

A newsletter from the Public Protection Team of Wealden District Council

## Cloths Are Not What They Seem On The Surface



With standards of cleanliness continuing to attract the media's attention Local Authorities are always searching for new information to help raise awareness and ultimately hygiene standards. One way is through in-house sampling projects that focus for example on a specific area of work that 'on the surface' may not even appear to be a risk to hygiene.

Over the last few months the food safety team at Wealden DC have been randomly visiting food handling premises throughout the district collecting 'used' and 'unused' kitchen cloths. These cloths have then been tested at the microbiology laboratory at Hayward's Heath with worse than expected results. Wightman & Parrish Ltd, a local hygiene supplier, kindly donated 50 packs of cloths which were offered in exchange for the cloths taken as samples.

So far 30 cloths in total have been tested from varied food handling premises including butchers, coffee shops, delicatessens and fishmongers. With 70% of those having unsatisfactorily high levels of bacteria. This not only

highlights the potential of 'unexpected' cross contamination occurring in kitchens but also the importance of ensuring a robust management system, such as Safer Food Better Business, is in place. To make any system work, staff must be fully trained and understand the risks.

In conjunction with the testing of the cloths a checklist of specific questions was developed and completed, with the help of the proprietor, at the time of sampling. This provided valuable details such as; the type of cloth used, where/how the cloth was used and how often cloths in the kitchen are changed or thrown away. Using this information gathered a 'Top Ten Tips for Kitchen Cloths' Leaflet has been written and will be available shortly.

We are very grateful to all those businesses that have participated so far. The team are hoping to continue this project throughout 2008 to include more premises and enable us to revisit those premises where improvements were made.



## Shattered Lives

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have produced a new training tool on their website which talks about the outcome of slips, trips and falls at work. They cover food retail, food manufacturing, catering, building and plant maintenance and construction. The site shows how the lives of individuals who have suffered from such accidents have been affected. It has some very powerful images and should help to get the safety message home to managers and employees. It includes advice on spotting and dealing with simple, controllable, hazards which can have serious consequences. [www.hse/shatteredlives](http://www.hse/shatteredlives)



## Successes for Safer Food, Better Business

A recent Food Standards Agency (FSA) evaluation of the success of Safer Food, Better Business shows that:

- 72% of businesses with a food safety management system (FSMS) said that the FSMS had changed at least one area of food safety management within their business
- 81% were using the FSMS for training their staff
- 70% said it improved effectiveness of their business and 45% said that it had increased profitability
- 87% said it helped them manage their business



## Food Focus Group to look at Scores on Doors

Would you like to contribute to the way we introduce Scores on Doors in Wealden?

The food business star rating scheme, showing customers how good a food business' hygiene and management is, will have an impact on businesses good and bad. How the scheme is rolled out in Wealden's area is still under discussion.

As a food business operator you may well have views on how this should be done. We need your opinion on how we can best support businesses to deal with this change in practice.

The focus group will consist of business representatives and Environmental Health Officers and will allow open discussion to take place.

The group will meet on the 1st May 2008 at the Council offices in Hailsham at 3.00pm.

If you would like to take part, or would like more information, please ring me on **01323 443276** or email [gail.fenn@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:gail.fenn@wealden.gov.uk)

You can find out more about Scores on Doors on [www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk](http://www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk)

## SPRING FORWARD IN 2008 – measure and reduce your carbon

Grow your competitive advantage and profits through improved resource efficiency.

A new free, online 'Indicator' from Envirowise is helping companies to understand where they can act to reduce their carbon footprint and capitalise on the commercial benefits that come from improved use of resources. The carbon footprint of a company indicates how much carbon is embedded in its raw material use and in its operations. The new tool from Envirowise gives an indication of how resource use and waste contribute to a company's carbon footprint.



### THE ENVIROWISE INDICATOR

Discover your company's own carbon footprint

Get feedback on your resources that impact most on the environment

Clarify areas where improvements can be made

Improve efficiency, lower costs and increase competitiveness

For use by any company size or industry

With added Envirowise support and advice

Find out more at [www.envirowise.gov.uk/indicator](http://www.envirowise.gov.uk/indicator)

# Wealden's Worst Food Businesses

The 50 worst food businesses may soon be invited to a session with food safety officers to look at why they are failing and what they can do to improve their position.

Businesses must take remedial action when officers find unacceptable standards during routine visits . . . but some businesses consistently fall into the worst performers group. The advent of Scores on Doors will bring pressure on all businesses to achieve the best score possible to achieve customer confidence.

Good businesses will benefit from the publicity when the scheme comes in. The badly performing businesses need to take action straight away to avoid having their poor rating made public. If you would like to find out your current score then email [foodandsafety@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:foodandsafety@wealden.gov.uk) or call **01323 443302**.

Further information on Scores on Doors can be found on [www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk](http://www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk)

## Wealden Business Directory

Do you have your business listed on our on-line business directory – over 1000 local businesses do!

The directory allows you to:

- advertise your business free of charge – including a free link to your website.
- search our database for local firms

Wealden District Council want to make our area as economically viable as possible; encouraging the use of local businesses helps make this happen.

Some of those already listed include:

- 88 accommodation providers
- 106 eating and drinking establishments
- 67 leisure and entertainment providers
- 51 manufacturers
- 103 retailers and wholesalers

*and many more.*



You can provide information about your business and services on our site, and a direct link to your own website if you wish. The businesses are held in 30 categories to enable customers to search more easily, and the search can be limited to certain areas of the district. We will provide a map link to help locate each business. Information can be updated as often as you wish. All of this can be done on-line in a matter of minutes. Just visit [www.wealden.gov.uk/business/index](http://www.wealden.gov.uk/business/index)

For further details email [regeneration@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:regeneration@wealden.gov.uk) or ring **01892 602887**

## New DVD Helps Caterers and retailers . . . in 16 languages

Caterers and food retailers now have extra help in food hygiene. The Food Standards Agency, the UK's food regulator, has produced a new DVD for food businesses that aims to provide an additional route for accessing up-to-date guidance on safe methods for food preparation, handling and storage.

The DVD complements information packs already being used by thousands of small businesses under the Agency's 'Safer Food, Better Business' programme (SFBB). It is aimed at managers, food handlers, trainers, and local authorities and is free of charge.

The DVD has voiceovers available in 16 different languages. It also uses video scenes of realistic situations in small catering and retail businesses to demonstrate SFBB in action.

David Statham, Director of Consumer Protection and Enforcement at the Food Standards Agency, said: "The DVD will prove to be an invaluable addition to the Safer food, better business material already available to help businesses implement a food safety management

system and train their staff. It will build upon the overwhelming success of Safer food, better business in improving food safety and minimising red tape burdens on small catering and retail businesses."

SFBB was developed specifically for the UK's smaller food businesses to help them comply with new food safety management procedures, which had originally been developed for large manufacturers. SFBB helps managers adapt good practice to their own business, and keeps record keeping simple by encouraging the use of a simple diary.

An online version of the DVD is currently being developed and will soon be available on the FSA website. In addition to the DVD, the Agency will be launching an SFBB supplement for care homes later in the year and a new childminders pack.

**For copies of the DVD, please call 0845 606 0667.**



## What is SALSA and why should you know about it?

SALSA is a 3rd party accreditation scheme aimed at helping small local suppliers provide the kind of assurances of safety and compliance with legislation which many retailers require.

The scheme received initial funding from DEFRA and the Food Standards Agency. The SALSA website provides a searchable directory of SALSA approved suppliers by region and by product group. The directory also contains suppliers who are working towards their approval.

The Institute of Food Science and Technology (IFST) operate the SALSA throughout the UK and maintain the SALSA website. Many retailers have recognised that there

are many small and local suppliers producing superb traditional or new products, often using quality local ingredients.

The scheme is being welcomed by many of the UK's leading retailer and foodservice buyers who require a robust food safety certification to support their local sourcing needs. To find out more visit [www.salsafood.co.uk](http://www.salsafood.co.uk)

**SALSA**  
Safe and Local Supplier Approval

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