



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SECTION

FOOD
SAMPLING
POLICY

**Food Standards Agency
Framework Agreement
The Standard 12.5
(Reviewed April 2002)
(Reviewed May 2003)
(Reviewed January 2006)
(Reviewed August 2008)**

THE MORAY COUNCIL

FOOD SAMPLING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to state this Authority's policy in respect of food sampling.
- 1.2 The policy has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency (Scotland) (FSA (S)) as part of the 'Framework Agreement On Local Authority Food Law Enforcement'.
- 1.3 This policy has been developed in accordance with the Food Safety Act 1990, The Food Hygiene (Scotland) Regulations 2006, The Official Feed and Food Control (Scotland) Regulations 2005, the Food Safety (Sampling and Qualifications) Regulations 1990 and the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland) Chapter 6, "Sampling".
- 1.4 Consultation has taken place with the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, Medical Microbiology Laboratory, Foresterhill, Aberdeen, the Laboratory of the Public Analyst, Aberdeen City Council, the Laboratory of the Public Analyst, Dundee City Council and the Laboratory of the Public Analyst Edinburgh City Council.
- 1.5 Public Analysts of Aberdeen City Council and Dundee City Council have been appointed by this Authority under Section 27 of the Food Safety Act 1990. A Service level Agreement has been jointly signed by The Public Analyst and the Environmental Health Manager.
- 1.6 The policy relates to all food samples taken by the Authority including those not covered by the Food Safety Act 1990 Code of Practice Scotland.
- 1.7 This Authority will ensure that the policy is implemented.
- 1.8 The policy will be published and made available to businesses and consumers

2. POLICY

- 2.1 This Authority recognises that:-
 - ❖ Microbiological examination of foods is an essential part of food safety enforcement which enables authorised officers to gain an insight into the microbiological safety of food and which may reveal shortcomings in its safe handling, preparation and/or storage.
 - ❖ The chemical analysis of food is an essential part of food standards enforcement, which enables authorised officers to assess the chemical

quality and safety of food and to determine compliance with food standards, composition, labelling regulations and claims.

- ❖ The chemical analysis and/or microbiological examination of complaint samples can assist in the investigation of consumer complaints.
- ❖ Approximately 50% of food on retail sale is imported and effective control over food imports is essential to maintain public health safeguards.

2.2 The general aims and objectives of sampling are to: -

- ❖ Protect the consumer through the enforcement of food legislation and encouragement of fair trading.
- ❖ Identify any contraventions in food hygiene or food standards legislation.
- ❖ Help determine whether advice or enforcement action would be appropriate where it is suspected that poor practices and procedures exist.
- ❖ Give advice and guidance, if appropriate, on food hygiene and food standards matters.
- ❖ Identify foods that could pose a hazard to the consumer because they may contain significant levels of bacteria and/or toxic chemicals and/or other harmful substances
- ❖ Help evaluate temperature control, food handling and processing practices at food premises in relation to hazard analysis (and where relevant, HACCP) requirements.
- ❖ Assess the microbiological quality of food manufactured, distributed or retailed in this Authority's area.
- ❖ Assess the legal requirements covering the quality, composition, labelling, presentation and advertising of food and of materials or articles in contact with food to prevent fraud, misleading descriptions and claims.

2.3 A sampling programme for microbiological and chemical parameters will be agreed between the appointed Public Analyst, Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils on an annual basis.

2.4 The number of samples taken will be based on the following:

- ❖ Samples for analysis (chemical samples) – 3 per 1000 of the population.
- ❖ Samples for examination (bacteriological samples) – 1.5 per 1000 of the population.

2.5 The programme will identify the Authority's intended food sampling priorities and will take into account the number, type and risk ratings of the food businesses in its area; the Authority's responsibilities in terms of the 'Home Authority Principle' and the need to ensure that the provisions of food law are adequately enforced.

2.6 The programme will consist of the following:

- ❖ Routine final product monitoring.
- ❖ The monitoring of processes and as an integral part of food hygiene/food standards inspections, particularly when an authorised officer has concerns about safety or compositional quality of food because of the food handling/cooking/preparation practices and procedures observed during the inspection of a food business.
- ❖ Surveys/projects/special investigations initiated by local intelligence or by the North of Scotland Food Liaison Group, Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee (SFELC), Local Authorities' Co-ordinating Body on Regulatory Services (LACORS) or the Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS).
- ❖ Samples taken as part of the controls exercised under the Home Authority Principle.
- ❖ Samples of imported food as part of the Food Standards Agency (Scotland) funded initiative for additional sampling and surveillance of imported food.

2.7 Priority will be given to the sampling of foodstuffs originating (i.e. manufactured/processed) within The Moray Council area.

2.8 Due consideration will be given to: -

- ❖ The SFCC 'Guidance on the use of Microbiological Surveillance'.
- ❖ The SFCC 'Guidance on the Conduct Reporting and Reviews of Surveys'.

to ensure that the numbers of samples for surveys are statistically significant and the surveys provide best value.

2.9 Samples may also be taken:

- ❖ As part of a food poisoning investigation.
- ❖ As part of a complaint investigation.
- ❖ In any other circumstances deemed appropriate by an authorised officer.

2.10 All food samples will be taken in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice (Scotland) Chapter 6 "Sampling" and associated Guidance. Regard will also be had to good practice or advice issued by the FSA(S) /LACORS/SFELC/PHLS, the Guidance and Regulations Advice on Import Legislation (GRAIL) or other official guidance.

3. REVIEW

- 3.1 The food sampling policy and food sampling programme will be reviewed on an annual basis to take into account any changes made by legislation, revised guidance from the FSA (S) or changed circumstances.

***THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT BE ALTERED WITHOUT THE APPROVAL
OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH MANAGER***