



**Isle of Man**  
Government  
*Reilrys Ellan Vannin*

# Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture

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*Rheynn Chymmyltaght, Bee as Eirinys*

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH UNIT

### FOOD SAMPLING POLICY

This policy will set out the Environmental Health Unit's (The Unit) general approach to food sampling and its approach in specific situations such as process monitoring, complaints and national and locally co-ordinated programmes.

The Unit has a duty to ensure that food meets legally prescribed standards and routine sampling will monitor compliance.

Sampling makes an important contribution to the protection of public health and is an integral tool in food law enforcement for the following reasons:-

- Detecting and deterring fraudulent activities
- Verifying that official control checks are effective
- Giving customers sufficient information to make informed choices
- Ensuring that food standards are maintained
- Informing the enforcement approach
- Providing product quality advice to the producer
- Promoting fair trade and deterring bad practice

Sometimes sampling is the only way of fulfilling these objectives; often it is a support to other interventions by Authorised Officers.

Sampling has particular benefits in supporting work on food complaints, food safety and standards inspections (including process monitoring) and surveys. There is also a role in DEFA's involvement in special investigations and local initiatives.

#### **Organisation of sampling**

All sampling will be undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Guidance (England), as well as guidance and procedures issued under this policy.

Sampling will only be undertaken by officers who are suitably qualified and competent in accordance with relevant legislation and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Guidance (England).

The Isle of Man Government Laboratory will provide Public Analyst and Food Examiner services. Samples which are unable to be analysed on Island will be sent to appropriately accredited laboratories in the UK or Ireland.

#### **Sampling Programme and prioritisation of sampling**

A Sampling Programme will be produced every year. The programme will be devised in consultation with the Government Analyst and will be informed by appropriate guidance and the local market.

The sampling programme will reflect the manufacturing, retail and catering premises in the Island to ensure locally produced foods meet legal requirements and to assist those businesses in monitoring compliance

When prioritising sampling the Unit will prioritise sampling in three categories.

Priority 1 – Samples required to meet statutory obligations

- Complaint samples
- DEFA co-ordinated surveys
- Inter-departmental surveys
- Imported food sampling

Priority 2 – Samples required for effective food safety enforcement

- Microbiological samples from high-risk (Category A & B) food hygiene premises
- Chemical sampling (including those taken during food standards inspections) from producers, packers, importers or exporters sending food outside of the Isle of Man
- Microbiological samples of high-risk foods from other food hygiene premises
- Sampling of foods or from premises highlighted by local and UK national sampling plans
- Imported food sampling by the Environmental Health Unit or other DEFA units

Priority 3 – Samples which give added value or which support local initiatives or projects

- Island-wide surveys
- Sampling to support local initiatives
- Sampling to support other government bodies

The Unit aims to prioritise samples falling into Priority 1 and 2 classifications. Resources will be devoted to Priority 3 where possible.

### Sampling and Enforcement

The Environmental Health Unit will ensure that appropriate action on non-compliance with food safety legislation is taken in accordance with current Food Safety legislation and the Food Safety Enforcement Policy.

During routine sampling if unsatisfactory results are found, the manufacturer, retailer or caterer will be notified of the results to discuss the proposed course of action.

### Review

This sampling policy, and any programme, guidance, or procedure issued thereunder, will be reviewed whenever there are substantial changes to the activities or legislation to which it relates.

The sampling programme will be reviewed and updated annually and as required to reflect local and national priorities.

If it is established that the sampling policy and programme are not being adhered to, the appropriate staff will be retrained and/or policy/programme reviewed to more accurately reflect the activities carried out.

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