

Assuring produce safety: 2nd edition CFA Microbiological Guidance

The safety of fresh produce is assured primarily by hygienic growing, handling and preparation conditions. The new revised 2nd edition of CFA's successful 'Microbiological Guidance for Produce Suppliers to Chilled Food Manufacturers' is now available and aimed at suppliers and growers of fresh, frozen and dehydrated produce, both organic and conventional. This new guidance aims to help minimise food safety risks by focusing on the use of risk assessment and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) in the field. It provides clear guidance to all growers of produce on the main microbial food safety hazards and their controls, particularly in relation to produce that is to be minimally processed and eaten without being cooked.

The revised Guidance addresses all the key control areas - specifically: risk assessment; traceability; hazards and their control in growing; harvesting and handling; packhouses and postharvest handling; sampling, test methods, targets and tolerances, interpretation of results. A risk assessment approach is taken throughout, with information being provided on relative risks of various water sources, irrigation methods, crop types and uses. Information is also provided on acceptable treatments and intervals in the application of organic materials to land as well as livestock intervals, which has been taken into account in the development of the FSA's 'Managing Manures for Food Safety'.

New to the 2nd edition are newly defined concepts such as 'control point', amended farmyard manure handling requirements, inclusion of requirements for orchards and fruit production, and revision of packhouse and postharvest handling requirements. In addition, the guidance now includes a return to work questionnaire for food handlers and information on the key requirements of the legislation (SI No. 2073/2005) from a fresh produce perspective.

The new Guidelines are available, price £50 (paper copy) or £30 (pdf) from the CFA online shop. For more information visit www.chilledfood.org.



CFA relaunches website

CFA has relaunches its highly successful website www.chilledfood.org. With over 340,000 visits to the site in the past 3 years and 80,000 downloads of CFA's various guidance documents, it is important that our interface with the public and the industry communicates our message clearly. Our newly designed website aims to do just that and has improved navigation and search facilities offering a wealth of information on food safety and hygiene as well as resources for journalists, students, authorities, enforcers and industry.

The CFA website provides a unique repository of information on chilled foods including:

- guidance on safety assurance, hygiene, management, shelf life, and legislation
- industry information such as market data;
- chilled food-related events (i.e. courses, conferences and exhibitions);
- CFA position statements on a variety of issues; and
- information for students.

The website is linked to the CFA shop where CFA publications can be purchased securely. You can also sign up for newsletters and updates.

For CFA Members the website provides access to an extensive library of resources including: technical reference materials; regulatory, political and policy developments (national and international); updates on confidential CFA projects and research; and contingency planning and support.

CFA members' day

A CFA members' only day at the Institute of Food Research, Norwich is planned for January 2008. Contact Kaarin Goodburn for further details.

Glossary of Terms - free download

AS reported in the Summer Issue of *CFA News*, CFA's 'Glossary of Terms' aims to help agencies and authorities, including the FSA and the HPA, understand industry terminology.

The Glossary will play a key role in assuring clarity in communications between industry and authorities. The FSA has commented that it is "a very useful document". DEFRA too has said that it is a "very good, comprehensive, useful document pitched at the right level for non-specialists". The Glossary is available on the CFA website as a free download.

Insurance industry supports new fire risk minimisation code of practice

A new food industry Code of Practice on Fire Risk Minimisation has been published by the Insurers' Fire Research Strategy Scheme ('InFiReS'), in association with the Association of Insurers and Risk Managers in Commerce ('AIRMIC') and the Food Industry Panels Group ('FIPG'), a broad consortium of trade associations in the food manufacturing, storage and distribution sectors led by CFA.

The Code has the support of the UK insurance industry and updates the previous guidance published in 2003 by FIPG. Designed to provide advice to all sectors of the food industry, the new Code aims to establish a generic property loss control standard that companies can aspire to in the expectation that damage caused by fire will be kept to a minimum. The new Code updates the approach that individual companies must take to ensure that they are fully compliant with legislative requirements and provides guidance on fire risk minimisation in both new and existing structures, which is required by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which came into force in 2006.

Fire Risk Minimisation Guidance for the Food Industry is available to order from the FPA website priced £15.00 or £12.00 for FPA members. It is also available as a free download to gold and silver FPA members at www.thefpa.co.uk.

CFA presentations

CFA's Chairman, Helen Sisson (Technical Director, Greencore plc) gave a presentation on 'The Challenging Face of the Chilled Food Industry' at the Food Faraday Partnership event held on 9 October in London. The event, entitled 'Excellence in Food Manufacture 2007 - Advantage from Innovation: Leading Edge Products, Processes and Technology' was attended by industry, academia, research funders and Government (www.scottishfoodanddrink.com).

On 19 October, Kaarin Goodburn, CFA Secretary General, gave a presentation entitled 'Use of Microbiological Criteria in Food Safety Assurance: An Industry View on the New EU Criteria' at the 3rd European Symposium on Food Safety organised by the International Association of Food Protection held in Rome from 18-19 October 2007 (www.foodprotection.org).

In the pipeline

CFA/BRC Guidance on the Micro Criteria Regulation - CFA is currently working on a revision of its highly successful MCR Guidance which aims to help food businesses meet the requirements of the EU Regulation which came into force in January 2006.

Hygiene Training Guidance for Multicultural Environments - CFA and Food Northwest are developing hygiene-focused training guidance for food and drink processing companies, specifically with the chilled food sector in mind, who directly employ, or who use the services of a labour provider to supply, workers who may be from different cultural backgrounds. It is anticipated that the guidance will be published in 2008.

For further information contact The Chilled Food Association, PO Box 6434, Kettering NN15 5XT, UK, tel: +44 (0)1536 514365, fax: +44 (0)1536 515395 e-mail: cfa@chilledfood.org, web: <http://www.chilledfood.org/>

© Chilled Food Association Ltd 2007