

## Councillors' Briefing Note No. 137

**Service :** Public Health and Public Protection, Safer Communities

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### **FSA Instructions to Local Authorities on horsemeat in food investigations**

From: Maggie Rae, Corporate Director and Councillor Keith Humphries, Cabinet Member

We thought it may be helpful to update on the current position for local authorities in the ongoing horsemeat investigations.

We have today received a communication from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) - Enforcement and Local Authority Delivery unit which sets out the current position on this matter and we can confirm that there are no premises in Wiltshire involved in the FSA investigations to date.

### **Local authority sampling – food authenticity – processed meat products – current national survey**

Wiltshire is not one of the 28 local authorities currently involved in a UK-wide survey of food authenticity in processed meat products and we are not currently carrying out any sampling of this nature. The results of the survey will be published in April 2013.

Bids will, however, be invited for the National Co-ordinated Sampling Grants programme for 2013-14 and this will certainly be considered by the Wessex Food Liaison Group. Hampshire Scientific Services, the public analyst that we use, is not able to carry out the required DNA analysis. The FSA has identified laboratories who can assist with this analysis.

### **Food Industry - food authenticity – processed meat products**

The FSA has asked food manufacturers and retailers which have already carried out their own testing of products and have analysis results, to provide this information to the agency by 15 February. The agency has also suggested that the food industry should be carrying out their own testing to check for the presence of horsemeat in comminuted (chopped) beef products, and to provide this information to them as a matter of urgency, as results become available.

It is expected that for major retailers and manufacturers where Primary Authority (PA) partnerships exist that the PA will liaise with the relevant businesses to confirm that suitable testing is being carried out to provide assurance for relevant products. This will not be relevant for any of our current PA partnerships.

However, we are liaising with any food manufacturers operating in Wiltshire who process comminuted beef products to outline the FSA's requirements.

### **Cold Stores and Meat Processing Premises**

The national investigation is keen to identify cold stores and meat processing premises which handle imported meat from the EU and Third Country trade, particularly those with a history of non-compliance, or those which handle products for several clients/brokers. We do not have any such cold stores in Wiltshire.

Our Public Protection Service Food Safety and Trading Standards officers are actively reviewing all our meat processing food businesses in the county where we have an enforcement responsibility, and they will carry out appropriate checks as necessary to verify meat traceability/authenticity. The FSA are offering to support the costs of any formal samples taken to establish meat authenticity if this is found to be warranted.

We will keep you updated as the FSA investigations progress.

**Maggie Rae, Corporate Director and Cllr Keith Humphries, lead member Public Health and Protection Services.**