Local authorities to test for lamb meat substitution

The FSA announced on 17 April 2014 an additional programme of priority testing of lamb dishes from takeaway restaurants across the UK following evidence of ongoing substitution of lamb for cheaper meats such as beef and chicken. Businesses could face prosecution if food is found to have been deliberately mislabelled.

An FSA review of local authority sampling data, from July to December 2013, found that 43 out of 145 samples of lamb takeaway meals contained meat other than lamb. In total, 25 of these samples were found to contain only beef. Other meat species identified included chicken and turkey. No samples were found to contain horse meat.

In response to the ongoing concerns about lamb substitution, the FSA is starting a further round of priority testing of lamb takeaway dishes from businesses across the UK. Local authorities are being asked to test 300 samples from takeaway restaurants and report the findings to the FSA. Sampling will start at the beginning of May. The mislabelling of food can result in fines of up to £5,000.

The concerns identified in the local authority data are also reflected in a survey of lamb dishes from restaurants in Birmingham and London released by Which?. The consumer organisation purchased 60 lamb takeaways, 30 curries and 30 minced lamb kebabs, of which a total of 24 were adulterated with beef and chicken.

George Fairgrieve REHIS Council member with responsibility for food matters said: ‘REHIS believes that consumers deserve accurate food labelling and that substitution of meat such as in the case of some lamb curries is unacceptable. Scottish environmental health departments, working together through the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee, are prioritising sampling of this type of product as part of 2014/5 sampling plans. REHIS welcomes this initiative and urges local authorities to take enforcement action against traders found deliberately misleading consumers.’

Use of electronic cigarettes soars in Scotland

The use of electronic cigarettes among adult smokers in Scotland has increased by over five times in the past four years, from 3% in 2010 to 17% in 2014.

The finding comes from a new YouGov survey commissioned by health charity ASH Scotland. It also shows use of e-cigarettes among adult ex-smokers in Scotland was 3% in 2014.

The poll reveals a dramatic rise in the number of current smokers in Scotland who have tried electronic cigarettes over the past four years. In 2010, only 7% of current smokers had ever tried electronic cigarettes. By 2014, the figure had risen to 45%. Just under a third (31%) of adults in Scotland who have heard of e-cigarettes believe that they will be good for public health while around a quarter (23%) disagree. Agreement was even higher among smokers (55%). Current use of e-cigarettes amongst those who have
never smoked is negligible (zero or nearly zero) and only around 1% of never-smokers report ever trying e-cigarettes.

ASH Scotland Chief Executive Sheila Duffy said: “These new figures emphasise the growing popularity of e-cigarettes and we believe there needs to be a vigorous public debate about their use.

“Our interest is in helping people improve their health and so we welcome harm reduction as a principle. We believe that ‘vaping’ will prove to be less harmful than smoking – but not harmless, as some supporters suggest.

“We are calling for regulation of the market in e-cigarettes - and other new nicotine delivery devices - because nicotine is a highly addictive substance and the companies involved are under strong commercial pressure to recruit young people into using it.

“To minimise the risk of drawing the next generation into nicotine addiction, we also want an under-18 age restriction on the sale of e-cigarettes in Scotland, as is already being planned for England and Wales, and we need restrictions on how these products are promoted.

“However, including e-cigarettes in the smoke-free enclosed public spaces legislation would require scientific evidence that harm from ‘second-hand’ e-cigarette emissions is likely. This is not the situation to date. But we support venues that have banned vaping to protect smoke-free environments.

“There are particular concerns with the growing involvement of tobacco companies in this market because of their history of prioritising profits over people and misleading consumers. It is not in their interest for people to become free of nicotine addiction. We must defend Scotland’s vision for creating a generation free from tobacco and ensure that e-cigarettes work for this, not against it.”

**CMO Scotland**

A new Chief Medical Officer for Scotland is expected to be appointed later this year following the decision by Sir Harry Burns to leave the Scottish Government for a post at the University of Strathclyde.

The role of Scotland’s Chief Medical Officer will be advertised in the coming months through a national recruitment process.

Dr Aileen Keel has been appointed as Acting Chief Medical Officer and took up the post on April 1, 2014. Dr Keel has held the post of Deputy Chief Medical Officer since 1999, after joining the then Scottish Office Department of Health in 1992. Dr Keel is also an honorary consultant in haematology at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and Chair of the Scottish Cancer Task Force.

**NHSScotland food safety assurance**

Food safety is a priority issue for NHSScotland, important both in terms of safety and well being of patients and staff, and the resources consumed by avoidable infections/outbreaks. Food safety is equally important for healthcare services in the private, independent and voluntary services. Each year many thousands of UK citizens are stricken by gastrointestinal and foodborne illness. The effects on individuals range from minor nausea, diarrhoea and sore head to in extreme cases, death. Hospital caterers are confronted by a further challenge in that they produce food for the most vulnerable and immuno-compromised members of the community i.e. the very young, the elderly and the infirm. This means that there has to be a robust emphasis on food safety at all times, during the storage, preparation, production and service of food.

Catering services staff are regarded as an essential part of the multidisciplinary approach in improving patient, staff and public wellbeing. For prevention and control of Food Poisoning outbreaks to work effectively, critical activities such as catering and food hygiene have to be embedded into everyday practice. There must be a culture of knowledge and understanding with integration of best practice into routine activities.

The Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorate commissioned the NHSScotland National Food Safety Assurance Manual to demonstrate a consistent approach to food safety and compliance with Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) and Food Safety legislation. Health Facilities Scotland (HFS) set up a Short Life Working Group in April
2009 to develop this guidance. A recent revision, published in March and available at http://www.hfs.scot.nhs.uk/publications/ has been produced in light of additional legislative changes that are required to be included within the document. The group consisted of professional Caterers from the HFS Catering Advisory Group and the Institute’s Director of Training.

Scotland’s Beaches
The Marine Conservation Society has recommended 54 out of 95 (56.8%) of Scotland’s beaches tested during last summer as having excellent water quality – that’s 12 more than the previous year. Despite Scotland receiving more rainfall than some other parts of the UK last summer, there were no failures at all, meaning all of Scotland’s monitored beaches reached minimum bathing water standards.

Nuclear Regulator
The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) was established on 1 April 2014 as a Public Corporation, under the Energy Act 2013. This is a significant milestone in its journey to become a modern, responsive, independent regulator. This change in status puts the UK independent regulator in a stronger position to fulfil its mission to provide efficient and effective regulation of the nuclear industry, holding it to account on behalf of the public. ONR also launched its new website, carrying the new ONR brand, where they will continue to openly publish details of their decisions, including enforcement actions and corporate publications. Read more about the changes at www.onr.org.uk.

FSA news
Eating out of home: filling the knowledge gap
The easy availability of calorie-rich foods and drinks may be encouraging weight gain leading to overweight and obesity. The perception is that many meals eaten out of home are high in calories. Work by the Scottish Government and the Food Standards Agency in Scotland (FSAS) is underway with retailers, caterers and manufacturers to reduce calories in foods eaten inside and outside the home.

There is a particular lack of information on eating out of home in Scotland and this report helps to fill the knowledge gap. The report, based on market research data, includes more than 13,000 eating occasions, and provides a general overview of eating out in Scotland and information about where consumers go and what foods and drinks they buy.

This report suggests that there is considerable scope for work by the catering and retail industry to both provide and encourage the purchase of healthier products. About half of all visits were to the larger retail/catering chains, with the top three being McDonalds, Greggs/Bakers Oven and Tesco. The most frequently consumed items were sandwiches, chips, coffee, regular cola and cakes/biscuits/pastries.

People in Scotland tended to eat more Indian and Chinese takeaway meals and visit fish and chip shops and bakers more frequently than people in the rest of Britain.

Other items purchased frequently from the larger chains were fried and breaded chicken, burgers, pizza and pies/pastries/ sausage rolls. More than half of all fried and breaded chicken and burgers were purchased on promotion.

Calorie information is generally provided by the major chains to help consumers make healthier choices, but not from the smaller independent caterers.

Caterers and retailers are being encouraged to offer healthier options and rebalance their meal and price promotions, by the FSAS and Scottish Government actions. Consumers will also be helped to choose healthier options through the provision of calorie information on menus. In Scotland, the eatwell everyday website is available for use by food and health practitioners and consumers. Healthy eating messages are also promoted by the FSA through public events such as students freshers’ fairs.

New revised salt targets published
Revised salt targets for processed foods have been developed and agreed across the four UK administrations and set for achievement by 2017.

High salt intakes contribute to high blood pressure, which can increase the risk of heart
disease and stroke. About 75% of salt in the diet comes from processed foods, and in 2006 to help consumers reduce their salt intake, the FSA began a programme of work which included setting targets for the food industry to reduce levels of salt across a range of processed foods.

During summer 2013, the Food Standards Agency in Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland worked closely with officials in the Department of Health and with industry, and other stakeholders to agree new salt targets.

The new 2017 targets recognise the progress that has already been made by the food industry and aims to encourage further reductions. Although salt levels in many foods covered by previous targets have reduced significantly, average salt consumption remains high at approximately 8.1g-8.8g/day. Considerable effort is still required to meet the dietary recommendation of no more than 6g/day. Further details of the targets are available on the FSA website www.food.gov.uk.

Illegal razor fish harvesting

by Brian Lawrie, REHIS Council Member

South Ayrshire Council has been working with colleagues in local authorities and with national agencies such as the Food Standards Agency Scotland and Marine Scotland to tackle the illegal harvesting of shellfish from unclassified areas. As a result of this co-operation two landings of razor shellfish were seized and subsequently ordered condemned by a Sheriff. Funding was received from the FSA's Food Fraud Fighting Fund to support the enforcement approach which involved out of hours working. This activity has resulted in a tightening of the registration document process and the submission of three fast track applications for razor shellfish classified areas off South Ayrshire’s coast. The majority of razor shellfish are exported to Spain and the Far East. Exporting shellfish from unclassified waters puts the Scottish industry’s reputation for safety and quality at risk. Exports of razor shellfish value upwards of £90m annually. Further information on this incident is available from Brian at brian.lawrie@south-ayrshire.gov.uk.

Litter louts to pay higher price

People dropping litter or flytipping in Scotland risk being hit with higher financial penalties from April 1, 2014.

The rise in Fixed Penalty Notices will see those caught littering face an £80 penalty; while those flytipping could be £200 worse offs. The move follows a public consultation, which supported tougher penalties for anyone who doesn’t bin their waste or damages our environment by flytipping.

The penalty increase comes ahead of the Scottish Government’s National Litter Strategy - the first since devolution, which will be published later this year alongside the Scottish Marine Litter Strategy.

HSE news

Council in court after death of pensioner

Glasgow City Council has been fined £20,000 following the death of a pensioner after he was struck by a reversing refuse vehicle in the city centre.

Malcolm McCulloch, 71, a retired dock worker from Glasgow, was walking across Holm Street, Glasgow, when he was struck by the reversing lorry on 10 August 2012. He suffered severe chest and pelvic injuries and later died in hospital.

The incident was investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and a prosecution brought against the council for serious safety failings.

Glasgow Sheriff Court heard on 11 April 2014 that the council carried out its own commercial glass collection. As the reversing of refuse collection vehicles is a hazardous activity, the council had introduced a program of reversing assistant training between March and December 2011. A reversing assistant’s role is to stand outside the vehicle and guide the driver in situations where reversing manoeuvres cannot be avoided.

The driver of the vehicle on the date of the incident was employed through an agency, rather than as a direct employee of the council, and had worked on the glass collection vehicle
since March 2012. A labourer employed by the council travelled with the driver, getting out at stops to empty the glass bins.

However, neither the driver nor the labourer involved in this incident had undergone reversing assistant training. The council had failed to ensure that agency workers received the training and had also failed to identify that its own employee had not received the training. Full details of this case are available on the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk.

**Two Aberdeen firms fined after worker severely injured in fall**

Two construction firms have been sentenced for serious safety failings after a worker was left with life-changing injuries when he fell almost four metres through a hole in the first floor of a hotel in Aberdeen.

Scott Massie, then aged 37 years, was employed by Riverside Construction (Aberdeen) Limited, which had been subcontracted by Aberdeen Fabrication Limited (A-FAB) to work on a major refurbishment project at the premises in Market Street.

Peterhead Sheriff Court heard on 15 April that Mr Massie had been replacing a floorboard over a hole in the first floor, one of several that had been used to hoist materials up to the floors above. But as he manoeuvred the board into position, it fell through the hole followed by Mr Massie himself.

Mr Massie landed on his back nearly four metres below, fracturing his spine in several places. No one heard him call out for help and he had to crawl back up to the first floor before colleagues found him.

He suffered eight fractures of the vertebrae, two broken ribs and was in hospital for almost eight weeks. He had to undergo physiotherapy to learn how to walk again and has been diagnosed as having permanent damage to his lower back.

The incident, on 13 October 2009, was investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) which, just a few weeks earlier, had served an Improvement Notice on principal contractor A-FAB following a site inspection. HSE had found failings in how work at height was being carried out and given the company time to put specific improvements in place.

HSE’s investigation into Mr Massie’s fall found the hole was part of a temporary hoist shaft installed on the instruction of the site manager, which consisted of holes in all four floor levels.

Boards placed over the holes when the hoist was not in use was the only measure to prevent a person falling through. Riverside’s supervisor intended that they be put in position by two people and screwed down, but this was not always done and there were no guards around the hole when the hoist was in use.

HSE identified that A-FAB had failed to sufficiently address the safety issues in the Improvement Notice and that both companies had failed to take suitable and sufficient steps to prevent persons from falling a distance likely to cause personal injury and, in particular, failed to ensure that holes in the floors were adequately guarded or that other means were in place to prevent persons approaching and falling through said holes.

Aberdeen Fabrication Limited, of Carden Place, Aberdeen, was fined £45,000 after pleading guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

Riverside Construction (Aberdeen) Limited, of Bon-Accord Crescent, Aberdeen, was fined £30,000 after pleading guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Full details of this case are available on the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk.

**Six metre fall lands Orkney firm in court**

An Orkney-based construction firm has been fined for safety failings after a worker was seriously injured when he fell six metres through a roof sheet.

William Paterson, then 58, and from the island was one of three workers employed by Daniel Harcus Construction repairing a fragile roof at a farm in Tuquoy, Westray, when the incident occurred on 16 April 2012.

Kirkwall Sheriff Court was told on 23 April that Mr Paterson and his colleagues were lifted on to the roof by a telehandler and had then stepped onto the fragile roof to begin work without any crawl ladders or other safety measures in place.
He had successfully replaced a couple of broken fibre cement sheets and was moving over the ridge from one pitch of the roof to the other when he stepped on a sheet which fractured under his weight. He fell through the sheet on to the concrete floor some six metres below.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Daniel Harcus Construction had failed to come up with a safe alternative system of work once it became apparent that existing crawling boards could not be used because of the curved ridge of the roof. Full details of this case are available on the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk.

**SEPA news**

**Blairgowrie man polluted a Perthshire burn**

An employee of a company which empties septic tanks was sentenced to a 100 hour Community Payback Order for unpaid work and activities to be completed within three months at Perth Sheriff Court on 17 April 2014 for polluting a local burn with sewage and for breaching waste management legislation designed to protect the environment.

Derek Davidson, an employee and former director of 1st Loo Ltd, was sentenced after pleading guilty following evidence led at trial to discharging a quantity of sewage into the Middleton Burn, which is a tributary of the River Tay. The incident was investigated by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and a report was submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

On 4 May 2011 SEPA responded to reports of pollution in the Middleton Burn in Dalgue. Investigations showed the burn was full of sewage as it flowed past a number of houses. Samples were taken, and a trail through the grass was seen leading from a septic tank from one of the householders down to the burn. The home owner confirmed that the then 1st Loo Limited has been paid to empty the septic tank and remove the contents.

Water samples taken from the burn were shown to contain high levels of pollutants present in the sewage discharge which are known to cause problems for fish and invertebrates.

The Middleton burn is a tributary of the River Tay Special area of Conservation.

Although Derek Davidson and another employee of the then 1st Loo Limited initially denied causing the pollution he later admitted at a further interview that he had been responsible for the incident at Dalguise. Mr. Davidson claimed that the septic tank contents were too thick to pump into the tanker and that the contents of the tanker were lost when water was taken from the burn into the tanker to make it easier to pump out.

As part of the investigation into the pollution at Dalgue, SEPA also looked into other collections of sewage made by Derek Davidson as an employee of the 1st Loo Ltd. This included checking the correct paperwork had been used for the disposal of waste. SEPA found that Mr. Davidson has failed to use the required paperwork for the disposal of up to 7,000 gallons of sewage collected from a private sewage works at Bridge of Cally. This paperwork, commonly referred to as a Duty of Care Transfer Note, is required to ensure that the person receiving the waste is able to deal with the waste correctly. Further details are available on the SEPA website www.sepa.org.uk.

**Personality Profile - Louise Cunningham**

Louise began her student training with Aberdeenshire Council in 2008 whilst at Strathclyde University, making the move from her home town of Falkirk to complete her training and has remained with them since graduating and qualifying in November 2010. Currently based in the Inverurie office, Louise is a generalist officer.
with interests in wind turbines, port health and food safety. She is a REHIS Course Presenter for the Elementary and Intermediate Food Hygiene courses. She was awarded Chartered status in January 2014 and looks forward to continuing to promote the Institute and the profession through challenging times. Louise is currently a member of the REHIS Council.

1. **Describe yourself?**
Young, twenty–something ambitious professional who moved to Aberdeenshire to begin a student placement whilst studying at Strathclyde in 2008. Having graduated and qualified in 2010, I recently moved office within Aberdeenshire in January to cover the Inverurie area. Currently I am a generalist officer covering everything from Food Safety to Public Health and Wind Turbines. Celebrating a year since getting the keys to my flat in Aberdeen city centre and loving life in the City by the sea.

2. **What’s your first, worst and best memory? (Professional career)**
My first professional memory would be my first day starting in Peterhead and being asked “Far di yi bide my quine” and thinking what have I let myself in for moving up here to complete my placement…..6 years later and I haven’t looked back however I have managed to resist going completely Doric!

My worst memory, thankfully I don’t have many. However my stomach used to always sink when there was a ship sanitation inspection request during Winter as guaranteed it would be gale force winds and horizontal hail when I was due to head out, the girls in the office would however always sing YMCA when I went out.

Best memory so far has to be representing my service at Taste of Grampian for the last few years, the reception we get from visitors is overwhelming, who would have thought Food Safety would have been so popular! Last year was a particular highlight, when I got to meet my hero of Sunday Morning television Simon Rimmer, after telling him off for not having a wash hand basin on his display kitchen I managed to get a photo for the album.

3. **Most embarrassing moment? (Professional career)**
As a Student Environmental Health Officer based in the Peterhead office I was tasked with collecting water samples on a Wednesday morning, during summer you couldn’t ask for a better job! I had arranged to collect a water sample as part of a house sale and arrived to be greeted by the elderly gentleman who was re-locating. “come on through the house my quine” he said “I’ve got my water sample for you here on the table” to which he presented me with a miniature whisky bottle with what I can only assume was a very personal water sample and not one from the tap!!

4. **Who influenced you most in your career?**
Being the daughter of an EHO, there really only is one person who has influenced and guided me to the position I hold currently, my Dad, Graeme Cunningham. It wasn’t until selecting university courses that I really began to understand the variety that the job offered, knowing I am not the indoors, office type – knowing I would be visiting different places, investigating different complaints and meeting a variety people on a daily basis I knew it was for me.

5. **Greatest achievement? (Professional)**
The last couple of months has seen a number of professional achievements come together as I was elected to join the Council at the AGM in November 2013 gaining Chartered Status at the beginning of the year, something which I hope to encourage others to participate in throughout their careers. This was all topped off by being appointed as a Senior Environmental Health Officer, a role which I took up after Easter.

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If you wish to feature any Environmental Health or Public Health initiative, event or activity in the REHIS Newsletter, please contact Jim Thomson, Policy/Professional Development Officer, The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland, 19 Torphichen Street, Edinburgh, tel: 0131 229 2968 or jt@rehis.com
6 What do you do to relax?
At the weekends I am quite often out and about visiting friends and family, home and away then by night I am normally found enjoying the bright lights of the Granite City drinking cocktails or serving up one of my own creations to friends and listening to music.

I am a keen foodie; I enjoy eating out and trying new recipes in the favourite part of my flat, the kitchen!

My ultimate week of relaxation will be in September when I head off to Cancun with four friends…..who am I kidding!! I will only be youngster once.

7 What is your vision for the future of Public Health in Scotland?
This is a tough one, there is no doubt in my mind of challenging times ahead for environmental health officers as we attempt to make continued improvements to the public health of an ever growing nation whilst our resources to do so are forever shrinking. Environmental Health, the Profession and the Service, contributes to many of the positive outcomes we need in our society and I think the challenge will be prioritising those that will have the greatest long term impact. However 2014 is a particularly exciting year with the Commonwealth Games and Ryder Cup which is the perfect opportunity for us to showcase the hard work we do to ensure safe local producers of high quality foods and safe, well attended events up and down the country. Let’s just hope the sun makes an appearance for us.

Vacancy
The Institute is seeking a part time (21 hour) Training Adviser to provide support to its prospective and Approved Training Centres and to monitor, review and evaluate the provision of training and examinations by REHIS Centres. Further details are available on the REHIS website; if you wish to discuss this opportunity please contact Jackie McCabe Director of Training.

OSHCR Update
As at 1 May 2014, 2,063 Consultants have been approved onto the Occupational Safety and Health Consultants’ Register (OSHCR) and this figure includes a number of Chartered EHO members of the Institute. Further information on the Register is available from the OSHCR website www.oshcr.org.

Forthcoming events
• Environmental Protection Scotland, Water Environment and Development Conference, Wednesday 14 May, Glasgow
• Food Safety and Nutrition Live Conference, Tuesday 20 May, Glasgow
• REHIS Southern Centre Electrical Safety in Housing Assessments (Tolerable Standard) Training Courses - 21 May, Dunfermline and 23 May, Clydebank
• Cancer Research UK Conference – Scotland Against Cancer 2014, 2 June, Surgeons Hall, Edinburgh
• IFEH 13th World Congress on Environmental Health, 7-10 July, Las Vegas, USA

Note: Always check the REHIS website events portal for up to date information on training events.
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