

# Babergh Foodwise



ISSUE 9 SPRING 07

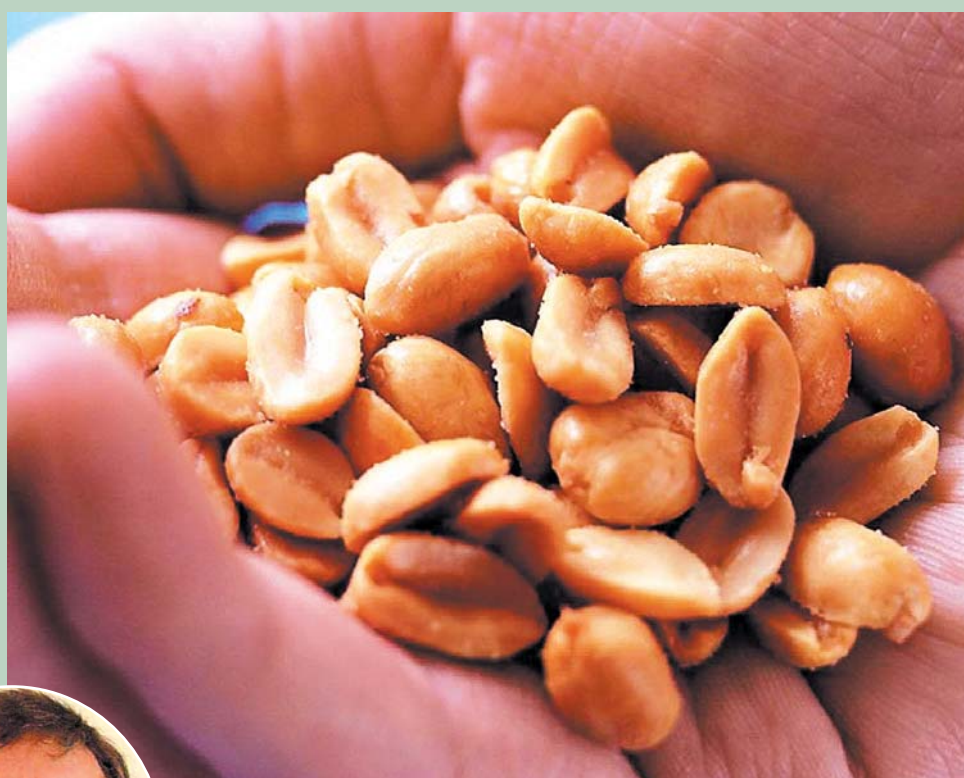
## FIRTH'S FOCUS

Welcome to the latest issue of Foodwise.

As a food handling business you have to be aware of best way to avoid health risks to not only your customers, but your staff as well. That is why we are carrying articles in this edition that focus upon the proper use and maintenance of chilled food cabinets, the avoidance of allergic reactions in your customers and the requirements of the new 'smokefree' legislation.

In all three cases, we provide what we hope are handy checklists, designed to make it easier for you to ensure that your business is up-to-scratch with both the law and recommended practice.

If you have comments or questions, please do let us know by contacting our Food & Regulation Team on (01473) 825890.



## Are you allergy aware?

In the UK approximately ten people die each year after suffering a severe allergic reaction to certain food products. Around 1 - 2% of adults and 8% of children are allergic to one or more food items which may include: cereals containing gluten, crustaceans, peanuts, soybeans, milk, nuts (including almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashew nuts, pecans, Brazil nuts, pistachios and macadamias), celery, mustard, sesame seeds, kiwi fruit and strawberries. Some sufferers are intolerant to certain allergens and experience gastro-intestinal upset when exposed to the product. Whilst unpleasant, intolerances are rarely life threatening unlike a severe allergic reaction, which can cause swelling of the throat and mouth, difficulty in breathing, collapse and unconsciousness. In extreme circumstances this can lead to anaphylactic shock and death within minutes of being exposed to the allergen. Allergens must now legally be clearly identified on all pre-packed foods. Caterers, however, are excluded from this requirement, but have a duty of care to their customers and ▶

▶ must be able to provide accurate information when requested. This will involve making all staff fully aware of ingredients in menu items whether made on the premises or purchased (all purchased products must list allergens).

### Advice to caterers:

■ Use nominated suppliers where possible so that you get consistent product (eg different companies will have different recipes for puddings – some may contain nuts whilst others don't). On delivery look out for suppliers 'substituting' products which may contain allergens.

■ Where foods are decanted for storage, keep the label. Don't top-up containers and clean between uses.

■ Avoid cross-contamination during preparation. Personal hygiene rules and cleaning regimes that are adequate to remove bacteria should also remove allergens e.g. effective hand washing, cleaning and sanitising work surfaces and equipment. Wooden boards not recommended as they are difficult to clean effectively.

■ On self-service counters ensure sufficient utensils are available and monitor that they are not used in different foods. Label foods, ensure supervising staff are allergy-aware. Notices which invite dialogue are the most useful e.g. 'some of our products contain nuts or other allergens – please ask if you require more information' (then make sure that staff have sufficient knowledge to help customers!).

■ Takeaway premises – staff taking orders must be allergy aware and make certain that any instructions from customers are passed onto kitchen staff.

■ When a customer states that they have an 'allergy' it is a good idea to ask how severe the allergy is. Sometimes it may be an intolerance (where they need to avoid the food to avoid unpleasant, though not life threatening symptoms) or in some cases it may be that they just don't like the food! You then know how careful you need to be, or in the case of severe, life-threatening allergy, you may even decide that you do not feel able to provide food that is definitely going to be safe.



### Case study: Woman's allergic reaction caused by lupin flour

A woman from Essex ate half a doughnut and subsequently suffered a swollen tongue and lips, stomach cramps, hives and breathing difficulties. She was injected with her prescribed adrenaline and taken by ambulance to hospital, where she received further treatment.

She sent a sample of the doughnut for laboratory testing and lupin flour was confirmed as an ingredient. She had known she was allergic to lupin because she had suffered two reactions previously and had undergone testing by an allergist. She is also allergic to peanuts.

Lupin has recently been placed on the EU list of allergens that must always be labelled when they appear in pre-packed food, although food companies have some months to comply. Food sold loose, or in the catering sector, is not covered by the new regulations and so the bakery was breaking no laws.

Uses for lupin flour include pastry cases, pies, waffles, pancakes, crepes, galettes, products containing crumb, pizzas, and crispy coated vegetables (such as onion rings and mushrooms). The extent to which lupin flour is used in UK food products is unknown, although it is believed to be an uncommon ingredient at present. It is more commonly to be found in products manufactured on the Continent, some of these products may be imported to the UK.

For more information visit the FSA website [www.food.gov.uk/safereating/allergyintol/](http://www.food.gov.uk/safereating/allergyintol/) or the Anaphylaxis Campaign website at [www.anaphylaxis.org.uk](http://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk)

# Managing chilled display cabinets

If your business is sandwich making, a delicatessen or even perhaps if you run a café or restaurant you may well have one or more chilled display cabinets in use.

These are useful for displaying foods to customers whilst keeping them under chilled control. High risk foods such as cooked meats and meat products, soft cheeses, fresh cream, cooked rice and pasta dishes and salads containing mayonnaise must by law be kept at temperatures below 8°C, and ideally between 0-5°C. It is therefore critical that your chilled display unit is able to maintain foods at these temperatures.

## What can go wrong?

- The ambient temperature of the room may affect the temperature within the cabinet. If the room is warm and the cabinet is at least partly open this can cause the temperature to rise above 8°C.
- Overstocking of the cabinet can restrict the airflow inside and cause the temperature to rise.
- When you monitor the temperature it

## How can you check your probe thermometer for accuracy?

If you've kept Issue 4 of FoodWise (Autumn 2004) you can find detailed instructions for how to do this! But in summary, the easiest way is to put the probe into some melting ice and check that it reads between -1°C and 1°C, and then put it into boiling water and check that it reads between 99°C and 101°C. If the readings are outside of this range then it should be serviced or replaced.



is important that you check the temperature of the food itself, not just the air temperature within the cabinet.

## How can these problems be avoided?

- Make sure your chilled display is in a well ventilated area and away from any sources of heat. This includes direct sunlight, so if your chilled display is in a window you may want to consider providing blinds outside.
- Don't overload the chiller cabinet as this can restrict the flow of air and so cause the temperature to rise. It may be better to keep most of your stock in closed refrigerators and only a small amount on display.
- Use shallow containers made of materials which will conduct the cold through the container and into the food.
- Place high risk foods in the coldest part of the unit, normally at the bottom close to the cold air intake.
- Stir foods from time to time.
- Do not rely on the built-in temperature gauge as this displays the temperature from a sensor at just one point in the unit, and is likely to be different to the temperature of the food.
- Use a clean probe thermometer (which has been checked for accuracy – see panel above) to monitor the temperature of the food.
- Have the chilled display unit serviced regularly to ensure that it is working efficiently.



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# Smoke-free is nearly here!

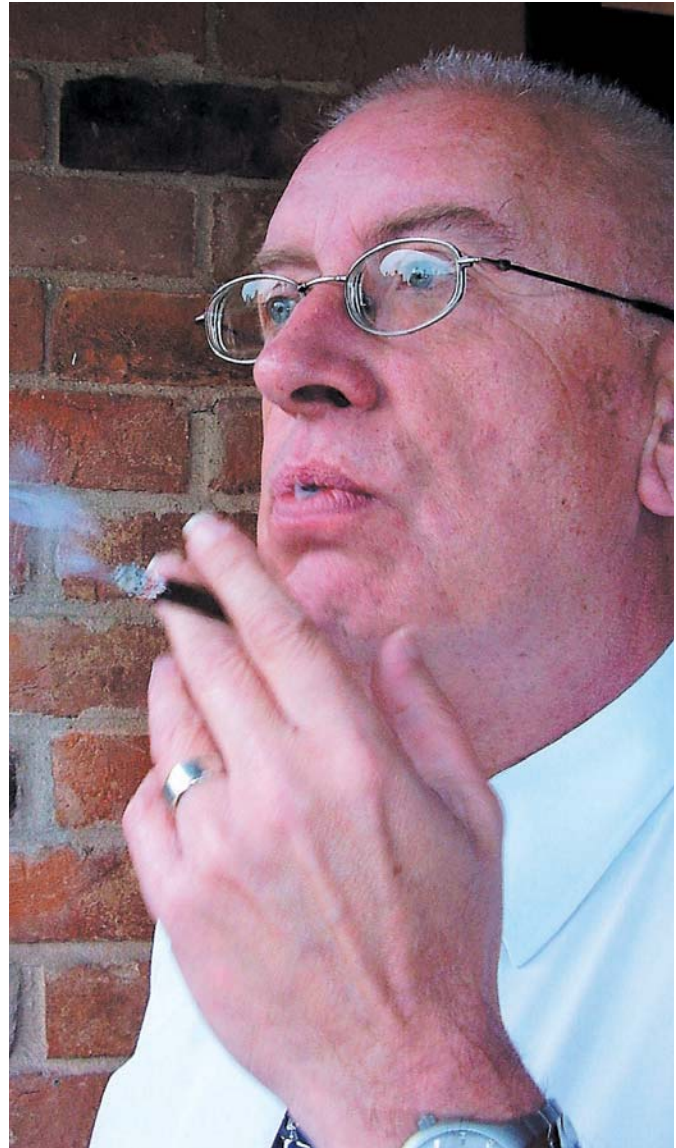
July 1st is the big day when virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces in England will become smoke-free. A smoke-free England will ensure a healthier environment, so everyone can socialise, relax, travel, shop and work free from second-hand smoke. The Suffolk local authorities have produced a plan to ensure consistent enforcement of the new legal requirements across the county, and Babergh has appointed a Smoke-free Officer to assist businesses and carry out enforcement as necessary.

Employers, managers and those in charge of smoke-free premises and vehicles will need to:

- Display 'no smoking' signs in smoke-free premises,
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that staff, customers/members and visitors are aware that premises and vehicles are legally required to be smoke-free.
- Ensure that no one smokes in smoke-free premises or vehicles.

You may also want to take these supportive measures:

- Remove ashtrays from smoke-free areas.
- Develop a smoke-free policy in consultation with staff.
- Provide your staff and customers with support to quit smoking.
- Ensure that your staff and customers know where



they can smoke if they choose to. For more information about the Regulations and what you need to do to comply visit the Smoke-Free England website at [www.smokefreeengland.co.uk](http://www.smokefreeengland.co.uk)

**FoodWise Special**

Facing this isn't so bad....



.....As facing this!

Sudbury Magistrates Court

## Safer food, better business

If you're using SFBB as your food safety management system and you're running out of Diary pages, don't worry. You can get a refill which will last you for another year by calling 0845 606 0667.

If your diary is running out, then it must be almost a year since you completed your SFBB pack. Has anything changed in your business that means that you need to review what you said in your Safe Methods? Hopefully the 4-weekly reviews have prompted you if you've changed the way you work, or bought a new piece of equipment, or taken on a new member of staff. But it's

probably worth while looking through the pack at least once a year to make sure that what you wrote down in the Safe Methods still applies.

After all it's a legal requirement to keep your food safety management system up to date, and the pack would form a large part of a due diligence defence should you ever need it, so you want to make sure that the Safe Methods always reflect what is actually happening in practice.

For more advice call the Food and Safety Regulation team on 01473 825890 or email [food.safety@babergh.gov.uk](mailto:food.safety@babergh.gov.uk)