
Public Protection Partnership Official Feed and Food Controls Service Plan 2019-2020 – 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. Over the years, the regulatory framework for feed and food control has grown from to keep pace with relatively rapid advances in feed and food production techniques such as preservation, packaging, and storage – at the same time, responding to scientific advancements in understanding risks associated with infectious disease and feed and food, market demands, shopping habits and business pressures. Today, the market is global, and people vote with their feet and pocket more often than not; there is even more opportunity to make ‘easy money’ in the food chain and it is not beyond the most unsophisticated individuals with criminal intent to sell products that are harmful to health whilst turning a tidy profit. For example, selling products that contain undeclared allergens, or banned ingredients.
- 1.2 There is also a move to more novel cooking techniques and methods, of which the risks to health are not fully understood by those that sell them. For example, undercooked burgers, pork and home style sous-vide, charcuterie and sushi are grown in popularity, but there is not pre-requisite requirements to set up a business and sell such products. Of course there still exist the traditional methods of cooking and preservation – another growing trend!
- 1.3 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 and not a year goes by without preventable deaths being reported in the media.
- 1.4 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. This issue remains a very live one, and the impacts to imported food controls and exports will have a direct impact on the regulatory services PPP provides and the businesses it serves.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 The PPP also recognise compliance is achieved by working in a consistent fashion nudging and rewarding business to achieve compliance with the relevant regulatory framework. The PPP accepts the earned recognition in food standards work approach, the alternative enforcement strategy approaches in food hygiene, the primary authority principal, and has a

proud record of achievements for those businesses its regulates by subscribing to the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).

2. Supporting Information – Feed Control

- 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 led to a number of high profile issues which affect the PPP service. For example, 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 have also cost the economy Billions.
- 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 micotoxins.
- 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 The area of Feed and Food Controls remains high profile and a high priority for the PPP. Safety, 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.
- 3.2 All of the PPP planned and reactive interventions in this field inform the national and international picture and it is necessary PPP remains a link in the farm to fork chain.

Officer details:

Name: George Lawrence
Job Title: Strategic Manager – Compliance and Enforcement
Tel No: 01635 519519
E-mail Address: George.lawrence@westberks.gov.uk
