

IN THIS ISSUE: Listeria, SUSSLE, Brexit, sustainability, another award and CE@10

Listeria legislation not broken – don't fix it!

CFA, its members and their retail customers, have long been at the forefront of the development of best practice, control and regulation of *Listeria monocytogenes* (*Lm*) in the UK, Europe and beyond. CFA's various *Listeria* guidance documents are available as free downloads from www.chilledfood.org



CFA's unique members-only dataset of more than three million food and production area data points, collected over the past 12 years, is the most comprehensive in the world. CFA and its members use the data to benchmark performance and to verify efficacy of hygiene control measures and that shelf lives are appropriate.

European listeriosis data consistently show UK rates to be half of that for Europe overall. Outside the UK, commercial enforcement by customers is often lacking and differing interpretations of regulations lead to a lack of consistent compliance.

Against this background the European Commission is expected to propose changes to *Lm* legislation (EU Microbiological Criteria for Foodstuffs Regulation 2073/2005). This is expected to require challenge testing to set shelf life, rather than the established and proven effective Day of Production (DOP) and End of Life (EOL) approach, coupled with storage trials.

The expected changes will particularly affect chilled foods made on the Continent, where shelf lives are substantially longer than those in the UK's tightly controlled local market – but changes would also impact export to the EU. Increased waste would result from consequent reduced shelf lives, with increased prices from highly specialised and narrowly applicable testing – all with questionable food safety benefits.

Earlier this year, when the proposals came to light, CFA established a pan-industry group to respond to them. With a membership comprising trade associations, CFA members and retailers, and also liaising with European Federations including the European Chilled Food Federation, it is gathering information and intelligence to present to the EC to show that the proposed changes are not necessary for food safety, but the originally agreed approach that was adopted by the UK, is.

As CFA Director General Karin Goodburn MBE explains: "The systems the UK chilled food sector has in place to detect and control *Listeria* have worked extremely well for the last 16 years since the EU Regulations came into force. This is illustrated in our more than three million datapoints on *Listeria* – the largest data set of its type in the world. This is just one way in which we are able to prove that what is being proposed will not improve food safety.

"The EU's approach is also flawed in that it only covers the testing of food and does not address critical hygienic control of the food production environment. We can see no obvious public health or sustainability benefit to the changes and will continue to lobby the EC to retain the DOP/EOL and storage trial approach as it is demonstrably highly effective. In short, when it comes to European *Listeria* legislation – it's not broken, please don't fix it!"

SUSSLE database sussed

In response to increased demands being made on its SUSSLE software and *Listeria* and *B. cereus* databases, CFA has consolidated all three systems into one and improved the administration of the system to make it easier to use. CFA hopes that these changes will meet the needs of current users and also encourage others to input their information which gives an invaluable picture of the efficacy of control of *Listeria* and *B. cereus*. Access to the system is restricted to CFA members and Licensees.



CFA presents evidence on Brexit effect

In April, CFA's Karin Goodburn gave evidence to the UK Trade and Business Commission on the impact of Brexit on a variety of business sectors. Karin, who established and chairs the SPS (Sanitary & Phytosanitary) Certification Working Group (comprising more than 25 trade and professional organisations throughout the food chain, EHOs and Official Vets), outlined the problems faced when exporting to the EU or moving food to Northern Ireland – including the reams of time-consuming complex paperwork (see *CFA News* 55). Her quote: "We're dealing with archaic paperwork, Byzantine process and Kafkaesque differences of interpretation." was widely repeated in the media. The Commission's report (www.tradeandbusiness.uk/interim-report-navigation-2021) – which also includes suggested solutions to the issues – was published in September, to coincide with the first meeting of the UK/EU Trade Specialised Committee on SPS Measures, which is seeking to reduce friction in UK/EU trade. CFA and the SPS Certification WG are continuing to work with the Government on systems digitisation and streamlining certifier touchpoints in the food chain.

Chilled Education UPDATE



A decade of Chilled Education recognised

CFA's initiative to address a skills gap in chilled food production is 10 years old. Representatives from industry and education have sent warm messages of thanks and support.

Patrick Coveney, CEO of Greencore Group plc (and CFA member company) explains Chilled Education's significance to the chilled food sector:

"I send congratulations to the CFA for ten years of its Chilled Education initiative. At its inception it was addressing a massive skills gap in the industry. Over the decade we've seen graduates, inspired by Chilled Education, join Greencore. We've also been delighted to be part of the 'delivery team' – going to science and careers fairs to join industry

"Chilled Education continues to inspire, inform and nurture the next generation of food scientists."

colleagues in sharing our experiences, and our enthusiasm for our dynamic industry. Though much has changed, the recruitment and retention of food scientists (and other colleagues) is more critical than ever. Chilled Education, therefore, still has an important role to play. And if the success of the first ten years is anything to go by, there is much to be optimistic about – as Chilled Education continues to inspire, inform and nurture the next generation of food scientists."



Patrick's words were echoed by fellow CFA member company's Samworth Brothers' CEO Flor Healy:

"We are dedicated to the sustainability of the chilled food industry and are proud to have been actively involved in Chilled Education's work. My Samworth colleagues have been to careers and science fairs and out to schools to share their knowledge. Their experiences are also a key part of the Chilled Education website.

"There are, of course, many routes into the industry and we are proud to be working with Sheffield Hallam University on its innovative Degree Apprentice Programme. Some of our apprentices are also working with Chilled Education. Their enthusiasm is infectious and their dedication compelling. I look forward to seeing their development and to welcoming many more. Thank you, Chilled Education, for pointing young scientific minds in our direction. Here's to the next decade!"

Over the years CEEd has worked with many teachers to develop its innovative resources. A partnership with the Design & Technology Association has led to a long-standing working relationship with its former Deputy CEO and founder of the Food Teacher Centre, Louise Davies. She told CEEd: "As a thriving group of over 7,000 food teachers we are delighted to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Chilled Education.

"We are very proud of our partnership with CEEd. Their celebration of 10 years nurturing the next generation of food scientists and sharing career pathways in the food sector closely unites with our own mission for better food teaching. We have worked collaboratively with them over the years to create platforms for professionals to share and receive advice and guidance.

"Food teachers and their students have enjoyed using CEEd's wide range of resources. We have happily shared thousands of fridge thermometers, making an impact both in school and in the home. Many students enjoy

"Food teachers and students have enjoyed using CEEd's wide range of resources."

using the MicroTrumps card game to get to grips with essential knowledge of pathogens and useful microbes in food. Teachers and technicians also use MicroTrumps to extend their own knowledge and application of microbial aspects of food.

"Many food teachers use and share the careers information. Bridging the skills gap tirelessly supported by Chilled Education during the last ten years is a unifying theme for future projects. "The website used by many of our members is testament to the reliable, wide-ranging and appropriate teaching resources available for use in schools today. Lesson plans, classroom activities and food science ideas are amongst the 'go to' resources always available, for various Key Stages, for food teachers. "We look forward to continuing to collaborate with Chilled Education in the future to support many aspects of food education."

Realising the need to work with science teachers as well as food teachers to influence lessons, in 2014 CEEd began a successful partnership with the Association for Science Education, which introduced CEEd to Chartered Science Teacher and author of best-selling science books, Sam Holyman. Sam's shared her enthusiasm and knowledge of her subject with CEEd. She says: "I am so privileged and proud to have worked with the CFA to create lesson ideas and resources that are ready to work in a classroom. My own children have grown up with the idea that Food Science isn't just cooking and have trialed lots of our ideas to see how young learners would engage with the activities, with Annie being amazed by the real iron in her cereal and Zac loving MicroTrumps."



Sam Holyman's Sweet Sustainable Science workshops were enjoyed by teachers at the ASE conference:

"We discovered that including children in our hands-on workshop was a great asset, as their enthusiasm for the subject showed sceptical delegates the power of food to really help students understand concepts in the more traditional sciences.

"My favourite part is working out how we can use food science techniques to reduce the risk of practicals for the science classroom. It has the added bonus in creating a lesson hook, bringing in everyday links from the food we eat to thinking about how science really affects us – from hand washing to harnessing the power of microbes to make yoghurt or insulin!

Sam continues: "CFA has developed my skills and championed me, and it has been a real pleasure to help encourage more people into STEM careers."



Karin Goodburn MBE, CFA Director General, sums up: "Chilled Education continues its aims to: 'inform, educate and inspire children in all areas of the dynamic and diverse chilled food sector'. While we are proud of our successes and eagerly follow the progress of our young graduates, our work is by no means over. Our industry's need for high quality food scientists, and other experts, shows no sign of diminishing as vacant roles continue to mount up.

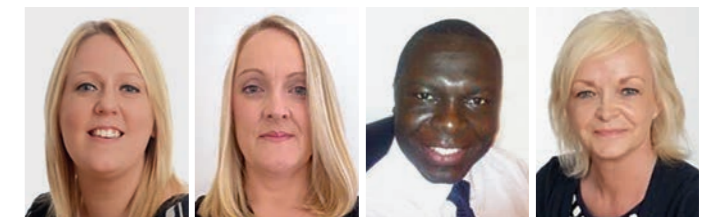
"However, we are heartened by the overwhelmingly positive experiences reported by the new recruits and will be using those testimonials to encourage others. They go a long way to correct the many misconceptions about the industry that have proved a barrier for many people.

"We send sincere thanks to all our partners and supporters and look forward to further working with our colleagues in the industry and in education as we embark on the next ten years of Chilled Education."



STEAM subjects in a digital age

An online education event in June continued CEEd's work in the virtual world. The University of Northamptonshire invited Karin Goodburn and Samworth Degree Apprentice Matty Desforges to share career insights at its online STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts and Maths) event. More than 600 students from years 6 to 12 attended and the CEEd presentation was the third most popular over the week-long event (just behind Maths and Physics). The full presentation can be seen at: www.chillededucation.org/videos/



More shared experiences

The career pages on the CEEd website are a popular resource, with real voices talking about their career paths. Four new candidates join a roll-call of industry experts: Greencore's Nicola Clarkson and Vicky Rust, and Oduro Ampaw and Margaret McPheat of 2 Sisters Food Group. Who made a surprising career change, and which colleague found themselves working in Russia? Find out on the CEEd website.

The winner takes it all (again!)



CEEd experienced a happy tinge of déjà vu last month when it won the Food and Drink Federation's Education Initiative of the Year Award it previously won in 2014. Commenting on the award (shown above with CFA's Karin Goodburn), the FDF judges described CEEd as an: "Outstanding, sustained educational initiative, highly creative, tailored to age groups and professionally presented."



Sustainability on the up, food to landfill stays at zero

In the run up to COP26, CFA is pleased to report a positive sustainability picture for its members, who represent many of the largest chilled food producers in this £13bn industry.

Data from CFA members reveals a 10.7 percent reduction in carbon dioxide between 2008 and 2020 in spite of an almost threefold increase in production. CFA believes that this is a credible achievement given that the easier to achieve savings were made during 2000-2010.

Additionally, CFA members continue to not send food waste to landfill. Food redistribution continues to contribute to this positive outcome with over 7.5 million meals redistributed in 2020 through agencies such as FareShare and the Company Shop.

Dr Rachel Hackett, chair of CFA's Sustainability Group: "We are proud of our track record. From 2017 to 2020 we redistributed almost 25 million meals and have not sent any food waste to landfill for a decade. But we realise that we now have a high 'personal best' and making further reductions will be challenging. However, our focus will remain firmly on the issue and we will continue to do all we can to minimise our industry's impact on the planet."



CFA welcomes new member

CFA is pleased to welcome a new member company – Cranswick plc. Jackie Carter, the company's Group Technical Director said: "I am delighted we are joining the Chilled Food Association alongside our peers and look forward to a long, productive and mutually beneficial relationship."

Established in the 1970s by a group of Yorkshire farmers, Cranswick has grown to become one of the UK's largest food producers, with revenue approaching £1.9bn, all whilst staying true to their ethos – to create authentically made, sustainably produced British food, without compromise. Its core market is the UK, operating from 16 facilities, with a team of over 12,500 people. Cranswick produces a range of high quality, predominantly fresh food including fresh pork, poultry, sliced cooked meats, gourmet sausages, bacon and pastry, and charcuterie meats and olives.

CFA supporting WRAP re water security

CFA is a supporter of waste reduction charity WRAP's new road map for water security. As well as businesses continuing to increase water use efficiency, WRAP expects that the UK food and drink industry will meet an overall target (by 2030) of ensuring that 50 percent of fresh food is sourced from areas with sustainable water management.



Farming: the only way is up?

Increasing demands on land space is leading to significant interest in the potential for new ways to farm certain types of fresh produce. One new method currently attracting attention is Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA). By enclosing a growing crop in a structure, CEA provides protection by reducing exposure to the outdoor environment. This approach can vary – from keeping the crop in simple greenhouses to fully enclosed 'vertical farms'.

These new approaches to farming are the subject of a new CFA position paper. The paper looks at the positives of the method which can include a longer growing season, less wastage due to bad weather and reduced pesticide use. It also outlines the negatives – which centre on the risk of pathogen growth.

CFA champions best practice in fresh produce farming so will support these new methods and would expect them to follow the same best practice principles as traditional outdoor farming systems. The paper can be found on the CFA website:

<https://bit.ly/2YJNsW7>

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