

Agency appoints new Chief Executive

FSA Chair Deirdre Hutton has appointed Tim Smith, the former Chief Executive of Arla Foods UK plc, as the Agency's new Chief Executive.

The company, which is the largest fresh milk supplier to the UK's supermarkets and is responsible for major food brands, Anchor, Lurpak and Cravendale, is now part of Arla Foods amba, Europe's largest dairy manufacturer.

Tim Smith will take up his post in March 2008, replacing John Harwood who has been Chief Executive since March 2006.

Tim Smith, who has a degree from Leeds University in microbiology and zoology, and has spent his entire career in the food business.

Commenting on the new Chief

Executive's appointment, Deirdre Hutton said: 'It's tremendous news that Tim is joining us. His food industry background complements the experience already embedded in the senior leadership team.'

'Tim also understands the issues, challenges and opportunities faced by the FSA at this time and will provide the Agency, I am sure, with a clear strategic direction. I and my colleagues on the FSA Board are looking forward immensely to working with him.'

Tim Smith said: 'I have always admired the FSA's passion and commitment to making sure people have access to safe and healthy food. Now, more than ever, food is an issue of national importance and there is no



Tim Smith: admires the Agency's passion and commitment for safe and healthy food

doubt we have tough challenges ahead of us, especially in the fight against obesity. I am very much looking forward to starting my new role.'

FURTHER INFORMATION

More details on Tim Smith are at: food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2007/nov/timsmith

'Simplification' cuts costs for business and public sector

Significant savings to business and the public sector of nearly £450m were announced this month by the Agency. The savings, of which £232m are for business, including £16m in administrative burden reductions, and £216m for the public sector, were reported in the Agency's second Simplification Plan.

The Plan shows significant progress in the Agency's aim to minimise bureaucracy without compromising public health and consumers' interests.

Key highlights include:

- FSA publication 'Safer food, better business', which helps

business comply with EU food hygiene requirements, generating an estimated £128m savings, with potential further savings of £40-50m.

- £15.6m saving from new guidance that separates legal requirements from best practice for record keeping of food, feed and animals destined for the food chain.
- The enforcement procedures developed by the FSA and local authorities have reduced the inspection burdens for farmers who are members of recognised farm assurance schemes, with savings of

£300,000 each year for about 60,000 farmers.

The Plan also includes the results of three studies promised in last year's Plan: a sector specific study, which looked at the concerns of small-scale butchers and craft bakers around hygiene approvals and labelling; a review of FSA guidance for business; and a review of forms the FSA requires business to complete.

Agency Head of Better Regulation Philip Clarke said: 'By making it easier for business to comply with regulations then they are more likely to do so.'

Consumers should be the ultimate beneficiaries of our simplification work. Better compliance means better protection for consumers.

'This Plan could not have developed without the contribution of stakeholders and the Agency is very grateful for their support.'

FURTHER INFORMATION

The full Plan can be viewed at: food.gov.uk/foodindustry/regulation/betregs/simplify
Simplification suggestions can be made via: www.betterregulation.gov.uk/

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Chief Scientist looks back at the past year. Committee review: Advisory Committee on Microbiological Safety of Food. Latest research reports published by the Agency.



Signpost labelling guidance issued

The Agency has published Issue 2 of the technical guidance for the front-of-pack nutritional signpost labelling approach.

The technical guidance includes the nutritional criteria that underpin the traffic light colours, advice on signpost design issues and example visuals.

This guidance has been revised and re-issued to include criteria for breakfast cereals and to incorporate a modification to the sugars red (high) criteria, which is intended to help consumers better identify foods that are healthier options, for example those where the sugars content is due to high levels of fruit.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more about front-of-pack labelling, contact Julie Lucas, tel: 0207 276 8014; email: julie.lucas@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk Issue 2 of the guidance is at: food.gov.uk/healthiereating/salt/salttargetreview

New SMS text service launched

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is currently undertaking a systematic re-evaluation of all authorised food additives in the EU and has started by looking at all colours. EFSA has been asked by the European Commission to do this work in the interest of consumer protection, taking account of new information since the original assessments were done.

The Agency is aware that rapidly alerting those that may be affected by a decision would be welcome. It is, therefore, launching a free SMS Text Message Service to alert those wishing to know when EFSA has published an opinion on a colour. The Agency will also send a message when a regulatory decision is made about a food colour or there is other important information to communicate about food colours.

To sign up to this free SMS service, simply send the text message 'START COLOURS' to 62372. Texting 'STOP COLOURS' unsubscribes you. This initial text will be charged at your network provider's rate.

Nurses back traffic lights

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN), the professional body that represents nurses in the UK, has become the latest health organisation to offer its backing to the Agency's recommended approach to front-of-pack nutrition signposting.

Announcing the RCN's support for traffic light labelling, RCN General Secretary Dr Peter Carter said: 'The Royal College of Nursing is delighted to support initiatives which provide clear information which can be easily understood by young people and families. The use of accurate food labelling will empower the public to make healthy choices.'

The decision by the RCN adds to the support for traffic light labelling already declared by a wide range of the UK's top health organisations, including the British Medical Association and the royal colleges of GPs, physicians and paediatricians.

Other supporters include the UK Public Health Association, and health charities ranging from the National Heart Forum and British Heart Foundation to the Stroke Association and Cancer Research UK (see below for more details).

Roadchef, the roadside food provider, has added its support, which means that more people on the move will be able to have a speedy and healthy snack.

Kate Eastwood, Director of



Royal College
of Nursing

The voice of nursing in the UK

retail and catering at Roadchef, said: 'We have introduced the signpost labelling on our Restbite sandwich range to help customers make informed choices when they stop at a Roadchef.'

Other travel retailers already supporting traffic light labelling include, Virgin Trains and GNER.

Kallo Foods, which produces foods ranging from stocks and gravies to bread sticks and biscuits, and Tasty Foods, which supplies produce ranging from ready meals to soups, are two of the latest companies to adopt the Agency's approach.

Emma Filby, Technical Manager at Kallo Foods, said: 'We have started to introduce The Food Standard's Agency's traffic light nutritional labelling system onto our products. As a responsible and honest health food company we believe it is very important to provide consumers with simple and easy

to understand information so they can make informed choices.'

Denver Gordon, Technical Manager of Tasty Foods, which is based in Dunmurry in Northern Ireland, said: 'We are really pleased to adopt this consumer friendly labelling system. We want to be honest with our consumers about the nutrients our products contain and we feel that the best way to do this is to use the traffic light system.'

FURTHER INFORMATION

A list of food retailers and producers that have adopted the Agency's recommended approach to front-of-pack labelling can be found at: eatwell.gov.uk/foodlabels/trafficlighs/ Traffic light supporters are at: food.gov.uk/foodlabelling/signposting/supportfsasignp

Keeping an eye on good practice

A delegation from AGES – Austria's food safety organisation – visited the Food Standards Agency at the end of November to find out how the

Agency deals with the handling of food safety incidents and risk communication.

The Austrian organisation had become aware of the

Agency's practice of open and transparent communications at meetings of the European Food Safety Authority.

Food Standards Agency Director of Communications Terrence Collis said: 'We are always happy to host visits from food safety agencies from other countries. It's a way of exchanging good practice and ensuring that we in the UK contribute to improvements in food safety and standards in the rest of Europe and worldwide.'



On the London Eye: The AGES delegation comprised AGES Head of Corporate Communications Oskar Wawschinek (left), Deputy Head of Communications Elisabeth Publig, and Werner Windhager, the organisation's editorial journalist



Building on experience to help the Agency perform better in the future: Deirdre Hutton hears some words of wisdom from children from the Schools Council Network

2007 – a springboard for further progress

It's come round to that time of year again when many of us prepare to heat up the mince pies, pour a glass of wine and look back at how we've done over the past 12 months.

At the Agency we also have to review our performance, and consider how we might improve things in the future, although our Board, our Executive and our staff go through this process on a much more regular basis.

While there are too many Agency initiatives and campaigns to reflect on here, I would like to highlight a few that I think suggest we are continuing to serve the UK public well when it comes to safe food and healthy eating.

This past year, for example, began with the launch in January of the latest TV ads promoting our recommended approach to front-of-pack nutrition signpost labelling. Research has shown that the traffic light system that we recommend is by far the easiest, and quickest, way for consumers to work out whether a product is high in fat, saturated fats, sugars and salt.

The momentum in support of traffic light labelling has continued to build throughout the year, with the majority of major supermarkets now using our approach and an increasing amount of food producers seeing the benefits of using clear labelling.

With the Royal College of Nursing a few days ago declaring its support for traffic lights – adding to the endorsement of

health bodies ranging from the British Medical Association and royal colleges of GPs and physicians to the UK Public Health Association – it seems that almost every eminent health organisation in the country is now supporting our approach.

We were back on TV in March, with phase 3 of our salt campaign. Our 'Full of It' ads focused on the fact that 75% of the salt we eat is already in the foods we buy, and the campaign encouraged consumers to look at labels and to choose the lowest salt option.

Understanding traffic lights – as easy as falling off a log



Our own tracking surveys show that since phase I of our campaign in autumn 2004 there has been a ten-fold increase in public awareness of the need to cut salt intake to 6g a day. Over the same period the number of consumers cutting down on salt has increased by more than a third.

Much more still has to be done on this, of course, but, with the Agency's encouragement, food producers are increasingly reformulating their products to reduce salt levels and we are confident that greater reductions in average salt intake will be achieved in the future.

The good news is that recent research has shown that between 2000/01 and 2005/06 there has been an average reduction of half

a gram a day (down from 9.5 grams to 9 grams), which could already translate into the saving of about 3,500 lives a year.

In the summer, we launched a 'bugs like it hot' campaign, to continue our progress in reducing foodborne illness. The very ambitious target we set in our last Strategic Plan, of a reduction of 20% by the year 2006 was very nearly reached, with a remarkable reduction of 19.2%. We will be continuing to push on this in the future.

Last month, as in February, there were announcements of the discovery of avian flu in the UK – something that could have had a catastrophic impact on the poultry industry in this country.

The Agency moved swiftly in both cases to reassure consumers that there was no danger of contracting the illness from eating turkey, or any other poultry, cooked in the normal way, and I am pleased to say that consumer research shows people have taken that message on board.

Food safety, of course, continues to be the 'bread and butter' of the Agency. Over the past year we have issued 42 food allergy alerts and 45 general food alerts – almost one a week. At present we have almost 1,500 organisations and individuals subscribed to our free email allergy alerts and more than 16,000 to receive food alert notification by email.

However, as a regulator, we also have to ensure that, without compromising public health and

consumers' interests, we do not overburden food businesses with unnecessary regulation.

I am pleased to tell you, then, that this month the Agency's second Simplification Plan has announced significant savings to business and the public sector of nearly £450m.

The savings, of which £232m are for business, including £16m in administrative burden reductions, and £216m for the public sector, have been achieved by cutting red tape and working with industry to simplify regulations. Our view is that by making it easier for business to comply with regulations, they are more likely to do so.

So, when you sit down to your Christmas meal with all the trimmings, I hope you have in front of you safe, healthy and nutritious food. I also hope that you will raise a glass to the FSA staff – as I will be doing – to congratulate them on a good job done over the past year, and to wish them even greater success in 2008.

FURTHER INFORMATION

See also the Chief Scientist's year in view, in the Research Supplement in this issue. More on the supporters of traffic lights can be found at: food.gov.uk/foodlabelling/supportfsasignp Retailers and food producers using traffic lights can be found at: eatwell.gov.uk/trafflights More on the salt campaign is at: salt.gov.uk

Tighter controls on baby milk

The Agency and the Department of Health have set out stricter controls on the promotion, labelling and composition of infant and follow-on formula.

The new controls will ensure all types of formula meet the nutritional needs of babies and marketing and promotion of such products won't undermine breastfeeding.

The FSA consulted on draft regulations earlier this year and responses have been published online. A 12-week public consultation on the draft statutory guidance notes is currently underway.

The Government is committed to encouraging breastfeeding because of the health benefits both to mothers and babies. However, not all mothers choose to, or are able to, breastfeed and the regulations will help mothers make more informed decisions.

The new measures include:

- Tighter labelling rules, clarifying that follow-on formula should not be used by infants under six months of age.
- New rules prevent formula from being advertised directly to parents and require any advertising to make very clear that follow-on formula is for older babies.
- Compliance will include ensuring formula advertising does not use pictures or text comparing products to breast milk and does not feature babies that could be thought to be under six months.

After a year of the new rules being in place, an independent review will check that they are working effectively. Further action will then be taken if needed.

Rosemary Hignett, Head of Nutrition at the Agency, said:

'The guidance provides clear direction to industry on the action they must take to comply with the new regulations.'

This consultation closes on 13 February 2008, with the final guidance notes published later in 2008.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The guidance for England is at: food.gov.uk/consultations/consulteng/2007/informnewguide07eng And for Scotland at: food.gov.uk/consultations/consultscot/2007/informscotguide2007

Working on sustainability

As this issue of *FSA News* went to press, the Agency was taking forward its work on sustainable development with a stakeholder workshop being held in London on 11 December.

The workshop was organised to help the Agency develop further its work on sustainability and firm up what this will mean for its policy-making.

It was set to discuss how the



Keeping the wheels in motion – in the most sustainable way

Agency takes account of sustainability issues, including how it sets parameters and how it can achieve a balance between different aspects of sustainable development in making policy decisions.

Tim Lang, Natural Resources and Land Use Commissioner at the Sustainable Development Commission and Professor of Food Policy at City University, and Jeanette Longfield, Coordinator of the National Food Alliance and Sustain, were due to speak at the event.

Agency Chief Executive John Harwood, who was due to attend the workshop said: 'The Agency has been committed to the principles of sustainable development for some time. We have made considerable progress in improving our business operations, and are one of the best performing Government departments.'

This workshop will give us the opportunity to engage with a wide range of key stakeholders and help shape our thinking on how we fully embed sustainable development within our policy making.'

Invitees included a range of external stakeholders from other Government departments, enforcement agencies, consumer and environmental organisations, industry and academia. A number of FSA Board Members were due to attend, as well as members of the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish food advisory committees.

A report of the event will be included in the next issue of *FSA News*.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For details of the Agency's work on sustainability contact Pippa Eames, tel: 020 7276 8410.

Agency issues meat hygiene warning

David Statham, the Agency's Director of Enforcement, has warned that the Agency expected serious powers to be used where company practices lead to serious breaches of meat hygiene.

'If necessary, we will assist local authorities with resources and expertise. We think spot checks should be the norm – that is the guidance we have given and it's in the statutory code of practice.'

He was speaking on BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme following a report about a company that had allegedly delivered meat from poorly refrigerated vans to restaurants and public institutions.

A whistleblower told the

programme that there were serious hygiene concerns when transporting meat and that the company practised 'door-stepping' – leaving meat outside a delivery premises if there was no one there to collect it.

David Statham told *Today* that it would be against law if meat was not stored at the right temperature and was exposed to risk of contamination.

The Food Standards Agency's position is that any company that delivers either fresh or frozen meat to their customers has a legal responsibility to ensure their product is safe to eat and is of the quality expected by the consumer.



David Statham: the Agency is prepared to use serious powers

Seminar on combating food fraud

The Agency's Authenticity Programme is organising a one-day seminar on 11 February 2008 on combating food fraud.

The seminar will report the development and use of state-of-the-art methods to uncover where there is deliberate misdescription for financial gain in the UK and Europe. It will look at existing and developing methods to combat food fraud, as well as give participants the

opportunity to share experiences and raise potential issues of fraud in industry.

This seminar is of technical interest to those involved with the authenticity of food supplies in the food industry, local authority enforcement officers and public analysts.

Attendance at the seminar is free but places are limited. Anyone wishing to attend should, therefore, apply for a

place as soon as possible, and at the latest by 25 January 2008.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The agenda for the food fraud seminar can be found at: food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/agendafoodfraud.pdf

A registration form for the food fraud analytical tools seminar is at: food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/regformff.pdf

The science year in view

It's been an eventful 12 months for me, says Andrew Wadge, in his final science column of the year. The key highlights have been the launch of the first annual report as the Chief Scientist and my blog, which was launched a year ago.

I am delighted with the success of the blog in sparking off debates and discussions with the scientific community and public. This was one of the topics that I presented at The Chief Scientific Adviser's Committee (CSAC) meeting held in December at the FSA. CSAC is the principal committee at official level dealing with issues relating to science, engineering and technology (SE&T) and is chaired by the Chief Scientific Advisor to the Government.

Members of this committee consist of Chief Scientific Advisers, like me, representing the FSA or their equivalent from all Government departments and devolved administrations, plus the Director General of the Research Councils.

CSAC considers issues of relevance to Government concerning SE&T. In particular it discusses and facilitates implementation of policy on SE&T; identifies and disseminates good practice in SE&T-related areas, including the use of scientific advice in policy making; and facilitates communication on particular high profile SE&T-related issues and those posing new challenges for Government. The focus of the meeting is on early discussion of issues of cross-



Sir David King, third left, chairs the meeting of the Chief Scientists at the FSA headquarters

cutting interest, and networking.

In early 2008, the Agency will be reviewed by The Government Office for Science (GO Science) to assess the quality and use of science by Government departments. This will provide a great opportunity for the Agency to demonstrate its strengths and to receive constructive feedback on its use of science to develop policy.

The professionalism of Agency staff, the eminent independent scientists on our scientific advisory committees, our accountability through strong science governance processes and our commitment to openness and transparency mean that we have a very good story to tell. I will keep you informed of the review process as it happens, so watch this space.

In this month's Research Supplement you will find an article about our Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF), which assesses the risk to humans of microorganisms that are used, or occur, in or on food, and which advises the Agency on

any matters relating to the microbiological safety of food.

It's that time of the year again, it will be Christmas soon and for many of us, including scientists, it will mean having the turkey on Christmas day. I hope everyone enjoys their meal and all that tasty food by following the Agency's safer eating messages on cooking (see Further information below for more details).

There are many ways that you can enjoy a healthy and nutritious Christmas, so on that note may I take this opportunity to wish all readers a healthy Christmas, be merry and be safe and I'll be back in touch in the New Year.

Further information

For healthy eating tips and advice go to eatwell.gov.uk or www.salt.gov.uk You will find information on how to ensure your turkey is defrosted properly and cooked right through, how to check you're not overdoing the salt, alternative healthy meals, and how to use leftovers safely.

The Advisory Committee on Microbiological Safety of Food

The Advisory Committee on Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF) is an advisory committee of independent experts set up in 1990 to provide expert advice to Government on questions relating to the microbiological safety of food.

The Committee provides advice in response to requests from the Food Standards Agency and on matters that committee members themselves identify as important.

ACMSF's terms of reference are: to assess the risk to humans of micro-organisms that are used, or occur, in or on food; and to advise the Food Standards Agency on any matters relating to the microbiological safety of food.

ACMSF has produced a number of comprehensive scientific reports, prepared by working and *ad hoc* groups and based on the most up-to-date information available. The reports assist the Agency in the development of its advice on microbiological food safety.

The advice given by the committee in its report on botulism in cattle led the Agency to change its advice on the management of outbreaks of suspected botulism in cattle and the sending of meat and milk into the food chain.

The committee recommended that, based on scientific evidence, there should be no requirement to place voluntary restrictions on the entry into the food chain of meat and milk from healthy cattle from farms where cases of botulism are suspected. Prior to the report, the Agency requested voluntary restrictions on the movement of livestock and on the entry of meat and milk into the food chain for healthy cattle as well as for clinically affected cattle from herds where

cases of botulism were suspected.

The committee's current work programme includes:

- investigating the increase in listeriosis in older people
- assessing antimicrobial resistance, specifically in relation to extended spectrum beta-lactamase producing *E.coli* in the food chain
- considering the potential risk to human health from botulism in sheep and goats
- providing advice on the Government's microbiological food surveillance programme and other surveillance relevant to foodborne disease
- keeping a watching brief on issues relating to avian influenza

The work is undertaken by ACMSF's subject-specific working and *ad hoc* groups.

ACMSF is chaired by Professor Sarah O'Brien, currently Professor of Health Sciences and Epidemiology and a Consultant in Public Health Medicine at the University of Manchester.

The 17 members of the committee are independent experts drawn from commercial catering, environmental health, food microbiology, food processing, food research, food retailing, human epidemiology, medical microbiology, clinical microbiology, public health medicine, veterinary medicine and virology. The committee also has two lay/consumer members. Members are appointed on a personal basis, for their expertise and not to represent a particular interest. Appointments to the committee are made strictly on merit following public advertisement and in accordance with the Nolan principles.

The main committee holds four open



The ACMSF is chaired by Professor Sarah O'Brien

meetings a year. The ACMSF from time to time establishes working groups and other subgroups to consider particular topics in depth. Such groups are comprised of ACMSF members (supplemented, as necessary, by co-opted external expertise in the particular subject being considered) and may meet as often as six times a year. *Ad hoc* groups may also be established, to make brief assessments of particular issues and advise the main committee on recommendations for advice.

The committee is supported by a secretariat of Food Standards Agency staff. The secretariat has scientific expertise that enables it to provide members with comprehensive background information and briefing papers to inform the decision making processes of the committee.

Further information

The ACMSF papers, minutes, reports and information on how to attend the meetings as an observer are published on the committee's website at:

<http://acmsf.food.gov.uk/>

For more details contact the secretariat at: acmsf@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Programme M01 – Meat Hygiene

Factors affecting the presence and spread of human bacterial pathogens in sheep (M01015)

Project M01015 was performed to investigate the spread of human bacterial pathogens between sheep along the production/processing chain, and to develop intervention measures to reduce these risks. The project investigated management (i) on-farm, (ii) during transport, (iii) marketing and (iv) lairage, for their individual and combined influence on sheep cleanliness and carcass contamination.

Measures that reduced the spread of bacteria were:

- providing clean bedding for sheep on the farm, during transport and in the lairage

- keeping sheep clean and dry before slaughter
- leaving space between pens of sheep, or separating them with solid partitions, and avoiding mixing groups of sheep
- providing sheep with clean drinking water and pasture time to rest before moving new sheep into a field
- making sure floors, surfaces and clippers are kept clean and disinfected

The results generated by this project have been used to generate key messages for sheep producers. These can be found in a booklet and poster series that contains guidance on 'best practice' for the production of clean sheep for slaughter.

Further information

Mary Howell, tel: 020 7276 8373, email: mary.howell@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk
More details on the project are at: food.gov.uk/foodindustry/farmingfood/cleancattleandmeatsafety/

Final reports of research published and available in the FSA Information Centre

The following research reports have been published by the Food Standards Agency and placed in the Agency's Information Centre. These may be viewed at the Agency's headquarters, 125 Kingsway, London WC2B 6HN or a copy (CD-ROM) or email attachment if available, otherwise hard copy, can be requested from the Information Centre.

Further information

Contact Dr John Dixon, Assistant Librarian, Food Standards Agency, 125 Kingsway, London WC2B 6NH, tel: 020 7276 8060; email: john.dixon@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk
For technical information on any of the research summarised here, please get in touch with the contact shown below the relevant report.

Study to investigate and establish the best methods for detection of campylobacter in red meat production and accurate methods for enumeration (M01033)

The findings of this study highlighted procedural and practical elements that could be improved to maximise campylobacter recovery and detection. These included using two isolation media in parallel, streaking enriched samples after 48 hours and incubating plates for up to 5 days. In addition, the viability of campylobacter on sponges used to test meat surfaces was determined. To ensure isolation, sponges pre-moistened with water required testing within four hours after sampling. For sponge samples stored over four hours the addition of Bolton broth base containing haemin improved detection. For the enumeration of *Campylobacter spp.* from poultry samples, the most probable number (MPN) technique was found to be unsuitable. Direct plating appeared reasonably reliable although the uncertainty associated with practical aspects of the method warrants closer examination. The SimPlate campylobacter test used generally showed good agreement with direct plate counts. A semi-quantitative culture method (Nordic Committee on Food Analysis) and a semi-quantitative real time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test showed potential, but the development of quantitative real time PCR approaches, not used in this study, could be investigated further.

Further information

Mary Howell, tel: 020 7276 8373, email: mary.howell@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Programme T07 – Food Intolerance

Prevalence and incidence of food allergies and food intolerance (T07023)

This project was commissioned by the Agency in 2001 to determine the prevalence and incidence of food allergy and intolerance in UK children of different ages. The study also investigated whether the prevalence of food allergy and sensitisation is increasing, in line with the documented increase in other allergic disease.

The study recruited a whole population birth cohort of children aged 0-3 years and school cohorts of children aged 6, 11 and 15 years, from the Isle of Wight. The children were clinically tested to see if they were sensitised (the precursor to allergy) and/or clinically allergic to foods that are commonly indicated as causing allergic

reactions, such as milk, egg, peanut, wheat, sesame and cod.

The study found that 5.3% of children aged under three were sensitised to one of the six test foods. This rises with age, with 13.4% of 15 year olds being sensitised. However the prevalence of clinically diagnosed food allergies was lower in the cohorts of older children, compared with the birth cohort, as many younger children with egg or milk allergy outgrew the allergy by three years of age.

The researchers also found that:

- the rates of reported sensitivity to foods were significantly higher than the rates of objectively diagnosed food hypersensitivity
- the rates of diagnosed food hypersensitivity varied depending on the diagnostic criteria used (for example open food challenge, or double blind food challenge).

Reporting the diagnostic criteria used as the basis for determining the prevalence of food allergy is critical in enabling comparisons between different studies to be made.

Further Information

Joelle Buck, tel: 020 7276 8516, email: joelle.buck@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

To investigate the influence of maternal experience of dietary antigen on the subsequent immune status of their offspring (T07026)

Currently, little is known about whether exposure to allergenic proteins while in the womb via the mother's diet, has an effect on the child's likelihood of developing a food allergy. This project used a pig model to investigate whether exposure to a food antigen (egg protein), antibody, or a mixture of the two immediately after birth affects subsequent immune development.

New born pigs, which develop their immune system after birth, were used to replicate in a controlled way the immune situation experienced by babies in the womb. The pigs were exposed orally to either egg (ovalbumin), the allergen plus antibody, or just antibody. This reflects the different types of exposure that could be experienced by an unborn child in the womb, depending on the mother's diet and immune status. A control group of newborn pigs were exposed just to saline.

At 16 days of age they were exposed to ovalbumin either by injection or by feeding and their immune responses were monitored using standard immunological assays and tests. It was found that pigs that were exposed to high levels of egg protein at birth, with or without antibody, did not have a large immune response when they were fed the protein later, indicating that the oral exposure at birth had induced tolerance. Antibody administration alone had no effect

FSA funded research published in peer reviewed journals

M01 Meat Hygiene

Fisher, A., Wilkin, C-A., Purnell, G. (2007) The production and microbiological status of skin-on sheep carcasses. *Meat Science* 77: 467-473.

Hutchison, M. L., Thomas, D. J. I., Small, A. H., Buncic, S., Howell, M. (2007) Implementation of compulsory hazard analysis critical control point system and its effect on concentrations of carcass and environmental surface bacterial indicators in United Kingdom red meat slaughterhouses. *Journal of Food Protection* 70 (7): 1633-1639.

T07 Food Intolerance

Chen, L., Lucas, J., Hourihane, J., Lindemann, J., Taylor, S., Goodman, R. (2006) Evaluation of IgE binding to proteins of hardy (*Actinidia arguta*), gold (*Actinidia chinensis*) and green (*Actinidia deliciosa*) kiwifruits and processed hardy kiwifruit concentrate, using sera of individuals with food allergies to green kiwifruit. *Food and Chemical Toxicity* 44: 1100-7

Dean, T., Venter, C., Pereira, B., Grundy, J., Clayton, C.B., Higgins, B. (2007) Government advice on peanut avoidance during pregnancy – is it followed correctly and what is the impact on sensitization? *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics* 20 (2): 95-9

Hourihane, J., Aiken, R., Briggs, R., Roberts, S. (2007) Assessing the Impact of Government Advice to Pregnant Mothers to Avoid Peanut on the Prevalence of Peanut Allergy in UK Children at School Entry. *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* 117 (2): S32-S32

Pumphrey, R., Gowland, H. (2007) Further fatal reactions to food in the United Kingdom, 1999-2006. *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* 119 (4): 1018-9

Venter, C., Higgins, B., Grundy, J., Clayton, B., Gant, C., Dean, T. (2006) Reliability and validity of a maternal food frequency questionnaire designed to estimate consumption of common food allergens. *Journal of Human Nutrition & Dietetics* 19 (2): 129-38

Venter, C., Pereira, B., Grundy, J., Clayton, C.B., Arshad, S.H., Dean, T. (2006) Prevalence of sensitization reported and objectively assessed food hypersensitivity amongst six-year-old children: A population-based study. *Pediatric Allergy & Immunology* 17(5): 356-63

Venter, C., Pereira, B., Grundy, J., Clayton, B., Roberts, G., Higgins, B., Dean, T. (2006) Incidence of parentally reported and clinically diagnosed food hypersensitivity in the first year of life. *Journal of Allergy & Clinical Immunology* 117 (5):1118-24

on subsequent immune response on challenge with the protein.

The results suggest that neonatal antigen exposure induces oral tolerance. Some caution must be exercised in extrapolating results obtained from this pig model to those of human children from allergic human mothers.

Further Information

Ruth Hodgson, tel: 020 7276 8536, email: ruth.hodgson@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

The role of IgG in allergy and tolerance to common food allergens (T07032)

The immune system responds to foreign proteins by producing antibodies known as immunoglobulins, of which there are several types. This project investigated whether immunoglobulin G (IgG) has a role in food allergy. The study measured the levels of specific IgG to peanuts and egg in the serum of four groups of children:

- peanut allergic
- egg allergic
- those with resolved egg allergy
- healthy controls

The study developed a novel approach to conventional assays for IgG measurement in order to be able to report the actual (quantitative) level of IgG per unit of serum, which facilitates comparison across each subject group and with research conducted by others.

The study found that all people have specific IgG to peanuts and egg whether they are allergic to these foods or not. The level of egg specific IgG was high in the study and the researchers are suggesting this was linked to the amount of egg consumed in early life (in other words, that specific IgG is a marker of dietary exposure).

No significant differences in levels of egg specific IgG were found across subject groups. Mean levels of peanut specific IgG were found to be higher in the peanut allergic group compared with the controls, but no cut-off level above which an individual child could be reliably identified as allergic could be identified from the results because of the overlap in levels in the different groups. The researchers concluded that tests for specific IgG to egg and peanut are of no diagnostic use.

Further Information

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Allergy Database Service (ZT0702)

This project developed a unique clinical database of information on nut allergic individuals attending an allergy clinic in

Manchester. The database was used to investigate a number of questions about the patterns of sensitisation and reactions to nuts in the nut allergic population, which may help improve clinical allergy diagnostic and management practices.

The database was used to explore:

- the characteristics of allergic reactions to nuts and which nuts provoke the most severe reactions
- the characteristics of allergic reactions to peanut and what factors influence the severity of a reaction
- the patterns of sensitisation in allergic individuals to different types of nuts
- food avoidance behaviour and repeat reactions in those with food allergy

Information on over 1,500 people with nut allergy was assessed.

The outcomes of this project have provided information on the patterns of sensitisation to different nuts among individuals and which nuts are associated with more severe symptoms than others.

For example, brazil nuts were found to produce relatively more severe reactions involving difficulty in breathing, than peanut. The information from this project is being used to inform the Agency's advice to nut allergic consumers about how to minimise the likelihood of a reaction.

It will also be disseminated to stakeholders in the medical profession and allergy support organisations to ensure that allergic consumers are getting the best available advice to help them in their management of their allergy.

Further Information

Ruth Hodgson, tel:020 7276 8536, email: ruth.hodgson@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Peanut allergy: routes of pre-natal and post-natal exposure (T07043)

There is increasing evidence suggesting that the early life experience of infants, in particular the route, timing and frequency of exposure to food allergens, may be important in determining whether or not a child becomes sensitised or allergic to food proteins, or whether they become tolerant.

This research project investigated whether the development of peanut allergy in young children is influenced by environmental exposure to peanuts during infancy, for example through application of peanut-containing creams, through consumption of peanuts by other household members and transfer via skin contact, or via inhalation of peanut dust in the environment.

Household peanut consumption (a measure of environmental exposure) during the first year of life was assessed retrospectively and compared between families of children who went on to develop peanut allergy, and those who did not. Information on use of peanut containing

creams and other potentially relevant factors was also collected.

Weekly household peanut consumption was significantly higher in families of children who went on to become peanut allergic (77.2g) compared with the families of children with no allergies (29.1g) and those with egg allergy but no peanut allergy (8.1g).

This relationship was not related to the child's own level of consumption of peanut. This suggests that a high level of environmental exposure to peanut during the first year of life, in the absence of oral exposure, is a risk factor for the development of peanut allergy and the findings raise the question of whether early oral exposure plays an important role in the development of tolerance to peanut.

Further information

Joelle Buck, tel: 020 7276 8516, email: joelle.buck@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Other reports available in the Information Centre

Programme M03 – TSE research

How much sheep TSE enters the human food chain? An assessment of risk reduction by removal of scrapie flocks M03027

Programme N09 – Food acceptability and choice research

Using village shops to promote healthier food choices in rural Norfolk: Phase 2 (N09018)

Programme N14 – Food choice inequalities

Overcoming barriers to a healthy food choice in girls from low income and ethnic minority groups (N14002)

Programme T01 – Risk Assessment

Biological relevance of apparent total nitrosocompounds in the human colon (T01031)

This supplement was published by the Food Standards Agency in December 2007. For more about the Agency's newsletter, *FSA News*, contact the editor at: frank.chalmers@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk To subscribe to the newsletter, to receive printed or electronic copies, contact Celia Dunphy, tel: 020 7276 8829, email: celia.dunphy@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk For more on the Agency go to: food.gov.uk or: eatwell.gov.uk To contact the Agency's Research Co-ordination Unit, telephone: 020 7276 8762; or email the unit at: MB-RCU@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Links strengthened with local authorities

More than 400 local authority enforcement officers in England have benefited from exchanging views and sharing experiences at a series of regional update events organised jointly by the Agency's Regional Unit and the Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services.

Five seminars were held during November and December in Bristol, Guildford, Liskeard (Cornwall), Nottingham and Wigan – with attendees from local authorities across the East Midlands, North West, South East and South West regions.

The Agency staff working out of the Government Offices for the regions worked with local authorities to get their

views on the location and content of the events, to ensure they were as relevant and accessible as possible.

This led to tailored events with a mix of speakers and workshop sessions, which secured a very high attendance and on the day provided a good forum to discuss issues of concern. The events covered enforcement issues such as the Food Law Code of Practice, Scores on the Doors, Local Area Agreements and Better Regulation. Speakers from the regions included the Health Protection Agency, Department of Health Regional Public Health and local authority representatives.

Workshop topics included local authority sampling priorities,

partnership working to promote healthy eating, and the future work of Food Standards Agency regional teams.

Feedback from all events has been very positive. John Barnes, Head of the Agency's Regional Unit, said: 'We are always looking at ways to strengthen our links with local authorities to deliver our shared priorities on food safety and healthy eating.'

'These events have helped with this and have also provided us with valuable information on areas of concern and where more support and information would be welcomed.'

Toni Smith, the Agency's South West Regional Co-ordinator, decided to hold two events,

partly due to demand and because of the difficulties in finding a venue reasonably accessible to all local authorities in the region. One of the events was held in the Council Chambers at Caradon District Council.

Martin Gregory from Caradon commented: 'Because we have a coordinator for our region we were able to work with Toni to meet local and regional needs in terms of venue, facilities and location. Combining the need to keep costs to a minimum, with easy access and having the opportunity for some real partnership working, it was a pleasure to be able to host the event at our council offices.'

North West joins forces for better food in schools

A School Food Conference has been held in Wigan to help young people in the North West of England develop a better understanding of the relationship between diet and health.

The event, which took place on 29 November at the JJB stadium, aimed to assist young people in making more informed food choices and provide them with the skills to prepare healthy meals safely. It also helped to co-ordinate food initiatives in schools across the region.

The conference was organised by the School Food and Health Team in the Public Health Group, Government Office North West, and was chaired by the Food Standards Agency's Regional Co-ordinator for the region, Angela Towers.

Approximately 160 delegates from across the region heard from speakers on all aspects of food in schools, and a major theme

running through the day was working in partnership, to help schools make the most of the wide range of food-based initiatives on offer.

Sir Don Curry, from the Sustainable Farming and Food Implementation Group, spoke about the importance of reconnecting children to the countryside through the Year of Food and Farming, which started in September. It is focusing on giving young people in England hands-on learning experiences based on visits, growing experiences and cooking or preparing food.

Lindsay Graham, of the School Food Trust, told the conference of the work being done to promote healthy school meals, through standards for lunch and non-lunch food, and to increase the uptake of school meals. She also commended the 'Food Policy in Schools – A strategic policy framework for governing bodies', a document developed in partnership between the FSA and the National Governors' Association.

A variety of workshops were on offer in the afternoon, including a cooking demonstration from the 'Chefs Adopt a School'



Rapt attention: 160 delegates took part in the conference, emphasising the importance of linking education and health

project, a presentation of the *Crop to Kitchen* DVD in support of the Year of Food and Farming, an update on the 'Let's Get Cooking' programme from the School Food Trust and information about how to get involved with the 'Food for Life Partnership'.

Also running were two workshops from the Agency, focusing on the new 'eatwell plate', launched in September this year, and traffic light labelling.

The two workshops gave the delegates a hands-on opportunity to see how the eatwell plate can be used to support healthy eating

messages and how traffic light labelling can be used to make healthier choices quickly and easily by showing at a glance if food has low, medium or high amounts of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt.

It really was back to school for those looking at traffic light labelling. Delegates were given a host of products to label using the Agency's traffic light criteria. The session was very well received and provoked a lot of discussion, with many of those attending keen to go away and promote the scheme to colleagues and children alike.



Angela Towers: getting the right information on food and nutrition into schools also helps the wider community

Welsh Strategy published

One of the commitments in the Welsh Nutrition Strategy's Action Plan was to produce a mid-term review, which was undertaken by a team from Warwick University during 2006-2007.

Food and Well Being – reducing inequalities through a nutrition strategy for Wales was launched in 2003 and is a joint FSA Wales and Welsh Assembly Government strategy.

The report can now be download from the Agency's website. A summary in English and Welsh is also available.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Bwyd A Lles: Adolygiad Canol Tymor, Crynodeb
food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/fwbsummarywelsh.pdf
 Food and Well Being: A mid term review, a summary document, is at:
food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/fwbsummaryenglish.pdf
 Food and Well Being: A mid term review, the full review, is at:
food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/fwbreview.pdf

Welsh language scheme

The Food Standards Agency Wales is seeking views and comments on its draft Welsh Language Scheme, which was published on 19 November.

The first FSA Welsh Language Scheme was published in 2002. The revised version is intended to cover 2007-2011.

Responses to the consultation must be returned by 8 February 2008.

FURTHER INFORMATION

You can read the consultation documents in English and Welsh.
 Cynllun Iaith Gymraeg yr Asiantaeth Safonau Bwyd 2007-2011 ymgynghoriad is at:
food.gov.uk/wales/aboutus_wales/fsawalesw/ymgynggori/wlsymyraeg2007
 The English version is at:
food.gov.uk/consultations/consultwales/2007/fsawls

Recipe for success...

FSA Scotland's immensely popular *Recipe For Success* roadshow, following a record audience attending in Edinburgh in early October, continued to draw in the crowds with another sell-out show in the borders town of Galashiels on 20 November.

Over 400 guests packed out the Volunteer Hall on a stormy Tuesday evening. But while the rain poured outside, the stars came out in force inside – with

an impressive line-up headed by celeb TV chef Phil Vickery (*Ready Steady Cook/This Morning*) working his culinary magic in the kitchen. He was accompanied by TV presenter Fiona Armstrong (ex GMTV) playing host and the couple built up a great rapport with

the audience with questions and comments coming thick and fast. Special guest Scottish rugby legend Gregor Townsend was on hand to taste



Phil's healthy and delicious food and to answer questions about the importance diet and nutrition plays in sport.

Throughout the show, Phil and Fiona promoted key Agency messages on diet, nutrition and health as well as hygiene.

Phil's charisma and flair in the kitchen clearly inspired the audience and yet again the show proved to be an outstanding success and a highly innovative vehicle for promoting food hygiene and healthy eating.

Eats, cooks – and leaves no questions unanswered: celebrity chef Phil Vickery cooks up some culinary magic

...is not such a tall order



FSA Scotland's netball star Lisa Harper recently represented her country at the World Netball Championships in Auckland, New Zealand, where Scotland was one of 16 countries to qualify for the finals. Lisa works in the Local Authority Enforcement team at the Food Standards Agency in Aberdeen and plays goal defence on the court. FSA Scotland sponsors the team's strips. Marion McArthur, Acting Head of Local Authority Enforcement in FSA Scotland, is seen wishing the team well before they depart. Lisa is pictured fourth from right

Radioactivity report issued

The radioactivity people absorb through food remained below the European Union (EU) legal limit during 2006, according to a report published by the Agency.

Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) 2006 is the fifth annual report combining the Agency's monitoring results with those of the Environment Agency, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Environment and Heritage Services of Northern Ireland.

It is the most comprehensive annual independent report of radioactivity in food covering the whole of the UK. The survey measures radioactivity from different parts of the food chain, including for people who live

close to nuclear sites and eat local food. The report also assesses how much radioactivity people would absorb from authorised radioactive discharges in the environment, such as in the air.

By combining these sources,

the report found that the total dose in the UK is under the EU annual dose limit for members of the public of 1 millisievert for all exposures to radiation. The findings do not highlight any safety concerns for the food chain.



There are no concerns about radioactivity in food grown locally

New legislation on mycotoxins

The Agency wishes to bring to the attention of stakeholders several pieces of legislation relating to mycotoxins in food that have been introduced in 2007.

The Contaminants in Food (England) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 2007 came into force on 14 November 2007 (SI No. 2983). These Regulations introduce the changes to maximum levels for Fusarium toxins in maize and maize products, laid down in Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1126/2007. The maximum levels were revised following the establishment of new information, particularly in light of observations made regarding levels of these toxins found in the 2005 harvest linked to climatic conditions.

In addition, several new Commission Decisions have been established. On 1 July, Commission Decision 2007/459/EC came into force, which sets out a minimum

weight for consignments and clarifies which composite products should be included. It also introduces Bulgaria and Romania as points of entry into the EU following their accession and makes miscellaneous changes to the health certificates.

Commission Decision 2007/563/EC came into force on 1 September and adds almonds from USA to the list of products which are subject to special import conditions.

Similarly, Commission Decision 2007/759/EC came into force on 19 November and lays down special conditions for the import of peanuts from Brazil. All of these Decisions have been implemented via Declaration under Regulation 33 of the Official Feed and Food Control Regulations 2006.

A fourth Commission Decision, which will enter into force this month, permits pre-export checks to be carried out on peanuts from the USA, thus reducing official

controls at EU borders and facilitating their import. As this Decision was made under article 23 of Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004, no implementing legislation will be required to enact it in domestic law.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Contaminants in Food (England) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations 2007 is available at: www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/20072983.htm

The Declarations, including those for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at: food.gov.uk/foodindustry/imports/legislation/legislation. For all information updates on chemical contaminants in food, see our Interested Parties letters at: food.gov.uk/foodindustry/regulation/europeleg/euupdates. For more details, contact Simona Origgi, tel: 020 7276 8722; e-mail simona.origgi@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Meeting to discuss salt targets

The Agency was due to hold a stakeholder meeting as this issue of *FSA News* was being published, to discuss how the review of salt reduction targets will be undertaken in 2008.

The Agency plans to consult stakeholders in mid 2008 about the reductions achieved so far, current levels in products, technical constraints, independent advice and data on current intakes. The results of the review and the consultation will be published by the end of 2008.

A series of meetings covering each salt target for the 85 categories of processed food that contribute most of the salt to the diet will be held with stakeholders during January and February 2008. The outputs from these meetings will inform the development of the consultation document.

The Food Standards Agency's voluntary salt reduction targets, which were published in March 2006, aim to encourage food manufacturers and retailers to continue reductions in the amount of salt in each salt target category.

At that time the Agency committed to review the salt targets in 2008 to establish what, if any, further reductions might be necessary to maintain progress towards the daily population average salt intake target of 6g.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more details, go to: food.gov.uk/healthiereating/salt



Review of GM rice incident

A report about the 2006 GM rice (LLRICE601) incident (see *FSA News* 72, p2) is being drafted for consideration by the Food Standards Agency Emergencies Committee alongside a draft action plan that was agreed at a recent review meeting.

The review meeting followed the Judicial Review, which took place in February 2007.

The Judicial review found in favour of the Agency but the judge made a recommendation to the Agency to reflect on certain points when he 'stopped the

clock' at specific times during the judgement.

The independently-chaired meeting, which provided an open platform to review the Agency's actions and enabled suggestions to be fed into an action plan, included stakeholders with a

direct interest in the incident.

They included: Friends of the Earth, Food and Drink Federation, British Retail Consortium, Rice Association, and the Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services.

Consultation on increased charges for meat premises

The Food Standards Agency has published a consultation paper on increased charges to approved meat premises for 2008/09.

The FSA is suggesting a general increase in charges of 8%, which would mean a maximum additional charge to a slaughterhouse of £14.14 per 100 cows, £7.35 per 100 pigs, and £2.83 per 100 sheep.

The Food Standards Agency currently subsidises the costs of official hygiene checks in approved meat premises by over £30m a year, approximately 60% of the costs of the controls.

The new proposals would

increase charges to businesses by approximately £1.5 million in 2008/9.

The new charges would represent a step towards increasing the level of charges for official controls at approved premises (slaughterhouses, cutting plants and game plants) towards full cost recovery while, at the same time, action is being taken by the Meat Hygiene Service to reduce the overall cost of those controls.

Peter Hewson, the Agency's Deputy Veterinary Director, said: 'We believe this increase is reasonable, but we are keen to hear the views of industry

and interested parties.

'Any increase in charges to industry will of course go hand in hand with the programme to further reduce costs of the Meat Hygiene Service while continuing to provide efficient controls to protect the consumer.'

The consultation on proposed increased charges will close on 11 January 2008.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Read the MHS consultation documents in full on the Food Standards Agency website at: food.gov.uk/consultations/consulteng/2007/mhscharges2008

Guidance on 'additional official controls' expenses published

The Food Standards Agency has issued guidance notes to provide advice in relation to regulation 41 of the Official Feed and Food Controls (England) Regulations 2007, which came into force on 14 December 2007.

Regulation 41 gives effect in England to a provision in Regulation (EC) 882/2004 on

official controls, which requires mandatory fees to be imposed by the regulatory authorities in relation to expenses arising from 'additional official controls'.

The question and answer-style guidance has been developed following public consultation and explains the provisions of the regulation, providing

informal and non-statutory advice. The notes will be kept under review and revised and updated as necessary.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The guidance notes are at: food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/offexpensesguidance.pdf

Animal feed committee's call for members

The Advisory Committee on Animal Feedstuffs (ACAF) is looking for a new chair and four members.

ACAF is an independent committee that advises the Food Standards Agency and Government Ministers on the safety and use of animal feeds and feeding practices, with particular emphasis on protecting human health and with reference to new technical developments.

The role of the Chair requires a practical or academic scientist of at least national standing in any science or field of medicine. He or she must have highly developed chairing skills to be able to assist the Committee members to reach appropriate judgements from complex and sometimes conflicting information.

Four new members of the

Committee are required with knowledge and/or experience in either human medicine, veterinary science, animal nutrition or the feed industry.

These posts represent an excellent opportunity to contribute to food safety and standards in the UK by providing advice on this key stage of the food chain. Appointment is initially for three years. ACAF meets four times a year, usually in London. Members are not salaried, although reasonable expenses are reimbursed and attendance and preparation fees for meetings are paid.

Appointments to ACAF are made strictly on merit and in accordance with the Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice.

Selection will be in accordance with the Government's Equal Opportunities Policy.

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is 21 December 2007.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you are interested in any of the above positions, an information pack and an application form may be obtained from:

Raj Pal,
ACAF Secretariat,
Room 415B Aviation House,
Food Standards Agency,
125 Kingsway,
London WC2B 6NH,
tel: 020 7276 8083; email:
acaf@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk
More details on the posts are at:
http://acaf.food.gov.uk/more_about/acafchairmem

Committee on Toxicity to hold workshop

The Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) is to hold a one-day workshop on transgenerational epigenetics on Wednesday 6 February 2008.

Internationally distinguished speakers will present the latest hypotheses on the potential for the induction of heritable epigenetic changes by environmental factors, and the implication of such effects for chemical risk assessment.

Full details of the draft agenda can be found at the link below. Early application is encouraged, as places are strictly limited.

The closing date for requests to attend the meeting is Friday 18 January 2008.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Requests to attend the meeting, which will be held at the Mottram Hall Hotel in Prestbury, should be addressed to: Julie Shroff at: Chemical Safety and Incident Prevention, Room 511C, Food Standards Agency, Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London WC2B 6NH, tel: 020 7276 8522; email: julie.shroff@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk
For more details and the agenda go to: food.gov.uk/science/ouradvisors/toxicity/transsepigenetics

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