

Foodmatters 2008—2009



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Imported foods survey

We participated in this national survey again taking a total of 52 samples. We looked for levels of aflatoxin in milk products, fumonisins in maize products, levels of mycotoxins and fumonisins in animal feed products
lead/cadmium levels in food supplements/herbal products and labelling and claims/ added water on fish and crustaceans.

The presence of all the contaminants such as aflatoxins and lead are strictly controlled and can cause serious health issues if consumed at certain levels. The survey revealed no major issues but a number of less serious labelling problems were dealt with.

Halt the salt events

Four events were held in September 2008 around the County to increase consumer awareness of the campaign. The events, held at Amersham, Beaconsfield, Aylesbury and High Wycombe gave consumers the chance to taste Chinese food with the usual amount of salt and half the amount of salt added. A competition also enabled us to gather information from the people, around 350, at the event which will be useful data for the future direction of the project.

Bulge in a bottle

The survey checked the level of alcohol as declared, determine the sugar content and calculate the calorific value per drink. The drinks were analysed for alcohol and sugars. The calorific value was calculated from these results.

The survey showed that these drinks had a high calorie content which many drinkers may not be aware of.

For women, 1 pint of average cider or 3 average alcopops would provide more than the recommended maximum units of alcohol per day. 3 pints of lager contains 8.3 units which meets the definition of binge drinking for both men and women. Cider contains even more alcohol with 3 pints containing 10 units of alcohol.

We produced a press release and managed to get some local publicity.



Pester power products

This project linked directly into our work contributing to the health agenda. It assessed the levels of fat, saturated fat, trans fat and salt in foods of greater than 5% fat content aimed at children e.g. powdered instant deserts, powdered instant drinks, fancy cakes, biscuits, dry sponge mixes, ready to eat deserts, fish fingers, chicken nuggets, pizza, chips, waffles and sausages.

It was found that party food had the highest level of saturated fat per portion and that the nutrition declarations were inaccurate and therefore unreliable information for parents.



Fish

The survey looked at fish, to gauge how much the eating of fish impacts on our daily intakes of fat, salt, saturated fat, sugar and energy together with assessing the level of colour present for legislative purposes.

The identification of fish species on food products is important to enable consumers to know that they are buying fish from renewable sources as well as having information to make a choice about species. The project targeted products such as fillets of uncooked fish to establish whether fish species sold is of the variety described and assess the quality of the fish. It also measured the amount of salt in fish products and evaluated the accuracy of any quantitative ingredient declarations.

Indian takeaway

The survey looked at these foods and gauged how much they do impact on daily intakes of fat, salt, saturated fat, sugar and energy together with assessing the level of colour present for legislative purposes.



Lunchbox foods

Schools project

This project continued to develop previous lunchbox food projects. Officers visited three schools for six sessions, usually with health promotion officers, using an established toolkit, modified by us as for our needs, to give children the chance to discuss the contents of their lunchboxes and how they could be made healthier. Tasting sessions also gave children the chance to try foods they may not have had before.



And another thing

Fruit shy

We used the fruit shy again this year to visit 26 village and school fetes, and larger events, such as Play in the Park, to deliver the 5 a day message as well as information about other relevant Trading Standards issues.

Visits

We completed all of our planned high risk visits as outlined in the food enforcement plan.

Confusing salt

This project examined the salt content of dehydrated foods, compared the salt level to FSA traffic light guidelines and commented on potentially confusing labels.

We are awaiting the final report

