

Safer food, better business – coming to a screen near you



This October, the Food Standards Agency will be launching an interactive DVD as the latest element of the Safer food, better business (SFBB) programme.

The DVD, which can be played on a PC or DVD player, will be an invaluable training tool for local authorities and food businesses.

The DVD has been designed to be used by both caterers and retailers, alongside the SFBB pack most relevant to their business. It helps managers put the pack into practice in their business and train staff in key areas.

Using the DVD could replace the need for coaching in some businesses, or reduce the amount of coaching needed, thus helping to sustain the SFBB programme.

This product will be especially useful in training people who don't understand very much English, or have low literacy levels.

It uses virtually no text and the video content has voiceovers in 16 languages that are common in small catering and retail businesses.

The DVD is split into 'Catering' and 'Retail' sections, each of which contains content for managers and for staff.

Film clips for managers demonstrate how to fill out key sections of the SFBB pack, especially those that some businesses find more difficult, such as the cleaning schedule.

The film clips for staff can be used for either individual or group training. They focus on practical demonstration of key food safety messages and good hygiene practice. A number of the film clips are interactive, with the user being asked to identify if the person in the film clip has been working in the right way or the wrong way.

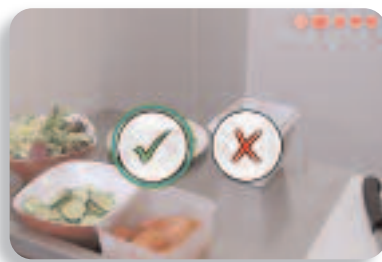
The DVD has been developed over a number of months and is currently being tested with staff and managers from small catering and retail businesses.

Work is also progressing on new versions of SFBB for those catering for vulnerable groups – in care homes and nurseries – and for childminders.

These will be launched in late 2007 and early 2008.

SFBB – the story so far

- SFBB for caterers was launched in September 2005 and since then more than 260,000 packs have been distributed. The pack was updated in September 2006.
- SFBB for retailers was launched in May 2006 and 45,000 packs have been distributed to date.
- SFBB for Chinese cuisine was launched in March 2007. Almost 11,000 Cantonese packs have been distributed, and almost 5,000 English language versions of the pack.
- SFBB for Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan cuisines was launched in March 2007 and almost 9,000 packs have been distributed.
- As part of the Agency's grant scheme, more than two-thirds of local authorities in England have received funding from the Agency and more than 28,000 small businesses have been helped by the grants. By March 2008, it is anticipated that more than 50,000 small businesses will have received face-to-face support on SFBB.
- The Agency has provided free regional training courses for environmental health professionals, with more than 1,200 coaches trained by Highfield.co.uk



The DVD will be useful for training staff

Feedback

Feedback from enforcement officers and businesses continues to be positive.

Oxford City Council project leader Trudie Krige said: 'Safer food, better business is being well received by caterers in the city.

'They like its simple, clear approach and feel that they are able to implement it and like using the daily diary.'

Mr Barrett of Bistro One, in Plymouth, said: 'I would recommend the pack. It is simple, and everything is provided for you to complete.

'SFBB is practical, and I like the diary as, instead of having lots of bits of paper, everything is in one place.'

Good practice in the North West...

Local authorities in the North West of England got together in June for an update on the success, so far, of the SFBB project in the region and to share ideas about the future of the initiative.

The event, held in Wigan on 19 June, was hosted jointly by the Food Standards Agency's North West Regional Office and the Food Safety Management Implementation Branch, in partnership with Food Northwest, a local business support organisation that has managed a large SFBB project in the region on behalf of a number of local authorities.

More than 70 environmental health professionals from across the region attended, with news and views about their different approaches to delivering the initiative, including useful tips that had emerged from individual schemes. These have included using external consultants to deliver the work as well as building in-house capacity to sustain the project in the future.

The relative benefits of group and one-to-one training sessions with business were also discussed, as were ways in which training can be delivered to business employees whose first language is not English.

All the different approaches had real benefits and it was clear that the success of SFBB to date has been as a result of local authorities taking a flexible approach to delivery and assessing what would work best in their area with their own unique mix of businesses.

Those local authorities in the North West involved in SFBB have found the scheme an extremely useful tool in helping businesses improve their food safety management systems.



Attention to detail: delegates at the North West seminar

Delegates also heard from a food business where staff – although originally sceptical – had now embraced the scheme wholeheartedly and were actively promoting it to colleagues in other food businesses as an efficient business management tool. Prior to using SFBB, they had been using nine separate systems for food safety monitoring and management. Now the SFBB pack meets all of those requirements.

There was a high level of commitment from delegates for the continuation of SFBB despite the absence of any new major funding from the Agency.

Many had already incorporated ongoing SFBB promotion to businesses in their core activity, and others saw useful links between 'Scores on the doors' and SFBB in encouraging better standards of food safety management in food businesses.

The forthcoming SFBB DVD (see page 1) was also welcomed as another avenue for disseminating information to businesses.

There were also some useful messages for the Agency to take away, including a suggestion that the Agency should trial a more regionalised approach to training in languages other than English.

Julian Blackburn, Head of the Agency's Food Safety Management Implementation Branch said: 'I was extremely impressed by the enthusiasm for SFBB among environmental health colleagues in the North West and the evident success of the programme to date in the region. We will continue to work closely with them in the future to promote SFBB.'

Plans are already underway for further regional SFBB seminars throughout England over the coming year.

... and in the South West

On the 27 November 2006, the Food Standards Agency hosted a one day seminar, at Lyngford House Conference Centre in Taunton, to share good practice on the implementation of SFBB. About 30 local authorities were represented from the South West, with 46 officers attending.

The event was chaired by Toni Smith, the Food Standards Agency's Regional Co-ordinator for the South West, and Julian Blackburn, Head of the Agency's SFBB Implementation Team, provided background information on SFBB and its developments.

Presentations were given on behalf of four of the 'first tranche' projects. John Barrow and Sue Dickins reflected on the experience in Torbay; Justine Wadge and William Wood talked about North Cornwall, Rachael Harris about Plymouth and Phil Park about Gloucestershire.

Each offered insights from their projects on things that had gone well; the pitfalls;

the lessons learnt; and the outcomes.

Practical tips offered included:

- ensure you get good publicity
- spend time setting up suitable recording systems
- ensure expenditure is tracked against the budget
- be prepared to adjust the rate of delivery
- ensure there is regular communication between project managers and coaches
- make follow-up calls as a reminder for seminars and coaching appointments
- ensure that appointments for coaching are captured on the day of the workshop.

The final presentation was given by Julie Munn on the lessons learnt by CMI since the inception of SFBB, and the day was concluded with participants being able to ask questions.

The panel was joined by David Lock from LACORS and Kirstie Trasler from Highfield.co.uk, who manages SFBB training courses run on behalf of the Agency for local

authority enforcement officers.

Toni Smith said: 'This event provided an excellent platform to show local authority colleagues how our regional work links with the SFBB programme as well as with the FSA's wider agenda.'

The overall feeling from participants following the event was very positive and most found it interesting and useful.

Rebecca Kirk from Penwith District Council, part of the West of Cornwall SFBB initiative (a collaborative bid, involving the districts of Carrick, Kerrier and Penwith), said: 'As someone who is about to embark on a project, this has been a really good opportunity to gain more of an insight into the implementation of SFBB and I have taken away many valuable points to incorporate into ours.'

The day also provided the delegates an opportunity to share varied experiences and to build networks.

Evaluating progress

Since SFBB was launched in September 2005, the Food Standards Agency has received lots of informal feedback on its success from enforcement and business stakeholders. We are now undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the SFBB programme. This is being carried out in three parts:

- Last year we asked local authorities to complete a questionnaire quantifying their activity in helping businesses introduce food safety management systems, using SFBB. The questionnaire also explored the level of compliance of food businesses in implementing food safety management requirements.

The survey has just been repeated for 2006/2007 and we are very grateful to those authorities who have returned completed questionnaires.

The Agency is currently reviewing the

information received and analysing the data.

- Many of the local authority projects from the first tranche grants ended in March 2007 and an independent academic review of final reports from these projects is now underway. The consolidated findings will be reported back to the Agency.

- The Agency is also carrying out an extensive research project throughout England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales interviewing businesses to explore their perception of implementing a food safety management system, including SFBB, Cook safe in Scotland or Safe Catering in Northern Ireland. The project should identify improvements both in managing food safety and in improved business practice in general.

The findings from all the evaluation activities will be reported to the Food Standards Agency Board in late 2007.



This will summarise the programme's achievements, highlight any issues to explore further and point the way for a sustainable future for the programme. The results of the evaluation exercise, including good practice identified, will also be fed back to local authorities.

More than two thirds of all local authorities in England have received funding from the Food Standards Agency for Safer food, better business training and free regional training courses have been provided for environmental health professionals. Below we highlight some of the work that has proved to be successful in local authorities

Blackpool illuminations

Blackpool Council was successful in its bid for Safer food, better business (SFBB) funding and was awarded £90,000 to help implement SFBB in 400 premises across the town, including 70 Chinese restaurants and takeaways.

The Chinese sector represents the largest minority ethnic group in the town and was seen as an ideal target group for this project. Experience has shown that these businesses often struggle with paperwork and documentation and many were grateful to receive the pack in their own language. The Chinese version of SFBB was delivered through workshops and one-to-one coaching visits using CMI, with support from the local authority.

The Chinese community in Blackpool was already well established and socially and commercially cohesive. Successful recruitment involved engaging the whole community and making particular use of key influential figures and contacts. Visits to the

local Chinese Sunday School proved to be a good way to spread the word and inform numerous businesses about the forthcoming training opportunity.

During the recruitment stage it was made clear from the outset that failure to comply with the legal requirements would result in a routine inspection and formal legal action. One hundred percent of the businesses subsequently attended the workshop and received the free training and coaching.

The workshops were restricted to 17 businesses and extensive use was made of the Chinese training materials proved by the FSA. To overcome the inevitable language difficulties, workshops were delivered in English but translated into Chinese using two interpreters recruited from the local community. Each workshop was supported by two local authority staff in addition to the CMI trainer. This proved to be essential in checking understanding and running the small group work sessions.

The follow up coaching visits were undertaken by coaches who were familiar with the Chinese style of catering and they proved to be most effective when delivered in the kitchen environment, helping the business to relate theory to practice.

Four of the businesses who failed to successfully implement SFBB subsequently received hygiene improvement notices, but all 70 businesses that took part in the project are now making successful progress and the whole project was well received by all who were involved.

In hindsight, the project would have been even more successful if the length of the workshops was reduced and each business was subject to two shorter coaching visits. Ideally, the coaching visits should have been delivered by a coach who was fluent in Cantonese. Likewise, it would have been more productive if the workshops were actually delivered in Cantonese rather than translated from English.



Delegates at the SFBB workshop for Chinese businesses in Blackpool

Focusing on tourism in Norfolk

It all started with an innocent question at a Norfolk Food Liaison Group meeting, says Jaan Stanton, Lead Project Co-ordinator Norwich City Council: 'Shouldn't we put together a joint bid for an FSA special grant for SFBB?'

In no time at all, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, North Norfolk, Broadland and Norwich had formed a project team and enlisted the help of training company CMi.

Many weeks were spent developing the application, covering a large geographical area characterised by a low wage and low skills economy, and seasonal working reliant on tourism.

The bid aimed to deliver SFBB into at least 1,218 small catering and retail businesses via workshops, coaching and evaluations. We needed to see an improvement in 'confidence in management' score to zero or 5 in most of them – no small task. To begin with we enlisted the support of those businesses willing to be SFBB 'Champions' and sought out external partners.



Miss Howkins (right) of Pedro's, Chapelfield Gardens, receives her 5-Star Award and 'Champion' Safer food, better business' certificate from Councillor Brociek-Coulton



Delegates at the project's first seminar, presented in Cantonese

We developed close ties with BusinessLink East, whose insight into how local businesses operate has been welcome.

We built-in links with the Norwich Scores on the Doors initiative as a way of ensuring the longevity of SFBB.

Both projects continue to compliment one another and although the other partner local authorities do not have similar schemes, the Norwich experience is being followed closely.

We produce a regular SFBB-Norfolk newsletter called FoodWise and hope that at the end of the project the Food Liaison Group will adopt it to continue promoting SFBB. Each partner local authority also runs a weekly surgery when food business operators can telephone or pop in for advice.

Getting businesses to attend seminars is the hardest task, but, once there, almost all sign up for coaching.

Many more businesses needed to be targeted to compensate for non-attendance

and we now offer direct coaching to businesses we think would benefit from this approach, so as to reach as many businesses as possible.

The owner of Trattoria Rustica said: 'The information I was given made the day-to-day management of food safety much easier.'

We are now half way through the project. Evaluations show standards are improving in almost all of those businesses supported, and we are increasing the pressure on the most reluctant businesses to sign up for SFBB workshops.

The rollout of SFBB has been more work than was initially contemplated and effective communication between the partner local authorities, CMi and their coaches is crucial. However, the benefit for those businesses implementing SFBB is apparent and the partner local authorities are looking forward to reaping the rewards of more compliant food businesses in the future.

Reaching new heights in the Tees Valley

The project undertaken in the Tees Valley area involving Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-tees, Redcar and Cleveland, Hartlepool and Darlington Councils – was set up to introduce the SFBB pack to catering businesses and assist up to 1,200 businesses with its completion and implementation.

Support package options

The project was designed to provide a number of support options including:

- a half day introduction to SFBB workshop
- a full day coaching workshop
- a coaching visit
- a drop-in surgery on 'taking SFBB forward'

All targeted businesses were asked to attend the introductory workshops where they received a copy of the SFBB pack with training on how to use it. The support needs of each business were assessed and referrals made to one or more of the support options available.

Marketing and recruitment

The main recruitment mechanism for the project was 'face-to-face' contact by environmental health staff as part of routine inspections and targeted visits. A total of 2,600 businesses were identified as requiring assistance, based upon the business type and risk rating. These businesses also received regular newsletters, and this combined approach, while resource intensive, proved very successful.

Workshops for local Chinese and Kurdish communities were marketed directly through respective community centres, resulting in an exceptionally high level of engagement.

Project delivery

Three training partners (University of Teeside, Food Training Partnership, Stockton Food Business Unit), each with

extensive experience of supporting catering businesses, were involved in the delivery of the support packages.

Project management

A project coordinator provided day-to-day project management support and overall strategic project management was provided through the Tees Valley Food Liaison group.

Project evaluation is ongoing. However, early indications suggest it has been a success and feedback from businesses has been very positive.

Jennifer Leafe, of the Abbeyfield Society, Darlington, said: 'Safer food, better business' is a very comprehensive package that covers every aspect needed in a catering environment. I've found the pack very easy to use and excellent as a training tool. It sets good standards for any food business.'

A continental approach with SFBB

Although primarily an England-wide approach to food safety management, SFBB is now being hailed as an innovative tool 14 miles from the French Coast.

The channel island of Alderney forms part of the Bailiwick of Guernsey. All of the island's 41 caterers were invited to an SFBB briefing and, despite the busy summer season, 29 attended.

Alderney is famous for its seafood, which features prominently on local menus. This level of craft catering needs to be well controlled from a food safety management perspective. Certainly, the participants all thought that the pack was both relevant and useable.

An earlier approach to over 300 Guernsey and Herm Island caterers resulted in staff from almost 150 catering premises attending nine sessions.

Director of Environmental Health and Pollution Regulation John Cook said: 'Even though EU legislation does not directly apply to the Bailiwick, local legislation is now in place that requires the adoption of HACCP principles for Island caterers.'

'The SFBB pack is a really good example of how they can achieve a food safety management system, to ensure their standards are as high as possible.'

'I don't believe that catering in the Bailiwick should be undertaken at a lower level of hygiene than is normal in the UK and the rest of Europe.'

The briefings were presented by environmental health officers from the department and further individual coaching on SFBB was available.



Richard Cann, Chef Proprietor of the Cornerstone Café Bar in St Peter Port, Guernsey

Richard Cann, the Chef Proprietor of the Cornerstone Café Bar in St Peter Port, Guernsey, said 'The pack is a refreshing and common sense approach to improving standards in the catering industry. It's great as a training tool and very useful indeed. I am glad that Guernsey managed to get hold of the packs for distribution to the catering trade.'

Last month, at the invitation of the Sark Public Health Committee, environmental health officers visited the unique feudal island of Sark.

The Island's food businesses were inspected and a well attended SFBB seminar held. Again, the pack was well received and easily understood by attendees.

John Cook said: 'We are now rolling out the Retail Pack and committed to the continuation of SFBB. Unfortunately, the Bailiwick couldn't bid for special grant funding and we have limited staff resources. It was, therefore, important to devise a system of SFBB implementation that gave every Bailiwick caterer an equal chance to be involved, while not overburdening staff.'

'Coaching for those caterers who didn't or couldn't attend our briefings will either be combined with routine food safety inspections or carried out on request. As a Crown dependency, we generally aspire to the FSA codes in respect of our food safety work and I am grateful for their support.'

Cornwall targets magistrates...

More than 80 magistrates attended a food safety training evening at Truro Crown Court delivered by Lesley Carrodus, Restormel Borough Council, Carol Thorogood, Carrick District Council and Sally Glover and Justine Wadge from North Cornwall District Council.

Those attending heard an outline of food safety, health and safety and environmental protection legislation. They then broke into groups and attended two of three subject presentations.

The food safety workshop communicated several key messages including:

- Only the very worst offenders are brought to court
- A great deal of work is, therefore, undertaken by environmental health practitioners to resolve problems informally in order to avoid prosecution.
- The offence may appear to be an administrative matter – for example failure to provide documented food safety management systems. However, this represents a failure to protect public health.
- The level of any fine should be proportionate to the offence.

■ The magistrates were told about SFBB and how much support was given to businesses to comply with legislation.

The magistrates provided insights into the constraints within which they work, such as the level of fines they can impose and information that would assist them in determining assets and, therefore, fines. They were interested in the work of the environmental health professionals, expressing a wish for further training and contacts with practitioners throughout the year.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more details, contact Lesley Carrodus, Principal Environmental Health Officer, Restormel Borough Council; email: lesley.carrodus@restormel.gov.uk

... and schools

The Commercial Services of Cornwall County Council, working primarily with North Cornwall District Council, recently piloted the implementation of SFBB into Cornish schools.

Cornwall County Council provided

additional funding of £40,000.

The existing Catering pack was used. However it included many of the school in-house documented checks and the four-weekly review was altered to three-weekly, to fit in with menu cycles.

Nineteen seminars were attended by school catering managers. The hybrid packs were issued and then, after several months, evaluated.

Feedback from catering managers using the packs has been overwhelmingly positive, and inspecting officers found a good level of compliance.

Justine Wadge, Senior Environmental Officer with North Cornwall District Council, said: 'This reflects how flexible SFBB can be, and how partnerships can result in a pack which is focused on a particular specialised type of catering. It's hoped this school version of the pack may be trialled elsewhere.'

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more details contact Justine Wadge, Senior EHO, North Cornwall District Council, email: justine.wadge@ncdc.gov.uk

Chesterfield and Bolsover adopt a 'collegiate' approach

Chesterfield Borough Council and Bolsover District Council have been awarded an SFBB grant to provide training and coaching to 300 small catering businesses.

The project includes 25 workshops and coaching for all of the businesses that attend a workshop.

The workshops are administered and delivered by Chesterfield College, a local catering college. It was decided to work in partnership with the college because it has a successful record of delivering foundation food hygiene training courses in the local area and has established links with the catering business community.

The college is also able to offer basic skills-training, free of charge, on request, to support delegates in the completion of the SFBB pack.

Initially, businesses were sent a letter to invite them to an SFBB workshop. This approach was successful at first but take-up fell after the first mailing.

It was then decided to recruit businesses by targeting specific catering sectors, and officers made direct contact with businesses by telephone or through a visit to encourage participation.

This approach has been successful, but the higher, unanticipated, workload has

increased the cost of the project.

The collaboration between Chesterfield and Bolsover councils has ensured that the scale of the project is substantial enough to enable the college to participate. The partnership has worked very well, and has benefited from having flexibility in allocating workshop places between the two authorities. Initially, the workshops were split equally between the two authorities but the allocated number of places on the workshops were changed to reflect the demand in each authority. This has ensured that each workshop was delivered as planned.

In March 2007, Chesterfield Borough Council launched a 'Scores on the doors' scheme covering caterers. Businesses that didn't receive any stars or only received one star were informed of their star rating before the scheme went live and were invited to an SFBB workshop. This resulted in an increased demand for the workshops and has encouraged businesses with lower standards to improve.

Workshops are followed by one-to-one coaching sessions carried out by local authority environmental health practitioners. Coaching sessions are arranged by appointment and are carried out at the

business premises. Each business has up to three hours of coaching.

Mrs Zannettou, of Tibshel Fish Bar, the 100th customer on the workshop, commented: 'SFBB has helped me keep on track with the management side of the business without adding to my already full daily schedule.'

The project also includes workshops for Chinese restaurants and takeaways. We have liaised with the local Chinese Community Association to encourage business participation and to ensure that the workshop meets the needs of these businesses. Chesterfield College will deliver these workshops but an interpreter will be present.

The interpreter will receive training on SFBB before the workshops to assist her understanding of SFBB.

Working with the Chinese Community Association has reduced the cost of delivering training to Chinese businesses, as the Association have provided free translation services.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more details, contact Amanda Hoyle, tel: 01246 345750 or Helen Rawson, tel: 01246 242252.

At least 260,000 SFBB packs for caterers have been distributed since September 2005, and 45,000 packs for retailers have been issued since May 2006. By March 2008 it is anticipated that more than 50,000 small businesses will have had face-to-face SFBB training funded by the FSA's grant scheme. On the following pages we highlight the experiences of some of the businesses involved

Shelly's passes on the message

Shelly's, a busy Warrington restaurant that can serve up to 80 covers by 11am, has been serving fine English food prepared to its customers' satisfaction for the past two-and-a-half years.

The business operates with three full-time staff, three part-time staff, eight youngsters who assist with waitressing, front-of-house work, washing up, and one part-time cleaner.

Proprietor Michele Butterworth first heard about the new EC regulations coming in, when attending an advanced food hygiene course. She kept her ears open for further information and approached Warrington Borough Council when she knew that training on SFBB was available.

Michele attended the SFBB workshop and the business then received one-to-one mentoring on site.

She said: 'The workshop was very good, it ensured we understood the content of the pack before moving on and beginning to complete it.'

SFBB has been implemented successfully at Shelly's and all the business procedures are listed in the pack. Each member of staff now

knows how to use the pack and understands how it works. The pack is also used as part of the induction process for new staff.

The chef, Benjamin, said: 'At first I felt I had enough to do in the kitchen and wasn't keen on the idea of having more paperwork. Now it takes less than one minute each day to complete the diary.' Benjamin was so impressed with SFBB that he's recommended it to the business next door and helped the staff there to complete their pack.

The relationship between caterer and environmental health officer (EHO) has developed through the EHO's attendance at the workshop and a follow-up visit once mentoring was complete. Shelly's is happy to approach Warrington Borough Council's Project Support Officer for advice.

Michele and Benjamin felt a simplified booklet giving a taster of SFBB would encourage businesses to use the system. This could be aimed at people who are new to the industry and look at cross contamination and cleaning, so the importance of these aspects is better understood. They also felt a training DVD with questions at the end could be a

valuable tool in rolling out SFBB to staff within a business (see page 1).

The SFBB pack will continue to be used at Shelly's. Everything that happens is recorded in the book, it helps to remind staff to double check everything and ensures compliance with the EC regulations.



Proprietor Michele Butterworth, Chef Benjamin Butterworth and staff Kate Rustage and Gwen Morgan



Café Roma, in Plymouth: streetwise, and SFBB safe

'One simple system' for Plymouth's Café Roma

Café Roma is a small city centre café serving light bites. The kitchen is very small and preparation and cooking are limited.

The business owners found out about the SFBB course through a newsletter and an invitation letter sent to them by the Environmental Health Department.

Café joint owner Mr Baker said: 'The invitation to the seminar came at an excellent time, as we were just in the middle of reviewing all our procedures.'

'We were keen to attend the course to ensure we were up-to-date with the new requirements and that we were doing everything right.'

The café staff found the seminar useful as they were able to discuss openly with other businesses in a similar position and share ideas. The business also had two follow-up coaching sessions.

Mr Baker said: 'We are using the diary pages and have laminated our opening and closing checks, cleaning rota and refrigerator checks on the wall so that all staff are aware what to check for every day. This is particularly handy, as we have a lot of

seasonal staff, and it means we can use the pack as a training tool and the training is much more structured and accountable.'

'We have used the training as an opportunity to combine all our procedures into one simple system. We have found that our stock control has definitely improved as a result. We now include the stock check as part of the closing checks and this means that our employees must check the stock and complete the ordering for the next day. We are now less likely to waste food or run out!'

Mr Baker added that if they had not had the SFBB pack or the help from Plymouth City Council, then the process would have taken a lot longer to complete and might have been less structured.

He said: 'The format of SFBB is easy and practical and it is also reassuring that you are following an approved format that is being adopted by the majority of food businesses. It is much easier to be given a comprehensive pack to complete, rather than to try to understand the regulations. I would definitely recommend the pack and free training.'

SFBB: a piece of cake at Rosy Lee's tea room

South Norfolk Council, a small rural authority, funded a series of roadshows to explain legislation changes to local businesses, providing each with an SFBB pack. The roadshows were well attended and follow-up visits and routine inspections have shown that many enterprises have incorporated the pack into the day-to-day running of their business.

SFBB has become an important tool for meaningful discussions with food business operators and has been well received by most premises in South Norfolk. This is an ongoing programme and the authority ensures all have access to new diary refill sheets as needed. The continued use of the pack as a documented food safety management system is achievable, with many establishments in their second year of using the pack.

Grizelle Davey, an environmental health officer working for South Norfolk, visited Rosy Lee's tea room in Loddon, Norfolk, to do a routine food hygiene inspection. She found that Caroline Dwen, the owner, had attended a roadshow and had found the pack increasingly easier to use.

Grizelle Davey said: 'She also told me she was finding the pack a great help when training her staff, as she has something concrete to show them if they query why she wants things done in a particular way. She was very complimentary about the whole thing.'

Caroline Dwen said: 'Initially I was apprehensive about a new method for health and hygiene. However, over time I have seen the benefits, not only for me but also for my staff. I feel safe and secure that I'm meeting current legislation with regards to serving the public – now and for some time into the future. I owe a great debt of gratitude to the environmental health officer for introducing me to these new methods and giving me a new perspective on health and hygiene.'



Dear Diary

Just to remind you that diary refills of SFBB for caterers and retailers are available for businesses and local authorities, free of charge. Refills can be obtained through the FSA publications line, EC Group – telephone: 0845 606 0667; fax: 020 8867 3225; email: foodstandards@ecgroup.co.uk

Local authorities can order up to 3 boxes

(54 refills) at a time for SFBB for caterers and for retailers up to 1 box (30 refills) at a time.

On the front of the diary refills, businesses are reminded to store completed diary pages safely until the next visit from their local authority enforcement officer – when they should check how long the enforcement officer wants them to keep their completed diary pages in future.

How to find out more about Safer food, better business

For general comments and enquiries about Safer food, better business please email the dedicated mailbox at haccpteam@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Julian Blackburn is Head of the Food Safety Management Implementation branch, which administers and monitors the special grant scheme and she can be contacted on 020 7276 8430 or by email to julian.blackburn@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk. The implementation branch works collaboratively with local authorities,

industry and other stakeholders to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the implementation of food safety management systems.

Stephen Airey is Head of the Food Safety Management Policy branch, which holds the policy lead on food safety management and he can be contacted on 020 7276 8118 or by email to stephen.airey@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

The policy branch is responsible for developing support tools and adapting SFBB for different cuisines and groups.

The FSA website – working for you

The Food Standards Agency is continually developing its websites to ensure that they meet the needs of all stakeholders.

A Safer food, better business page aimed specifically at retailers and caterers can be

found on the Agency's www.food.gov.uk website at: www.food.gov.uk/sfbb

The page, see below for more details, provides information that should be of interest to a range of businesses.

Safer food, better business for caterers

This section includes information about the food safety management pack developed to help small catering businesses, such as restaurants, cafés and takeaways, comply with new regulations introduced in January 2006.

Safer food, better business for retailers

This section has details on the safety management pack developed to help retail businesses across the UK comply with new regulations introduced in January 2006.

Bacteria Bite Business

The FSA's Bacteria Bite Business video demonstrates the importance of good food hygiene, focusing on the 4 Cs (Cleaning, Cooking, Chilling and Cross-contamination). This is also available to view online.

Safer food, better business for different cuisines

This section describes Safer food, better business packs adapted for small catering businesses, such as restaurants and takeaways, that serve either Chinese cuisine or Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan cuisines.

Safer food, better business in other languages

Safer food, better business for Chinese cuisine is available in Traditional Chinese and both Safer food, better business for caterers and Safer food, better business for retailers have been translated into Welsh.

