The Food Standards Agency Labelling and Composition of Meat Products Guidance Notes September 2003

Background

The above guidance notes have been in existence for 12 months and are shortly due to be appraised to identify whether any revisions are necessary. In particular, Annex C of the guidance notes contains a table of typical values for meat ingredients. This table specifies the level of fat, collagen and protein and the resultant collagen to protein ratio for different meat cuts. It has been suggested by some that the scope of meat cuts there listed is not wide enough to cover the variety of meat cuts currently being used to manufacture meat products. As such, it is likely that this table will need to be revised from time to time to reflect other meat cuts not currently included within the table. It may also be necessary from time to time to change the current listed values to reflect changes in the composition of meat cuts in the light of changing factors such as fatness or other contributing factors. As such, it is important to establish performance criteria for any new data that may be submitted, thus enabling judgements to be made about whether any new data is sufficiently robust to be included in Annex C.

The FSA has asked the BMPA to chair a committee involving representatives from the meat and meat products trade, enforcement authorities and research associations to establish the criteria for acceptance of the new data and the vetting of any new data prior to recommending to the FSA the changes to Annex C of the guidance notes. The attached annex provides a draft produced by the committee, which attempts to establish the criteria necessary for submission for new data for consideration by the committee.

The FSA and the BMPA are circulating these criteria to interested parties seeking:

1. Identification of both species and cuts of meat that are not currently included in Annex C but which are currently being used in commercial manufacturing.
2. An appeal for existing data for such species and meat cuts embodying fat, collagen and protein content to be submitted in accordance with the criteria laid down in the annex to this paper.

It also envisaged that following receipt of the above, the committee can then make recommendations on areas of work that may be required to make up the deficiencies identified if relevant data is not forthcoming or does not meet the performance criteria established.

Annex

Performance Criteria for Submission of Meat Ingredients Data

Jan 2005

Laboratory Requirements

The laboratory shall operate in accordance with requirements and principles of ISO 17025. The laboratory should utilise BSI methodologies or equivalent for fat, collagen (hydroxyproline) and protein. In operating in accordance with ISO 17025, the laboratory is required to partake in performance assessment schemes and the submission of any data. The laboratory is required to provide copies of the relevant performance assessment results consistent with the period of the data submitted.

The Meat Cuts

The company should supply as much detail as possible regarding the origin of the meat cut to include where appropriate anatomical details, geographic origin, slaughter location, breed, sex and carcase conformation score (i.e. degree of fatness).

Numbers of samples

The company should submit a sufficient number of samples to reflect the variability of the material submitted. Analytical Methods Committee studies contain sufficient numbers of samples to reflect geographic origin, sex, weight, breed and degree of fatness via the carcase conformation score. It is possible that individually submitted data would not reflect fully these influences. However, this should not preclude companies submitting more limited data as it may be possible to pool data for more than one submission relating to the same cut if relevant.