

6. REVIEW

6.1 Review Against the Service Plan 2003/2004

6.1.1 Food Hygiene Inspections

The number of food hygiene inspections achieved between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004 within the target time were as follows:

Risk Category	Target	Achieved	%
A (High)	177	158	89%
B (High)	431	397	92%
C (Medium)	663	558	84%
D (Low)	151	133	88%
E (Low)	74	59	80%
F (Low)	137	109	80%

These figures indicate a decrease in performance achievement of -4% in respect of high risk premises and -6% in respect of low risk premises with regard to the previous year.

This was due to the ever increasing workload throughout all environmental health functions and also in respect of 3 enforcement officers sitting their final professional examinations in November 2003. As a result the inspection output was lower for the first half of the year. If this additional authorised resource had been available throughout the year then the performance would have matched previous standards.

6.1.2 Food Standards Inspections

The number of food standards inspections achieved between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004 within the target time were as follows:

Risk Category	Target	Achieved	%
High	4	1	25%
Medium	251	213	85%
Low	468	342	73%

This is the first year that a separate food standards inspection programme has been produced therefore no comparison can be made with previous years figures.

6.1.3 Feeding Stuffs Inspections

The number of Feeding Stuffs Inspections carried out

Risk Category	Target	Achieved	%
High	6	5	83.3
Medium	1	1	100
Low	746	639	85.7

Risk assessment is on the basis of the 1994 LACORS Risk Assessment scheme.

6.1.4 Formal Enforcement Action

Nineteen Improvement Notices were served under Section 10 of the Food Safety Act 1990 in respect of 7 food premises.

A breakdown of the non-compliances contained within the notices are as follows:

Hazard Analysis	6
Repair and Condition of Premises	6
Training	4
Layout	1
Ventilation	1
Protection from Contamination	1

This equates to a 79% increase over the previous years total of 4.

Two reports were submitted to the Procurator Fiscal service for consideration for prosecution.

One resulted in a guilty verdict in terms of selling food not of the nature, substance and quality demanded and the second is still under consideration in respect of failing to comply with an Improvement Notice.

6.1.5 Food Complaints

A total of 128 food complaints were received and fully investigated. This equated to a decrease of 49% from the 252 the recorded during the previous year.

A breakdown of food complains received is as follows:

Foreign Body	42 (33%)
Labelling	26 (20%)
Microbiological	21 (16%)
Hygiene of Premises	20 (16%)
Chemical	7 (5%)

Of the total food complaints received 12 (10%) were referred to other Local Authorities.

6.1.6 Home Authority Principle

A total of 16 Home Authority referrals were received by the Food Safety Service and all were satisfactorily dealt with in an informal manner. This is the first year of recording this data therefore a comparison cannot be made in respect of previous years.

A breakdown of the referrals is as follows:

Meat and Meat Products Composition	4
Foreign Body	4
Fishery Products Labelling	3
Dairy Products labelling	2
Soft Drinks Labelling	2
Meat Products Labelling	1

6.1.7 Food Sampling

There is no legally required standard in respect of obtaining food samples, however, as a rule of thumb the recognised target for proactive chemical sampling is three per thousand population and 1.5 per thousand population for proactive microbiological sampling.

The sampling targets for the year were calculated as 675 chemical and 330 microbiological which included general monitoring, local targetted exercises and regional and national surveillance surveys. They do not include re-active samples such as these taken as a remit of consumer complaints or as part of investigations of food poisoning outbreaks.

Twenty local targetted surveillance exercises were identified and agreed in order to investigate previous perceived problems and possibly identify the need for national

surveys in the future and counted for 152 chemical samples and 300 microbiological samples within the total sampling target.

Participation in the following regional and national surveillance surveys was also programmed:

Raw Shell Eggs in Catering Premises	(HPA/LACORS)
End-of Shelf-Life of Cooked Meats	(HPA/LACORS)
Pathogens in Raw Meat	(HPA/LACORS)
Quality of Cooked Crustaceans & Molluscan Shellfish	(EU)
Substitution of Haddock	(NSFLG)
Quality of Dips, Yoghurts, Sauces & Marinades	(NSFLG)
Quality of locally Produced Potted Meat	(NSFLG)

The actual samples obtained during 2003/2004 totaled 382 chemical which equates to 57% of the target figure and 117 microbiological which equates to 36% of the target figure.

Factors influencing the performance were identified as:

- ✧ Continuing heavy workload throughout all Environmental Health functions
- ✧ Lack of Authorised sampling officers
- ✧ Courier timetable restricting sampling days
- ✧ Samples in respect of local targetted exercises found to be unobtainable or unavailable for certain subjects resulting in an estimated loss of 180 chemical and 120 microbiological samples from the target figure.

Feeding Stuffs Sampling

A total of 53 samples were taken and submitted for analysis. Eight samples were submitted for the detection of dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls. Levels were not found to be in excess of those permitted. Two complaint samples were taken, one of a pet food and neither were adversely reported upon. Of the remaining 43 samples which were taken from compounders and farms, 8 samples received adverse reports identified as labelling errors after further enquiry. One sample was identified as being deficient in protein. Failure to reach the target of 62 samples arose mainly as a result of the departure of one of the two Technical Officers (Feeding Stuffs) who resigned to take up a post outwith local government.

6.1.8 Notification, Control and Investigation of Outbreaks of Foodborne Disease

Notifications received from NHS Grampian in respect of foodborne disease totaled 459, a reduction of 125 (21%) from the previous year.

A breakdown of specific diseases with comparison to the previous year is as follows:

Salmonella	78	(+4%)
E Coli 0157	16	(-62%)
Cryptosporidium	44	(-33%)
Giardias	1	(-85%)
Aeromonas	33	(+65%)
Yersinia	8	(+60%)
Dysentery	6	(+50%)
Campylobacter	272	(-25%)

No major foodborne disease outbreaks occurred during the year and all required interviews were undertaken in accordance with the Service Standard.

6.1.9 Food Hazard Warnings

The food hazard warnings received from the Food Standards Agency are classified below and compared to previous years trends:

Category of Warning	2003/2004	2002/2003	2001/2002
A – For immediate action	0	2	1
B – For action	11	8	7
C – For action as deemed necessary	18	9	9
D – For information only	27	44	46
TOTAL	56	63	63

All warnings were fully investigated by telephone or personal visits, however, on two occasions information letters required to be sent from a central location to all licensed premises in respect of contaminated vodka and, to all retailers and caterers in respect of contaminated spice powder. No suspect product was found within Aberdeenshire on either occasion.

6.1.10 Training

Twenty-three Elementary Food Hygiene courses were organised during 2003/2004 resulting in 328 candidates attending.

Three Intermediate Food Hygiene Courses were also organised with 28 candidates attending.

The training provision generated a total income of £11,862.00. All courses are presented by the Food and Safety Support Officer with assistance from the Environmental Health Specialist Officer (Food) at Intermediate level. There is no requirement to utilise any core operational staff in respect of this function.

6.2 Service Plan Variance

Any variance from the Service Plan and the reason for the variance will be identified and recorded.

Additional work carried out in other enforcement areas which has achieved the service objectives through other means will also be recorded.

6.3 Service Improvement

In response to the findings of the review against the Service Plan the following improvements have been identified and adopted in order to raise the performance standards and quality.

6.3.1 Food Hygiene Inspections

The Food Safety Act 1990, Code of Practice No 9 allows the inspection of food premises within a 14 day period of the target date to be considered as meeting the frequency of inspection target.

An analysis of dates of inspection over the first three quarters of 2003 revealed that only 55% of successful inspections had been carried out on or before the target date.

In an effort to re-prioritise high risk premises inspections it was agreed by the Environmental Health Managers, Specialist Officer (Food) and the Area Principal Environmental Health Officers that the 14 day window facility be withdrawn in respect of high risk category A and B food premises. This will require these premises to be inspected on or before the target date.

Medium risk category C food premises may be inspected using the 14 day window facility with priority given to catering premises.

Low risk category D, E and F food premises are deemed as low priority and may be targeted when workloads permit.

A procedure has also been implemented where premises of an assessed negligible risk be removed from the food hygiene and/or food standards inspection programme, in accordance with the Food Safety Act 1990 Codes of Practice. An alternative enforcement strategy requires to be adopted in respect of these low risk premises, once every 3 years, in the form of a postal request for the businesses to self certify their compliance.

It is expected that these amended procedures will raise the performance standard in respect of high risk premises, reduce the inspection programme in respect of low risk premises and present enforcement officers with additional time to focus on high priority issues.

6.3.2 Food Sampling

In order to further alleviate enforcement officers' workloads it was agreed that the Specialist Officer (Food) carry out food sampling duties in respect of national surveillance surveys while authorised sampling officers' undertake local targeted exercises and general monitoring food sampling.