

HOW WILL BREXIT IMPACT FOOD SAFETY LEGISLATION & PRACTICE?

30 March 2017: Leatherhead Food Research, a leading provider of science, technology and regulatory consulting services to the global food & beverage market, is advising its member organisations to consider the potential implications of Brexit on the industry and prepare themselves for the forthcoming period of change.

As a result of yesterday's triggering of Article 50 by the UK government, the upcoming Great Repeal Bill* and the anticipated transposition of EU into UK law, Leatherhead has been evaluating the most likely outcome and the implications for the UK food & beverage industry. With almost a century of industry experience, Leatherhead anticipates that EU food safety legislation will initially be brought into UK law wholesale. It is also anticipated that over time certain pieces of legislation may be "cherry picked" and that some alteration to specific areas of food safety law may be amended or improved for the UK market. Leatherhead considers this to be a relatively low risk transitional approach for food safety within the UK food & beverage industry.

"The EU law as it stands provides a good framework for food safety and we believe that this will substantially migrate into UK law," says Chris Wells, Managing Director, Leatherhead Food Research. "It is likely that in future some areas of UK regulation will diverge from the EU but this will evolve over time. However, given that Europe is the UK's biggest export market for food & beverage, manufacturers exporting into the EU will still have to comply with EU food & beverage legislation. Furthermore, the legislative environment potentially becomes more complicated if the UK allows the import of more produce from outside the EU – such as GM foods - goods that are not compliant with EU law. In these situations UK based food manufacturers will need to ensure that they do not pass on non-compliant food into the EU supply chain."

Leatherhead believes that one of the biggest risks to food safety will come from potential changes to border controls when the UK leaves the EU. Leatherhead advises its members in the food & beverage industry to consider:

- Possible veterinary certification costs
- Import/export fees
- Additional border considerations resulting in potential delays at border
- Additional possibility for food safety hazards and food fraud

The subject of border delays has the potential to have major impact on food safety and on shelf-life for perishable goods. An example is salad goods where much produce is imported into the UK from Spain and Portugal particularly during the winter. Typically the market has had a heavy reliance on a fast cold chain distribution system. If an extra day is added into a border crossing then that day is effectively removed from the shelf-life of the product, potentially resulting in additional food wastage.

Leatherhead's expertise in food safety and global regulatory services, along with its daily news bulletin, will enable Leatherhead members to stay right up to date on Brexit developments as they emerge and to understand the potential impact of the biggest legislative change for the UK in half-a-century. In the rapidly changing food & beverage industry, real time knowledge is a strategic advantage that Leatherhead provides to its member organisations.

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*The name of the Bill may change.

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About Leatherhead Food Research

Leatherhead Food Research provides expertise and support to the global food and drinks sector with practical solutions that cover all stages of a product's life cycle from consumer insight, ingredient innovation and sensory testing to food safety consultancy and global regulatory advice. Leatherhead operates a membership programme which represents a who's who of the global food and drinks industry. Supporting all members and clients, large or small, Leatherhead provides consultancy and advice, as well as training, market news, published reports and bespoke projects. Alongside member support and project work, our world-renowned experts deliver cutting-edge research in areas that drive long-term commercial benefit for the food and drinks industry.

Leatherhead Food Research is a trading name of Leatherhead Research Ltd, a Science Group (AIM:SAG) company. Science Group provides independent advisory and leading-edge product development services focused on the Group's in-depth science and technology capability. It has six offices globally, two dedicated UK-based R&D innovation centres and more than 350 employees. Other Science Group companies include Oakland Innovation, OTM Consulting and Sagentia.

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