February 2014

Dear Sir / Madam,

Food Safety Policy Update (February 2014)

This latest issue of our periodic update bulletin provides you with information on the key developments within the Food Safety Policy.

The attached summary of news items details the areas covered in this bulletin, and clicking on the associated links will take you directly to the relevant material.

You may also wish to note that the Chemical Safety Division has recently merged with the Hygiene and Microbiology Division and is now called Food Safety Policy. As a result of this we are considering whether to extend this bulletin to cover matters relating to feed and food hygiene/microbiology.

This would considerably increase the size of the bulletin and the size of the distribution list. I would therefore appreciate your feedback on whether you would like the the update to continue and, if so, whether it should be expanded to cover feed and food hygiene/microbiology. Please send your comments to:Benjamin.nketiah@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,

Michael Wight
Head of Food Safety Policy

FOOD SAFETY POLICY UPDATE: February 2014

SUMMARY OF NEWS ITEMS

Section	Subject	Link
Environmental Contaminants (Inorganic)	• Lead – draft maximum limits: Commission Regulation 1881/2006 (as amended) • Arsenic - draft maximum limits: Commission Regulation 1881/2006 (as amended) • 2 and 3 MCPD Esters/ Glycidyl Esters – draft monitoring recommendation • Perchlorate • UK total diet study of meals and other elements (and acrylamide in selected categories)	
Process Contaminants	• Acrylamide and Furan survey 2014-2018	
Environmental Contaminants (Organic)	**Dioxins and PCBs** • Monitoring and Reduction • Baltic Salmon • Reallocation of non-compliant feed ingredients to the food chain • PCBs in dogfish • Separate limits for dioxin-like PCBs • Brominated flame retardants (BFRs) • Perfluorinated compounds • Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons	
Mycotoxins	**Developments in EU policy** • Concerning Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1881/2006 (as amended) in regard to the setting of maximum levels for citrinin in red yeast rice • Concerning Regulation (EC) 1881/2006, as amended	

	as regards maximum levels of erucic acid in vegetable oils and fats and foods containing vegetable oils and fats • Concerning Regulation (EC) 1881/2006, as amended as regards maximum levels of ergot in certain cereal grains • Concerning Regulation (EC) No 1152/2009 imposing special conditions governing the import of certain foodstuffs from certain third countries due to contamination risk by aflatoxins • Concerning a Commission Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 401/2006 as regards methods of sampling of large lots, spices and food supplements, performance criteria for T-2, HT-2 toxin and citrinin and screening methods of analysis **Guidance Documents and Codes of Practice** • Guidance on the application of Commission Recommendation 2013/165/EU on the presence of T-2 and HT-2 toxin in cereals and cereal products • Good practices to reduce presence of opium alkaloids in poppy seeds • Code of Practice for Weed Control to Prevent and Reduce Pyrrolizidine Alkaloid (PA) contamination in Food and Feed • Proposed draft Annex for the prevention and reduction of aflatoxins and ochratoxin A contamination in sorghum **Preparation of discussions in advance of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food, 31 March - 4 April 2014** **Scientific opinions EFSA and other risk assessment bodies** • Tropane alkaloids • DON - consumption estimates • Effect of increasing DON MLs for certain semi-processed food • Effect of processing on the levels of nitrate • Pyrrolizidine alkaloids in herbal teas • Risk assessment of mycotoxins in cereal grain (Norway) • DON and acetylated derivatives and masked	

	mycotoxins **Research commissioned/proposed:** • Survey on sterigmatocystin in food • Determination of masked mycotoxins in cereals and cereal-based foods • Occurrence of Pyrrolizidine Alkaloids in food • Ergot alkaloids in cereal grain • Development of an electronic database for the collating of industry T-2 and HT-2 mycotoxin occurrence data • Call for research proposals from DG Research • Request for data	
Food Allergy Update	• EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation (EU FIC) – implementation of EU rules into UK law	
Flavourings, Food Enzymes, Food Additives and Food Contact Materials	**Flavourings** • Union list of smoke flavourings • Union list of flavouring **Food Enzymes** • Union list of enzymes **Food Additives** • FSA guidance on food additives legislation • Food additives in meat • Food supplements for children • Colours in food guidance • EFSA opinion on aspartame • University of hull study on aspartame **Food Contact Materials** • EFSA launches second stage of BPA consultation • Amendment to Commission Regulation (EU) No10/2011 on Plastic Materials and Articles intended to come into contact with food. • Union Guidance on Food Contact Materials published	

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Environmental Contaminants (Inorganic)

Lead – draft maximum limits: Commission Regulation 1881/2006 (as amended).

The European Commission has produced an updated draft document for discussion, proposing revisions to the maximum limits for lead in food as laid down in Commission Regulation 1881/2006 (as amended).

There are proposed maximum levels for infant formulae and follow on formulae of 0.02 mg/kg (powdered 'as sold' product) and 0.01 mg/kg (liquid product). Processed cereal based foods for infants and young children 0.1 mg/kg and other baby foods 0.1 mg/kg.

There is also a maximum limit for lead in honey.

The category Cephalopods will be removed and this will be covered under muscle meat of fish.

3.1.9	Legume vegetables[27], cereals and pulses	0,20	0,20		
	Fresh legumes	0,20	0,20	**0,10 mg/kg**	
	Cereals	0,20	0,20	To remain unchanged	
	Pulses	0,20	0,20	To remain unchanged	
3.1.10	Vegetables, excluding brassica vegetables, leaf vegetables, fresh herbs, fungi and seaweed[27]. For potatoes the maximum level applies to peeled potatoes.	0,10	0,10 for bulb vegetables, fruiting vegetables and root & tuber vegetables	**To change the entry to:**	
				Vegetables with the exception of leaf vegetables & fresh herbs and seaweed Except Leaf vegetables excluding fresh herbs; leafy brassica; and the following fungi [27] *Agaricus bisporus* (common mushroom), *Pleurotus ostreatus* (Oyster mushroom), *Lentinula edodes* (Shiitake mushroom)	0,10 0,30
3.1.11	Brassica vegetables, leaf vegetables[43] and the following fungi[27]: *Agaricus bisporus* (common mushroom), *Pleurotus ostreatus* (Oyster mushroom), *Lentinula edodes* (Shiitake mushroom)	0.30	No ML for fungi	**To removed entry (covered by change to 3.1.10)**	

	Brassica	**0,30**	**0,30**	**Brassica to be moved to 3.1.10 (0,10 mg/kg) but to maintain "leafy brassica (kale etc)" in 3.1.11 (0,30 mg/kg)** **(covered by change to 3.1.10)**
3.1.12	Fruit, excluding berries and small fruit[27]	0.10	0,10	To remain unchanged
3.1.13	Berries and small fruit[27]	0.20	0,20	To remain unchanged
3.1.14	Fats and oils, including milk fat	0.10	0,10	To remain unchanged
3.1.15	Fruit juices, concentrated fruit juices as reconstituted and fruit nectars[14]	0.050	0,050	**To align to Codex** **0.03 for fruit juices, concentrated fruit juices and fruit nectars from fruits other than berries and other small fruits** **0.05 for fruit juices, concentrated fruit juices and fruit nectars from berries and other small fruits**
3.1.16	Wine (including sparkling wine, excluding liqueur wine), cider, perry and fruit wine[11]	0.20[28]	0,20	**To align to OIV recommendation (0.15)**
3.1.17	Aromatized wine, aromatized wine-based drinks and aromatized wine-product cocktails[13]	0.20[28]	0,20	**To align to OIV recommendation (0.15)**
3.1.18.	Food supplements	3.0		To remain unchanged
	Chocolate-cocoa		**No ML**	**Not a major contributor**
NEW	**Honey**		**No ML**	**0,1**

The Commission is to produce an ‘information note’ or similar (as has been done for cadmium in brown crabmeat) to encourage Member States who have not yet done so to produce consumer advice for lead shot game meat. The FSA produced consumer advice for the UK on lead in game last year, as have some other member states.

The Commission may propose lower limits (0.1mg/kg) for berries and small fruit or see if it is possible to split this category further. There was pressure from some member states to reduce the maximum limit for fruit to 0.5 mg/kg and the Commission will consider this. There was also interest in a general limit for fungi.

The Commission will consider further the brassica issue and how best to include these or split the group.

The Commission is keen now to produce a draft proposal to amend the regulation and the Commission will then seek to consult on the proposal.

Arsenic – draft maximum limits: Commission Regulation 1881/2006 (as amended).

The European Commission has produced a draft document for discussion, proposing maximum limits applicable to inorganic arsenic (not total arsenic) in some foods for inclusion in the Annex to Commission Regulation 1881/2006 (as amended). There are proposed maximum levels for rice and rice products of 0.20 mg/kg, brown rice and brown rice products 0.25mg/kg, rice and rice based foodstuffs for infants and young children other than brown rice 0.10 mg/kg and edible fats and oils 0.10 mg/kg. The proposals are on an ‘as sold’ basis. The EFSA report on occurrence and consumer exposure is expected in the first half of 2014. Maximum levels are no longer considered necessary for arsenic in seaweed/ algae in general, as the issue only applies to Hijiki and therefore consumer advice is appropriate.

	Foodstuffs	ML for discussion	Codex MLs
3.5	Arsenic		
3.5.1	Rice and rice products Except Brown rice and brown rice products Rice and rice based foodstuffs for infants and young children other than brown rice	0,20 0,25 0,10	(0,2) None None
3.5.2.	Edible fats and oils	0.10	**0.1**

The Commission is not minded not to make a special case for parboiled rice as the data it has indicates that the proposed ML should suffice.

The Commission is to examine the possibility of including separately a category for rice cakes/crackers as it is not clear whether these would be brown rice/rice/infant food and reported levels are considered relatively high.

2 and 3 MCPD Esters/ Glycidyl Esters – draft monitoring recommendation

The European Commission has presented a new draft Recommendation for monitoring of chloroesters and glycidyl esters (including analytical performance criteria) in food including potato and cereal based snacks, infant formula and follow on formula, foods for infants and young children, smoked fish, vegetable oils and fats, smoked preserved meat and vegetable oil containing foods; for the purposes of data collection. The Commission is keen that this is agreed ASAP so that monitoring data can be included in the EFSA exposure assessment due later this year.

Perchlorate

The chief suspect for the source of contamination is thought to be fertilizer and establishing maximum limits for fertilizers is a lengthy process. The Food Standards Agency is undertaking a programme of analysis of UK produce (FS102077: Investigation of Perchlorate levels in fruit and vegetables consumed in the UK) which will inform further risk management, in late 2014. EFSA opinion/ statement still delayed (expected end of March).

UK total diet study of metals and other elements (and acrylamide in selected categories)

The FSA will be shortly be starting a UK total diet study (TDS) of the following 24 metals and other elements: Aluminium, antimony, arsenic (total and inorganic), barium, bismuth, cadmium, chromium, copper, germanium, indium, lead, manganese, mercury, molybdenum, nickel, palladium, platinum, rhodium, ruthenium, selenium, strontium, thallium, tin and zinc.

The last UK TDS of metals and other elements was carried out in 2006, so it is important that another TDS is carried out to:

- Calculate up to date background exposure to metals and other elements from the whole diet
- Determine trends in exposure

Up to date exposure calculations are essential for risk assessment but are also vital for assessing UK policy implications and to underpin EU negotiations. The key principle of a total diet study (TDS) is that it is representative of the whole diet. A TDS is different from many surveys in that foods are prepared for consumption (rather than being analysed as sold) before being pooled into groups before analyses. It is expected that this TDS will involve the purchase of 120 categories of foods from 24 different UK towns (total of 2880 samples). Samples will be analysed at both the food category level (120 categories) and at the food group level (20 groups). This will provide more specific data than previous TDSs that only analysed at the food group level. The process contaminant acrylamide will be analysed in those categories in which it is likely to be present.

Process Contaminants

Acrylamide and Furan survey 2014-2018

The survey for acrylamide and furan in retail products for 2014 to 2018 (a continuation of the previous survey) is now underway.

Environmental Contaminants (Organic)

Dioxins and PCBs

Monitoring & Reduction

The new recommendation to replace Commission Recommendation 2011/516/EU was eventually published in December. Commission Recommendation 2013/711/EU on the reduction of the presence of dioxins, furans and PCBs in feed and food includes a proposal to target free range and organic eggs, sheep and lamb liver, Chinese mitten crabs (brown meat and appendages separately), dried herbs (feed and food) and clays.

Baltic Salmon

Visits by the Food and Veterinary Office to Baltic States found various measures in place to control the internal marketing of Baltic salmon but these measures generally appeared inadequate to prevent the EU-wide marketing of non-compliant Baltic fish. Notwithstanding the concerns, food businesses are permitted to place Baltic salmon on the market in the UK as long as it is compliant with the limits set out in Commission Regulation 1259/2011 but are advised to verify that this is indeed the case.

Reallocation of non-compliant feed ingredients to the food chain

There have been a number of instances of feed ingredients which were non-compliant with dioxin limits being redirected to the food chain in cases where there was no equivalent limit in food. Although such moves may be justified on the basis of a risk assessment, some Member States find this presentationally difficult. To resolve the issue, the Commission proposed adding a provision to the section on dioxin limits in 1881/2006 to the effect that limits will apply to 'other food for which an ML has been established in Directive 2002/32/EC for the same product when use is for feed'. This was not well supported by the Expert Committee for a number of reasons including concern that it was not necessary in all instances to protect public health and also that some feed ingredients, such as colours and minerals, may be covered in other EU legislation. However, the Commission did agree to reconsider an earlier request from certain Member States for a joint meeting of food and feed experts to address this and other overlapping issues.

PCBs in dogfish

The Commission had received a request from a trade body to consider realigning the limit for non dioxin-like PCBs in dogfish to that for wild eel, i.e. from 75 to 300 ng/g. However, the only data provided in support of the request was that for two samples from the US which exceeded the current limit by small margins and the Expert Committee agreed with the Commission that the request did not warrant further consideration.

Separate limits for dioxin-like PCBs

Germany had asked the Commission on several occasions whether it would be possible to introduce separate limits for dioxin-like PCBs in addition to the existing limits for dioxins and total TEQ. The Commission's view was that this would add further complexity without providing any extra protection to consumers. Most Member States agreed with the Commission and this will therefore not be taken any further.

Brominated flame retardants (BFRs)

A monitoring recommendation is being prepared for publication, based on recommendations in the six recent EFSA opinions.

Perfluorinated compounds

Following a scientific report from EFSA on the occurrence of perfluorinated compounds in food and diet, it has been agreed by the Commission that further investigations of this category should be regarded as low priority and there will therefore not be any further EU-coordinated call for data.

Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons

There has been very little discussion on PAHs at recent Environmental and Industrial Contaminants Expert Committees, other than about possible changes to the expression of the limits for cocoa beans and derived products. This has yet to reach any conclusion.

Producers of smoked meat and/or smoked fish products are reminded that revised limits will apply from 1 September 2014, being reduced from 5.0 to 2.0 and 30.0 to 12.0 µg/kg for benzo(a)pyrene and PAH4 respectively. These are set out in Commission Regulation 835/2011.

Mycotoxins (Agricultural Contaminants)

Developments in EU Policy

Concerning Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1881/2006 (as amended) in regard to the setting of maximum levels for citrinin in red yeast rice:

Citrinin is a mycotoxin produced by a variety of fungi which can be present in a range of foods such as grain and cheese. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) recently published an opinion on the health risks of citrinin from food and

feed. EFSA found that citrinin was nephrotoxic but there was considerable uncertainty regarding its potential carcinogenicity.

Red yeast rice produced by fermentation of rice with the fungus *Monascus purpureus* under controlled conditions can produce a family of monacolins that inhibit cholesterol production. However, citrinin can be formed as a toxic by-product of this fermentation and has been identified as a risk to consumers as there are products on the market that contain higher than expected levels of citrinin.

In early 2013, EFSA published a scientific opinion on the substantiation of a health claim (for adults) related to monacolin K in red yeast rice. This opinion concluded that in order to obtain the claimed effect, 10 mg of monacolin K from fermented red yeast rice preparations should be consumed daily.

In order to protect public health, the European Commission had proposed a limit of 2000 µg/kg for citrinin in food supplements based on red yeast rice, derived from the typical dose of these food supplements and the established level of no concern for nephrotoxicity.

In section 2 of the Annex to Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006, the following entries 2.8 and 2.8.1 will be added:

Foodstuffs([1])	Maximum levels (µg/kg)
"2.8 **Citrinin**	
2.8.1 Food supplements based on rice fermented with red yeast *Monascus purpureus*	2000(*)

(*) The maximum level is to be reviewed before 1 January 2016 in the light of information on exposure to citrinin from other foodstuffs and updated information on the toxicity of citrinin in particular as regards carcinogenicity and genotoxicity"

The proposal was voted on at the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (Toxicological Section) on 21 October 2013 as regards amendments to European Commission legislation on contaminants and shall apply from 1 April 2014.

Concerning Regulation (EC) 1881/2006, as amended as regards maximum levels of erucic acid in vegetable oils and fats and foods containing vegetable oils and fats:

A maximum level of 50 g/kg for erucic acid in oils and fats intended as such for human consumption and in foodstuffs containing added oils and fats has been established by Council Directive 76/621/EEC. A stricter maximum level for erucic acid in infant formulae and follow-on formulae has been set in Commission Directive 2006/141/EC. In an exercise to simplify legislation, the Commission has decided to

transfer these maximum levels to Regulation (EC) 1881/2006 and to repeal Council Directive 76/621/EEC subsequently.

In the Annex to Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006, the following section 8 "Inherent plant toxins" will be added

"*Section 8: Inherent Plant toxins"*

Foodstuffs ([1])		Maximum levels (g/kg)
8.1	**Erucic acid**	
8.1.1	Vegetable oils and fats	50
8.1.2	Foods containing vegetable oils and fats with the exceptions of the foods referred to in 8.1.3	50 (*)
8.1.3	Infant formulae and follow-on formulae	10 (*)

(*) the maximum level refers to the maximum level of erucic acid in the fat (fatty acids) in food."

This will not affect the UK since the Regulations on erucic acid have already been consolidated into the Contaminants in Food (England) Regulations 2013 (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/2196/pdfs/uksi_20132196_en.pdf) and equivalent regulations in the devolved administrations.

The proposal is due to be voted on at the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (Toxicological Section) shortly and is expected to come into force from 1 July 2014.

Concerning Regulation (EC) 1881/2006, as amended as regards maximum levels of ergot in certain cereal grains:

A similar simplification of legislation has been proposed for the presence of ergot sclerotia in cereal grain. Commission Regulation (EU) No 1272/2009 laying down common detailed rules as regards buying-in and selling of agricultural products under public intervention sets a limit of 0.05% for ergot sclerotia in common wheat and durum wheat. Codex standards for ergot sclerotia provide a limit of 0.05% for oats (CODEX STAN 201-1995) and wheat and durum wheat (CODEX STAN 199-1995). The Commission has proposed to extend this as a common limit for ergot sclerotia in cereal grains (wheat, barley, oats, rye and spelt) and include it in the annex of the contaminants legislation (EC) No 1881/2006. It was acknowledged that it was only a rudimentary measure as it is possible to have high levels of ergot alkaloids (EAs) in grain with very little or no visible sclerotia content due to it breaking down. These levels would be reviewed by the end of December 2016 and could be modified based on the data collected from monitoring exercises.

Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006 will be amended as:

(1) The following Article 6 b is inserted after Article 6:

"*Article 6 b*

Specific provisions for cereals except corn and rice

By way of derogation from Article 1 cereal grains intended for human consumption, except corn and rice, not complying with the maximum level of ergot laid down in point 2.9.1. of the Annex can be placed on the market provide that these cereal grains:

(a) are not intended for direct human consumption or use as an ingredient in foodstuffs;

(b) are subjected to a treatment involving sorting or other physical treatment to remove ergot from the cereal grains and that after this treatment the maximum levels of ergot laid down in point 2.9.1. of the Annex are not exceeded and this treatment does not result in other harmful residues;

(c) are clearly labelled showing their use and bearing the indication "product shall be subject to sorting or other physical treatment to reduce the ergot contamination before human consumption or use as an ingredient in foodstuffs or before any further processing;

(d) are subject to sampling and control by the food business operator to ensure that the cereals grains which have undergone a sorting or other physical treatment are compliant with the maximum level of ergot, before being placed on the market for human consumption or any further processing"

2) In section 2 of the Annex to Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006, the following entries 2.9 and 2.9.1 will be added:

Foodstuffs ([1])		Maximum levels (mg/kg)
"2.9	**Ergot sclerotia**	
2.9.1	Cereal grains intended for human consumption except corn and rice	500 (*)

(*) The maximum level is to be reviewed before 31 December 2016 in the light of information on the presence of ergot alkaloids in cereals and cereal products, the effect of processing and the relation between the presence of ergot sclerotia and ergot alkaloids"

The proposal is due to be voted on at the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (Toxicological Section) shortly.

Concerning Regulation (EC) No 1152/2009 imposing special conditions governing the import of certain foodstuffs from certain third countries due to contamination risk by aflatoxins:

Regulation 1152/2009 consolidated a number of 'safeguard measures' and lays down specific measures for control of aflatoxins in products from certain third

countries including details of sampling frequencies, documentary checks on health certificates and results of analysis and physical checks. This will now be amended to reflect some changes in the control frequencies for the import of certain foodstuffs from certain third countries. The amended version will form a new Regulation and Regulation 1152/2009 will be repealed.

Regulation (EU) 91/2013 has specific conditions applicable to the import of groundnuts from Ghana and India, okra and curry leaves from India and watermelon seeds from Nigeria (and amending Regulations (EC) No 669/2009 and (EC) No 1152/2009, covering both aflatoxins and pesticides). All specific measures related to aflatoxins in Regulation 91/2013 ('groundnuts from India and Ghana' and 'melon seeds from Nigeria') would be transferred into the new Regulation (following repeal of Regulation 1152/2009). Regulation 91/2013 would then be simultaneously repealed and replaced by a new Regulation covering only pesticide residue issues.

The proposal is due to be voted on at the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (Toxicological Section) shortly.

Concerning a Commission Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 401/2006 as regards methods of sampling of large lots, spices and food supplements, performance criteria for T-2, HT-2 toxin and citrinin and screening methods of analysis:

Regulation (EC) No 401/2006 establishes the criteria for the sampling for the control of the levels of mycotoxins. The Commission had proposed changes in the sampling legislation for mycotoxins with respect to the sampling of large lots, spices and food supplements, performance criteria for T-2, HT-2 toxin and citrinin and screening methods of analysis.

Following discussion at several expert Working Group meetings, the proposal was voted on at the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (Toxicological Section) on 29 November 2013 as regards amendments to European Commission legislation on contaminants and shall apply from 1 April 2014.

Guidance Documents and Codes of Practice

Several guidance documents and codes of practice are being developed with regards to the reduction and monitoring of agricultural contaminants and plant toxins, both at the EU level and internationally:

Guidance on the application of Commission Recommendation 2013/165/EU on the presence of T-2 and HT-2 toxin in cereals and cereal products: The European Commission is developing this Guidance Document with the purpose of providing information and advice to Member State authorities and food and feed business operators to support uniform application of the Recommendation and comparable reporting of the results of investigations. This is based on a document developed by UK stakeholders. It provides guidance on the two main requirements of the Recommendation, namely monitoring of T-2 and HT-2 toxin in cereal and cereal products and investigations where repetitive findings above the Indicative level have been found.

Good practices to reduce presence of opium alkaloids in poppy seeds: Since the main sources of morphine and other alkaloid compounds in poppy seeds would be due to external contamination especially through inappropriate plant protection and harvesting-cleaning procedures, the Commission is developing a document detailing good agricultural practices relevant to reduce the presence of opium alkaloids during growing and harvesting of poppy seeds.

Code of Practice for Weed Control to Prevent and Reduce Pyrrolizidine Alkaloid (PA) contamination in Food and Feed*:* At the Codex Committee meeting on Contaminants in Food in 2012, it was decided that due to the potential health-threatening effects that can be caused by ingestion of PAs in feed or food, the electronic Working Group on PAs (of which the UK is a member) concluded that it is desirable to reduce exposure of both human and animals to PAs as much as possible. The Working Group also recommended the development of a code of practice (COP) for the prevention and reduction of contamination of food and feed with PA, in particular with regard to weed control as there was useful information available in this regard. The draft is almost complete and it is hoped that the COP will be finalised at the next meeting in April.

Proposed draft Annex for the prevention and reduction of aflatoxins and ochratoxin A contamination in sorghum*:* The Codex electronic working group on developing this annex to the Code of practice for the prevention and reduction of mycotoxin contamination in Cereals - CAC/RCP 51-2003 has developed a draft of this annex and will be discussed at the next Codex meeting in April.

Preparation of discussions in advance of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food, 31 March - 4 April 2014

The 8th session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Food (CCCF) will take place in The Hague, The Netherlands from 31 March - 4 April 2014. The provisional agenda can be found at ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/meetings/CCCF/CCCF8/cf08_01e.pdf together with links to those documents that have currently been made available.

Should stakeholders wish to discuss any of the forthcoming agenda items as regards agricultural contaminants and plant toxins with the Food Standards Agency, including the UK position in advance of either the EU Coordination meeting on 19th March or the 8th session of CCCF at the end of March, please contact me at the address given below.

Scientific opinions EFSA and other risk assessment bodies

Tropane alkaloids

EFSA has delivered an opinion on the presence of Tropane Alkaloids in food and feed. The opinion can be accessed from the following weblink:
http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/doc/3386.pdf
The Commission is looking at possible risk management measures and has discussed the need for more data on the occurrence of these alkaloids. If you have any data you would like to submit, please send it to the address given below.

DON - consumption estimates
EFSA has produced a report considering the occurrence and exposure of deoxynivalenol in food and feed. This has taken into account consumption data submitted by various member states, including the UK. The report is available here: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3379.htm

Effect of increasing DON MLs for certain semi-processed food
A statement on the risks for public health related to a possible increase of the maximum level of deoxynivalenol for certain semi-processed cereal products such as flour, semolina, meal and flakes derived from wheat, maize or barley used as an ingredient, has been published by EFSA, and is available at: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3490.htm

Effect of processing on the levels of nitrate
EFSA had commissioned a study on the influence of food processing on nitrate levels in vegetables (carried out by the University of Maribor, Slovenia). The results were presented to the EC expert Working Group meeting in January 2014. The report is available at: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/supporting/pub/514e.htm

Pyrrolizidine alkaloids in herbal teas
A project run by the BfR in Germany has found pyrrolizidine alkaloids present in herbal tea. The work was presented at the EC expert Working Group meeting in October 2013. A report of the work conducted is available here: http://www.bfr.bund.de/en/press_information/2013/18/levels_of_pyrrolizidine_alkaloids_in_herbal_teas_and_teas_are_too_high-187319.html
The Food Standards Agency is due to commence a survey in this area shortly. If you have any data you would like to submit, please send it to the address below.

Risk assessment of mycotoxins in cereal grain (Norway)
The risk assessment of mycotoxins in cereal grain in Norway was presented by the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food Safety at the EC expert Working Group meeting in September 2013. The report is available at: http://www.vkm.no/dav/eee04d10c4.pdf

DON and acetylated derivatives and masked mycotoxins
EFSA are due to publish an opinion on these topics, which are expected to be published in summer 2014.

Research commissioned/proposed:

The FSA has planned to commission some research and surveys on the occurrence of mycotoxins and other plant toxins. Details of the work are given below:

Survey on sterigmatocystin in food*:* The project is part of an EFSA Article 36 grant and a consortium of partners will undertake the study (Fera is the UK partner). This project aims to obtain representative occurrence data of sterigmatocystin in food samples with special focus on grains and grain-based products for human consumption from different geographic regions in Europe by using a state of the art method such as LC-MS/MS. The samples (grains including wheat, barley, rye, oats and rice and grain-based products including flour, bread and rolls, pasta, cereal

flakes and muesli, nuts and beer) will be taken from at least 3 different European countries and analysed.

Determination of masked mycotoxins in cereals and cereal-based foods*:* The masked or bound mycotoxins present in the plant tissue are currently not routinely screened for in food as they are able to escape established analytical techniques. This project that the FSA is due to undertake will collect data on masked mycotoxins and also develop suitable analytical methods to determine other masked mycotoxins in foods. The project will also examine whether the bound/masked mycotoxins can be released in the gut by carrying out *in vitro* gut hydrolysis studies.

Occurrence of Pyrrolizidine Alkaloids in food*:* EFSA has assessed the risk for public and animal health related to the presence of pyrrolizidine alkaloids (PAs) in food and feed. The alkaloids are genotoxic and carcinogenic and as such EFSA was unable to set a tolerable intake. EFSA recommended that ongoing efforts should be made to collect analytical data on occurrence of PAs and identified honey and herbals as contributors to PA exposure. It is envisaged that this study will analyse samples of herbal teas, as well as herbal supplements and honey.

Ergot alkaloids in cereal grain*:* Commission Recommendation 2012/154/EU calls on Member States to monitor the presence of ergot alkaloids in food and feed and that the data collected should be provided on a regular basis to EFSA for compilation into a database which could underpin discussions on appropriate risk management measures at the Commission. EFSA also recommended continuous surveillance and eventual setting of standards in its Scientific Opinion of June 2012. Given the current EC discussions on ergot alkaloids, there is an urgent need for UK data. The FSA is collaborating with the HGCA (Home-Grown Cereals Authority) in collecting data on ergot alkaloid levels in cereal grains - wheat, barley, oats and rye.

Development of an electronic database for the collating of industry T-2 and HT-2 mycotoxin occurrence data*:* The European Commission published Recommendation 165/2013 in March 2013 which stated that Member States should monitor cereals and cereal products for the occurrence of T-2 and HT-2 toxin. Monitoring should be carried out from 2013 to 2015, with monitoring results being supplied to EFSA before the 31 Dec for each year of the monitoring period. Results for other mycotoxins were also requested if available. The project involves the setting up of an electronic database, as a repository of UK industry occurrence data. UK industry will be invited to submit occurrence data via their trade bodies or direct to the third-party database administrator for uploading.

Call for research proposals from DG Research*:* We have been requested to draw the attention of interested parties to the DG Research call on “Assessing the health risks of combined human exposure to multiple food-related toxic substances”. The call will be open until **12.03.2014**. More information about this call is available on the website
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/2328-sfs-12-2014.html#tab1

(Please note that the FSA is not responsible for the content of external websites).

Request for data:

If you have data on the following, please submit them to the FSA, as they will be very useful in formulating UK policy for any future EU policy (including the setting of maximum limits) on how food safety would be affected by these contaminants. UK data will help ensure that any risk management measures considered will be proportionate and achievable whilst ensuring consumer safety.

- Ergot alkaloids in cereal grains and cereal products
- Opium alkaloids in poppy seeds and products containing poppy seeds
- DON, acetylated DON and masked mycotoxins
- Tropane alkaloids in cereals and cereal products
- Pyrrolizidine alkaloids in teas and herbal products
- T-2 and HT-2 toxin and other mycotoxins

If you have any questions or wish to discuss any of these issues further, please do not hesitate to contact me. All information or comments relating to mycotoxins and plant toxins should be submitted to Christina.Baskaran@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk; *Tel: 0207 2768661*

Food Allergy Update

EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation (EU FIC) – implementation of EU rules into UK law

The public consultations for the Food Information Regulation (FIR), the Statutory Instruments (SI) for the four UK countries have now closed. The revised FIR SI's are expected to be published April / May 2014; the technical guidance on the Regulations will also be issued around that time. The Food Allergy Branch plans to publish supplementary allergen guidance and advice for SMEs to provide support on the more technical aspects of the Regulation, this will be released around April 2014 and will be available from our website at www.food.gov.uk/policy-advice/allergyintol/label/ .

Industry-led technical guidance on allergen labelling of prepacked foods was issued by the British Retail Consortium and Food & Drink Federation and can be freely obtained from (http://www.brc.org.uk/downloads/Guidance%20on%20Allergen%20Labelling.pdf).

To provide support for enforcement officers and food businesses on the new allergen labelling requirements and allergen management, we released the updated allergy E-learning module during December 2013. This module can be freely accessed through http://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/english/default.aspx.

We have also commissioned a series of 1-day training workshops on the new regulation to explain the changes in working arrangements for enforcement officers. The workshops provide an overview on the technical aspects of the new Regulation and the proposed working arrangements across trading standards and environmental health departments and two tiered authorities. These workshops were rolled out in England and Wales during January and February 2014; we are planning to hold further workshops during Summer/Autumn of 2014.

The Food Allergy branch will also be engaging with businesses across the food service sector in the coming months to raise awareness of the new allergen information requirements for non-prepacked foods and to provide advice and guidance for businesses on their new obligations. We have commissioned research to investigate the extent to which allergen information is currently being provided for non-prepacked foods and to explore the barriers faced by businesses when supplying this information. The first stage of this research was published in September 2013 at http://www.food.gov.uk/science/research/allergy-research/allergy-labelling/fs305004/ and follow up work is expected to be published in the Spring.

We will also be engaging with allergy support organisations and those health professionals who care for people with food allergies and intolerances so that consumers understand and know how to use the allergen information provided on food products. As part of this communication strategy, the Food Allergy Branch updated its consumers leaflet "Advice on Food Allergen Labelling" to provide up to date consumer advice on what to expect with the changes to allergen labelling under the new regulation. This leaflet was released in August 2013 and can be obtained from http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/publication/allergy-leaflet.pdf.

Flavourings, Food Enzymes, Food Additives and Food Contact Materials

Flavourings

Union list of smoke flavourings

The Union list of smoke flavouring primary products was published in the *Official Journal* of the European Union on 12 December 2013[1] and applied from 1 January 2014. The list contains only those primary products that have undergone a safety assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and for which no concerns over genotoxicity were raised. For each primary product the list specifies which types of food it can be used in and maximum permitted levels. All authorisations are company specific and are initially for a 10 year period.

The Smoke Flavouring Regulation (EC) No. 2065/2003 specified transitional measures for when the Union list applied. In particular, the Regulation states that any foods (including compound flavourings) which contain primary products that are not on the Union list may stay on the market for 12 months after the date of application of the Union list. Although the transitional period ends on 31 December 2014, foods which are lawfully placed on the market before the end of the transitional period may remain on the market until stocks are exhausted.

Food manufacturers and ingredient suppliers should ensure they are only using smoke flavourings that contain, or are derived from, authorised primary products and that the specified conditions of use are complied with i.e. the primary product is

[1] Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1321/2013 establishing the Union list of authorised smoke flavouring primary products for use as such in or on foods and/or for the production of derived smoke flavourings - http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:333:0054:0067:EN:PDF

allowed in the food category and its use does not exceed the maximum permitted level.

Union list of flavourings

As previously reported, the positive list of flavouring substances was adopted on 1 October 2012[2] and populated Part A of Annex I of the flavouring legislation (Regulation (EC) No. 1334/2008). This positive list applied from 22 April 2013, but flavouring substances not included in the Union list may be placed on the market and used in or on food until 22 October 2014. After this date, foods containing flavouring substances, which were lawfully placed on the market or labelled prior to 22 October 2014, but which do not comply with the positive list may be marketed until their date of minimum durability or use-by-date.

In the positive list some substances are marked with a footnote to indicate they are still under evaluation by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). As the evaluation process continues the list will be updated to reflect the outcome of EFSA's evaluations. In October, Commission Regulation (EU) No. 985/2013[3] amended the list to remove footnotes from 23 substances and at the same time corrected some errors which appeared in the initial list. A further amendment to remove some flavouring substances from the list which are no longer supported or used by industry will be published in spring 2014.

Food Enzymes

Union list of food enzymes

Work is on-going on the establishment of a positive list of food enzymes and the deadline for submissions is 10 March 2015. In 2012 the Commission received 5 food enzyme applications and 26 in 2013. Industry estimates that approximately 200 applications will be submitted in 2014.

All valid applications received within the application period will be assessed by EFSA and once these evaluations are completed the Commission will prepare the initial positive list after consulting Member States and considering the technological need.

Once the positive list is established (subject to any transitional provisions) only those food enzymes included may be used in foods. Therefore food manufacturers' should liaise with their enzyme suppliers to ascertain whether applications will be submitted for the enzymes they use. After the list is established, new enzymes will be added by the Commission once they have been considered by EFSA and Member States.

Food Additives

[2] Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 872/2012 - http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:267:0001:0161:EN:PDF
[3] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:273:0018:0024:EN:PDF

FSA guidance on food additives legislation

Guidance for manufacturers, processors, retailers, caterers, and enforcement officers written by the FSA on understanding the European Food Additives Regulation has been produced and can be found via the link below:-

http://food.gov.uk/business-industry/guidancenotes/additives-supps-guidance/foodadlegguid

Database with further information for specific food additives and the legislation including amendments to 1333/2008

The European Commission website has a helpful database on food additives, including the ability to search specific food additives to see what foods they are permitted in and at what levels, also a list of the legislation (including recent amendments). This can be accessed via the link below:-

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/sanco_foods/main/?event=display

Food additives in Meat Preparations

The European Commission has proposed amendments to Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 2008 as regards the food categories of meat and the use of several additives in meat preparations as defined by Regulation (EC) No 853/2004.

Along with other issues being addressed, the proposal addresses the concerns of UK industry as regards clarifying the rules on carry-over for additives in food ingredients used in meat preparations.

If you would like further details concerning this proposal please contact us at foodadditives@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Additives in food supplements for children

There also continues to be discussions within the EU over proposed amendments to the food additives Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 2008 as regards the food additives that are permitted in food supplements for infants and young children up to 36 months.

If you would like further details concerning this proposal please contact us at foodadditives@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Colours in food guidance

Guidance notes have now been agreed at European level to help when considering if a substance is a food colour (that needs to be authorised under Food Additive Regulations) or a colouring food (such as spinach) that does not need to be authorised under food additive Regulations.

The "**Guidance notes on the classification of food extracts with colouring properties"** can be found via the following link:-

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/fAEF/additives/guidance_en.htm

Guidance document to help understand what foods fall under the different food categories within the food additives legislation

EU Guidance has also been developed to assist in understanding the food categories within the food additives Regulations, by describing them in greater detail, often with examples.

This can be found via the same link as above:-
http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/fAEF/additives/guidance_en.htm

EFSA opinion on aspartame

EFSA have now published their opinion on the safety aspartame - they concluded that aspartame and its breakdown products are safe for human consumption at current levels of exposure. The opinion can be found via this link:-

http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/3496.htm

University of Hull study on aspartame

The Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer products and the Environment (COT) has peer reviewed a double blind randomised crossover study of aspartame, commissioned by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). COT is a committee of independent experts that provides advice to the FSA and other parts of government.

The expert Committee concluded that 'the results presented did not indicate any need for action to protect the health of the public'. The study has been submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific journal, but has not yet been published.

For further information please follow this link:- http://food.gov.uk/news-updates/news/2013/dec/aspartame

Food Contact Materials

EFSA launches second stage of BPA consultation

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has launched the second part of a two-stage public consultation on its draft opinion on the possible risks to public health from bisphenol A (BPA).

The first phase of the EFSA consultation, which looked at exposure to BPA in Europe, was held between 25 July and 15 September 2013. EFSA's scientific experts provisionally concluded that for all population groups diet is the major source of exposure to BPA and exposure is lower than previously estimated by EFSA.

When EFSA adopts and publishes its final opinion on BPA – following consideration of comments received from these consultations – the Food Standards Agency will consider, along with the European Commission and EU Member States, whether action is necessary to protect consumers. The two EFSA consultations can be found by following the external sites links

http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/consultationsclosed/call/130725.htm

http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/consultations/call/140117.htm

Amendment to Commission Regulation (EU) No10/2011 on Plastic Materials and Articles intended to come into contact with food.

An amendment to Commission Regulation (EU) No 10/2011 was adopted by Member States in the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health, in Brussels on 28th November 2013. This is as a result of the addition of two new substances (***FCM 988*** and ***FCM 340***) to the Union list of approved monomers and other starting substances, additives, polymer production aids and macromolecules obtained from microbial fermentation.

Union Guidance on Food Contact Materials published

The European Commission has published guidance on information in the supply chain with regard to Regulation (EU) No 10/2011 on plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with food.

This document, which was endorsed by the Member States in the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health of 28 November 2013, is a culmination of discussions in a working group of technical experts and the working group of governmental experts on food contact materials.

The guidance is aimed at European Professional Organisations and Member States competent authorities dealing with questions concerning the interpretation and implementation of certain aspects on the declaration of compliance and adequate information in the plastics supply chain.

. This document is made available on the DG Sanco website on food contact materials: http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/chemicalsafety/foodcontact/docs/guidance_reg-10-2011_en.pdf