

# FSAeNEWS



LATEST NEWS

NUTRITION

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## We have the technology ...you have the opinions

**All available seats at the Agency's FSA10 conference have been snapped up. But with a laptop or mobile you can still join in from the comfort of your own home or office – and even from the bus.**

In a few days time the Agency will be holding 'FSA10: Ensuring safe food and healthy eating for all' – a conference that will be crucial in helping the Agency formulate and implement its strategy for the next five years.

Interest in attending the event, being held on 24 February in the Queen Elizabeth II Centre, in London,

has been so great that all places have been filled. But never fear! We have the technology to let you take part.



'We're broadcasting by satellite link to the devolved nations, by webcast to our regional offices and we'll be online for everyone else who wants to follow the discussion,' explains Adam Treslove, Senior External Affairs Manager for the Food Standards Agency.

The live broadcast, on the Agency's food.gov.uk website, will feature a unique interactive session that will allow consumers and stakeholders from around the UK to participate and help shape the Agency's work.

Key stakeholders and politicians will be taking part in the conference, which will be introduced by BBC Newsnight's Gavin Esler and will feature a keynote address by Agency Chair Jeff Rooker.

Agency Chief Executive Tim Smith will introduce an interactive session on Safe food and healthy eating for all, which will look at the best ways to deliver the Agency's Strategy for 2010–2015.

This session will consider:

- ◆ how the Agency can work more effectively with stakeholders to improve regulatory compliance to ensure safe food
- ◆ what are the most effective ways for the Agency and stakeholders to ensure positive dietary change

Health Ministers from all four UK countries will discuss the public health challenges associated with food in their different countries.

Robert Madelin, Director General of the European Commission's health directorate, will provide a global perspective, while Paul Bettison, *Continued on page 2*

Take part in the Agency's FSA 10 event from the comfort of your own desk.

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Chair of the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Service, will provide a view from local authorities.

Professor Douglas Kell, Chief Executive of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, Dr Steven Walker of research laboratory Campden Bri, and Dr Philip Davies of Oxford Evidentia, will be on a panel for a debate led by Agency Chief Scientist Andrew Wadge on the science underpinning the Agency’s strategy.

The consumer focus will be discussed in a session with Sue Davies, Chief Policy Officer at Which? and Gwyn Burr, Customer Director at Sainsbury’s ■

### FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like to participate online, please click here [food.gov.uk/fsa10](http://food.gov.uk/fsa10) ■■■■■

# Delivering a round unvarnish’d tale

**The Agency has won a national Plain English Award for a leaflet it produced on the risks of listeria to older people.**

“If you’re over 60...’ was a winner, the judges said, ‘for its simple language, lack of baffling terminology and attractive design. It uses personal pronouns such as “we” and “you” well, and employs the “active” rather than “passive” voice. The important message is aimed specifically at an older audience and doesn’t patronise while still being clearly expressed.’

Lenny Henry took time off from appearing on stage as Othello to present the awards in London.

Jane Seymour, the Agency’s head of web and editorial, said: ‘It’s a fantastic achievement to win this award, and indicative of the effort that communications puts into translating highly-technical scientific information in to clear English that everyone can understand.’

Less-welcome prizes, including the Golden Bull Awards for gobbledegook, were awarded to a number of other organisations. In 1981 – long before the FSA gave prominence to food safety – winners in this category would have received a portion of tripe through the post.

Marie Clair, speaking for the Plain English Campaign, said that the campaign was currently looking at clarity in food labelling, especially the Co-op’s ‘ambient

sausage rolls’. ‘We are always interested when technical jargon crosses over to the public in such a way that no-one is clear what it means,’ she said ■



From left: Robert Martin, Joanna Higgins, Liz Niman (who wrote the leaflet), Stephen Humphreys and Catherine Clarke accept the award from Lenny Henry (centre back) on behalf of the Agency

# SmallSteps4Life could mean a giant leap for child health

**A new website using the Olympic Games as inspiration has been launched to help children take some small steps forward in achieving a healthy lifestyle.**

**D**ouble Olympic gold medallist James Cracknell recently helped the Agency launch SmallSteps4Life – an interactive website set up to motivate young people to take simple steps towards improving their health and well-being, inside and outside the classroom.

Using the Olympics to inspire young people to make long-term behaviour changes, SmallSteps4Life is leading the healthy and active lifestyles strand of Get Set, the London 2012 education programme. It also supports the Change4Life programme.

SmallSteps4Life encourages young people to set themselves challenges, relating to the themes of eating well, getting active and feeling good – these could include eating a healthy breakfast every day, walking to and from school, or just getting more sleep.

The website also gives primary and secondary schools the opportunity to post their own challenges, play games and take

part in quizzes. Teachers can share their schools' successes and nominate individuals or groups as SmallSteps4Life 'champions'.

A pilot project in Kent schools showed that positive behaviour changes encouraged by the project were sustained after it had formally ended.

Launching the project at the Olympic Park, within sight of the new stadium in Stratford, East London, James Cracknell said: 'I am proud to help launch this unique project that addresses well-being in a way that is fun and meaningful for young people. I look forward to seeing the kind of creative challenge ideas that young minds come up with when they are shared on the website.'

Gill Fine, Director of Consumer Choice and Dietary Health at the FSA, said that the children in the pilot project felt 'fitter, healthier, and more positive, but most importantly, they had fun!'

James Cracknell is a Sustainability Ambassador for the 2012 Olympics Games. Inclusion and healthy living are key themes, inspiring people across the country to take up sport and develop active, healthy and sustainable lifestyles.



Fast spin (above): children from St James the Great primary school demonstrating balance and concentration at the launch of SmallSteps4Life

Ball park figure (left): double Olympic gold medallist James Cracknell at the launch of SmallSteps4Life at the Olympic Park in Stratford, London



## FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the SmallSteps4Life website at: [smallsteps4life.direct.gov.uk/](http://smallsteps4life.direct.gov.uk/)



# Who'll survive when the chips are down?

**When teenagers consider the words 'survivor' and 'food', do their thoughts inevitably turn to takeaways, chips and pizza?**

**T**he FSA is challenging students to become the 'Ultimate Sixth Form Survivor'. The competition, launched by celebrity chef James Martin, challenges students in Northern Ireland to eat healthily and to create new and fun ways to cook.

Sixth formers have until 23 March to enter the competition, by logging on and uploading their favourite recipes.

'This is a fantastic way of getting teenagers who are leaving home to learn about what type of food they should be eating and how to cook and

develop their own recipes,' said James, who will also host a Cook-Off Final.

Every sixth former who submits a recipe that is chosen as one of the top 100 will receive a voucher and a Sixth Form Survivor Certificate. Five regional finalists from the top 100 will go on to represent their sixth form in a grand final. The Ultimate Survivor will receive £250 in vouchers, a bespoke award and £1,000 of equipment for their school.

Students at the North Coast Integrated College in Coleraine, Co Derry, helped

launch the competition by preparing recipes from the FSA in Northern Ireland's 'Survival Guide to Food'.

Linda Stewart and Lauren Millar (pictured), are both 17 and students at the college. Linda said: 'I especially liked the "eating for exams" section. It's particularly relevant as we're studying for our A levels ■

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For more on how to take part click on: [food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2010/jan/sixthformsurvivorcomp](http://food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2010/jan/sixthformsurvivorcomp)



Linda Stewart, left, said: 'I've learned to cut down on drinking coffee and I'm trying to drink more water instead.'

## FSSNet draws tighter

The FSA recently organised a training event for environmental health officers (EHOs) in Northern Ireland on FSSNet, a database system to manage food sampling. The system is designed to gather

data from local authorities across the UK to help identify national food safety and food standards issues and better target enforcement work.

All 26 councils in Northern Ireland are using the system,

and to support this the FSA held four one-day advanced FSSNet workshops for EHOs and administrative officers. Training included analysing local, regional and national data.

Mervyn Briggs, from the FSA in Northern Ireland, said: 'I was really pleased at the turnout for the training event, which everyone found very useful.' ■

# Who didn't eat all the pies?

Everyone agrees it's the Best Broth in Burnley and it might help the town's football club avoid relegation

In autumn of last year, Burnley council's environmental health team, working with partners through Burnley Food Forum and with Burnley FC, launched an FSA-funded competition to find the town's favourite homemade soup. Homemade soup can be a way of reducing saturated fats and salt – two themes of current Agency campaigns.

People contributed their favourite recipes and the final four were tested by Burnley FC footballers. After a public vote, a vegetarian soup devised by year two pupils from Brunshaw Primary School was declared the winner.

Amy Newton, the children's teacher, said: 'Our current topic is all about healthy eating and growing our own vegetables.'



We based our work around our entry to Burnley Broth. One of the things we wanted to do is make learning more interesting for our boys. By making the connection with Burnley FC we achieved this.'

On match day, Burnley FC supporters were able to buy the soup. Chris Gibson, catering manager at Turf Moor, said it sold so well 'it affected pie sales, which is probably good news to you'.

And Burnley beat relegation rivals West Ham 2-1 ■

In search of super soup: pupils from Brunshaw Primary School show off their cooking skills to Burnley FC players



# Workshops unite theory and practice

From Durham to Devon, local authority staff have been benefiting from update workshops

All over England, local authority staff have been benefiting from update workshops organised jointly by the Agency and Local Authority Coordinators of Regulatory Services to bring together theory and practice in healthy eating and food safety.

Local authorities are responsible for delivering these key Agency priorities, so the events have been providing an opportunity for staff to hear what the Agency is looking for and to share good practice.

The first updates took place towards the end of last year in Devon (for the South West England region), Durham (for the North East) and Wigan (North West). Each event has had representation from almost every local authority in the region.

To date, the events have had over 90% of participants

rating the day as either 'good' or 'excellent'. A delegate at one event commented that everyone involved worked 'with frankness and openness, leading to some real outcomes'.

The programme of events has been tailored to reflect the priorities of local authority partners. Speakers have come from the Agency and other partnership organisations, including regional Department of Health teams and the Meat Hygiene Service.

An important part of each event has been a case study presented by a speaker from a local authority.

All nine English regions are involved and by April, when the current programme has been completed, more than 600 officers will have been updated ■

# Shedding light on diet and vitamin D

**Towards the end of last year, the Agency held a one-day workshop entitled 'Sunlight, Diet and Vitamin D status', which was chaired by Professor David Fraser, from the University of Sydney, Australia.**

**T**he results of three projects from the Agency's N05 research programme that cover nutrition status and function, were presented to an international group of scientific experts. The research projects (N05062, 63 and 64) assessed the relative contribution that diet and exposure of skin to sunlight

make to the vitamin D status of the UK population.

The projects presented at this workshop were commissioned in response to knowledge gaps identified by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) [www.sacn.gov.uk/](http://www.sacn.gov.uk/) in its 2007 position statement 'Update on Vitamin D' and



will help to inform future risk assessments by the SACN, as well as Agency policy. The workshop also served to identify a number of future

research priorities. The proceedings of the workshop will be submitted to the British Journal of Nutrition for publication later this year ■

# Battle lines are drawn in the 'war' on food fraud

The fight against food fraud will be the subject of a two-day conference at the Cabinet War rooms. The Agency will be participating with Leatherhead Food Research, Campden BRI and LGC in the Government Chemist dissemination event entitled, 'Setting standards in Food Analysis'.

The conference, which will look at food safety, authenticity

and analysis, will be held on 28 and 29 April 2010 in the Churchill Museum and Cabinet War Rooms, central London.

The programme includes a session on scientific methods developed by the Agency to verify food authenticity, and FSA-funded projects that apply cutting-edge technology and novel approaches to monitor food labelling ■

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Details of the authenticity conference are at: [governmentchemist.org.uk/Events.aspx?m=92&amid=939](http://governmentchemist.org.uk/Events.aspx?m=92&amid=939)

The Food Standards Agency's food authenticity programme is at: [food.gov.uk/science/research/researchinfo/choiceandstandardsresearch/authenticityresearch/](http://food.gov.uk/science/research/researchinfo/choiceandstandardsresearch/authenticityresearch/)



## Reports published by the FSA

**N14005: A cluster of randomised controlled trials of a Smart Lunch Box, designed to improve the content of primary school children's packed lunches in the UK: Final report**

This study, involving 88 schools, indicated that the Smart Lunch Box increased significantly the provision of fruit, vegetables and dairy foods. [Click for live link](#)

**N14009: The Health Challenge Programme evaluation of a pilot intervention in Kent schools**

Students chose at least one challenge to maintain for four weeks, including healthy eating, getting active or feeling good. [Click for live link](#)

**Q01117: Determining the milk content of milk-based food products**

A method that could potentially be used as a rapid screen to detect unusual milk protein profiles, which could indicate contamination or adulteration of milk products. [Click for live link](#)



### food.gov.uk

is the Food Standards Agency's main website. It contains the latest Agency news, food alerts, consultations, science, research and regulatory information.

[food.gov.uk](http://food.gov.uk)



### Bite

is the Food Standards Agency's new quarterly magazine. It provides an in-depth look at challenging policy issues and includes stakeholder discussion and opinion.

[food.gov.uk/bite](http://food.gov.uk/bite)



### eatwell.gov.uk

is the Food Standards Agency's consumer advice and information website.

It provides consumers with up-to-date practical tips on, healthy eating, food safety and hygiene.

[eatwell.gov.uk](http://eatwell.gov.uk)



### the newsletter of the Food Standards Agency

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Editor: Frank Chalmers

Tel: 020 7276 8805

