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Centre for Agricultural Strategy

Management of regulation in the food chain - balancing costs, benefits and effects

Edited by BJ Marshall & FA Miller

STP
KD3453
.M36x
1997

CAS Paper 36

June 1997

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CAS Paper 36

Management of regulation in the food chain - balancing costs, benefits and effects

Proceedings of a conference organised by the
Centre for Agricultural Strategy, held at
The Royal Society, 6 Carlton House Terrace, London
SW1Y 5AG on 11 February 1997

Edited by B J Marshall & F A Miller

Centre for Agricultural Strategy
University of Reading
PO Box 236
Earley Gate
Reading RG6 6AT

June 1997

ISBN 0 7049 1133 7

ISSN 0141 1330

Printed by TA Printers, 43-45 Milford Road, Reading RG1 8LG

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Acknowledgements

The Centre gratefully acknowledges the support and advice provided by the following organisations:



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food



AgrEvo

AgrEvo UK Crop Protection Ltd



Campden & Chorleywood
Food Research Association

Campden & Chorleywood Food Research Association

DALGETY ■

Dalgety Food Technology Centre



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European Food Law Association of the UK



Food and Drink Federation



Institute of Food Research



Law Laboratories Ltd



Northern Foods plc

SAINSBURY'S

J Sainsbury plc



Unigate plc



Unilever Research Laboratory

ZENECA

Zeneca Agrochemicals

ZENECA

Zeneca Plant Sciences

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACC	Association of County Councils
ACNFP	Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes
ACRE	Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment
ADC	Association of District Councils
AMA	Association of Metropolitan Authorities
BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
CA	Consumers' Association
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CAS	Centre for Agricultural Strategy
CJD	Creutzfeld-Jacob Disease
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DU	Deregulation Unit
EC	European Commission
EEC	European Economic Community
EFLA/UK	European Food Law Association of the United Kingdom
EHO	Environmental Health Officer
EU	European Union
EUROPMI	European Small Business Organisation
FDA	Food and Drugs Administration
FDF	Food and Drink Federation
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
IACS	Integrated Administration and Control System
ITSA	Institute of Trading Standards Associations
LACOTS	Local Authorities Coordinating Body on Food and Trading Standards
LGA	Local Government Association
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
MP	Member of Parliament
NCC	National Consumer Council
NFU	National Farmers' Union

OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
plc	Public Liability Company
PPC	Public Protection Committee
QUID	Quantitative Ingredient Determination
SAFE	Sustainable Agriculture, Food and Environment
SCF	Scientific Committee on Foods
SEAC	Spongiform Encephalopathies Advisory Committee
SLIM	Simpler Legislation in the Internal Market
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USA	United States of America
VTEC	Verocytotoxin-producing strain of <i>Escherichia coli</i>
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Preface

This conference was well timed. Questions about the regulation of the food industry are currently the subject of a great deal of media attention. In the light of recent food scares consumer groups, as well as other food industry representative organisations have questioned the adequacy of existing institutional arrangements. Some have called for a radical reallocation of responsibilities. The industry itself is deeply concerned both about the cost and effectiveness of regulations and about their impact on its competitiveness. For both, the restoration of confidence in the United Kingdom (UK) food regulatory regime is critical.

The Centre for Agricultural Strategy, one of whose functions is to promote informed debate on issues of long-run significance sought, through this conference, to bring together the interests involved. The intention was to understand the position of each group and to consider options for the organisation of food law, administration and enforcement. All sectors were invited to comment on the report of the Food, Drink and Agriculture Task Force (1993), to review the Government's deregulation initiative and to take account of the review of food law currently being undertaken by the European Commission (EC). The Task Force had stressed the highly regulated nature of the food industry. The Government's deregulation policy was designed to minimise burdens on industry whilst ensuring adequate consumer protection. The EC seeks coherence in Community food legislation and wishes to explore the scope for simplification and rationalisation. In the light of their comments on the current situation, contributors were invited to consider what organisational changes, if any, were needed to restore public confidence in the safety of food.

The papers in this report set out the authoritative views of representatives of key sectors of the industry and of consumers.

The publication also includes a record of the well-informed debate which followed and supplemented the material in the papers. Together they provide an accessible and informed account of the current debate about food safety regulation. As such they contribute both to public understanding and to the work of food policy makers and their legal advisers in the UK and the European Union.

The Centre for Agricultural Strategy is grateful to the many food companies and associated organisations who provided support and sponsorship. Without them we could not have promoted this event. We appreciated, too, and are encouraged by, the large number of participants from these diverse industries and interest groups, who played so positive a part in ensuring a lively and productive debate on these issues which are sensitive, controversial and important.

J S Marsh
Director
Centre for Agricultural Strategy