



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Subordinate Legislation: Food Standards

30 January 2020

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Committee for Health

Subordinate Legislation: Food Standards

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Colm Gildernew (Chairperson)
Mrs Pam Cameron (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Sinéad Bradley
Ms Paula Bradshaw
Mr Gerry Carroll
Ms Jemma Dolan
Mr Alex Easton
Ms Órlaithí Flynn

Witnesses:

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|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Ms Joy Cresswell | Food Standards Agency |
| Ms Sharon Gilmore | Food Standards Agency |

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): I welcome Ms Sharon Gilmore, who is head of standards and dietary health; and Ms Joy Cresswell, senior adviser, operational policy and delivery. I invite you to brief the Committee.

Ms Sharon Gilmore (Food Standards Agency): Thank you. I will give you a brief introduction to the Food Standards Agency (FSA). Joy will provide a technical response to the specific statutory rules (SRs) that are listed on the agenda.

The Food Standards Agency is a non-ministerial department that works across Northern Ireland, England and Wales to protect public health and consumers' wider interests in food. Our strategic aim is to make sure that food:

"is safe and what it says it is."

In Scotland, those functions are carried out by Food Standards Scotland. Officials use their expertise and influence so that people can trust that the food they buy is safe to eat, and honest. Our strategy recognises the growing challenges in food safety, affordability and security. It outlines our purpose and responsibilities, and the roles and responsibilities of others in meeting those challenges.

Our supporting strategic plan sets out proposed approaches to ensure that consumers are consistently protected, informed and empowered. Those approaches include using science, evidence and information to tackle the challenges of today and to identify and contribute to addressing emerging risks for the future; and using legislative and non-legislative tools effectively to protect interests and deliver consumer benefits.

The Food Standards Agency is governed by a board to act in the public interest, and is accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly through the Minister of Health. In Northern Ireland, the Food Standards Agency is responsible for devolved legislation and policy relating to food and feed safety; nutrition and dietary health; standards; food composition and labelling, including allergens.

Responsibilities of the FSA in Northern Ireland include advising Ministers on food safety and standards issues; developing food policy and proposing legislation; providing timely and effective responses to food and feed incidents; setting standards and auditing district councils' food enforcement activities; setting standards and auditing the delivery of official controls of meat hygiene, animal feed, eggs and milk hygiene and primary production, which are carried out by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on behalf of the FSA; encouraging food producers and caterers to reduce levels of saturated fat, salt and calories in food products; and giving public advice on diet, nutrition and food safety issues.

One of our key strategic priorities is food sensitivity and food allergens. Our strategic aim is to improve the quality of life of people living with food sensitivities, and to support them to make safe and informed choices to manage risk effectively. We know that the only treatment is to avoid these foods and that there is a growing and significant health issue in the United Kingdom. We are working on implementing new allergen rules to introduce full ingredient labelling of allergens in all prepacked-for-direct-sale food.

Another key priority is the food hygiene rating scheme, which rates food hygiene standards in food businesses where people eat or buy food. The 2016 Act means that, by law, a food business must display its rating sticker. The FSA runs this scheme, and district councils are responsible for inspecting and rating food premises in these areas.

Another key area, which I have mentioned, is the management of incidents. Where we believe that food is unsafe, businesses must take steps to remove the food and feed from the market and inform authorities. A large focus of our work in the last number of years has been on preparing for EU exit, and maintaining the high standard of food safety and consumer protection that we currently enjoy in Northern Ireland and across the United Kingdom.

We have a close working relationship with the Department of Health in Northern Ireland on public health agendas, specifically in relation to diet and nutrition. This includes programmes such as A Fitter Future for All, the obesity prevention strategy, which is a cross-government framework for preventing overweight and obesity across the life course. Our key strategic priorities are the reformulation of foods that are high in sugar, fat, calories and salt, and a reduction in the portion size and sales of such food. To do that, we work collaboratively across the UK and the Republic of Ireland, sharing insights and aligning on policy development where it is most appropriate in Northern Ireland; we develop and collect robust Northern-Ireland specific data on food consumption and food purchasing through the National Diet and Nutrition Survey; and we provide consumers with clear nutrition information to allow them to make informed choices, including front-of-pack signpost labelling.

We also have a close working relationship with DAERA whereby we have a service-level agreement that outlines the arrangements for the delivery of official controls relating to meat, milk, egg and primary production hygiene.

Finally, we have a close working relationship with the 11 district councils in Northern Ireland, which are the enforcement bodies for the majority of our food legislation.

Thank you, Chair and members. Joy will now go through the more technical responses to the SRs that are listed.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): Thank you.

Ms Joy Cresswell (Food Standards Agency): If it is OK, I will provide a very brief summary of the statutory rules that are before you. As Sharon said, we propose legislation, through the Department of Health, that covers the policy areas within the FSA's remit.

The statutory rules that are before the Committee today demonstrate the general nature of statutory rules that you will come across from the Food Standards Agency. To date, they have been mainly been to fulfil EU obligations, to provide enforcement for food and feed law, and to maintain the high degree of public health protection and informed consumer choice that we enjoy. Throughout the

development of policy and legislation, the FSA engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, and our statutory rules are subject to open and public consultation.

I have grouped the statutory rules into general policy areas. The Food (Miscellaneous Amendments and Revocations) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 amend the Fruit Juices and Fruit Nectars Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 and the Food Hygiene Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 to draw attention to EU legislation for food business operators and enforcers. It also makes some technical amendments and revocations to statutory rules in the food and feed law to correct out-of-date references to EU and domestic legislation and revoke expired or redundant provisions.

We have four statutory rules that relate to regulated products: bottled waters; novel foods; condensed milk and dried milk regulations; and jam and similar products.

The Natural Mineral Water, Spring Water and Bottled Drinking Water (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 made amendments to the principal 2015 regulations on those products to provide for the enforcement of an amendment to an EU directive on water quality.

The Novel Foods Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 were required to provide powers to enforce a new EU regulation on novel foods following a review. Novel foods are foods that have not had a significant history of consumption in the European Union before May 1997. Under EU law, they must be shown to be safe by means of a scientific assessment, and they must be authorised before they are placed on the market.

The Condensed Milk and Dried Milk Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018 consolidated the 2003 principal regulations and a further amendment that implemented EU directives on the compositional standards of those types of products. It also removed outdated references to the Food Labelling Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996. The 1996 regulations had transposed the EU directive on general food labelling requirements. However, that directive has been repealed and replaced by a new food information to consumer regulations in the European Union.

The Jam and Similar Products Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018 provide for the continuing implementation of a directive relating to those products intended for human consumption. It revokes the Jam and Similar Products Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003, which refer to out-of-date labelling requirements from the Food Labelling Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996.

Two statutory rules relate to food contact materials. The Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 provided for the enforcement of amendments to a Commission regulation on plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with food, and they amended the Materials and Articles in Contact with Food Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012. The EU regulation that relates to food contact materials is routinely amended to improve the clarity of rules and to keep up with technical innovations. Improving technical and scientific knowledge also enables experts in the European Food Safety Authority to evaluate and re-evaluate the risks arising from the migration of chemicals from food contact plastics into food. The Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018 also amended the 2012 principal regulations. This related to the use of bisphenol A (BPA) in varnishes and coatings that are intended to come in contact with food. This chemical substance is used in food contact materials, such as hard clear plastic, or in resins that are used as a protective lining inside some metal food and beverage cans. This EU regulation was adopted to set limits on the amount of BPA that can be used in food contact materials.

We have three statutory rules relating to food and feed safety. The Animal Feed (Basic Safety Standards) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018 transposed into Northern Ireland domestic law the revised EU basic safety standards directive that lays down basic safety standards in various areas around the protection from dangers arising from exposure to ionising radiation. The statutory rule applies that to animal feed. The Food Standards Agency has policy on animal feed because animal feed is consumed by food-producing animals, and it ensures that there are controls to ensure the safe production of food.

The Food Safety (Information and Compositional Requirements) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 provided continued enforcement for a regulation on food for special medical purposes, and for offences and penalties for breaching those EU rules. Food for special medical purposes is specialist food intended for the exclusive or partial feeding of people whose nutritional requirements for vitamins and minerals cannot be met by normal foods. The new regulation updated compositional and labelling rules for those foods, taking into account scientific developments and the new legislation

on food information to consumers. It also prohibits nutrition and health claims for those foods, to avoid the inappropriate promotion of the specialist products, which are for use under medical supervision, and it extends rules on pesticides that apply to infant formula and baby foods to these types of foods for special medical purposes, intended for infants and young children.

The Food Hygiene (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 amended the public health labelling provision in the Food Hygiene Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 to inform vulnerable consumers of the potential risks in the consumption of raw drinking milk. In Northern Ireland, there has been a public health labelling requirement on raw drinking milk. It stated that the milk had not been heat treated and therefore may contain organisms that were harmful to health. The Food Standards Agency believes that it is important to maintain good public health protection by extending the public health warning to vulnerable groups, and the additional statement to the required labelling on raw drinking milk now states:

"The Food Standards Agency strongly advises that it should not be consumed by children, pregnant women, older people or those who are unwell or have chronic illness."

The final three statutory rules — the Official Feed and Food Controls (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland 2019), the Meat (Official Controls Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and the Fishery Products (Official Controls Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 — relate to official controls. These three statutory rules give effect to a new Official Controls Regulation (EU) 2017/625 into Northern Ireland domestic legislation. This new EU regulation came into force in April 2017, but it has applied gradually over several years and was fully applicable from 14 December 2019. It establishes a single legislative framework for the organisation of official controls across the agri-food chain. Official controls include activity such as the audit and inspection of food businesses, ante- and post-mortem inspections in meat establishments, and the sampling of food and feed. These activities are carried out by competent authorities, and, in Northern Ireland, they are carried out by district councils and the Department of Agriculture on our behalf. These regulations were required so that existing enforcement powers and legislative powers to enforce food and feed safety laws could continue to be used by those competent authorities.

Thank you for your time. That is the end of my summary.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): Thank you. That was very detailed. It illuminated a number of issues for us, so thank you for that. The impact assessment on the official controls regulations highlighted a number of issues that were raised by stakeholders, including the time and costs involved in familiarisation, which the sector thought were being underestimated. They also had concerns about the port health officer's role and the role of environmental practitioners. I note, however, that these were addressed to some degree in the impact assessment, but it is unclear to what degree. How do the stakeholders feel about that now? Are there concerns outstanding?

Ms Cresswell: We have ongoing technical engagement with district councils and port health authorities. We took on board the familiarisation cost in the final impact assessment and increased the cost for enforcement officers. The official controls regulations have some changes, but a lot of things stay the same. We recognised that stakeholders needed time to read through that and come to the same understanding.

The other issue that they raised was about training. The Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland has an annual training programme, and we work with district councils on the identified training needs. We work with them to identify any needs, and, if there are needs in relation to the official controls regulations, we will include those in the programme that we run with them.

We will also work to provide guidance on the official controls regulations. The regulations will be subject to consultation and stakeholder engagement. We hope to do that in the future. I believe that the food law code of practice, which is the code of practice and the practice guidance for district councils, will be out for consultation, hopefully, in February, and we will be able to engage further with local authorities and district councils on that.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): Thank you. Some of the earlier ones — SRs 218, 219 and 220 — refer to a cost to a business of £40. Will you outline what a business is in that context? Is it a food producer? Is it down to farmer level? Is that £40 per regulation or per annum? Can you give us more context for those charges?

Ms Cresswell: Those charges relate to a business. Usually, it is up to a food manufacturer's quality control person to read and consider the regulations. Food businesses that come under the official controls regulations are throughout the agri-food chain, so it could be anyone from a primary producer — a farmer — right through to a food manufacturer.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): Is it likely to include every farmer, or is it more a farm business that is also a food manufacturer?

Ms Cresswell: It includes all food businesses. We consider primary producers — farmers — to be food businesses. However, we do not expect that to have a big impact on those types of business. The enforcement requirements are under the hygiene regulations; this is about official controls, which are undertaken by enforcement authorities. We expect that to have less of an impact.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): Finally from me, can you give any indication at this stage of how the regulations, and food standards more generally, are affected by the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020? I note that your document outlines that similar regulations to these are being introduced in England, Scotland and Wales. Bearing in mind that we live on an island and that there is an imperative here to have frictionless cross-border trade, what regulations are being considered in the Twenty-six Counties? In the time ahead, with Brexit and the withdrawal, will that be impacted?

Ms Cresswell: Those particular regulations are directly applicable now in all four nations and in the Republic of Ireland. So, they will continue to apply for us through the implementation period. In relation to the Northern Ireland protocol, we still consider that we will be applying these rules.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): Do you think that, moving forward, the regulation of food standards across all the regions will continue to run in harmony, or do you have concerns that there could be a divergence of standards?

Ms Cresswell: The Food Standards Agency is working with Food Standards Scotland and with the Food Standards Agency in England and Wales to endeavour to ensure that we comply with the visas as they stand.

Ms Gilmore: The four countries have very much been working together in the last two to three years to build common frameworks. These look across the breadth of the food and feed safety legislation for parallels and ways of working together to ensure that food standards and food safety is maintained whatever the future scenario.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): My concern is that we have a very strongly developed cross-border, all-island food production economy. What guarantees are there that those will remain in harmony and that there will not be divergence of standards, creating business and economic difficulties down the line?

Ms Gilmore: On the island of Ireland?

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): The island, yes.

Ms Gilmore: We await a steer from the centre on the Northern Ireland protocol and what effect that will have on Northern Ireland and the statute book. We are working with other Departments across the legislation, and it is our aim that our legislation here will continue to maintain those high standards and that they will be maintained throughout Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Mr Carroll: Thanks, Sharon and Joy for that. I have three quick questions. SR 2019/218 mentions border control posts. Will you comment on that and detail when the need for these would arise? My guess is that it would be in the midst of a health crisis, such as a BSE-type situation, but will you expand on that, please?

My understanding of point 78 on the impact assessment accompanying that legislation is that the legislation includes increased scope for goods that will be subject to harmonised import conditions. Can you detail how things will differ from how they are currently and what the changes will mean in practical terms?

Finally, the Chair mentioned the familiarisation costs. Some groups stated that they thought that those had been underestimated. Is there a concern at the low response to the consultation? In some cases, there were zero responses, and the highest might have been 30 or 40 respondents. Is there a concern that things might have been missed? Obviously, things can be missed. Is there a concern that there was not a high response to a consultation on something that will probably affect a lot of businesses and organisations?

Ms Cresswell: I will take each question in turn, if you do not mind. On border control posts, this official controls regulation brings together in a single framework a lot of official controls that were, historically, held in different EU regulations. For example, the border control posts were already in EU law under a different name and for different types of products. The border inspection posts (BIPs), for example, were for products of animal origin coming in through to the EU for release in free circulation, and those checks and controls were done. Also included were high-risk feed and foods that were identified from specific countries. Those were foods not of animal origin, and they also were subject to checks in a designated port of entry before entrance to the European Union. Those have been amalgamated into border control posts. Those posts already exist and will continue to do so. There has been quite a bit of harmonisation and consolidation around those checks.

Sorry, what was your second question?

Mr Carroll: No problem. It was about the import conditions. Point 78 of the impact assessment refers to an increased scope of goods and a harmonisation of import conditions. Can you give us a sense of how things would change?

Ms Cresswell: That is part of the consolidation and harmonisation. Obviously, the European legislation had a list of, for example, high-risk feed and food, which changes according to emerging risks from different countries. There is always scope for that to increase.

You mentioned your third question.

Mr Carroll: Yes, it was about consultation. The Chair made a point about familiarisation costs, and there was concern about that. Is there a concern that, generally speaking, there has been a low level of response to the consultation? Is there concern that people may have missed that it was happening and that, as a consequence, issues could arise that were not foreseen by the FSA?

Ms Cresswell: We received quite a few responses from a Northern Ireland perspective. We received 17, which is quite high for us, given that the consultation period was shortened and that we were implementing it in December. In relation to the familiarisation cost, the main response came from enforcement authorities, which deal with the official controls. They felt that they needed that extra time to familiarise themselves with that. We will be engaging with them on the guidance that comes out of the official controls, such as the Food Law Code of Practice and the practice guidance. We will also address anything in relation to training.

Mr Carroll: Finally, if you are made aware of issues regarding implementation, will the FSA be willing to speak to those organisations to run through them or to tease them out?

Ms Cresswell: Yes, we have an ongoing schedule of regular engagement with stakeholders; not only with the district councils but with industry. We regularly meet stakeholder industry groups, and we generally discuss things like this and their implications. It is likely that we will have another statutory rule to enact the further delegated regulations that may come under this very large EU regulation. So, there will be further consultation and engagement.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): Thank you very much for coming along and for that expert breakdown of the issues and for your direct answers to the questions.

Ms Gilmore: Thank you.

Ms Cresswell: Thank you.

Official Feed and Food Controls (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): This SR provides for the execution of powers and enforcement of the official controls regulations, Regulation (EU) 2017/625, on official controls and other activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products. Are members content that they do not have any further issues that they wish to raise in connection with the statutory rule?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): I ask members to agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2019/218, the Official Feed and Food Controls (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, has no objection to the rule.

Question put and agreed to.

Meat (Official Controls Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): These statutory regulations provide for the execution of powers and enforcement of the official controls regulations, Regulation (EU) 2017/625, on official controls and other activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products. Are members content that they do not have any further issues that they wish to raise in connection with the statutory rule?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): I ask members to agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2019/219, the Meat (Official Controls Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, has no objection to the rule.

Question put and agreed to.

Fishery Products (Official Controls Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): These statutory regulations provide for the execution of powers and enforcement of the official controls regulations, Regulation (EU) 2017/625, on official controls and other activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products. Are members content that they do not have any further issues that they wish to raise in connection with the statutory rule?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): I ask members to agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2019/220, the Fishery Products (Official Controls Charges) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, has no objection to the rule.

Question put and agreed to.

Natural Mineral Water, Spring Water and Bottled Drinking Water (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): These regulations amend the Natural Mineral Water, Spring Water and Bottled Drinking Water Regulations (NI) 2015 and implement Commission Directive (EU) 2015/1787 on the quality of water intended for human consumption. Are members content that they do not have any issues that they wish to raise in connection with the statutory rule?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): I ask members to agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2017/201, the Natural Mineral Water, Spring Water and Bottled Drinking Water (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, has no objection to the rule.

Question put and agreed to.

Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): These regulations amend the Materials and Articles in Contact with Food Regulations (NI) 2012 to provide for the continued enforcement of Commission Regulation (EU) 10/2011 on plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with food. Are members content that they do not have any issues that they wish to raise in connection with the statutory rule?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): I ask members to agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2017/157, the Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, has no objection to the rule.

Question put and agreed to.

Novel Foods Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): These regulations revoke and replace previous statutory rules to provide for the execution and enforcement of Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 regarding novel foods. The new regulations provide revised legislative requirements for placing foods on the market that do not have a history of consumption in the EU. Are members content that they do not have any further issues that they wish to raise in connection with the statutory rule?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): I ask members to agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2017/233, the Novel Foods Regulations (NI) 2017, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, has no objection to the rule.

Question put and agreed to.

Animal Feed (Basic Safety Standards) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): These regulations transpose article 21 of Council Directive 2013/59/Euratom on revised EU basic safety standards, laying down standards for protection against the dangers of exposure to ionising radiation as it applies to animal feed. Are members content that they do not have any issues that they wish to raise in connection with the statutory rule?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): I ask members to agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2018/16, the Animal Feed (Basic Safety Standards) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, has no objection to the rule.

Question put and agreed to.

Condensed Milk and Dried Milk Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): These regulations remove outdated references to food labelling regulations, introduce improvement notices providing for non-compliance and consolidate two earlier SRs, streamlining the regulations into one statutory rule. Are members content that they do not have any issues that they wish to raise in connection with the statutory rule?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): I ask members to agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2018/77, the Condensed Milk and Dried Milk Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, has no objection to the rule.

Question put and agreed to.

Jam and Similar Products Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): These regulations revoke and replace the 2003 regulations, correct out-of-date references to food labelling regulations and introduce notice provisions for non-compliance. Are members content that they do not have any further issues that they wish to raise in connection with the statutory rule?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): I ask members to agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2018/78, the Jam and Similar Products Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, has no objection to the rule.

Question put and agreed to.

Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): This SR provides for the enforcement of EU Commission Regulation (EU) 2018/213 on the use of bisphenol A (BPA) in varnishes and coatings intended to come into contact with food; and makes amendments regarding the use of BPA in plastic food contact materials. Are members content that they do not have any issues that they wish to raise in connection with the statutory rule?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): I ask members to agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2018/186, the Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, has no objection to the rule.

Question put and agreed to.

Food (Miscellaneous Amendments and Revocations) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): These regulations make amendments to a number of regulations relating to food and feed. These include regulations regarding raw materials and additives permitted in fruit juices and similar products and measures to benchmark and mitigate the amount of acrylamide in foods. Do members have any issues that they wish to raise in connection with this statutory rule?

Ms S Bradley: May I just make a point? It is not specific to this, but I am noting that, on many of these statutory rules, the consultation refers to one or no responses. It might be worth the Committee noting that. It may be that they are non-contentious issues and are not going to warrant a response, or it may be that there is a systemic failure in who is being reached. That may come to light if, after this period, we get communications, so it may be worth noting at this stage.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): Will you note that, Clerk? Thank you.

I ask members to agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2019/5, the Food (Miscellaneous Amendments and Revocations) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, has no objection to the rule.

Question put and agreed to.

Food Safety (Information and Compositional Requirements) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): This statutory regulation provides for the enforcement of EU delegated regulations regarding specific information and compositional requirements for food for special medicinal purposes. Are members content that they do not have any further issues that they wish to raise in connection with the statutory rule?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): I ask members to agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2019/9, the Food Safety (Information and Compositional Requirements) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, has no objection to the rule.

Question put and agreed to.

Food Hygiene (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): This statutory regulation amends labelling provisions for raw drinking milk to inform vulnerable consumers of the potential risks associated with its consumption. The labelling proposals will harmonise labelling requirements across NI, England and Wales. Are members content that they do not have any further issues that they wish to raise in connection with the statutory rule?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): I ask members to agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2019/110, the Food Hygiene (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, has no objection to the rule.

Question put and agreed to.