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Lessons learnt from chemical contamination of food to improve food safety

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Previous problems

- Food Fraud
- Food adulteration
- Counterfeit products

...and solutions

- Analyse products
- Publish results
-and brand names



Advice gets overlooked



"If you please, Sir, Mother says, will you let her have a quarter of a pound of your best tea to kill the rats with, and a ounce of chocolate as would get rid of the black beetles?"
(Punch, 14 August 1855)

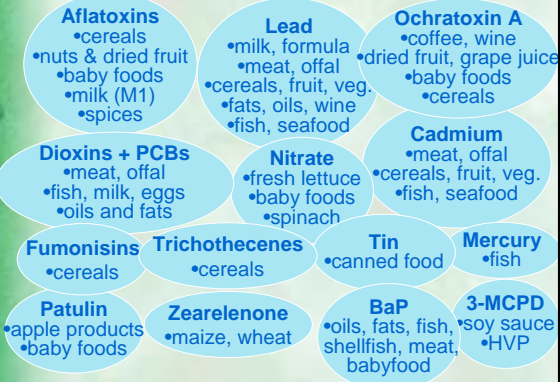
21st Century - What has changed?

What EU food law requires

Food shall not be placed on the market if it is unsafe (injurious to health or unfit)

Food businesses responsible for ensuring compliance with food law

EU-wide limits



Food law enforcement

Enforcement authorities

- Sampling and analysis
- Advice, or ultimately prosecution

Food industry

- “due diligence”
- BRC global standard
- Independent audit

...But another law says

Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong

Friday 24th
27 April 2006

Toxic levels of cancer agent found in crisps



JARS OF BABY FOOD IN CANCER ALERT



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Cancer-causing dye is discovered in 350 foods
By Paula Healy

Food industry admits that tests for cancer dye are not carried out
By Hannah Elliot
October 2007

Supermarket alert on cancer food dye
By Hannah Elliot
October 2007

No safe level for dangerous dye in any foodstuff
By Hannah Elliot
October 2007

SCARE OVER RED DYE WHICH AFFECTS DNA
By Hannah Elliot
October 2007

CANCER PERIL IN 359 TOP FOODS

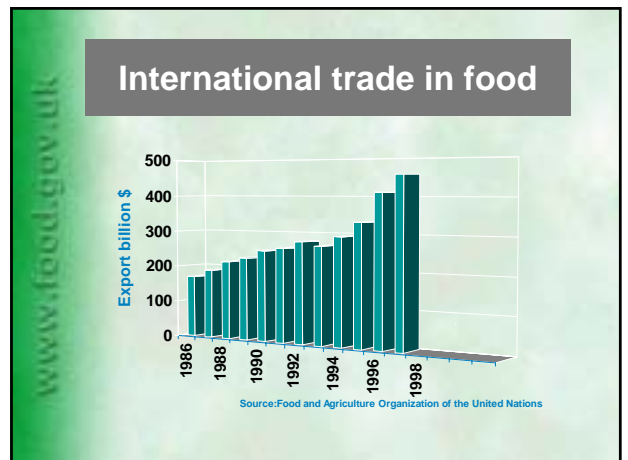


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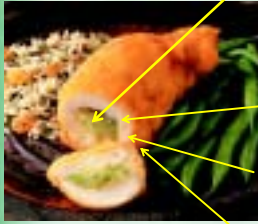
Contaminants in food

What we want to achieve:

- chemicals in food do not compromise food safety
- appropriate controls, properly enforced
- open debate of issues amongst stakeholders

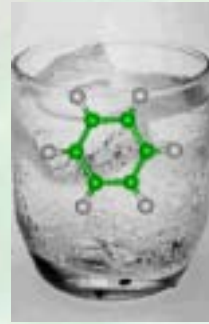


Globalisation of food trade



- Herb Butter:** Salted butter - UK, Ireland
 Garlic puree - China, USA, Spain
 Garlic salt - China, USA, Spain
 Lemon - USA
 Parsley - France, UK
 Pepper - Indonesia
 Water - UK
- Chicken Breast:** Chicken - Ireland, Belgium
 UK, France etc.
- Batter:** Flour - Belgium, France
 Water - UK
- Bread Crumb:** Bread crumb - Ireland, UK
Crumb: Rape-seed oil - EU, Australia
 Eastern Europe

Chicken Kiev



Risk in 6,000 food and drink products
**CANCER LINKED
 TO SWEETENER**

Looking Forward



Our key aims include:

Food safety

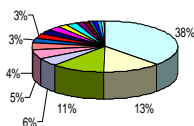
- to continue to reduce foodborne illness
- to reduce the risks to consumers from contaminated food



Food incidents

“Any event where, based on the information available, there are concerns about actual or suspected threats to the safety or quality of food that could require intervention to protect consumers’ interests.”

Incidents by category



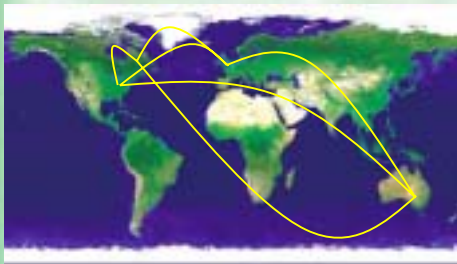
1337 incidents Sept 05 – Aug 06

Environmental Contaminants	Natural Chemical Contaminants	Microbiological Processing/Post Processing
Veri Meds	Physical - Accidental	Mislabelling
Microbiological - On-farm	Regal Additives	Other
Allergens	Irradiated Foods	Food Fraud
Process Contaminants - Chemical	Unauthorised use of an Additive	Food Contact Materials
Pesticides	Radological	Physical - Deliberate
Biocides		

How can we prevent food incidents?

- Raise awareness
- Identify research needs
- Develop codes of practice
- Encourage targeted action
- Develop robust horizon scanning mechanisms
- Share intelligence
- Intelligence led enforcement

Informal information exchange



EU RASFF SYSTEM



INFOSAN



Incident prevention – Working in partnership





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