

Fire risk minimisation guidance published

The Food Industry Panels Group (FIGP) was set up in Autumn 2001 by CFA together with the Ice Cream Federation, the UK Association of Frozen Food Producers, and the Cold Storage Distribution Federation. Membership is made up of members of the individual associations, brokers, selected design engineer consultancies, and composite panel manufacturers. The FIGP has recently published Fire Risk Minimisation Guidance for the food industry. This practical guide (price £75 for non-members and £40 for members) is available from CFA's online shop at www.chilledfood.org.

The Guidance aims to:

- provide a common risk minimisation strategy across the food industry;
- reduce fire risk across the industry; and
- help companies to obtain insurance at risk-based premiums.

The Guidance also provides information on controls relating to people (personnel, visitors and contractors; processes, plant and materials); and premises (including composite panels). Specimen forms, templates, and checklists are also included to assist in implementation.

Reaction to the Guidance has been extremely positive from manufacturing and temperature controlled storage industries, risk management and insurance specialists, brokers, insurers, and the insurance press.

A number of workshops have also been held which have been very successful. The next workshop is planned with the Northwest Food Alliance on 29 May 2003 at their offices in Runcorn. Contact Anna at annak@nwfoodalliance.co.uk or 'phone 01928 513 777 for bookings.

FIGP's work is continuing apace and is now concentrating on:

- Evaluating a mechanism for recording claims made;



- Seeking enhanced capital allowances
- Evaluating technical developments;
- Exploring insurance options for the industry as a whole;
- Coordinating activity to avoid duplication of effort;
- Promoting the guidance to the food and insurance industries.

FIGP also links into a network of food manufacturing associations and has catalysed the establishment of the Food & Distribution Industry Forum (FDIF), a special interest group at the Association of Insurers and Risk Managers in Commerce. The FDIF is led by FIGP and CFA member, Mr Derek Mason (Uniq plc) and is handling broad insurance issues for the food industry.

For further information visit the FIGP website (www.infoatfigp.com)•

New members

CFA welcomes Baxters Food Group and Vitacress Salads Ltd as full members. This brings CFA's membership up to 28 companies, representing over 150 plants employing over 50,000 people•

Factory visits

As part of CFA's longstanding programme of factory visits for government and other relevant agency officials, the DEFRA Food Technology Unit visited a ready meal and a salad plant in March. The aim of these visits is to demonstrate the chilled food industry's high standards in operation from farm to fork. Further visits are planned for the future•

New regulations on animal by-product waste

CFA has made representations to DEFRA regarding the lack of consultation and resulting impact on the chilled food sector of new EU regulations on waste. CFA also called for a phase-in period to at least 31/12/05 for the implementation of the Regulations in relation to food manufacturers' operations. This is imperative to both protect the environment and enable Government and industry to develop the systems necessary to manage the practicalities of the legislation, particularly in setting up an infrastructure for the removal of waste to final processing plants.

EU Regulation 1774/2002 was due to come into force on 1/05/03 and will require thermal treatment of any animal by-product waste (ABP) before landfilling. One of the many facets of the Regulations was that non-animal material that has been in the same factory as ABP must be treated in the same way as ABP. Previously this waste material did not have to be treated and this extra requirement places a major burden on the industry. CFA estimates that its sector produces some 120,000–150,000 tonnes of mixed waste which will be affected by the legislation, and for which there is no clear disposal route.

The phase-in period requested by CFA (to 31/12/05) is to be granted for 'former foodstuffs'. CFA is now concentrating on ensuring that definitions are clear and systems and infrastructure are developed to manage the practicalities of the legislation.

Pesticides update

Some 320 substances used in plant protection products, including insecticides, fungicides and herbicides, are to be

withdrawn from the market by 25 July 2003 as part of the European Commission's new approach to the evaluation of active substances in plant protection products. Users, wholesalers and retailers of plant protection products will need to be aware of whether the products they use or sell are likely to be withdrawn, so as to prevent them being left with stocks of unusable material. (The Regulation 2076/2002 of 20 November 2002), with the list of the 320 substances, was published in the Official Journal and at http://europa.eu.int/eurlex/en/oj/2002/L_31920021123en.html).

CFA's 'Due Diligence Guidance on the Agricultural Use of Pesticides for Suppliers to Chilled Food Manufacturers' set out the management systems recommended to manage the new legislative requirements and best practice systems for operations throughout the chain. The Guidelines are available for £30 each for 1-4 copies, or £20 each for 5 or more copies. Members receive a discount.

CFA robotics workshop

CFA recently held a very successful workshop on the 'Potential for Robotics in the Chilled Food Industry'. Speakers from Amtri, University of Salford, SRI's Bio-Engineering Division, and DEFRA/LINK highlighted key on-going projects, potential applications and further R&D needs.

Obvious potential advantages for the chilled food industry are the improved hygiene achieved from avoiding all human contact with food during manufacture, as well as efficiency and environmental improvements. The challenge is to meet the industry's short runs, large numbers of different types of products, and design specifications for CIP (Cleaning in Place). Presentations and researchers' details are available for CFA members only on the members area of the CFA website (www.chilledfood.org/members/robotics.htm).

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/>
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