

Councillors Briefing Note No. 130

Service : Public Health and Public Protection, Safer Communities

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Horse and Pig DNA in Meat Products

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

There is much media coverage this morning regarding this issue. As yet Wiltshire Council's Public Protection Service has not received any instruction from the Food Standards Agency, London directing us to take action on this issue. The FSA (Ireland) have acted swiftly to identify affected product, retailers and implicated meat processing plants. **They stress there is no health risk associated with these findings.**

The key information to date is as follows:

- The Republic of Ireland's food safety authority (FSAI) has reported survey findings of horse DNA in burgers and meat products which were on sale in Ireland.
- The survey comprised: 27 beef burger products with best-before dates from last June to March 2014, with 10 of the 27 products - 37% - testing positive for horse DNA and 85% testing positive for pig DNA.
- 31 beef meal products such as cottage pie, beef curry pie and lasagne were tested, with 21 found to be positive for pig DNA. All were negative for horsemeat.
- 19 salami products were tested but showed no signs of horse DNA. The FSAI analysis also found traces of horse DNA in batches of raw ingredients, including some imported from the Netherlands and Spain.
- DNA tests found horse in the following products: Tesco Everyday Value Beef Burgers, 29.1%; Tesco Beef Quarter Pounders, 0.1%; Oakhurst Beef Burgers in Aldi, 0.3%; Moordale Quarter Pounders in Lidl, 0.1%; Flamehouse Chargrilled Quarter Pounders in Dunnes Stores, 0.1%; two varieties of Iceland Quarter Pounders, 0.1%.
- The burgers had been on sale in Tesco and Iceland in the UK and Ireland. In the Republic of Ireland they were on sale in Dunnes Stores, Lidl and Aldi. **Both Tesco and Iceland here in the UK immediately withdrew from sale all products from the implicated supplier.**

- The FSAI said the meat came from two processing plants in Ireland, Liffey Meats and Silvercrest Foods, and the Dalepak Hambleton plant in Yorkshire. Silvercrest Foods and Dalepak claim never to have bought or traded in horse product and have launched an investigation into two continental European third party suppliers.
- Irish government vets are carrying out investigations at the implicated meat processing plants.
- The chief executive of the FSAI, Professor Alan Reilly, said “while the findings posed no risk to public health, they did raise some concerns. There may be a plausible explanation for the presence of pig DNA in these products due to the fact that meat from different animals is processed in the same meat plants There is no clear explanation at this time for the presence of horse DNA in products emanating from meat plants that do not use horsemeat in their production process. For some religious groups or people who abstain from eating pig meat, the presence of traces of pig DNA is unacceptable.”
- A further update will be circulated should the FSA London issue an instruction for local authorities here to act.

Further information:

<http://www.fsai.ie/content.aspx?id=11879&terms=horse+meat> or contact Jenny Thomson or Jo McClay , Public Protection Managers on 01225 716684 or 01722 434291