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Royal Highland Show first for Food Standards Scotland

New food body takes its messages to consumers with the help of Scottish Chef of the Year Adam Handling

Scottish Chef of the Year Adam Handling joined Food Standards Scotland to promote the new body's food safety and healthy eating messages to consumers for the first time on the opening day of the Royal Highland Show (18 June 2015).

The 2013 Masterchef finalist attracted large crowds to the organisation's new interactive stand, where along with Geoff Ogle, Chief Executive of FSS, he urged people to stop washing raw chicken to reduce the risk of contracting food poisoning bugs such as *Campylobacter*.

With a recent survey finding that one in four adults (26%) mistakenly believe washing chicken before it's cooked on a barbecue is the best way to ensure it is safe to eat, Food Standards Scotland is visiting the annual food and drink event to help raise awareness about easy and important food safety practices.

Foodborne illness causes around 43,000 infections, 5,800 GP visits and 500 hospital admissions across Scotland every year.

To help people eat safe this summer, Adam Handling helped Food Standards Scotland share its advice on the Four C's to drive home the key steps to safe barbecuing: Cleaning, Cooking, Chilling and avoiding Cross-contamination.

Speaking at the event, Adam Handling said: "There is no doubt that people in Scotland take an active interest in the food they eat but information on labelling, maintaining a healthy, balanced diet and preparing food safely can be confusing. That's why I fully support Food Standards Scotland which is working hard to promote clear and reliable information about food.

"As a professional chef, I understand how important the Four C's safety tips are, whether you're preparing food in a restaurant, cooking at home or on the barbecue. Following some really straightforward advice helps reduce food poisoning, which no-one wants at any time of year. Not everyone's aware that you shouldn't wash raw poultry before you cook it, and it's really important to always wash utensils and chopping boards after use and most importantly wash your hands thoroughly throughout."

Dozens of visitors including school children took part in a number of food demonstrations aimed at helping them make safe and healthier choices. Interactive games including an innovative hand-washing unit where visitors to the stand can test their technique under an ultraviolet light to check where harmful bacteria might lurk unseen have also proven popular at the event.

Chief Executive of Food Standards Scotland, Geoff Ogle added: “Adam’s visit has been a great boost for us as it helps us raise awareness of the vital importance of preparing and cooking food safely – indoors and out.

“Food Standards Scotland is committed to working in partnership with the food industry and chefs such as Adam to reach as many people as possible to let them know about the simple yet effective things they can do to help them work towards a balanced, healthy diet and to reduce the risk of food poisoning to them and their families.”

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Picture caption: Scottish Chef of the Year Adam Handling and Geoff Ogle cut the ribbon to officially open the new stand for Food Standards Scotland.

Scottish Chef of the Year Adam Handling and Geoff Ogle promote healthy eating to young children at the Royal Highland Show.

Notes to Editors:

In Scotland, there are approximately 43,000 infections, 5,800 GP visits and 500 hospital admissions caused by food borne diseases annually. Source: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/food-safety-standards/foodborne-illness>

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,042 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 3rd - 4th June 2015. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Scottish adults (aged 18+).

Adam Handling’s culinary journey started at Gleneagles where he was the first ever trainee chef, he then went on to become Fairmont’s youngest ever Head Chef, culminating in winning Scottish Young Chef of the Year 2011. Adam was a finalist in

MasterChef: The Professionals in 2013 and is the British Culinary Federation's Chef of the Year 2014.

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Four Cs:

- **Cleaning** - Keep yourself and your kitchen clean by washing and drying your hands thoroughly before preparing food, after touching raw food, especially meat and after going to the toilet. Make sure you keep worktops, chopping boards and utensils clean.
- **Cooking** - Germs such as Campylobacter, Salmonella and *E. Coli* O157 are waiting to strike at any time. However, they can be killed by thorough cooking. Always follow the instructions on the label and check your food is steaming hot in the middle.
- **Chilling** - Stop germs growing by keeping them cold. Make sure you put the right foods in the fridge – look out for a 'use by' date or 'keep refrigerated' on the label. Your fridge is a weapon in the battle against germs, but it must be used effectively.
- **Cross contamination** - This is one of the major causes of food poisoning. There are a few simple things you can do to help stop it happening: keep raw meat and unwashed vegetables separate from ready-to-eat food during storage and preparation, don't let raw meat drip onto other food – keep it in sealed containers at the bottom of your fridge. Never use the same chopping board for raw meat and ready-to-eat food without washing the board (and knife) thoroughly in between and don't wash meat before cooking it.

Food Standards Scotland

- Food Standards Scotland (FSS) was established on 1 April 2015 by the Food (Scotland) Act 2015 as a non-ministerial office, part of the Scottish Administration, alongside, but separate from, the Scottish Government.
- FSS is mainly funded by government, with a budget of £15.7m agreed within the Food (Scotland) Act 2015, but also charges fees to recover costs for regulatory functions.
- The organisation is based in new premises in Aberdeen, and has approximately 150 office and field-based staff.

- The primary concern of FSS is consumer protection – making sure that food is safe to eat, ensuring consumers know what they are eating and improving nutrition. FSS's stated vision is to deliver a food and drink environment in Scotland that benefits, protects and is trusted by consumers.
- The objectives of FSS as set out in the Food (Scotland) 2015 Act are to:
 - Protect public from risks to health which may arise in connection with the consumption of food
 - Improve the extent to which members of the public have diets which are conducive to good health
 - Protect the other interests of consumers in relation to food