

THE APPETISER

News and events from the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland



FOOD
STANDARDS
AGENCY
NORTHERN
IRELAND

www.food.gov.uk/northernireland

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| ALL CHANGE AT THE TOP | 1 |
| FARM NOTES | 1 |
| EAT SAFE AWARD | 2 |
| SAFE CATERING | 3 |
| MEAT CHARGING | 3 |
| SURVIVAL GUIDE TO FOOD | 3 |
| DATE FOR YOUR DIARY | 4 |

ABOUT US

The Food Standards Agency is a UK non-ministerial government department which reports to a Board appointed to protect the public interest in relation to food. It has offices in Belfast, Aberdeen, Cardiff and London.

FSANI carries out the full range of functions of the Agency in Northern Ireland. Working in partnership is key to achieving our aims and we work closely with consumer groups, District Councils, other government departments, industry, caterers and everyone who has an interest in food— from farm to fork.

ALL CHANGE AT THE TOP



Gerry McCurdy, Director FSANI

The Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland (FSANI) has recently seen some changing faces in its senior management team. Gerry McCurdy has been appointed Director at FSANI, as successor to Morris McAllister who retired in September.

Supporting him in his new role are Maria Jennings as Assistant Director (formerly Head of Consumer Choice and Food Standards at FSANI) and Michael Jackson as Head of Food Safety &

Enforcement (formerly Head of FSANI's Local Authority Unit).

These changing positions fit well with the changing priorities of the Agency as it moves forward into a new phase of strategic planning.

Key Priorities

Gerry McCurdy says: "These are certainly interesting times for the Agency. With our new Chief Executive Tim Smith now well established in his post, work on the new strategic plan, which will set

priorities and targets for 2010-15, is now underway. Going forward, we need to be clear about our strategy and this plan will set direction for the whole Agency in terms of vision for our work and the resources needed. We are looking forward to continued partnership working with other government departments on projects which have an effect on the interests of Northern Ireland consumers.

"Linked to this, the future for the Agency's core business 'Safe Food and Healthy Eating for all' sets out our vision. The new strategic plan will be clear about what we need to do to make this a reality, and – just as important – what we don't need to do.

"We always welcome the opportunity to talk directly to our politicians, policy makers and stakeholders here in Northern Ireland to discuss the work of the Agency and to help shape the work we aspire to do in the future."

FARMERS URGED TO TAKE NOTE

The Agency has launched a campaign urging farmers to keep better records which will help them to comply with the food and feed hygiene legislation. Known as Take Note, the campaign has been introduced to farmers at agricultural shows across Northern Ireland this summer.

Take Note's message is to advise farmers that although

the legislation requires record keeping of on-farm activities, this can be achieved in a simple and easy way, without adding to farmers' administrative burden.

Gerard Smyth, Senior Policy Officer from FSANI said: "This initiative aims to raise awareness with all farmers and growers of the requirement to keep records.



Kirsten Dunbar Head of Primary Production & Gerard Smyth Senior Policy

Continued on page 2...

500 REASONS TO CELEBRATE EAT SAFE



Alison Shields and Kathryn Baker, FSANI, celebrate Eat Safe success



The Eat Safe award scheme is celebrating success in Northern Ireland with the number of eateries awarded reaching a landmark 500. From hotels to residential homes and primary Schools to pizzerias there are a growing number of diverse kitchens entitled to display the Eat Safe logo.

The prestigious award which promotes excellence in food hygiene is given only to catering businesses that go above and beyond legal requirements.

So, consumers can be confident when they see an Eat Safe logo that their

food has been prepared with the utmost care.

“I am delighted that Northern Ireland now has 500 food premises displaying the Eat Safe logo” said Kathryn Baker from FSANI. “It is great news that we now have a large number of caterers taking every precaution to prevent food poisoning. It only goes to show the goals of Eat Safe and its simple format are a winning combination for the local catering trade, food hygiene enforcers and ultimately the consumer”.

The scheme was introduced in Northern

Ireland in 2003 to act as an incentive to caterers to strive for high food hygiene and food safety management standards, and each Eat Safe recipient is awarded with a recognisable sign of excellence. The Award is administered by the Environmental Health Departments of local Councils in conjunction with FSANI.

FURTHER INFORMATION
Visit the Eat Safe website www.eatsafe.gov.uk to see where your nearest Eat Safe credited food business is or contact the Environmental Health Department of your local District Council.

“Consumers can be confident when they see an Eat Safe logo that their food has been prepared with the utmost care.”

... continued from page 1

“It is primarily, but not exclusively, targeted at the smaller farmer and at farmers that are not part of farm quality assurance schemes.

“Inspections at farm level have shown that deficiencies in record keeping are more likely to be found with the smaller non quality assured farm. In the last year, a significant proportion of such farms were found to have inadequate records.”

The overall campaign aim is to help farmers comply with the legislation

The free booklet was given out at Ballymoney, Castlewellan and Clogher Valley agricultural shows. These shows also provided an opportunity to platform some of the Agency’s healthy eating messages, focusing on the traffic light campaign in particular.



Gerard Smyth FSANI, MEP Jim Allister and Ciaran Cunningham, DARD

SAFE CATERING PACK

FSANI has been working with Further Education Colleges across Northern Ireland to include the Safe Catering Guide in the teaching content of catering and hospitality courses so that students are trained in the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). The guide is a resource designed to make food safety a top priority in

business and FSANI is aiming to integrate it into catering students' education before they enter the industry.

In January 2006, European changes to food hygiene legislation required that all food businesses, including caterers, apply food safety management procedures based on the principles of HACCP to their businesses. Safe Catering

was developed by FSANI and partners in order to help food businesses comply with this requirement.

It is available free of charge to businesses and are distributed through the environmental health departments of Northern Ireland District Councils.



Kathryn Baker, FSANI looks at the Safe Catering Guide with Eddie Sharkey from the Hilton Belfast

MEAT HYGIENE CHARGING REVIEW

The FSA is responsible for the delivery of the meat hygiene controls in the UK. Our primary goal is the safe production of meat for consumers. We are also working to ensure this goal is achieved at the best value to the taxpayer.

In July, the FSA Board considered a number of options to change the current charging system operated throughout the UK. In Northern Ireland this is operated by the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) – on behalf of FSA. It agreed to recommend to Ministers

that the Agency should consult on the following proposals:

- to introduce time based charging for DARD services in approved meat premises to replace the current charging arrangements under which most meat plant operators pay a flat rate of charge based on throughput;
- to reduce the discounts currently applied to meat hygiene charges such that, all other things remaining constant, hygiene charges paid by meat plant operators

would increase by 12% (inclusive of inflation) in 2009/10; and

- to introduce charges for controls on the removal of Specified Risk Material (SRM) from 2009/10 to recover, in the first year of charging, 5% of the costs of these controls.

A public consultation will be carried out on the charging proposals and an event to discuss the public consultation will be held later this year. Further details of this event will be issued in due course and published on the FSANI website www.food.gov.uk/northernireland

“Our primary goal is the safe production of meat for consumers.”

SURVIVAL GUIDE TO FOOD

FSANI has revised and updated its survival booklet on food for first year university students to target young people before they fly the nest. ‘A Survival Guide to Food’, is aimed at A Level pupils, through the Learning for Life and Work class. The guide is designed to give young people helpful hints and tips on how to eat well and be well when they leave home for the first

time. As well as promoting healthy eating messages there is useful advice on how to survive on a budget with money saving tips on shopping and cooking. Through the guide, pupils will also learn vital food hygiene information based on the 4Cs (Cleaning, Chilling, Cooking and Cross Contamination), the differences between use by and best before dates, understanding allergy and other nutritional information

on food labels. The guide is packed full of healthy easy to follow recipes, interesting food facts and tips on what to eat when studying for exams.

A survival Guide to Food will be distributed to all 12,000 Year 14 pupils in Northern Ireland in partnership with the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), later this year.



RESPONDING TO A CHANGING WORLD

**A half-day conference for stakeholders of
Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland**

Date: Monday 17 November 2008

Registration: 9.00am

Venue: Stormont Hotel, Belfast

We are planning an event to bring all our stakeholders together to allow us to explore and discuss many of the important issues which are facing us in today's changing world. Our panel of speakers are leaders in their fields whose inputs promise to be provocative and stimulating, including:

- Opening remarks from FSANI Director Gerry McCurdy;
- Health Minister Michael McGimpsey MLA, who will discuss work surrounding the public health agenda;

- Paul Kelly, Corporate Affairs Director, Asda. Paul will update delegates on the challenges facing Asda in today's global food market;

- Professor Dan Collins, Professor Emeritus of Farm Animal Clinical Studies, University College Dublin will challenge the audience on the global threat food safety poses to all of us;

- Closing remarks will be delivered by our Chief Executive Tim Smith;

- Chairing the session will be renowned BBC NI journalist Karen Patterson.

After these keynote speakers, delegates will participate in brief workshop sessions and put questions or concerns to a panel of FSA staff.

We hope the conference will allow our stakeholders to hear from experts in their field of work as well as giving all delegates a chance feed into the FSA policy making process. We want to take this opportunity to listen to our stakeholder's needs and act on them.

For more information on this conference please telephone: 028 9041 7700 or email: infofsani@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

KEY CONTACTS

10a-10c Clarendon Road, Belfast, BT1 3BG

T: 028 90417700

E: firstname.secondname@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

