

Combating Food Fraud Seminar

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Tackling Food Fraud

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FSA Measures to assist local authorities in tackling food fraud:

- Illegal Meat Task Force
- FSA 'Fighting Fund'
- Food Fraud Database
- Work of the Food Fraud Task Force



Why were these measures established?

- Large scale food frauds such as operations “Fox” and “Aberdeen”
- Recommendations of the WFTF



Illegal Meat Task Force

Why was a Task Force set up?

- Origins in the FSA 7 point action plan on unfit meat
- Recommended by the Waste Food Task Force Report.
- Large scale food frauds.



Illegal Meat Task Force (cont.)

- The Task Force was set up in 2003
- Currently comprises 28 enforcement officers specially trained by the FSA in advanced investigation skills and relevant legislation.
- Total of 8 days training provided by the FSA
- Available to LAs upon request.



Illegal Meat Task Force (cont.)

- Members are contracted to provide up to 2 weeks of their time a year (negotiable upwards).
- Not a rapid response team, but an advisory support resource for local authorities.
- Also act as the 'eyes and ears' of the Agency.



Illegal Meat Task Force (cont.)

- Refresher training took place in September and October 2006, with Task Force increasing from 24 to 28 members.
- Training covered the new PACE Act, Open Source Investigations and difficult aspects of the new EU Food Hygiene Regulations.



What is the scope of the IMTF?

- To receive information and to feed this back to the FSA
- To assist local authorities in the investigation of illegal meat activities
- To report on the progress of such investigations to the FSA



Fighting Fund

Why was it set up?

- Investigations can be resource intensive. Not all local authorities have the resources to undertake large scale investigations.
- Fighting Fund was set up in 2003 to provide financial assistance to local authorities with their investigations.
- £270,000 currently allocated for the Fund, but more has been made available when successful applications have exceeded this amount.



Fighting Fund (Cont.)

- There is no limit on the amount that local authorities can apply for.
- Upon receiving an application, a panel of appropriate Agency staff is established to assess all applications received against the Fighting Fund.



Applications previously received have sought financial assistance to pay for:

- Surveillance
- 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)
- Other ancillary costs associated with an investigation.



What type of investigations have the applications been for?

- Storage and destruction of imported skin-on cows feet
- Storage and destruction of sheep carcasses, heads and offal
- Mislabeled meat originating from Australia
- Food products contaminated with illegal food dye
- E-coli outbreak in Wales
- Operation of an illegal slaughterhouse
- Salmonella outbreak at food factory



Food Fraud Database

- First proposed in the Waste Food Task Force Report, recommendation 15.
- Proposal incorporated into the FSA's Strategic Plan 2005-2010.



Food Fraud Database

Purpose of the Database:

- Collation and storage of intelligence on suspect or confirmed food fraud activity
- Intelligence resource available to local authorities undertaking investigations.
- To assess and monitor reported food fraud.



Food Fraud Database

Progress to date:

- Research identified that a Memex based intelligence system was most suitable.
- Memex is a powerful intelligence system used by numerous police forces world-wide.
- Memex also used by the Welsh Food Fraud Co-ordination Unit.

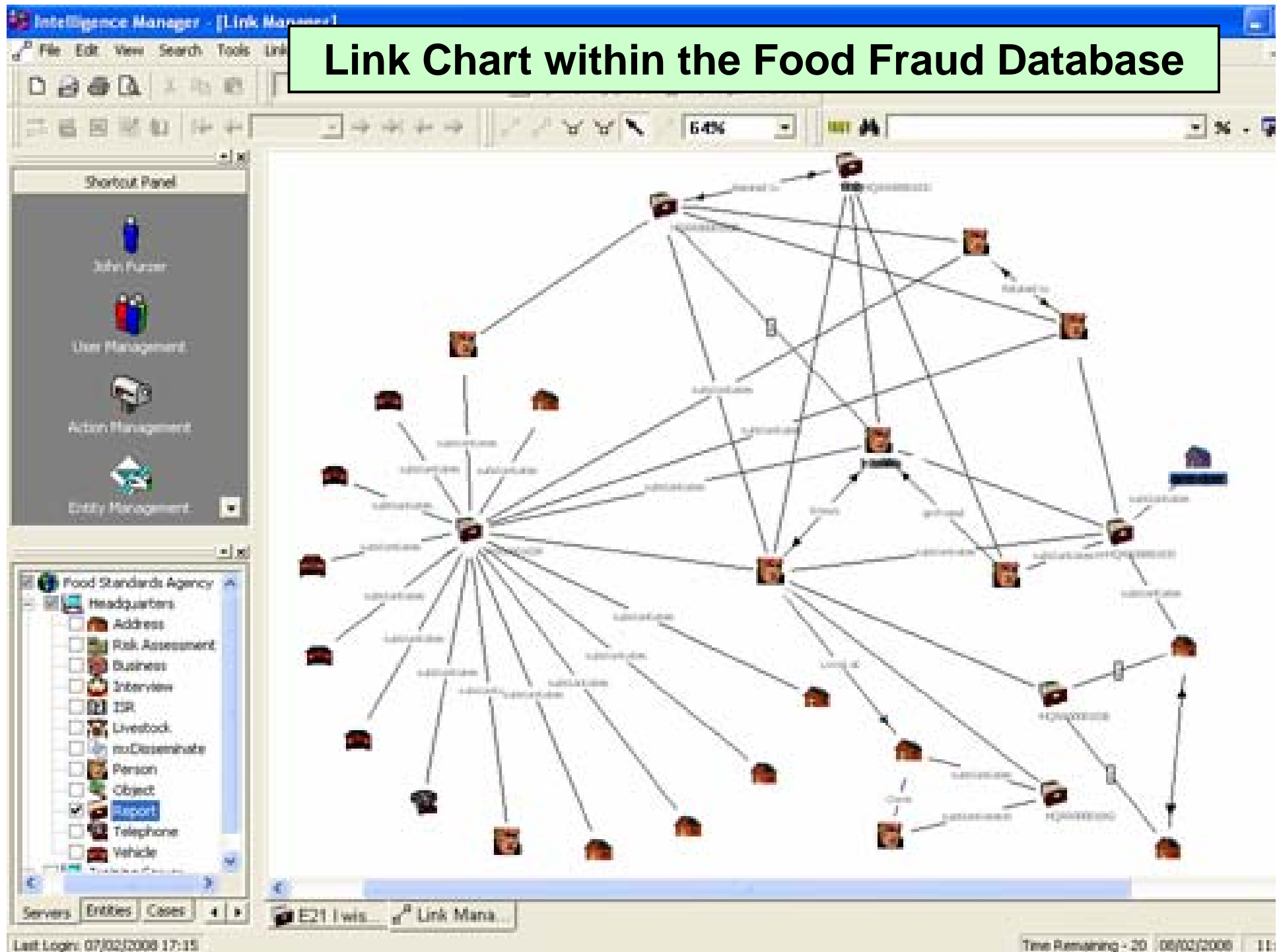


Progress to date (Cont.)

- Memex system purchased and installed in 2005 in compliance with Strategic objective.
- 3 July 2006 Head of ED wrote to all local authorities informing of the database and requesting intelligence via intelligence report form (5X5X5).
- Establishment of dedicated mailbox
- Memex Training undertaken in 2006 and 2007.



Link Chart within the Food Fraud Database



Aims:

- Further Training required following reorganisation of Enforcement Division
- Share intelligence with other enforcement bodies (e.g. WFFCU).
- Proactive work to encourage LAs to forward intelligence for populating database.
- Encourage LAs to use the database resource.



Further information on the Food Fraud Database:

- <http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/lar/eseource/foodfrauddatabase>
- Dedicated mailbox
- Intelligence report Forms
- Short Guide to intelligence



Food Fraud Task Force

- Background
- Membership
- Information and Evidence Gathering
- Key Findings
- Recommendations
- Next Steps



Background

- The FFTF was set up in February 2006
- Initial focus was on meat fraud, but extended to the whole food chain
- Terms of reference included -



Membership of FFTF

- Philip Barlow (Chair)
- Jeffrey Moon - FSAI
- Jenny Morris - CIEH
- David Pickering / Philip Thomas - TSI
- Beryl Morgan - LACORS
- Kevin Swoffer / Barbara Gallani - BRC
- Peter Bradnock / Richard Griffiths - BPC
- Kerina Cheesman - FDF
- Mike Seton - Corp of London
- Rob Philips - Welsh Food Fraud Co-ordination Unit
- Julie Lennard - Which?
- Jill Nute - RCVS
- Dave Slater - Criminal Investigation Specialist
- Victor Hazelton / Paul Grooby - Dunbia Meats
- Graham Walker - REHIS



Information and Evidence Gathering

- Meetings
- Visits
- Presentations
- Papers



Key Findings

- Food fraud not a widespread public health concern in the UK
- Importance of proactive measures to limit and deter fraud
- Industry and consumers have a role in reporting suspicions
- Need better use of intelligence to target enforcement activity



FFTF Recommendations

- 16 recommendations in FFTF Report - for the Agency and Local Authorities
- 16 suggestions for further discussion and debate



Details of Recommendations

- Raise profile of fraud to enforcement officers
- Provide training for enforcement officers
- Food Fraud Co-ordination Unit?
- Liaison with HMRC and International Agencies
- Food Prosecutions Register
- Food Premises Registration – brokers?
- Inspection targets to take into consideration work on food fraud investigations
- Workshop on Food Fraud with FLEP



Details of Recommendations

- Food Fraud Intelligence Unit?
- Rapid Response Food Fraud Investigation Team?
- Food Fraud Intelligence Sharing
- National Free-Phone Fraud Line
- Extend range of food fraud sanctions (Macrory)
- Lead Food Fraud Officer in each LA and contact points for all enforcement agencies
- Unannounced inspections
- Maintain current staining requirements for animal by-products



Further Suggestions

- Use of social marketing
- Recognised mark for Halal food
- Food fraud on LA liaison group agendas
- Whistle blowing
- Promotion of intelligence sharing
- Security of health marks and ID marks
- Education of Magistrates on food fraud issues



Next Steps

- FSA / FLEP European Conference on Food Fraud – January 2008 Birmingham
- Report to FSA Board in March 2008 responding to the FFTF Report and the recommendations
- FSA Action Plan



Thank you!

