

**To: Heads of Environmental Health Service; Lead Food Officers,
Cc: SFELC, REHIS, SoCOEH**

ENF. Letter Ref: FSS/ENF/17/011

Dear Colleague,

Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS) returns 2016-17

I would like to inform you about the process for submitting data returns on your 2016/17 food law enforcement activity. These returns should be uploaded to LAEMS and signed off by the Head of Service by **31 May 2017 at the very latest**. Please contact the LAEMS team at laems@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk as soon as possible if you envisage any difficulties in meeting the deadline of **31 May 2017**. Advice and guidance to help is attached below in the Annex.

It is each LA's responsibility to ensure that their return is submitted by the above deadline and that the accuracy of the data has been validated prior to sign off. In previous years inaccurate data has been reported in some cases, or a number of LAs have submitted returns after our deadline, and this only following a significant amount of follow up action by FSS.

In recent years, where LAs have used UKFSS to record their sampling activity, we have attempted to reduce the administrative burden by using UKFSS to complete the sampling section of the LAEMS return. However, this has proved to be an increasingly resource intensive process, with inaccurate or incomplete information on UKFSS leading to many LAs questioning and amending the summary data sent to them for validation.

As a result, we will not be using UKFSS to produce the sample return for the 2016/17 LAEMS report and all LAs are asked to complete the sampling section of the LAEMS return.

The above two areas have resulted in significant delays in the publication of the data and our report on the UK summary. This year, we intend to publish our report by the end of July 2017 and, therefore, returns submitted either after the **31 May deadline**, or which contain inaccurate data may not be included in the published report.

Should local authorities fail to contact us or to submit their validated monitoring returns by the deadline of 31st May we will be notifying the relevant Chief Executive. Authorities will also be named as having failed to get performance data to us for inclusion in the 2016/17 Annual report on UK food law enforcement.

Important changes from 2017/18: As part of our commitment to deliver on the UK's legal obligations to publish data in a timely manner, FSS are changing the way local authority activity data is reported from 1st April 2017 for the period 2017/18 by using the Scottish National Database.

However, for the present reporting year 2016/17 each Local Authority will still require to complete their LAEMS return and thereafter will move onto the SND in a phased roll out. Further information on the timescale for transition from the FHIS UK Platform will be given in due course.

FSS are also intending to establish a Development Group, consisting of Local Authority representatives, with the function of governance of the SND and further assessing how the data can be used to influence performance standards and Food Law enforcement activity. Further details will be made available as soon as practicable.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



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Annex - Important information

Access to LAEMS

The LAEMS database can be accessed at <https://laems.foodapps.co.uk/>

Publication of 2016/17 data

Our aim is to publish the 2016/17 national report and individual local authority data earlier this year – by the end of **July 2017**. Should you wish to consult the 2015/16 statistics, the annual report and individual local authority statistics are available at:
www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/monitoring/laems/mondatabyyear/enforcement-data-2015-16

Guidance

Comprehensive guidance on the LAEMS process is available at
www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/enforcement/laemsguidance.pdf.

And a short LAEMS top tips document (revised January 2017) is available at
www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/laems-top-tips.pdf
which provides advice on preparing monitoring returns and reporting on LAEMS.

Creating new users/resetting passwords

Each LA has at least one LAEMS administrator who is able to manage other users' accounts, to create new users or re-set passwords – see the guidance for more information. Please **only** email the FSA's LAEMS team, remembering to **provide your user name and local authority (LA) code**, when your administrator is not available.

NTSB risk assessments for food standards

Food standards authorities that use the National Trading Standards Board (NTSB) for food standards risk assessments should submit their 'xml' files to
laems@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk prior to uploading.

Sampling/enforcement data

In recent years, where LAs have used UKFSS to record their sampling activity, we have attempted to reduce administrative burden by using UKFSS to complete the sampling section of the LAEMS return. However, this has proved to be an increasingly resource intensive process, with inaccurate or incomplete information on UKFSS leading to many LAs questioning and amending the summary data sent to them for validation. **As a result, we will not be using UKFSS to produce the sample return for the 2016/17 LAEMS report and all LAs are asked to complete the sampling section of the LAEMS return.**

Imported food data

Could LAs/PHAs inputting food hygiene and food standards returns on LAEMS please remember to also complete their imported food return on LAEMS. LAs/PHAs (both those with points of entry and inland) are reminded to enter enforcement action data relating to imported foods onto the imported food section of LAEMS as these data are not on UKFSS.

Guidance on completing your imported food return is available at:

www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/leamsimportsguidance.pdf.

Please note that if no imported food control data are submitted via LAEMS or UKFSS, the FSA will assume a nil return.

Further information or questions: If you experience any problems whilst uploading your LAEMS data, please e-mail: laems@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk