

## CFA to promote stronger enforcement of RTE food businesses

CFA is working with enforcement groups (LACORS - Local Authorities Coordinating Office on Regulatory Services, CIEH - Chartered Institute of Environmental Health) and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to promote stronger levels of hygiene enforcement among producers of ready-to-eat (RTE) foods. Standards for many such suppliers, which include takeaways, can differ widely and may lack basic hygiene amenities on their premises.



CFA members are required to have British Retail Consortium or International Food Standard certification in addition to complying with CFA's Best Practice Guidelines for the Production of Chilled Foods and other relevant CFA guidance. CFA believes the highest enforcement priority should be those food businesses producing RTE food and not having relevant third party hygiene certification. In addition, enforcers should focus particular attention on producers of publicly procured foods for vulnerable people, e.g. hospitals, schools.

Environmental Health Practitioners need to be supported to ensure they have and make use of powers to close down businesses failing to comply with these standards, for example by expanding usage of Remedial Action Notices including where prerequisites are not in place. This should be supported by clearly linking standards with the FSA's Scores on the Doors Scheme and premises failing to comply with the prerequisites should not be awarded any stars.

The prerequisite mandatory standards are:

- handwash facilities on all premises;
- hygienic and functioning refrigeration;
- implemented and functioning hygiene schedules;
- all staff handling food and the business owner should be able to demonstrate they have received hygiene training.

## CFA priorities for 2010

Following a very successful 2009 CFA has identified the following priorities for 2010:

- Better recognition of best practice, particularly in relation to improved enforcement of RTE food businesses;

- Grocery Suppliers Code of Practice (GSCOP) implementation;
- Technical and Legislative issues e.g. fresh poultry labelling;
- Sustainability;
- CFA supported research activities.

## CFA a partner in 'waste mapping' research

CFA is a partner in a new research project led by WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) which, for the first time, will calculate the amount of waste in the UK retail supply chain for pre-prepared food and identify how this waste can be reduced.

Covering four products - sandwiches, pizza, quiche, ready meals - the research will develop detailed 'resource maps' to highlight the amount of food and packaging waste generated for each product type at key stages in the chilled and frozen supply chains. It will also calculate the associated carbon emissions and economic impact as well as detailing the amount of water used and disposed of during the manufacture of these products.

Best practice guidance will then be produced and companies will be able to benchmark themselves against data and maximise opportunities for achieving environmental benefits and cost savings. This will include solutions for minimising waste and improving resource use from initial production through to distribution and back of store. The maps will also include WRAP data on levels of packaging and food waste from households, so that a whole chain can be seen and the 'hot spots' identified.

WRAP is urging companies throughout the sector to participate in the research. Data collection will include an industry survey and company-specific resource minimisation reviews, covering 80% of the UK market for the products selected.



The research is being undertaken by Food Processing Faraday in partnership with the Centre for Value Chain Research at the University of Kent and CFA. The British Frozen Food Federation, British Sandwich Association and the Pizza, Pasta and Italian Foods Association are also supporting the project.

CFA's Kaarin Goodburn said "Waste is a strategic issue for chilled food manufacturers

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to reduce both costs and support future food security and sustainability agendas. We hope this project will build on our sustainability activities over the best part of a decade providing a comparison with 2005 Defra-funded work and tracking progress in reducing waste. Informal CFA data indicates members have, since 2003, reduced waste by more than 25% and reliance on landfill by nearly 70% although the chilled prepared food market grew by nearly 30% over that period."

Businesses interested in getting involved should contact [resourcemaps@wrap.org.uk](mailto:resourcemaps@wrap.org.uk).

## EFSA recognises importance of GAP to ensure produce safety



CFA's Micro Guidance for Growers (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) published in January 2008 stresses the importance of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) as a key element in ensuring produce safety.

Aimed at suppliers and growers of fresh, frozen and dehydrated produce, both organic and conventional, the primary aim of this Guidance is to help minimise food safety risks through hygienic growing, handling and preparation conditions. By focusing on the use of risk assessment and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) in the field, the document 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.

This principle has recently been recognised by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention & Control (ECDC) who, on 28 January 2010, published their annual compilation of data on zoonoses and food-borne outbreaks for 2008.<sup>1</sup> Specifically with respect to Salmonella in fruit and vegetables, the report concludes that Salmonella was only detected in very few instances and generally at very low levels. Importantly the report recognises the

importance of GAP in ensuring produce safety, stating that "direct monitoring of Salmonella seems to be a very cost-ineffective way to ensure the safety of fruit and vegetables and underlines the importance of HACCP and Good Production Practises to ensure food safety of this product group".

The EFSA/ECDC publication follows an agreement (December 2009) by the United Nations FAO/WHO (Food and Agriculture Organisation/World Health Organisation) Codex Committee on Food Hygiene on 'Fresh Leafy Vegetables' to be included as an Annex to the Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. This annex, to which CFA made substantial input, covers general requirements for the primary production of fresh leafy vegetables, albeit without CFA's critical limits.

CFA continues to seek the widest possible uptake of its Micro Guidance for Growers, starting with publicly procured RTE foods provided by Government to vulnerable people e.g in hospitals.

1. The Community Summary Report on Trends and Sources of Zoonoses, Zoonotic Agents and Food-borne outbreaks in the European Union in 2008, The EFSA Journal (2010), 1496.

## Presentations

Karin Goodburn, CFA's Secretary General, has been invited to give presentations at:

1. The IOD conference, 'Taking the Lid off Northamptonshire's Food and Drink Manufacturers' to be held at the University of Northampton on 22 April 2010;
2. The Leeds Applied Food Microbiology Course for EHOs, food microbiology and food safety professionals at Weetwood Hall Hotel and Conference Centre, Leeds on 28 April 2010;
3. Food Processing's 'Appetite for Engineering' Conference on 29 April 2010 at Hinckley Island Hotel, Leicestershire;
4. Warwick Food Microbiology Course for EHOs and QA Officers at Warwick University from 13-16 September 2010.

For more information visit CFA's website <http://www.chilledfood.org/events>.



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