
Public Protection Partnership Food and Feed Plan – Supporting Information

1. Supporting Information – Food Control

- 1.1 Legal controls relating to food safety, hygiene and quality have been in place for many years. Traditionally they have focussed on preventing adulteration and standards. Over the years a wide range of product specific controls were developed ranging from bread to jam and milk and cheese to meat products and many other products that were considered staple foods. A wide range of these controls are in place supported by broader cross cutting legislation relating to food safety, additives, labelling and traceability.
- 1.2 Issues still arise in relation to adulteration and examples in recent years have included the horsemeat scandal, fake alcohol with all the associated health effects, sudan 1 dye cancer scare etc. Many reports also relate to undeclared allergens on products. These often lead to recalls once identified.
- 1.3 The majority of food controls are European in origin and form part of the framework arrangements for the Single Market. There are still in place domestic controls relating to the nature, substance and quality of food as well as misleading labelling and advertising.
- 1.4 There is a range of legislation also designed to control the safety and handling of food as well as setting out the hygiene standards of premises. These give authorised officers a range of powers including issuing improvement notices through to closing premises by Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices and seizure and detention of food. Clearly such significant powers need to be exercised in a defined framework that includes competency requirements assessed annually and CPD requirements.
- 1.5 In recent times the health benefits and risks relating to food have come to the fore. Cardiovascular disease, certain cancers and obesity are often linked to food as a range of benefits in such as cholesterol reducing, health heart and brain functions and a whole range vitamin, mineral and food supplements. In recognition of this a new framework has been put in place to provide for clearer but more comprehensive labelling as well as approved health and nutrition claims. This combined with other specific labelling requirements relating to areas such as genetically modified, organic, geographical protections and irradiated foods allow for informed consumer choice. These are complicated areas of law and the officers that deliver many areas have to meet competence and CPD requirements.

2. Supporting Information – Animal Feed

- 2.1 Like food controls these have existed for a long time to govern the safety and composition of animal feeds. Over the years failures in these controls have come to the fore on a number of high profile occasions e.g. salmonella in poultry and eggs, foot and mouth disease and most notably BSE and the links to vCJD. These failures led to health risk, injury to health and loss of life. They also cost the economy many £Bs.
- 2.2 It is also recognised that farmed animals form part of the food chain and safety issues arising in animal feed can pass through to the food chain or indeed affect the health of the animals directly. Examples include dioxins and microtoxins. Attached to the Food and Feed Plan is a briefing note which explains some of the work in his area.
- 2.3 Our work in this area extends beyond hygiene into quality of feed, labelling and contamination. Like food it is a specialised area of law and practice and one that the PPP has significant expertise in. So much so that we host regional officer who carries out visits to farms across Oxfordshire, Hampshire, Berkshire, Surrey and east and West Sussex. The Public Protection Manager is also a member and former Chair of the National Trading

Standards Board - Feed Governance Group who deliver the strategy and managed the funding on behalf of the Food Standards Agency.

3. Concluding Comments

- 3.1 This area of work remains high profile and high priority. Safe food and feed, informed choice for consumers and fair competition between businesses are all important as is confidence in food business operators and products. On the latter point we have seen numerous occasions where loss of confidence has led to economic damage and loss of markets. All of our work feeds into a national and international picture and allows foodstuffs to travel freely and be exported.
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