

To: Directors of Public Protection
Cc: CIEH Wales

5th August 2008

Reference: ENF/W/08/049

Dear Director,

1. REPORTING SAMPLING ON FOOD ALLERGENS

2. ALLERGEN MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE RESEARCH

The Agency is aware that work is currently being done on sampling prepacked and non-prepacked foods to investigate both the accuracy of labelling with regard to allergenic ingredients and also the possibility of any allergen contamination. However, there appears to be a wide variation in the way the findings are reported and the timing of the notification to the Food Standards Agency about the findings, especially when the results are showing that there is a mislabelling or a contamination issue.

It is important that the Agency is notified promptly of adverse findings and, if at all possible, that the results are quantified and not recorded as >x ppm. The need for accurate information is to enable a robust risk assessment. In a recent example several reports of milk contamination of plain chocolate were received where the levels reported were given as greater than x ppm. As low levels of milk can be life threatening for a sensitive individual it is important that there is a clear idea of the level of the contamination involved.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Asiantaeth Safonau Bwyd, 11ed Lawr, Ty Southgate, Wood Street Caerdydd CF10 1EW
Food Standards Agency, 11th Floor, Southgate House, Wood Street Cardiff CF10 1EW
Ffôn / Tel: +44 (0)29 2067 8957 Ffacs / Fax: +44 (0)29 2067 8918

E-bost: Rob.Wilkins@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

E-mail: Rob.Wilkins@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk



If you receive adverse results an incident form report must be completed. For more information on reporting food incidents please see

<http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/regulation/foodfeedform>

I also wish to make you aware that the Agency has commissioned research into its Guidance on Allergen Management and Consumer Information, published in 2006 and relating to controlling food allergens in the factory setting, with particular reference to avoiding cross-contamination and using appropriate advisory labelling (e.g. "may contain" labelling) The company "Jigsaw" has been engaged to carry out the research which will include contacting a number of manufacturers, retailers and enforcement officers throughout the United Kingdom.

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