

To: District Council Chief EHO's
Cc: Group Chief EHO's
NIFLG Members
LACORS
CIEH

29th July 2008

Ref: **ENF/NI/08/034**

Dear Colleagues,

**GUIDANCE ON THE SAFETY AND SHELF-LIFE OF VACUUM AND MODIFIED
ATMOSPHERE PACKED CHILLED FOODS WITH RESPECT TO NON-
PROTEOLYTIC *CLOSTRIDIUM BOTULINUM***

I am writing to bring to your attention the publication of the Food Standards Agency 'Guidance on the safety and shelf-life of vacuum and modified atmosphere packed chilled foods with respect to non-proteolytic *Clostridium botulinum*'. The guidance has been published on the Agency website at:

www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/guidancenotes/foodguid/vpguide

The Agency developed the guidance to raise awareness of the hazard of botulism associated with vacuum/modified atmosphere packed chilled foods. The aim of the guidance is to:

- Explain the '10 day shelf-life rule' for vacuum packed chilled foods;
- Clarify the need for additional controlling factors, where the shelf-life is greater than 10 days;



- Advise Enforcement Officers/ Local Authorities on the general approach to cases of non-compliance with the '10 day shelf-life rule'

A simplified factsheet based on the guidance is also available on the Agency website and a laminated copy can be ordered quoting Ref **FSA/1272 0708** using the order line **0845 606 0667**, email: foodstandards@ecgroup.co.uk. A Welsh language version will also be available.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Jackson', written in a cursive style.

Michael Jackson
Head of Enforcement
Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland