

# News story: Government Chemist work regarding management of food allergens

The Government Chemist has a long standing interest in food allergy stemming from acknowledged difficulties in allergen analysis. Our interest focuses in three areas:

1. Metrologically traceable food allergen analysis (the science of ensuring allergen measurements correspond from one lab to another across the globe)
2. Resolution of analytical disputes about allergen measurement (referee cases)
3. Food allergen management – better to understand industry best practice so as to interpret allergen measurement results in the right context and offer advice to businesses, regulators, enforcement authorities and consumers on request.

We continue to contribute to knowledge transfer in these areas. Some examples of our recent work include speaking engagements to key audiences.

## **Food hypersensitivity post graduate module at Imperial College School of Medicine**

On 12 November 2018 [Michael Walker](#) gave an invited lecture on 'Food Allergy: Public Health Issues' to an audience of paediatricians, GPs and health care professionals. This was part of a post graduate module on Food Hypersensitivity delivered by Imperial College School of Medicine, St Mary's Hospital, London. The lecture covered:

- Food Allergen Regulation, Enforcement and Food Law
- Food labelling – allergen labelling
- Analysis of food for allergens
- Case Study – Almond or Mahaleb?

Michael quoted [Audry DunnGalvin and co-authors](#):

Targeting uncertainty should be a major goal for health professionals working with children, teens and families with a food allergy

Michael's aim in this lecture was better to equip medical professionals to advise their patients what to expect from food labelling and the information they should be provided with to help manage their allergies.

## **“Food allergy – human clinical and forensic implications” at the Institute of Global Food Security (IGFS)**

On 3rd December 2018 Michael took part in a seminar ‘Food Allergy – human, clinical, analytical and forensic implications’ at the Institute of Global Food Security (IGFS), Queen's University, Belfast. Organised by Dr Katrina Campbell of IGFS, this seminar mainly for MSc students in food safety brought together a spectrum of speakers.

Dr Hazel Gowland spoke on ‘Food Allergy: human impact and forensic implications’, Professor Clare Mills, University of Manchester described ‘Food Allergen Analysis in a Risk Assessment Context’ and Pauline Titchener, Neogen Europe Ltd, described ‘Commercial allergen diagnostics’. Michael's talk: ‘Complementary analysis for food allergens – the [almond/mahaleb story](#)’ described the resolution of several complex food recalls involving compromise of allergen test results by cross reactivity within the Prunus genus .

From left to right, Professor Chris Elliott, Dr Hazel Gowland, Professor Clare Mills, Dr Michael Walker, Professor Duncan Thorburn Burns

During the seminar for the first time all five authors of the [influential paper on potentially flawed allergen analysis](#) were in the same room.

## **Food labelling seminar at Campden BRI**

On 4 December 2018 Michael gave a talk: ‘Allergen labelling and regulation: Implications of UK Exit (and other things)’ at a Food Labelling Update Seminar at Campden BRI.

The ‘other things’ included remarks on the recent inquest on the death of a teenager after eating a baguette that was ‘prepacked for direct sale’, a form of labelling that legally permits food allergen information to be available orally on request rather than printed on the food label. The seminar, attended by over 70 food company representatives, was an opportunity to describe the Government Chemist approach to food allergy and engage in dialogue.

## **Improving metrological traceability**

Improvement in food allergen analysis in Official Control laboratories across the EU is being fostered by a cooperative analytical exercise called a ‘ring trial’ where labs analyse a matrix spiked with allergen and return their results for evaluation along with information on the methods they have used.

Organised by the Joint Research Centre, JRC, the European Commission's science and knowledge service, this ring trial will enable JRC to disseminate best practice advice to official labs. The Government Chemist is representing the UK in this exercise with analysis spearheaded by Malvinder Singh.

Malvinder Singh

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## **News story: Alert for charities – risk of CEO fraud through Christmas gift cards**

The information contained within this Alert is based on reports made to Action Fraud, the UK's national fraud reporting centre, and follows previous advice from the Commission about the threat from CEO fraud.

### **What Is CEO Fraud and how are gift cards used to perpetrate this?**

CEO fraud involves the fraudulent impersonation of a senior figure within a charity (often the Chief Executive Officer – CEO) with subsequent requests for the fraudulent transfers of funds by the charity to the fraudster's bank account (see the [Charity Commission's regulatory alert](#) dated 26/03/2018).

Action Fraud are reporting a new variation on this type of fraud whereby charities are targeted by fraudsters purporting to be the CEO (or a similar senior position within the charity) requesting that gift card vouchers be purchased for staff as a form of Christmas gift.

Once the vouchers have been purchased, the fraudster requests copies of the cards and their codes, allowing the fraudster to spend up to the value of the card.

Contact is typically made by email, usually from a spoofed or similar email address as the one the CEO or director of the charity would use.

### **What you need to do**

- ensure that you have robust processes in place to verify and corroborate all requests requiring a payment or transaction
- get in touch with the purported originator directly, using contact details you know to be correct, to confirm that the request you have received is legitimate
- all employees should be aware of these procedures and encouraged to challenge requests they think may be suspicious
- sensitive information you post publicly, or dispose of incorrectly, can

be used by fraudsters to perpetrate fraud against you. The more information they have about you, the more convincingly they can purport to be one of your legitimate employees – always shred confidential documents before throwing them away

## Reporting Fraud

If your charity has fallen victim to insider fraud, or any other type of fraud, you should report it to Action Fraud by calling 0300 123 2040, or by visiting [Action Fraud](#).

Charities affected by fraud should also report it to the Charity Commission as a serious incident, using the dedicated email address: [rsi@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:rsi@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk)

Serious incident reporting helps the Commission to assess the volume and impact of incidents within charities, and to understand the risks facing the sector as a whole. Where appropriate, the Charity Commission can also provide timely advice and guidance.

## Notes

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, is issuing this alert to charities as regulatory advice under section 15(2) of the Charities Act 2011.

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## [News story: Dstl's life saving work awarded at The Sun Military Awards](#)

The glamorous event held in London saw those from across the MOD, including The British Army, The Royal Navy and the RAF congratulated for their contribution to the Armed Forces.

Work carried out at Dstl by Immunology Fellow, Dr Roman Lukaszewski and his team won the Innovation category and accepted their trophy from actress Joely Richardson and journalist Mark Austin.

The new test, which can identify patients most likely to develop sepsis, was developed following more than a decade of work by Dstl and its partners, including the US Department of Defense. The test could one day be used on the frontline to save the lives of troops, and in hospitals in the UK and beyond.

Dr Lukaszewski said:

It was a really special night and a real honour for our work to be

recognised in such a public way. We have been working on this project for more than a decade and it's fantastic to be able to have a result which could one day save so many lives. It was also a privilege to be among so many truly inspirational members of our Armed Forces.

Dstl was also shortlisted in the innovation category for its role in the procurement of the Carbonite-2 demonstrator satellite, which is able to capture colour and full HD still imagery and full-motion video from space.

Among the famous guests included armed forces supporters, Gareth Southgate, Nick Knowles, Bear Grylls and Dame Kelly Holmes, all walking on the red carpet at the Banqueting House in London.

Dstl's Chief Executive, Gary Aitkenhead, who attended the awards, said:

It was an absolutely fantastic evening – to be at a national event that holds real prominence for the military, and indeed our people, who support the Armed Forces. Winning the innovation award for the sepsis breakthrough is just brilliant, I'm really proud of the team.

The awards will be shown on Forces TV with a 90 minute programme on the following channels: Freeview 96, Freesat 165, Sky 450 or Virgin 277, on Wednesday 19th December.

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## **Speech: PM press statement at European Council: 14 December 2018**

At this Council meeting, I have held a series of discussions with my fellow leaders on the Brexit deal and I was crystal clear about the assurances which are needed on the backstop having heard the views of MPs in the House of Commons.

I reiterated that it is in the interests of the EU as well as the UK to get this over the line. A disorderly Brexit would be good for no-one.

At 27 level, the EU have published a series of conclusions.

The EU made clear:

- that it is their firm determination to work speedily on a future relationship or alternative arrangements which ensure no hard border by

31 December 2020 so that the backstop will not need to be triggered.

- If the backstop was ever triggered, it would apply only temporarily and the EU would use its best endeavours to negotiate and conclude expeditiously a subsequent agreement that would replace the backstop.
- That the EU stands ready to embark on preparations so that negotiations on the future partnership can start as soon as possible.

As formal conclusions, these commitments have legal status and therefore should be welcomed.

As I have always said, the guaranteed way of avoiding the backstop is to have the future partnership in place by the time the implementation period is over. The EU is very firmly committed to this course.

But MPs will require further assurances, and I have discussed that this morning with my EU partners, including Presidents Tusk, Juncker and others.

I note there has been reporting that the EU is not willing to consider any further clarification. The EU is clear – as I am – that if we are going to leave with a deal this is it.

But my discussions with colleagues today have shown that further clarification and discussion following the Council's conclusions is in fact possible.

There is work still to do and we will be holding talks in coming days about how to obtain the further assurances that the UK Parliament needs in order to be able to approve the deal.

I say again. It is in the overwhelming interest of all our people – in the EU and the UK – to get this done, and as quickly as possible.

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## **News story: Appointments to the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council**

Sarah Newton, Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, is pleased to appoint 6 new members to the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC) from 1 November 2018. Five independent members have been appointed for 5 years and the sixth, an employer representative for 3 years.

Dr Lesley Rushton, IIAC Chair, said:

I am very pleased to welcome the new members who will bring extensive expertise and experience in several important areas which will be of great value to the future work of the Council.

The 5 new independent members are:

## **Prof Kim Burton**

Prof Kim Burton specialises in musculoskeletal occupational health research. He is an Associate Professor of Clinical Biomechanics at the British School of Osteopathy in London, and since 2015 has been an expert adviser to the government's Joint Work and Health Unit.

## **Prof John Cherrie**

Prof John Cherrie is currently Professor of Human Health at Heriot Watt University and Principal Scientist at the Institute for Occupational Medicine (IOM), having previously been a Research Director at the IOM. He has extensive specialist expertise in occupational hygiene and epidemiology, having worked on a number of epidemiological studies to investigate hazards and risks from exposure to chemicals and dusts, particularly in relation to occupational cancer. Currently, he is also a member of the Health and Safety's Workplace Health Expert Committee. Previously, he had been a member of both the Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) and the Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards (EPAQS). He was also an adviser to the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) on the science behind their "No time to lose" campaign to raise awareness of occupational cancer.

## **Dr Valentina Gallo**

Dr Valentina Gallo is a medically trained scientist with specific interest in neurodegenerative diseases and mental health disorders. She is a senior lecturer in Epidemiology at the Centre for Primary Care and Public Health at Bart's and The London School of Medicine, University of London. She is also an Honorary Associate Professor at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and an honorary lecturer in Epidemiology at Imperial College London School of Public Health.

## **Dr Max Henderson**

Dr Max Henderson is a clinician and academic in psychological medicine. He is a Consultant Liaison Psychiatrist at St James University Hospital in Leeds and co-founded the Occupational Psychiatry Special Interest Group in the Royal College of Psychiatrists and is its academic secretary. He was appointed to the Parliamentary Liaison Committee of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, was a member of the 2017 review into Mental Health and Employment by Lord Dennis Stevenson and Paul Farmer and a member of the Department for Work and Pensions and Department of Health Occupational Health Expert Group.

## **Dr Samuel (Chris) Stenton**

Dr Samuel (Chris) Stenton is currently a Locum Consultant Physician at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle upon Tyne and an Honorary Clinical Senior Lecturer at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Formerly, he had been a lecturer in Medicine and Senior Registrar (General and Occupational Medicine) and lecturer in Medicine and Honorary Clinical Registrar at the University.

The new employer representative is:

## **Dr Ian Lawson**

Dr Ian Lawson has been appointed to represent employers for 3 years. He is a retired occupational health physician, and formerly Rolls-Royce Chief Medical Officer. He has also been an honorary lecturer at the Royal Society of Public Health and a former President of the Society of Occupational Medicine and has particular expertise in Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome.