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For the majority of our caterers and retailers, the easiest way to comply is to use SFBB. But it is not sufficient to just complete the pack and then ignore it. To ensure ongoing compliance with the Regulations, you must continue to implement the Safe Methods, carry out the 'opening and closing' checks and four-weekly reviews and review the whole system regularly to ensure it is still applicable to your business. These checks must be recorded in the daily diary in order for you to demonstrate they are being done. This will also assist in providing you with a 'due diligence' defence should it be required. For example if we receive a complaint about your business, the records in your daily diary will help to demonstrate that you have been following your Safe Methods, and show how you have managed any problems that have occurred.

I've completed my documentation - now what do I need to do?

- Make sure your Safe Methods are being put in practice
- Keep the Diary up to date, including the 4-weekly reviews
- Train any new staff in the Safe Methods
- Review the whole system regularly

Although many food business operators have praised this system and commented on how easy it is to use, there are others who complain that they 'do not have time' to complete the diary daily. The opening and closing checks specified are not onerous - they are the type of checks that most proprietors would be doing anyway.

Firth's Focus

Welcome to the Spring 2008 edition of FoodWise



It's hard to believe that it's now more than two years since the new food hygiene regulations came into force. Since well before the 1st of January 2006 Babergh's Food and Safety Regulation team have been busy running seminars and workshops and helping businesses on a one-to-one basis to get to grips with the new requirement to produce a documented food safety management system.

I'm pleased to report that this has been a success, and the vast majority of our manufacturers, caterers and retailers now have a documented system in place. But getting a system up and running is only the beginning - it needs to continue to be at the centre of the food operation, as is explained by the article on pages 1-3 in this issue.

Staphylococcus aureus is one of the less well known food poisoning bacteria. This is probably because it causes a disease of a relatively short duration and so those affected do not visit their GPs. However, it is an unpleasant illness which is often caused by poor personal hygiene resulting in contamination of food. Turn to page 4 to find out how to make sure that your business is not the source of a Staphylococcus aureus outbreak.

How would you feel about the results of a food hygiene inspection of your business being made public? This is already happening in many local authorities across the UK and may well soon be the case in Babergh as we hope to launch our Scores on the Doors scheme later this year - see back page. The aim of course is to drive up standards of hygiene and enable the public to make an informed choice about where they wish to eat, but do you welcome such a scheme? Let us have your views on this or any other food safety matters at food.safety@babergh.gov.uk

