

To: CEHOs
GCEHOs
NIFLG
LACORS

27th June 2008

Reference: ENF/NI/08/031
NIP 339 & 618

Dear Colleague

IMPORTED FOOD CONTROLS QUESTIONNAIRE – ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY IN 2007/08

Please find attached the annual questionnaire on imported food controls requesting information on inland local authority / port health authority enforcement activity completed between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2008. We would be grateful if you could arrange for the questionnaire to be completed and returned to the e-mail address given on the questionnaire by no later than Friday 25th July 2008. Please note that this deadline has been extended in Northern Ireland to take account of the July holiday period.

In order to help reduce the number of information gathering returns that local authorities produce for the Agency, this will be the last year that the information will be requested from you in this format. As from next year data on imported food controls will be captured as part of the new local authority enforcement monitoring system (LAEMS).

The content of the 2007/08 questionnaire closely mirrors that from last year, with only a small number of minor changes to reflect legislative developments.

The information you supply in response to the questionnaire is vitally important in enabling the Agency to give a continuing commitment to providing dedicated resources to support the local enforcement of imported food controls. This includes the annual food sampling grants, the imported food control resource pack, imported food training, and the development of IT systems, such as the Guidance and Regulatory Advice on Import Legislation (GRAIL) database, which was formally launched in April 2008. For those of you who have not already registered on GRAIL, I would encourage you to do so at:

<https://grail.foodapps.co.uk/grail/general/home.aspx>.

Your response also enables us to evaluate the level of imported food law enforcement being carried out, particularly in relation to the targets we have set for



all local authorities to aim to achieve 10% imported food samples of all the food sampling they carry out. Full details of the Agency's targets for imported food control enforcement were included in the letter which accompanied last year's questionnaire and have been reproduced at the Annex A to this letter for ease of reference.

The Agency received an encouraging number of responses to last year's questionnaire, particularly from inland authorities, with 68% of all UK local authorities responding. However, disappointingly this also means that nearly a third of authorities did not respond to the questionnaire. In addition, of the 68% that did respond, approximately half gave nil returns for all aspects of imported food law enforcement. Consequently, the summary data listed in Annex B represents the activity undertaken by only approximately one third of all UK local authorities.

As a direct result of the feedback received from you last year, both Excel and Word versions of the questionnaire have been produced for this year. It is hoped that this approach will aid accessibility to and completion of the questionnaire. I do request that, where possible, in the first instance you submit your return using the Excel version of the questionnaire as this will help us analyse responses more readily.

If possible, I would be grateful if you could arrange for the questionnaire to be completed electronically and returned by email to me at joy.cresswell@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk.

If you have any questions about the completion of the questionnaire please contact Paul Stubbington (020 7276 8397, paul.stubbington@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk) or Mark Davis (020 7276 8402, mark.davis@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk).

Finally, may I take this opportunity to remind you that in October last year the Agency published the "Working Together on Imported Food" booklet (<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/publication/importedfood1007.pdf>). The booklet emphasises that enforcement of imported food controls is the responsibility of all UK local authorities and details Agency support available to support authorities in this work. If you haven't done so already, please take the time to read the booklet.

Thank you in advance for your help with this request and I look forward to receiving your return by Friday 25th July 2008.

Yours sincerely



JOY CRESSWELL
Meat Hygiene & Imported Food Unit

The following imported food targets for LAs/PHAs and the Agency, were developed by the Agency, in consultation with APHA and LACORS:

Activity at Seaports and Airports

- Achieve 100% of statutory checks on all declared consignments of non-animal origin food products subject to emergency controls and safeguard measures entering the Port. Take appropriate regulatory action in relation to all rejected consignments of non-animal origin foodstuffs identified at the Port.

All Local Authority Activity Other Than That Carried Out At Point Of Entry Into The UK

- Achieve a national average that 10% of all non-animal origin food samples taken will be samples of food imported from countries outside of the European Union. Take appropriate regulatory action in relation to all unsatisfactory imported foods.

Food Standards Agency Activity

- Carry out a review of the 2006/2007 imported food control enforcement activity by local/port health authorities and use the results to inform the setting of future performance targets, including consideration of a target for the examination of non-animal origin imported foods not subject to specific emergency controls or safeguard measures.
- Contribute to the review of the Agency's local authority monitoring form to develop and implement by March 2008 a more systematic method for collection of LA/PHA data on imported food control activity.

ANNEX B

The key points emerging from analysis of the 2006/07 returns were:

- 23,578 imported food samples were taken (8,598 products of animal origin (POAO) and 14,980 food not of animal origin (FNAO));
- 74% of these samples were taken by PHAs;
- Of the imported food samples taken, 5% were found to be unsatisfactory;
- For those local authorities providing a response (not including nil returns and excluding PHAs, where imported food samples represented all of the food samples taken) the 10% target rate for the number of imported food samples compared to the total number of food samples was exceeded (13%),
- 327,534 consignments (57,616 POAO and 269,918 FNAO) were reported as entering the UK during 2006/07;
- A total of 1,049 consignments were rejected at point of entry (667 POAO and 382 FNAO). POAO consignments were primarily rejected due to labelling (15%) or other reasons (79%). FNAO consignments were primarily rejected for other contaminants (35%) and other reasons (58%);
- Of the 667 POAO consignments rejected, 34% were subject to destruction and 66% were redispached. Of the 382 FNAO consignments rejected, 2% were redirected for use other than human consumption, 1% were subject to special treatment, 14% were subject to destruction, 74% were redispached and the outcome of 9% of rejected consignments was reported as unknown.
- The 100% target set for checks on all declared consignments on FNAO products subject to emergency control measures was met or exceeded.
- The following formal enforcement actions were taken in relation to imported food:

Type of Action	No. Taken	No. of LAs/PHAs Taking Action
Notices served under OFFC Regs 2006 No. 15, Regulation 30 – not in relation to aflatoxin measures	74	6 PHA and 1 Unitary
Notices served under OFFC Regs 2006 No. 15, Regulation 30 –in relation to aflatoxin measures	170	3 PHA, 2 Unitary and 1 County
Notices served under Emergency Control Regs, Reg 6	81	4 PHAs and 3 Unitary
Notices served under POAO (TCI) Regulation 8	40	7 Unitary and 1 County
Notices served under POAO (TCI) Regulation 16	69	3 Unitary and 2 PHA
Notices served under POAO (TCI) Regulation 21	737	6 PHA and 4 Unitary
Notices served under POAO (TCI) Regulation 24	68	11 Unitary, 2 PHA and 1 District
Notices served under POAO (TCI) Regulation 25	21	3 Unitary and 2 PHA
Seizures under the Food Safety Act, Section 9	33	8 Unitary and 6 District
Voluntary Surrenders	571	26 Unitary, 10 District, 6 PHA and 4 County
Formal Cautions	4	1 Unitary, 1 PHA and 1 County
Prosecutions	12	4 Unitary, 4 District and 2 County