

To: Heads of Environmental Health Services (England)
Directors of Trading Standards (England)
Chief Port Health Officers (England)

Cc: LACORS, CIEH, TSI, APHA

3 July 2006

Reference: ENF/E/06/045

Dear Sir or Madam:

National Food Fraud Database

I am writing to you to inform you about a national Food Fraud Database that has been established by the Food Standards Agency in line with its 2005 – 2010 Strategic Plan.

The purpose of this database is to provide a resource for UK food authorities undertaking investigations and/or prosecutions in relation to food fraud.

Information about suspect or illicit activity will be gathered from various sources, particularly from local authorities, but also from other agencies, including HM Revenue and Customs, Defra and the MHS, to name a few. The database utilises 'Memex' specialist intelligence software used by other intelligence agencies including many national and international police forces as well as the Welsh Food Fraud Co-ordination Unit.

As it becomes populated, it will provide an additional and useful tool to assist local authorities in combating food fraud.

However, the capability of this intelligence system is, of course, dependent upon the quantity as well as the quality of data input. It is therefore essential that *all* information, about known or suspected food fraud activity, as well as any details of individuals associated with such activity, is forwarded to the Food Standards Agency for inclusion on this database.

Examples of issues that we would be interested in receiving information about could range from data on illegal slaughter activity and the sale of unfit meat, to the manufacture and sale of counterfeit food products or the intentional misdescription and sale of food.

To ensure the consistency of intelligence received by the FSA, we will require enforcement officers to submit all information about current incidents via the attached Intelligence Report Form, which is based on the standard Police form. It uses the '5X5X5' evaluation method, and requires submitting officers to score the source, intelligence and handling of the information being submitted on a scale of 1 to 5 for each.

Completed intelligence forms will ensure, as far as possible, a standardised approach to the handling and forwarding of intelligence and therefore provide an important guide to the reliability of such data.

To receive completed Intelligence Report Forms, the FSA has set up a dedicated mailbox to which they can be e-mailed: foodfraud@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk.

Alternatively, they can also be sent to the Meat Fraud and Diversity Branch within the FSA's Enforcement Division, as they have responsibility for maintaining the database. You may post completed forms to the address below, or by fax to: 0207 276 8447.

For further assistance in completing this intelligence report form, please contact either John Furzer or Julian Ciepluch at the address below:

Food Fraud and Diversity Branch
Food Standards Agency
Aviation House
125 Kingsway
WC2B 6NH

Tel: 0207 276 8077 / 8449

We would also be particularly interested in receiving pertinent information about previous food fraud incidents, as this can help in cross referencing data with future incidents and thus facilitating related investigations. However, as the intelligence report forms are intended for advising on current incidents, data on past incidents can be simply e-mailed or forwarded to the above contacts.

I would be grateful if you could ensure that this letter is disseminated to all food enforcement officers within your authority as soon as possible.

The role of local authority food enforcement officers is essential in tackling all food fraud activity wherever it occurs and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support in protecting the food safety and standards for consumers.

Yours sincerely



Handwritten signature of Julie A. Clark in blue ink.

Julie Monk
Head of Enforcement Division