

Traceability

Bill Drennan

Food Law Policy Branch

FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY

020 7276 8138

bill.drennan@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk



Traceability

- Defined in Regulation (EC) 178/2002 as:

the ability to trace and follow a food, feed, food-producing animal or substance intended to be, or expected to be incorporated into a food or feed, through all stages of production, processing and distribution



Traceability under Article 18

- Identify the suppliers of product to the business
- Identify the businesses to which products have been supplied
- Systems and procedures to ensure that such information is made available to competent authorities on demand
- **NO requirement for internal traceability**



Traceability under Article 18 (2)

- All 'food businesses' have to comply with the traceability requirements
- In practice, 'food business' will include primary producers, importers, manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers and food brokers
- Could also include storage operators, transporters and charities



Traceability under General Food Regulations 2004

- Local authorities and port health authorities enforce Article 18 (Traceability)
- Food Standards Agency has no powers to enforce traceability provisions but can inspect records, e.g. in meat plants



FSA Guidance Notes

- Food industry claim following best practice advice in EC Guidance results in disproportionate costs
- Consultation on draft FSA Guidance Notes - more appropriate for UK – now complete
- New Guidance Notes to focus on legal requirements, not best practice
- Available in April



Key Records

Draft FSA Guidance Notes specify that key records are -

- Name and address of supplier/customer
- Nature and quantity of products
- Date of transaction/delivery
- Batch numbers where possible

Keeping information above should already be standard practice in basic invoicing



Reaction Time

Draft FSA Guidance Notes now recommend -

- All records sufficiently organised and available to be produced within the short timescale needed for use in withdrawal/recall



Time for Keeping Records

Draft FSA Guidance Notes recommend -

- Businesses to decide how long to keep records, bearing in mind nature of food or feed and product life, if withdrawal needed or help needed by enforcement authorities
- Failure to produce necessary documents would be an offence



Role of enforcement officers

- Ask for traceability records when food found to be unsafe
- Give guidance on how to keep records
- Check traceability records being kept
- Guidance to be added to next edition of Food Law Practice Guidance



Any Problems?

- Retailer to retailer sales: even when retailers know that food is being sold to another business, claim that it would be impractical and expensive to record such sales
- Food sold in non-food shops. For example Zam Zam water sold from a bookshop
- Food brokers who do not physically handle food and deal in other commodities



Any Problems ? (2)

- Effect of legislation on charities
- ‘Food business’ defined as an ‘undertaking’. ‘Undertaking’ understood to mean degree of organisation and a continuity of activities
- Therefore many charities qualify and are subject to the traceability requirements



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