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Food Standards Agency

Olympics food safety legacy 'up and running' online

Food hygiene training videos developed by the FSA for coaching food businesses in the Olympic host boroughs have been made available online for use by food businesses and local authorities throughout the UK.

'It's an Olympic legacy, even before the Olympic Games have begun,' said Sarah Appleby, Head of Enforcement and Local Authority Delivery at the Food Standards Agency.

'The videos will help promote basic food safety messages, such as the importance of effective handwashing and keeping equipment used for raw and cooked foods separate,' she said. 'They are practical and easy for food businesses operators and their staff to follow.'

The 10 short videos, issued to help caterers produce food safely, are each about a minute long and cover specific food hygiene practices, such as:

- effective handwashing
- keeping pests out of your business, what to look for and the action to take
- what to do if a member of staff is ill at work
- effective cleaning
- chilling foods down as quickly as possible
- checking that foods are cooked thoroughly

They are also designed to illustrate messages within the FSA's 'Safer food, better business' food hygiene management packs, and follow the same innovative and practical approach to food safety management as the packs.

Olympic host boroughs and local authorities hosting live events have each been supplied with a DVD for reference. Other local authorities throughout the country have been informed that the material can be viewed online.

The video scheme requires only a minimal input from local authorities, and provides a stepping stone for food business operators to continue improving their food safety practices.

The videos are available via the Agency's YouTube channel (see further information). More on the FSA's Olympics work can be found on the following page.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The videos can be viewed on the Agency's **YouTube** channel.

Some of the videos demonstrate (from top) how to wash your hands properly, the need to keep foods cold in a fridge or display unit to keep food safe, and the importance of checking that foods are cooked thoroughly to kill harmful bacteria

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NEXT

"Food business inspections will be increased during the run-up to the Olympics"

Twenty local authority officers (above) took part in the training course

Into the home straight on Olympic food safety

With less than two months to go to the 2012 Olympics, the Agency has entered the home straight in its efforts to ensure that food bought, cooked and eaten during the Games is safe.

The Agency has published a toolkit that offers advice to food businesses, tourism groups, trade associations and others on how they can contribute to the Play it Safe campaign. Suggestions include posting details on company websites and in newsletters, using social media and issuing press releases.

The toolkit also answers frequently asked questions about the campaign and about food hygiene and safety.

The first Play it Safe newsletter to be issued during the campaign outlines the work being undertaken by the FSA to protect consumers.

To improve the skills of people working directly on food safety during the Games, the Agency's Olympics preparations team and Middlesex University last year set up a course leading to a Certificate of Higher Education in Food Control.

The course was designed for those wishing to be registered to undertake food standards enforcement and to inspect high-risk food premises.

It also met the educational requirements of the Environmental Health Registration Board and other professional standards.

Twenty local authority officers from a variety of food-related backgrounds started the course in November 2011 and finished it this month.

Those who qualified will now be able to support food officers in their local authorities and undertake a full range of food control duties, including carrying out inspections to ensure compliance at food establishments.

The mass of visitors anticipated during the Games will lead to the production of unprecedented quantities of food. However, because it is impossible to predict how much of this will be consumed, businesses may end up with too much stock and with chilled foods unsold beyond their 'use by' dates.

In addition, food business inspections will be increased during the run-up to the Olympics, and enforcement officers may find that more food than usual will need to be seized and condemned.

To cope with this increased burden on storage capacity, the Agency has made contingency arrangements to hire three coldstores, should they be required.

The sites, run as commercial enterprises, are in east, west and south London. The Agency has also funded a storage facility for the local authority in Weymouth and Portland. Elsewhere, local authorities will use existing arrangements.

FURTHER INFORMATION

More on Play it Safe is on **food.gov.uk** or go to: **TWITTER@foodgov #FSW2012**

Bunting, and no red tape

With the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympic Games approaching fast, it's street party time again, and the FSA is providing some common-sense guidance to help things run smoothly and safely.

Some people are under the impression that organising neighbourhood parties requires more red tape than it would take to tie up 100 sandwich boxes. That's not the case.

The FSA advice, available at the link below, points out that one-off street parties require neither food hygiene certificates nor the formation of food businesses.

If you are intending to organise a street party and would like to focus your attention on filling tubs of potato salad rather than on filling forms, see below for answers to commonly asked questions.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Answers to common questions are available on **food.gov.uk**

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‘43% of businesses in England and 50% in Northern Ireland with an FHRS rating were displaying it’

Agency to consider mandatory display of food hygiene ratings

The FSA Board has agreed unanimously that the Agency should investigate making the display of ratings mandatory for its Food Hygiene Ratings Scheme (FHRS) in England and Northern Ireland and its Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS) in Scotland.

Food businesses are not currently required by law to display their ratings. A mandatory display would require legislation, so the Agency will carry out a detailed impact assessment with local authorities, food businesses and government in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, once local authority uptake of the schemes in these countries has been completed. The Welsh Assembly has already agreed to mandatory ratings.

The Agency decision follows research that assessed the level of voluntary display of the rating schemes and additional work that considered the views of consumers, local authorities and food businesses.

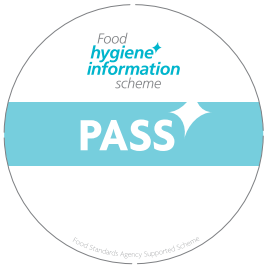
The research found that:

- the higher the rating the more likely a business was to display it
- 47% of businesses in Scotland were displaying their FHIS ‘Pass’ result
- consumers and local authorities in FHRS/FHIS areas were generally supportive of mandatory display
- businesses tended to be divided, with support for mandatory display expressed by some higher-rated businesses
- 43% of businesses in England and 50% in Northern Ireland with an FHRS rating were displaying it

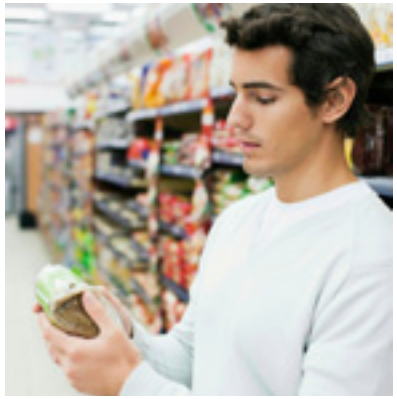
In 2011, similar research to assess the level of voluntary display of FHRS ratings was carried out on the FSA’s behalf in Wales. This contributed to the Welsh Government’s proposals to introduce legislation for mandatory display of FHRS ratings at food businesses in Wales.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Papers for the Board’s discussion on ratings are on **food.gov.uk**. The research is also on **food.gov.uk**



Above: Food Hygiene Rating Scheme stickers are displayed by 43% of businesses in England and Food Hygiene Information Scheme stickers are displayed by 47% of businesses in Scotland



Views sought on front-of-pack labelling

Choosing healthier foods could be made easier thanks to a consultation launched on front-of-pack nutrition labelling by the Food Standards Agency in Scotland and in Northern Ireland, the Department of Health in England and the Welsh Government.

Many food products sold in the UK already have some form of front-of-pack labelling. However, different retailers and manufacturers have different ways of labelling, which can be confusing for consumers. Some use labels showing Guideline Daily Amounts (%GDA), some use traffic light colour coding that highlights high fat sugar and salt content, and some use both.

The objective of the consultation will be to maintain and extend the use of front-of-pack labelling while achieving consistency in its content and presentation.The consultation runs until 6 August 2012.

FURTHER INFORMATION

To make responses in Scotland or Northern Ireland consultation documents can be found on **food.gov.uk**

To make a response in England, go to the **Department of Health** website; and to respond in Wales go to **wales.gov.uk**

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Dairy hygiene staff report for inspection

Changes to the way in which dairy hygiene inspections are carried out in England and Wales should result in enhanced public health protection and efficiency savings.

Since April, dairy hygiene inspections in England and Wales have been carried out by FSA inspectors. Prior to this, the FSA contracted out this work to the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) and its predecessor organisations. The transfer of inspections from the AHVLA was recommended by the operations review project board after it looked at the service level agreements with external providers.

Twenty field-based FSA staff across England and Wales, many of whom were already meat hygiene inspectors, undertook additional training to deliver these new duties.

The inspectors will inspect the dairy farms that produce raw milk for further processing and for human consumption. Farms that are members of the Red Tractor Farm Assurance Dairy Scheme are inspected every 10 years, while the non-assured farms are visited every two years. Farms selling raw milk for human consumption are inspected every six months.

FURTHER INFORMATION

More details can be found on **food.gov.uk**

Latest appointments

The Food Standards Agency has appointed Tim Bennett as Deputy Chair of the FSA Board and Jim Wildgoose as the new Chair of the Scottish Food Advisory Committee.

Tim Bennett has been interim Deputy Chair of the FSA since May 2011. Jim Wildgoose has been an FSA Board member for Scotland since March 2011. This new appointment will run concurrently with his FSA Board membership.

The FSA is also looking for a new member for the General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS), who needs to be a scientific expert. The closing date for applications to GACS is 4 July 2012.

FURTHER INFORMATION

More on the work of Food Standards Agency Board members is on **food.gov.uk**
For details on the GACS appointments see **GACS website** or contact the GACS secretariat on 020 7276 8277 or email **Dr Patrick Miller**

Above: Deputy Chair Tim Bennett; below, SFAC Chair Jim Wildgoose

FSA guidance issued on desinewed meat

The Food Standards Agency has published new guidance to help meat processors comply with the moratorium on the production and use of ‘desinewed meat’ (DSM) from pig bones and poultry carcasses. The moratorium has been in place since 26 May 2012.

Its introduction follows advice from the European Commission that DSM produced by mechanically separating residual meat left after boning must be regarded as mechanically separated meat (MSM) and labelled as such.

A moratorium on DSM for cattle, sheep, and goat bones has applied since 28 April, again following European Commission advice.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Guidance on the desinewed meat moratorium is available on **food.gov.uk**

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HHEAPS of fun – and a hole in one

ClubGolf, a Scottish programme that introduces pupils to golf at school, has been helping to promote the FSA in Scotland’s HHEAPS (hygiene, healthy eating and activity in primary schools) initiative.

Since it was established six years ago, HHEAPS has been promoting FSA messages to primary school children all over Scotland.

HHEAPS uses role models, such as sports coaches, to influence children’s behaviour. Key partnerships have already been established with Scottish Rugby Union, the Scottish Football Association, Tennis Scotland and the Active Schools Network.

ClubGolf joined the initiative in March 2011. By March 2012, along with another new partner, the Camanachd Association (the governing body for shinty), it helped promote children’s awareness of food hygiene, healthy eating and fitness to more than 70,000 pupils across Scotland.

ClubGolf ran a six-week pilot programme during February and March in Dumfries and Galloway and West Lothian. ■

On target for HHEAPS of health with FSA support

Restrictions tightened at Dalgety Bay

Restrictions have been placed on the gathering of seafood and bait from an area of Dalgety Bay in Fife affected by radioactive contamination. This is a precautionary measure by the FSA in Scotland, following the detection of radioactive items on the beach.

Individuals are known to collect shellfish, despite warnings. ■

FURTHER INFORMATION

Details are on **food.gov.uk**

From left: Ruth Watson and Julie McKinstry-Harvey from FSA in Northern Ireland with Northern Ireland Health Minister Edwin Poots MLA and Leah Watters, EHO from Magherafelt District Council, at the Balmoral Show

Stand and deliver

More than 80,000 visitors had the chance to hear food safety messages from the FSA in Northern Ireland during the recent three-day Balmoral Show.

The show, which is Northern Ireland’s single biggest gathering of consumers and its largest agricultural event, provided an ideal opportunity for FSA Northern Ireland to promote Caloriewise and the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS).

Caloriewise is a new scheme that encourages takeaways, pubs, coffee shops and workplace restaurants to display calorie information on menus.

Visitors to the Agency’s stands were encouraged to check the FHRS of their favourite eateries online and to visit the Agency’s demonstration kitchen. Chefs from the Caloriewise businesses showcased healthy dishes. ■

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Understanding healthy eating messages 1

More messaging is needed around the eatwell plate

FS244029 (part 1) Investigating how consumers and health professionals understand healthy eating messages

This research, which builds on work by the FSA in Scotland's eatwell week project, found that improvements are required in how information is conveyed about the importance of having a healthy balanced diet.

It found that while consumers are aware that they should limit foods high in fat or sugar, they are also influenced by taste, price and convenience.

The research suggested that to address this, industry has a role to play in providing products that are lower in fat, saturated fat and sugar. More competitive pricing and promotions on starchy foods, fruit and vegetables could also contribute.

The research recommends that further work is required.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The report is on **food.gov.uk**

Understanding healthy eating 2

FS244029 (part 2) Exploring the sources of information which might influence health professionals' delivery of healthy eating advice: A discourse analysis

This research, commissioned by the FSA in Scotland, found inconsistencies in and between sources of healthy eating advice. It found also that the social context of eating is often ignored.

It concluded that information about limiting foods high in fat or sugar is open to interpretation, based on health professional or consumer perceptions about what is 'too much' or 'about right'.

An alternative approach might be to advise consumers about how often they should eat foods high in fat or sugar during a typical week. 'Real life' examples could also illustrate how consumers have taken healthy eating messages on board.

It recommends that more work needs to be done to improve communication of healthy eating advice to health professionals and consumers.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The report is on **food.gov.uk**

Managing mycotoxins

Elli Amanatidou, of the FSA's Chemical Safety Division, has had an article published in New Food magazine. The article covers the health effects of mycotoxins, factors affecting their production and best practice for business.

Mycotoxins are found in cereals, cereal products, coffee, dry vine fruits, and other fruits and vegetables. They are produced by fungi, and are difficult to eliminate, so controls focus on managing conditions that encourage their production.

Businesses can mitigate the effects of toxin production by testing their products according to UK Accreditation Service standards. Awareness of conditions likely to produce mycotoxins is also important.

FURTHER INFORMATION

'The risk of mycotoxins in foods – factors affecting production and control measures' is in New Food (15:2, 2012)

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is the Food Standards Agency's main website. It contains the latest Agency news, food alerts, consultations, science, research and regulatory information.
food.gov.uk

Bite
is the Food Standards Agency's new quarterly magazine. It provides an in-depth look at challenging policy issues and includes stakeholder discussion and opinion.
food.gov.uk/bite

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