

# FoodWise

BABERGH'S FOOD SAFETY AND HYGIENE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 1

## Firth's Focus



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Welcome to the first edition of FoodWise - Babergh's Food Safety Newsletter. We aim to bring you up to date with some topical food safety issues, translate food law into Plain English and point you towards other sources of information to help you run your food business more effectively. In short we hope that this publication will help you and your staff to become more FoodWise!

The newsletter is for **you**, so please let us know what you would like to see included and feel free to give us plenty of feedback – positive or otherwise! You can contact us by phone or email (details after each article) or write to us at Environmental Services, Babergh District Council, Corks Lane, Hadleigh, IP7 6SJ.

## Cracking the problem of *salmonella*

Since August in the UK, over 350 people have been taken ill as a result of outbreaks of *salmonella* food poisoning and two people have died. Some of these outbreaks have occurred in Suffolk. The common factor in these outbreaks appears to be the use of eggs, and in several of the outbreaks, Spanish eggs in particular have been implicated.

As a result, the Food Standards Agency has repeated their advice to businesses and consumers that all eggs – UK, Spanish or other imported eggs, should be properly handled and used.

Since the '*salmonella* and egg crisis' of the late 1980s, improvements in the UK egg industry such as the introduction of a Code of Practice for the prevention and control of *salmonella* in breeding flocks and hatcheries, and the Lion Quality marking scheme, have all contributed to a decrease in the number of cases of *salmonella* food poisoning. However, UK eggs can still not be guaranteed to be '*salmonella* free', and it is safest to assume that any egg may be contaminated.

Here are some points to remember when handling and using eggs:

- Purchase your eggs from a reputable supplier. Check the condition of the eggs on delivery (cracked or dirty eggs should not be used) and ensure that they are well within their best before date.
- Store eggs in the refrigerator, at or below 5°C. Eggs should not be allowed to touch other foods as they may become contaminated with *salmonella* from the egg shells. Where a warmer egg will 'perform better' (eg when whisking), remove the eggs from the fridge for a short time before use.



*Salmonella in eggs - together we can crack it*

- Wash your hands well after handling eggs, and ensure that any surfaces or equipment which have come into contact with raw egg or shells are thoroughly cleaned. Cook eggs and food containing *(continued on page 2)*