

Directors of Public Protection in Wales

16th January 2008

Reference: ENF/W/08/004

Dear Director

VOLUNTARY BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE ON THE PROVISION OF ALLERGEN LABELLING IN THE LOOSE FOOD SECTOR AND INFORMATION ON REVISED ALLERGEN LEGISLATION GUIDANCE

The Agency became aware that buying food that is not pre-packed and eating out can be particularly difficult for food allergic consumers because there is less information on which allergens are present in the food. Therefore, it is harder for them to know which foods are safe for them to eat. This reflects that it is not currently a legal requirement for businesses to provide information on the allergen content of foods sold non-pre-packed.

Last year we consulted interested parties about draft voluntary best practice guidance in this area. The guidance has been developed by the Food Standards Agency with the help of food retailers, caterers, consumer groups and enforcement bodies, and was amended to take account of the comments received.

The guidance package was published on the 16th January 2008 and provides best practice advice to help retailers and caterers on how to ensure they are providing accurate information on the allergen content of the foods they sell.

The guidance is in three forms so that you can have the information in the most appropriate format.

- The main guidance document provides full information on providing accurate information on the allergen content of the foods you sell. This includes practical advice on how to tackle allergy issues and worked scenarios that put the information in context – this is aimed particularly at medium and larger businesses and at enforcement bodies.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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- The leaflet highlights the key principles that businesses need to think about – this is aimed at small and micro businesses.
- The poster is a useful training aid to introduce the main allergens of concern - this may be of particular use in training staff who do not have English as their first language.

Copies of the guidance are available from the Food Standards Agency website at <http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/guidancenotes/labelregsguidance/>. It can also be obtained from Food Standards Agency Publications on telephone: 0845 606 0667, or e-mail: foodstandards@ecgroup.uk.com. Copies of promotional leaflets and posters for businesses can also be obtained from this address.

Allergen labelling legislation regarding pre-packed foods

I would also like to take this opportunity to inform you that the guidance notes associated with the allergen labelling legislation in pre-packed foods have been updated. The update of the guidance reflects new legislation that came into force on the 23 December 2007 requiring lupin and molluscs to be labelled in pre-packed foods when used as deliberate ingredients. The new guidance notes can be found on the Agency's website at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/guidancenotes/labelregsguidance/allergenlabelguide2007>.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'HL', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Heather Lewis
Head of Incidents Branch
Food Standards Agency Wales