

**East Midlands FSA / LACORS Update
Event for LA food officers
19 January 2010**

Tackling Food Fraud in Partnership

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food.gov.uk



Food Fraud - What's the problem?

- Affects everyone - both as enforcers and consumers
- Opportunities for fraud will be exploited
- Increasing food prices provides greater opportunity/incentive/rewards
- Not just about money - it's a health/choice issue



Tackling Food Fraud – What's the problem?

- Fraud is often very sophisticated
- Fraudsters are difficult to detect
- Often one step ahead
- National/International problem - cross boundary issues.
- Local authorities have limited resources



Tackling Food Fraud – A problem shared...

- The Agency provides resources to assist local authorities in their investigations:
 - Available expertise: Food Fraud Advisory Unit / FSA
 - Financial support – Fighting Fund
 - Illegal Meat Guidance
 - Food Fraud Database – powerful intelligence manager tool



Available Expertise

Food Fraud Advisory Unit:

- set up in 2009
- comprises 15 local authority enforcement officers:
 - specially trained in advanced investigation skills
 - experienced in investigating diverse variety of food fraud
- available upon request to the Agency to support (not lead) UK local authorities in their investigations



Available Expertise

Agency staff:

- Officers in the Food Safety: Implementation and Delivery Division and the Legal Investigations Team
- More generally, wealth of experience across the Agency in food policy areas

Training

- Agency supports a wide range of relevant food law enforcement training through its training programme, including specific training on investigative techniques and also on evidence gathering interview skills.

Wider contacts

- Agency has links across Europe, including the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and globally.



Financial Support

Agency Fighting Fund:

- Set up in 2003 to assist local authorities with resource intensive investigations
- £300,000 has typically been allocated for the fund, but more has been made available when successful applications have **collectively** exceeded this amount
- There is no limit on the amount that local authorities can apply for.



Financial Support

Successful Fighting Fund applications have sought financial support for:

- Surveillance Equipment
- Provision of cover for officers engaged in investigations
- Counsel or other legal fees
- Storage and/or destruction of food
- Specialist assistance (e.g. Public analyst, IT Forensics)
- Other ancillary costs associated with an investigation.



Illegal Meat Guidance

- Produced to assist local authority food enforcement officers in tackling meat fraud.
- Includes advice on imported meat, including Intra-Community trade, Third country imports, personal imports and bush meat.
- Available at:

www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/illegalmeatguideen.pdf



Food Fraud Database

Agency has established a national Food Fraud Database:

- Specialist 'Memex' Intelligence System enabling collation and analysis of intelligence on food fraud.
- Memex System used by leading UK police forces, the Welsh Food Fraud Co-ordinating Unit and a number of other high profile global organisations.
- Central database of intelligence on known or suspected food fraud notified to us by port health and other local authorities, members of the public, industry, Other Government Departments, and international contacts.
- All reports entered onto Database with the source, accuracy and dissemination of the intelligence evaluated - using the '**5x5x5**' principle.



Intelligence Evaluation Table

SOURCE x INTELLIGENCE x HANDLING = 5 x 5 x 5

SOURCE EVALUATION (S)	A Always reliable	B Mostly reliable	C Sometimes reliable	D Unreliable	E Untested source
INTELLIGENCE EVALUATION (I)	1 Known to be true without reservation	2 Known personally to source but not to officer	3 Not personally known to source but corroborated	4 Not known personally to source and not corroborated	5 Suspected to be false or malicious
HANDLING CODE (H)	1 May disseminate to law enforcement and prosecuting agency within EEA and EU compatible	2 May disseminate to UK non- prosecuting party (authorisation and records needed)	3 May disseminate to non EEA law enforcement agencies (special conditions apply)	4 May disseminate within the originating agency only	5 No further dissemination: refer to the originator

What information do we collect?

“Intelligence is information valued for its currency or relevance rather than its accuracy or detail”.

Intelligence collected can include:

- Any suspicious activity:
 - e.g. unusual / unauthorised activity at food premises/farms etc. (e.g. operating at night);
 - enforcement officers being barred from certain rooms during inspections;
 - Information which may not be easily verified – from unknown third parties
 - Incomplete traceability
 - locally held ‘*knowledge*’ of known suspicious activity or persons
 - historical data: e.g. successful prosecutions or previous reports of food fraud
- ❖ ***No information is too insignificant to be reported – it could be the missing link in a wider problem!***



How to submit information to the Food Fraud Branch

- Local / Port Health authorities should submit a completed (and evaluated) Intelligence / Information Report Form to Food Fraud Branch:
foodfraud@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk;
- Industry, consumers, whistleblowers etc. can e-mail Food Fraud Branch (same e-mail as above);
- Food Fraud Hotline (unmanned answer phone) where information (particularly anonymous) can be recorded: 0207 276 8527.



6 Point Checklist to consider when submitting intelligence:

- Who:** Individual name(s), descriptions and trader name(s)
- What:** Type of Activity
- Where:** Location, postcode, description of area: rural etc.
- When:** Date and time (approx) of incident
- Why:** What are the benefits? – e.g. financial gain etc.
- How:** What method did they use? Mode of transport, method of entry, words spoken etc.



Ref No

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: Possible link between a farm under surveillance by [redacted] County Council Animal Welfare Officers (potential illegal slaughter) and a meat & other foods cash & carry.	
NAME OF OFFICER SUBMITTING: [redacted]	DEPARTMENT: Environmental Health [redacted] Borough Council
DATE AND TIME RECEIVED: [redacted]	P.I.I.* SOUGHT: YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
IF P.I.I.* SOUGHT PROVENANCE FORM TO BE SUBMITTED WITH COPY OF INTELLIGENCE REPORT TO ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL OFFICER.	
IF NO PII SOUGHT NAME AND ADDRESS OF WITNESS REQUIRED :-	
TEXT	Evaluation Code
	S I H
LCC currently carrying out surveillance on [redacted] following anon complaint re fraud etc. Surveillance has indicated possible link with [redacted] Cash & Carry, [redacted] Road, [redacted]. [redacted] Borough Council currently carrying out surveillance at the Cash & Carry to identify details of vehicles/suppliers delivering to the premises.	E 4 1
SIGNED: [redacted] Public Health manager, [redacted] Borough Council.	

Information / Intelligence Report Form

HOT: <input type="checkbox"/>	PREDICTIVE: <input type="checkbox"/>	HISTORIC: <input type="checkbox"/>	
INTELLIGENCE REPORT			
B Mostly reliable	C Sometimes reliable	D Unreliable	E Untested source
2 Known personally to source but not known personally to reporting officer	3 Not personally known to source but corroborated by information already recorded	4 Not known personally to source cannot be corroborated (cannot be judged)	5 Suspected to be false or malicious
2 Permits dissemination to UK non prosecuting parties ICORS W Task groups	3 Permits dissemination to non EEA Law Enforcement Agencies where no adequate safeguards for the rights of the individual exists only on grounds of substantial public interest and risk assessment carried out	4 Permits dissemination but only within the originating organization	5 No further dissemination: refer to the originator special handling requirements imposed by officer and it is expected that P.I.I. is to be made to protect intelligence.
DISSEMINATION:			
Required prior to dissemination:		Copies forwarded to:	
No <input type="checkbox"/>		Date: <input type="text"/>	



Food Fraud Database

How the database can help:

- Database has a number of very useful functions, but one of the key strengths is the system's search capability - as reports are input, the system automatically checks against existing records to identify possible links
- The database may already have the information that could 'fill the gaps' of a local authority investigation or...
- A local authority may provide the final piece of the puzzle in another authority's investigation
- Agency can help coordinate investigations into cross-boundary fraud involving multiple enforcement authorities



Our work continues...

- Raising awareness of the importance of intelligence sharing – both within the UK and across Europe.
- Seeking to utilise existing systems to maximise exchange of intelligence between Member States and the European Commission (DG SANCO).



Our work continues...

- Developing partnerships to share best practices, raise awareness and work together in tackling food fraud:
- Welsh Food Fraud Co-ordination Unit (WFFCU); Regional Intelligence Officers (through the Office of Fair Trading); Member States, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).
- More widely, we have established contact with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and,
- Interest from the US Food and Drug Administration.



For further Information:

food.gov.uk/foodfraud

- What food fraud is and how to identify it;
- How to report known or suspected food fraud activity to the FSA (Intelligence report forms / dedicated food fraud e-mail: foodfraud@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk; Consumer Hotline: 0207 276 8527);
- Links to Agency resources for Local Authorities: Food Fraud Database, the Food Fraud Advisory Unit, Fighting Fund and Training; Illegal Meat Guidance
- Information on historical food scams
- Details of ongoing FSA work to tackle Food Fraud:
 - Implementation of action plan to tackle food fraud
 - Authenticity research surveys
 - European Food Fraud Conference

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