

To: Directors of Public Protection Wales

Ref: ENF/W/08/032

10 June 2008

Dear Director,

Labelling of minced meat, meat preparations and meat products intended to be eaten cooked with cooking instructions

The Agency has been made aware of consumer concerns regarding minced meat offered for sale (both in packs and loose) to the final consumer that may not be labelled with clear cooking instructions. I am writing to ask local authority officers to check, as part of their normal enforcement duties in food businesses, that manufacturers of minced meat, meat preparations and meat products intended to be eaten cooked are correctly applying the required labelling to their product.

Advice from the Agency is that food business operators responsible for the production and sale of minced meat, meat preparations and meat products intended to be cooked before consumption, must comply with the specific requirements to label products placed on the market with cooking information. This will, of course, ensure that any pathogenic bacteria present are destroyed.

Article 6 of Regulation (EC) 2073/2005, as amended, on microbiological criteria for foodstuffs, requires minced meat, meat preparations and meat products (of all species set down in Annex I of that Regulation) intended to be eaten cooked to be clearly labelled by the manufacturer to inform the consumer of the need for thorough cooking prior to consumption. The Agency has taken advice from the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food who recommends that manufacturers give clear cooking instructions including oven temperatures and times. Symbols should only be used in conjunction with appropriate wording. There is more information in the Guide to Food Hygiene and Other Regulations for the UK Meat Industry; a link to this guidance is at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/mig16aug07.pdf> (page 524 refers)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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The Agency recommends that best practice in relation to the sale of loose mince would be to have cooking instructions on a label attached to the packaging. Alternatively, retailers selling loose products, including minced meat, meat preparations and/or meat products, where no automatic labelling is available may prefer to have a label or sign displayed prominently at the point of sale to indicate this information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Wilkins', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Rob Wilkins

Head of General Enforcement Branch