.

In April and May, 937 users registered and used the MenuCal system (Figure 1). 275 of these users are consumers, demonstrating continued strong consumer interest. This can only result in consumers becoming more 'calorie aware'.

Benefits for your Food Business and How to Get Started

The creation of a healthier food environment in Ireland cannot be achieved without food service businesses. The good news for food businesses is that this will not reduce their revenue. Research shows that putting calories on menu highlights the attraction of smaller portions.



Using MenuCal allows chefs to develop menu items that are lower in calories without compromising on taste. Below is a screenshot from MenuCal showing the difference in calories achieved by substituting yoghurt for mayonnaise in a baked potato – a reduction of 210 kcal (Figure 2).

Over 96% of consumers in Ireland want to see calories on menus to support healthy eating and their efforts to control their weight. Putting calories on menus is giving the consumers what they want – this gives your business a competitive advantage. Using MenuCal ensures you prepare and serve your food the same way every time – this means less waste, tighter stock control and greater profits for your business. Putting calorie values on the food you serve gives smaller portions a whole new appeal – helping your bottom line in more ways than one!

A MenuCal interactive training module is also available to help you get started. Log on to www.menucal.ie to try it for yourself.

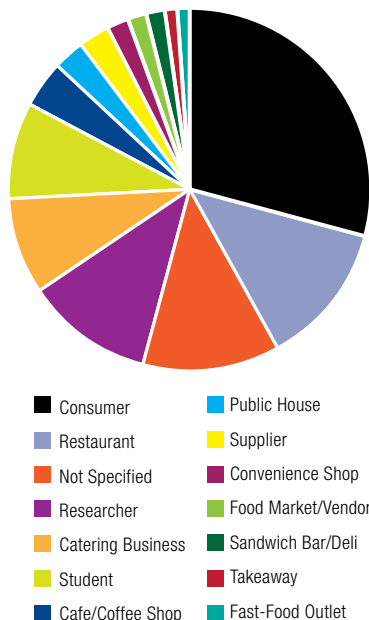


Fig 1: MenuCal Users in April & May 2014



Pictured at the MenuCal launch are: (top) Minister of Health, Dr James Reilly, with Prof Mary Flynn, Chief Specialist, Public Health Nutrition, FSAI, and (bottom) Noel Marrey, Executive Chef with the Moriarty Group, and Prof Mary Flynn, FSAI.

The FSAI plans to host information sessions for food businesses interested in putting calories on their menus and using MenuCal. To register your interest in attending these sessions please email us at menucal@fsai.ie.

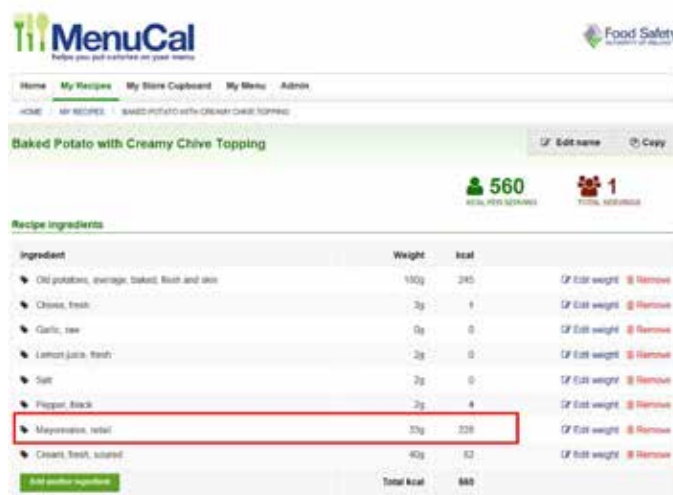
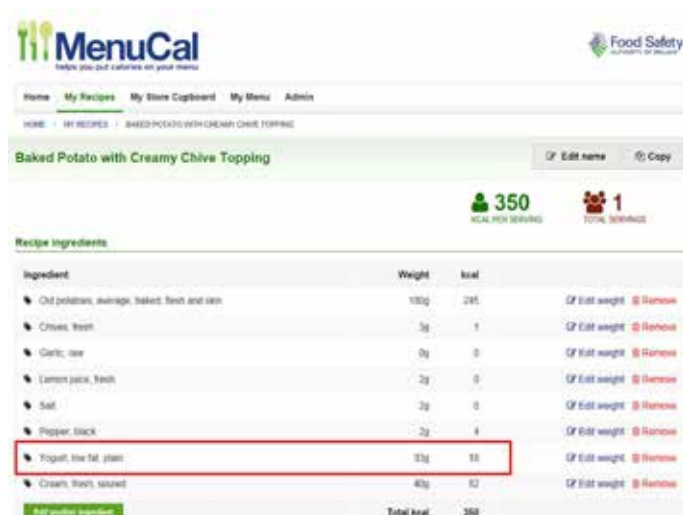


Fig 2: Swapping one ingredient for another can make a huge difference to the calorie content of the dish

Legislation Update



Maximum Levels of Cadmium in Food

Commission Recommendation No. 2014/193/EU of 4 April 2014 on the reduction of the presence of cadmium in foodstuffs and Commission Regulation (EU) No. 488/2014 of 12 May 2014 amending Regulation (EC) No. 1881/2006 as regards maximum levels of cadmium in foodstuffs have been published in the EU Official Journal.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) concluded in its scientific report on 'Cadmium Dietary Exposure in the European Population' that the current exposure to cadmium at population level should be reduced. An exposure assessment which used the new EU Comprehensive Food Consumption database found that for adults, starchy roots and tubers, grains and grain based products and vegetables and vegetable products are major contributors to exposure. For children and adolescents, starchy roots and tubers, grain and grain based products and sugar and confectionary are main contributors to exposure, while for infants and toddlers it is starchy roots and tubers, grains and grain based products, vegetables and vegetable based products, milk and dairy products and

foods for infants and small children that contribute most. The refined exposure assessment shows that overall exposure is the result of not only a few main contributors but the addition of contributions of a number of different food groups.

Maximum levels for cadmium in food have existed in EU legislation since 2001, including cereals, vegetables, meat, fish, seafood, offal and food supplements. Some foodstuffs that are important contributors to the exposure for certain population groups (chocolate and cocoa products, foods for infants and young children) maximum levels have not yet been established. This Regulation establishes maximum levels of cadmium for those foodstuffs.

Chocolate and cocoa powder sold to the final consumer can contain high levels of cadmium and are an important source of human exposure. Three maximum levels have been set for chocolate, where the strictest maximum levels apply to chocolate varieties most eaten by children. A maximum level is also set for cocoa powder destined for direct consumption. A transitional period is introduced to allow cocoa producing countries and the chocolate industry to adapt to these new levels which will apply from 1 January 2019. New maximum levels have also been set for several categories of infant formula and also for processed cereal-based foods and baby foods for infants and young children which will be applicable from 1 January 2015.

Commission Recommendation 2014/193/EU on reducing the existing maximum levels for other important contributors to dietary exposure such as cereals, potatoes and other vegetables has also been adopted to allow a progressive implementation by farmers and food business operators of measures which lower levels

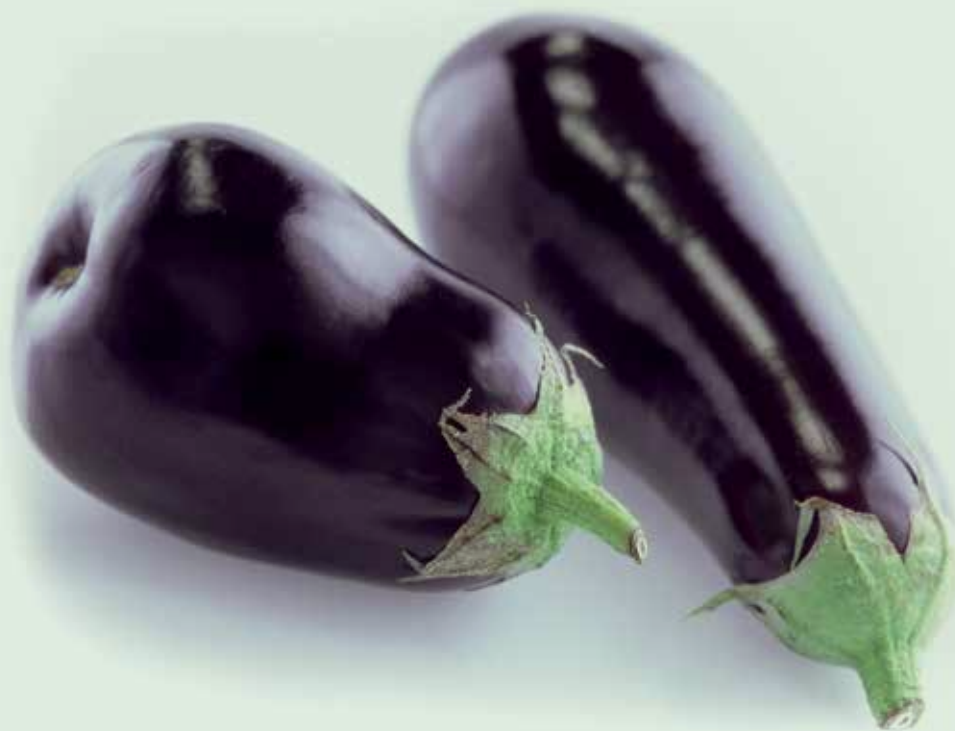
Caramel Colours

Commission Regulation (EU) No. 505/2014 of 15 May 2014 amending Annex II to Regulation (EC) No. 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the use of caramel colours (E150a-d) in beer and malt beverages has been published in the EU Official Journal.

Annex II to Regulation (EC) No. 1333/2008 lays down an EU list of food additives approved for use in foods and their conditions of use. Caramel colours are food colours currently approved for use and listed in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No. 1333/2008. This approval takes into account the Acceptable Daily Intakes (ADI) established by the Scientific Committee for Food in 1987, 1990 and 1996. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) issued an opinion on 3 February 2011 regarding the re-evaluation of the safety of caramel colours as food additives. In that opinion EFSA concluded that the anticipated dietary exposure of child and adult populations may exceed the ADIs for plain caramel (E150a), ammonia caramel (E150c) and sulphite ammonia caramel (E150d). Beer has been found to be the main contributor to exposure in adults and therefore this Regulation amends the conditions of use and establishes maximum use levels for ammonia caramel (E150c) in food subcategory 14.2.1 'beer and malt beverages' to guarantee a high level of protection of human health.

An application for authorisation of the use of caramel colours (E150a-d) in malt beverages was submitted to the EU on 4 June 2013. Beer is not defined in EU legislation and national definitions of beer vary among the Member States. Consequently, a particular product classified as beer in one Member State could be classified as a malt beverage in another. Since there is a technological need for caramel colours (E150a-d) in malt beverages and the use of caramel colours is authorised in beer only, the current situation has a negative impact on the internal market and hinders the free movement of those products. There is a need for caramel colours to restore a consistent colour in malt beverages which has been affected by the production processes and/or to make malt beverages made from pale malts visually more appealing. Roasted malts cannot be used to provide the dark colour since they impart strong flavour which is not appropriate for those products. This Regulation authorises the use of caramel colours in malt beverages as it is considered that such authorisation would not have a significant impact on total exposure to caramel colours.





Certain Fruits and Vegetables Originating in India

Commission Implementing Decision No. 2014/237/EU on measures to prevent the introduction into and the spread within the EU of harmful organisms as regards certain fruits and vegetables originating in India was published on 26 April in the EU Official Journal

This EU Decision prohibits the import into the EU of *Colocasia sp.* (taro, eddo), *Mangifera sp.* (mango), *Momordica sp.* (bitter gourd), *Solanum melongena* (eggplant) and *Trichosanthes sp.* (snake gourd) from India. Due to the high number of consignments being intercepted at arrival in the EU with quarantine pests and findings in audits

conducted by the EU, it was concluded that the current phytosanitary safeguards in India are insufficient to ensure that consignments are free from harmful organisms.

Though the prohibited commodities represent less than 5% of the total fresh fruits and vegetables imported into the EU from India, the potential introduction of new pests could pose a threat to EU agriculture and production. Such pests were found in 207 consignments of fruits and vegetables from India imported into the EU in 2013. The measures introduced by this Decision will remain in place until 31 December 2015 in order to address the ongoing risk of introduction, while allowing India to upgrade its certification system. A revision will take place before 31 December 2015.

EFSA Consultation

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has launched an online public consultation on the draft scientific opinion on the evaluation of allergenic foods and food ingredients for labelling purposes.

The document updates previous EFSA opinions on food ingredients or substances that are known to cause adverse reactions. These include cereals containing gluten, milk and dairy products, eggs, nuts, peanuts, soy, fish, crustaceans, molluscs, celery, lupin, sesame, mustard, and sulphites. The document includes information on the prevalence of food allergy in unselected populations, on proteins identified as food allergens, on cross-reactivities, on the effects of food processing on allergenicity of foods and ingredients, on methods for the detection of allergens and allergenic foods, on doses observed to trigger adverse reactions in sensitive individuals, and on the approaches which have been used to derive individual and population thresholds for selected allergenic foods.

The online public consultation will remain open until Friday 8 August 2014 and can be accessed at: www.efsa.europa.eu/en/consultations/call/140523.htm



New Regulations

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

S.I. No. 194 of 2014

European Communities (Official Controls on the Import of Food of Non-Animal Origin for Pesticide Residues) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations, 2014

S.I. No. 143 of 2014

European Communities (Official Controls on the Import of Food of Non-Animal Origin) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations, 2014

A Risk-Based Approach to Developing the National Residues Sampling Plan

A ranking system for veterinary medicinal products and medicated feed additives has been developed by the FSAI Scientific Committee's Chemical Safety Sub-committee. This ranking system can be applied as part of a risk-based approach to developing the residue testing programme for foods of animal origin in the National Residue Control Plan (NRCP).

There have been a number of developments over the last decade at European Union level, at Member State level and internationally, towards implementing a risk-based approach to developing residue testing programmes. The system developed by the Chemical Safety Sub-committee adds to the work being done in this area in Ireland.

In the context of food sampling and residue testing for the NRCP, there is, firstly, the risk to human health from residues of chemical substances in food and, secondly, the issue of non-compliance with regulations relating to residues in food due to improper farm practices. Both of these elements have been included in the risk-ranking system developed by the Committee. Three characteristics of substances that may occur as residues in food are included in the developed risk-ranking system:

- **Potency**, as measured by the Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) assigned to each substance
- **Usage**, as measured by the three factors of: number of doses; use on individual animals or for group treatment; and withdrawal period; and
- **Residue Occurrence**, as measured by non-compliant samples in the NRCP



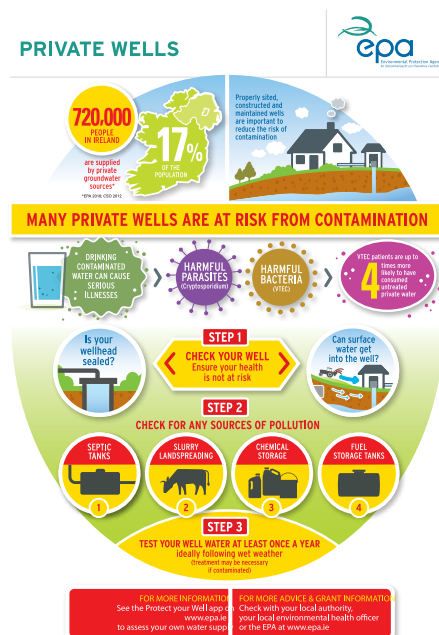
The risk-ranking system for substances has been developed for beef cattle, sheep and goats, pigs, poultry and dairy cattle using a scoring system applied to the various parameters described above to give an overall score based on the following equation:

$$\text{Potency} \times \text{Usage (No. Doses + Individual/Group Use + WP)} \times \text{Residue Occurrence}$$

The risk-ranking system described is a relatively simple system, designed to provide a basis for selecting the veterinary medicinal products and medicated feed additives that might be prioritised for residue testing.

However, there are a number of limitations associated with the system and this risk-ranking of substances represents only one component of a total risk-based approach to designing the residue testing programme for the annual NRCP. Other factors which should be taken into account are issues of regulatory concern, such as evidence of misuse of particular veterinary medicinal products and medicated feed additives, and changes in the specifications for particular veterinary medicinal products and medicated feed additives, such as new maximum residue limits (MRLs) that would affect the occurrence of non-compliant samples. In addition, the importance of multi-analyte residue testing methods and dietary exposure need to be considered.

The Scientific Committee's report is available on our website at: www.fsai.ie/publications_riskbased_residue_sampling.



EPA Finds Greater Risk of Illness from Private Wells

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Health Service Executive (HSE) are advising people that water supplies from private wells can be contaminated with *E. coli*. The HSE has also reported a growing number of cases of VTEC, a particularly serious form of *E. coli*. People treated for VTEC have been found to be four times more likely to have consumed untreated water from a private well.

Many people are under the false impression that because their water comes from a well or a spring that it's completely pure and safe to drink, but that is not necessarily the case. The EPA estimates that up to 50,000 private wells in Ireland are contaminated with human or animal waste and this can cause a significant threat to people's health.

The EPA is providing easy-to-use information on its website explaining what well owners should do to protect their health. The information includes a short animation to

explain the risks to well water quality and the simple things that can be done to reduce the risks.

A 'Protect your Well' assessment app is also available from the EPA website. Well owners can assess whether their wells are at risk in less than 10 minutes using this simple app. It provides well owners with tailored advice on how they can reduce the risk of contamination.

For more information visit the EPA website at <http://bit.ly/SbLDZb>.

Event Round-up

Breakfast Bites

Breakfast Bites are our free, informal breakfast meetings for small food businesses. At these events, we provide useful information on a variety of topics. These sessions are very helpful for those who own or work in a small food business and also for those who want to get a new food business off the ground.

At our recent Breakfast Bite 'What to Expect from Your Inspector', Philip Devinish, environmental health officer (EHO) outlined what you can expect when an Environmental Health Officer visits a business to carry

out an inspection and gave plenty of good advice.

For further information and to register for these events, see: www.fsai.ie/events.



Elizabeth Collins and Victoria Mikulecz attended the May Breakfast Bites session



Phillip Devinish, EHO, Dublin North City West, speaks about food business inspections



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If you would like to receive notification of our upcoming events, you can subscribe to our mailing list at: <http://bit.ly/THbdjZ>

Irish Cheese Awards 2014

The Irish Cheese Awards took place at 'Bloom in the Park' this year in the Phoenix Park, Dublin. The awards are now in their fifth year and are run by Bord Bia in partnership this year with the Traditional Cheese Company. It is the only competition dedicated entirely to Irish cheese. Frances Douglas, FSAI, helped with the judging, along with Eddie O'Neill, Teagasc and Mary Kate Mageean, Musgraves.

Cheeses were judged within 17 separate categories including class creamery mild cheddar aged up to 6 months, 6-9 months and over 12 months, fresh cheese (any milk), sheep milk cheese and blue cheese, among others. The awards given for each category can be viewed on the Bloom in the Park website at <http://bit.ly/TEVNDc>



Frances Douglas, FSAI, takes a sample of cheese for judging.



Pictured l-r: Frances Douglas, FSAI, Mary Kate Mageean, Musgraves and Eddie O'Neill, Teagasc, who judged the cheeses at Bloom.



Sharon Williams, Training Executive, FSAI presented at the food safety training workshop

Food Safety Training Skills Workshop

The FSAI held a two-day Food Safety Training Skills workshop on 17 and 18 June. The workshop was designed to provide managers, supervisors and trainers with the skills to deliver induction training in their workplace using our three hour induction training programme 'Food Safety & You'. The induction programme is based on the skills outlined in our Guide to Food Safety Training, Level 1 and has been designed to promote active learning and the application of training in the work environment.

FSAI Hosts Delegation from the Saudi Food and Drug Authority



Pictured are delegates from the Saudi Food and Drug Authority with John Matthews, FSAI (far left)

The FSAI hosted a group of nine delegates from the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) from 19 to 23 May. The delegates visited Ireland to discuss the draft Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Import Control Questionnaire with representatives from the FSAI and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM). The questionnaire is aimed at

providing the SFDA with a comprehensive picture of Ireland's food safety controls, legislation relevant to food production and in particular import controls. The group was made up of key decision makers from the SFDA Import Department, Risk Assessment Department and from the Legislation and Standards Department. Following discussions in the FSAI on

the Import Control Questionnaire, the group visited two establishments supervised by DAFM as well as the Backweston laboratory campus in Kildare. The group completed their itinerary with a visit to the Food and Veterinary Office in Meath.

2014 Public Health Nutrition Winner Announced



Prof Mary Flynn, FSAI

Prof Mary Flynn, Chief Specialist Public Health Nutrition, FSAI, has been announced as the winner of the inaugural Public Health Nutrition Medal for 2014. The Nutrition Society established the first Public

Health Nutrition Medal, recognising excellence in the field of Public Health Nutrition. The competition was open to Nutrition Society members whose work has had significant impact on local, regional, national or international policy or delivery, or the evidence base in public health nutrition.



Gail Carroll, FSAI, talks to PEHOs at the annual meeting

Annual Meeting of the PEHOs and the FSAI

There are 33 Principal Environmental Health Officers (PEHOs) of the Environmental Health Service who work as part of the service contract between the FSAI and the HSE. Each PEHO manages a team of Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) who are responsible for enforcement of food law within their local area. On 30 April the HSE PEHOs attended the FSAI for an annual national meeting.

Speakers from the FSAI and the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) covered a range of topics. These included the new Food Information to Consumers Regulation, the NSAI's experience of the application of the food contact materials legislation in companies, environmental health updates, 2013 trends in enforcement orders, MenuCal, the proposed EU Regulation on official controls, HSE sample test data, and an overview of the work of the FSAI Advice Line and information services.



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 Happens when an Environmental Health Officer Inspects a Food Business?

Frequency of Inspection

All food businesses are subject to inspection. Inspections may be either planned inspections or inspections in response to a complaint, to take food/water samples, to follow up on outstanding issues or to proceed with enforcement action.

Planned inspections are carried out to assess compliance with legislation, to look at the general hygiene standards of the premises and the overall ability of the food business to place safe food on the market. The frequency of planned inspections is determined by the risk categorisation of the business. The FSAI's Code of Practice No. 1 classifies food businesses into low, medium and high risk, with the priority for inspection being on the businesses in the high risk category.

Notice of Upcoming Inspection

Inspections are generally unannounced and the EHO is authorised to enter a food business at all reasonable times to carry out an inspection. The EHO will introduce him/herself on arrival at the premises and will be carrying identification. To attempt to prevent an authorised officer entering a premises is an offence. The FSAI's Guidance Note No. 1 on the Inspection of a Food Business provides guidance on the inspection process with a view to providing a consistent approach to inspections.

During the Inspection

The EHO will look at the following during an inspection:

- The physical condition of the premises – structural, hygiene and cleanliness
- The food - temperature, labelling, traceability, packaging
- Processes and procedures – e.g. nature and extent of the menu
- Documentation - food safety management procedures, temperature monitoring, traceability system, training records, pest control



The EHO will use a number of different tools in the course of an inspection.

- Observation - what they see and hear and what they don't see and don't hear
- Monitoring e.g. temperature measurements
- Audits - review of procedures, HACCP documentation, level of monitoring
- Sampling – they may take food/water swabs of surfaces. In addition, certain businesses, depending on the size and nature of activities taking place, may be required to do their own routine sampling and have documented results available
- Questions and discussions - direct/indirect questions and conversations with owner/manager and staff.

After the Inspection

After the inspection the food business will receive a report with a result that is generated based on each aspect of the inspection and the significance of any non-compliances. The result may be one of the following:

- Satisfactory
- Minor non-compliance - minimal risk to food safety. Written report issued.
- Unsatisfactory - non-compliances present but not a significant risk. Written report issued requiring action within specified time frame.
- Unsatisfactory Significant - non-compliances and significant risk to health e.g. cleaning neglected, no food safety management system, food handling issues. Written report requiring action with deadline and warning issued or immediate enforcement action can also be taken e.g. Improvement Notice, prosecution, increased inspection frequency

- Unsatisfactory Serious - non-compliances leading to a serious risk to health. Serious infestation, gross contamination, lack of water, serious loss of temperature control. Immediate enforcement action may be taken such as closure and/or prosecution.

Compliance is measured against all applicable aspects of the food hygiene legislation as well as other legislation which may be applicable to a business e.g. beef labelling legislation in butcher shops, labelling legislation in retail or manufacturing businesses.

Consistency of Inspection

The FSAI's Guidance Note No. 1 sets out a consistent approach to food inspections. However, due to the huge variety of food businesses under the supervision of the Environmental Health Service, environmental health officers will also need to use their experience and knowledge of the food business and its inspection history to aid them in an inspection. This may vary from business to business. The FSAI and representatives from the Environmental Health Service have a consistency working group that meets regularly to look at any issues relating to consistency of inspections across the country and come up with a common approach which is disseminated to all EHOs.

Further Information

Guidance Note No. 1 can be downloaded free of charge from our website at www.fsai.ie/resources_publications.html or a hard copy can be obtained from our Advice Line on 1890 336677. Code of Practice No. 1 is currently unavailable.

Martin Higgins Retires from safefood



Martin Higgins, *safefood*

Martin Higgins led *safefood* since its inception in December 1999. In 1998, he joined the Food Safety Authority of Ireland as Director of Corporate Services. A year later, he moved to *safefood*, initially on secondment, and was appointed Chief Executive in 2001. His knowledge of the health and food safety sectors has helped to establish *safefood* as one of the island's primary sources of information and advice for consumers on food issues.

We would like to wish Martin the very best on his retirement and thank him for the close working relationship he helped to build between the FSAI and *safefood*.

Recent Publications

The following publications were recently produced by the FSAI:

- Risk-Based Approach to Developing the National Residue Sampling Plan
- Update to factsheet 'Starting a Food Business in the Home'
- Update to factsheet 'Business Start-up Information'

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



Pictured are staff members who participated in the Flora Women's Mini Marathon. Back row: Ana Canizares, Adrienne Foley, Aileen Ward, Anne-Marie Kierans, Ruth Conefrey, Mary Hodgins, Anne Fleming; Front row: Michelle Riblet, Olive Ryan, Sinead Murphy, Dorothy Guina Dornan, Vanessa Cooling, Emma Reinhardt. In addition to those staff members pictured above, the following also walked or ran on the day: Valerie Brady, Laura Costigan, Judith Giles, Carol Heavey, Maria Meghan and Sharon Williams.

FSAI Take Part in Flora Women's Mini Marathon

A number of FSAI staff took part in this year's Flora Women's Mini Marathon in Dublin to raise money for the Irish Cancer Society. We are pleased to report that they all finished, smiling, and an enjoyable day was had by all who took part.



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