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**Operation of the  
Advisory Inspector Service  
and Analysis of Results  
April 1982 - April 1983**

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**June 1983**

OPERATION OF THE ADVISORY INSPECTION SERVICE & ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

April 1982 - April 1983

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SEA FISH INDUSTRY AUTHORITY  
Industrial Development Unit

Technical Report No. 214

June, 1983

OPERATION OF THE ADVISORY INSPECTION SERVICE  
AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS  
April 1982 - April 1983

SUMMARY

The Advisory/Inspection Service of the Sea Fish Industry Authority has now completed its fifth successive year of operation under contract to the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS).

Each of the 14 hospital regions in England was visited for a one week period. Additional one week visits were made to different districts in the two largest regions, i.e. West Midlands and Yorkshire, making a total of 16 visits.

As a result of these visits 722 samples of fish were collected from a total of 371 hospitals and assessed according to the criteria outlined in the WFA/Torry Purchase Specifications.

Seventy two samples were found to be outside the recommended minimum quality standards. This represents a failure rate of 10.0% which is an increase on the figure of 8.0% recorded in the year 1981/82, although similar to the years 80/81 and 79/80.

Two one week visits were made to Scotland, where 58 samples were collected from 40 hospitals. Five of these samples were judged to be below the minimum standard ordered, representing a failure rate of 8.3%.

Catering staff should understand that a deep freeze merely retards spoilage and frozen food does not keep for an indefinite period. Correct stock rotation is essential if good standards are to be maintained.

(ii)

Wales also received two one week visits and 42 hospitals yielded 70 samples. Three of these samples were outside the levels laid down in the specifications - a failure rate of 4.3%. No corresponding visits were made to Wales or Scotland in the previous year.

Author: D. Harrison

SEA FISH INDUSTRY AUTHORITY  
Industrial Development Unit

TECHNICAL REPORT No. 214

JUNE, 1983

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AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS  
April 1982 - April 1983

1. INTRODUCTION

The Advisory/Inspection Service of the Sea Fish Industry Authority has now completed its fifth successive year of operation under contract to the Department of Health and Social Security. All the hospital regions in England were visited and fish from selected hospital examined. The fish quality is assessed against standards laid down in the WFA/Torry Purchase Specifications.

Visits were also made this year to Wales and Scotland on behalf of the Welsh Health Technical Services Organisation and the Scottish Home and Health Departments respectively.

Fees paid were:	England	£18,445	(inc. VAT @ 15%)
	Wales	£ 2,560	(inc. VAT @ 15%)
	Scotland	£ 2,951	(inc. VAT @ 15%)

Reports on the findings were submitted to the DHSS and the regional supplies officer. Each supplier is provided with a copy of the data concerning his particular fish. A copy has also been forwarded, this year, to the Supplies Department of the West Midlands Regional Health Authority, whose staff have the overall responsibility for all major provisions contracts.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DIVISION OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES  
1957

MEMORANDUM

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FROM: [Illegible]

SUBJECT: [Illegible]

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2. RESULTS

TABLE 1  
ADVISORY/INSPECTION SERVICE RESULTS  
YEAR 1982/83

REPORT No	DATE	R.H.A.	HOSPITALS	SAMPLES	FAILURES	%FAILURES
5002	June 82	Wessex	18	39 (2)	5 (0)	12.8 (0)
5003	June 82	N.E. Thames	23	59 (7)	5 (1)	8.5 (14.3)
5004	July 82	Trent	30	51 (27)	8 (3)	16.0 (11.1)
5006	July 82	Yorkshire	33	56 (12)	12 (3)	21.4 (25.0)
5007	Aug 82	Yorkshire	15	26 (5)	2 (0)	7.7 (0)
5008	Sept 82	Northern	23	42 (25)	4 (4)	9.5 (16.0)
5013	Nov 82	W. Midlands	22	50 (24)	5 (2)	10.0 (8.3)
5014	Nov 82	S. Western	10	20 (20)	2 (1)	10.0 (5.0)
5015	Nov 82	N.W. Thames	20	45 (26)	4 (4)	8.9 (15.4)
5017	Feb 83	Oxford	28	55 (9)	4 (1)	7.3 (11.1)
5018	Feb 83	East Anglia	26	52 (13)	2 (3)	3.8 (23.1)
5019	Mar 83	S.E. Thames	17	33 (14)	5 (3)	15.2 (21.4)
5020	Mar 83	N. Western	36	75 (12)	7 (4)	9.3 (33.3)
5021	Mar 83	Mersey	20	35 (5)	2 (0)	5.7 (0)
5023	Apr 83	W. Midlands	23	37 (39)	5 (4)	13.5 (10.2)
5024	Apr 83	S.W. Thames	27	47 (44)	0 (1)	0 (2.3)
TOTALS			371	722 (284)	72 (34)	10.0 (12.0)
<u>SCOTLAND</u>						
5010	Sept 82	Gtr Glasgow	21	32 (5)	2 (0)	6.3 (0)
5011	Oct 82	Lanarkshire/ Lothian & Forth Valley	19	26 (2)	3 (0)	11.5 (0)
TOTALS			40	58 (7)	5 (0)	8.3 (0)
<u>WALES</u>						
5012	Oct 82	N. Wales	20	36 (7)	2 (3)	5.6 (42.8)
5016	Dec 82	S. Wales	22	34 (13)	1 (0)	2.9 (0)
TOTALS			42	70 (20)	3 (3)	4.3 (15.0)

N.B. Figures in brackets refer to samples assessed more than one week subsequent to delivery

TABLE 2  
OVERALL SAMPLE FAILURE RATE ON A REGIONAL BASIS

REGION	1982/83		% FAILURE RATE							
	No. OF SAMPLES ASSESSED	No. OF SAMPLES OUT OF SPEC	82/83	81/82	80/81	79/80	78/79			
S.W. Thames	47 (44)	0 (1)	0 (2.3)	4.3 (5.8)	5.7	1.5	26.0			
East Anglia	52 (13)	2 (3)	3.8 (23.1)	14.8 (16.9)	2.1	2.9	24.4			
Mersey	35 (5)	2 (0)	5.7 (0)	0 (1.8)	15.4	17.4	20.0			
Oxford	55 (9)	4 (1)	7.3 (11.1)	12.1 (14.1)	6.3	10.5	0			
N.E. Thames	59 (7)	5 (1)	8.5 (14.3)	6.1 (5.9)	10.2	13.9	25.6			
N.W. Thames	45 (26)	4 (4)	8.9 (15.4)	0 (4.0)	7.3	6.5	13.6			
North Western	75 (12)	7 (4)	9.3 (33.3)	3.2 (2.7)	21.1	6.9	21.6			
Northern	42 (25)	4 (4)	9.5 (16.0)	10.2 (5.1)	12.0	15.0	7.5			
South Western	20 (20)	2 (1)	10.0 (5.0)	8.5 (11.8)	-	14.6	17.9			
West Midlands	87 (63)	10 (6)	11.5 (9.5)	3.7 (3.8)	16.1	13.6	5.8			
Wessex	39 (2)	5 (0)	12.8 (0)	5.5 (7.3)	25.0	0	29.3			
S.E. Thames	33 (14)	5 (3)	15.2 (21.4)	12.5 (15.2)	1.7	32.4	28.9			
Trent	51 (27)	8 (3)	16.0 (11.1)	3.2 (5.4)	6.0	12.1	27.3			
Yorkshire	82 (17)	14 (3)	17.1 (17.6)	17.3 (18.3)	8.5	9.8	17.6			
	722 (284)	72 (34)	10.0 (12.0)	8.0 (9.1)	10.8	10.6	19.1			

N.B. Figures in brackets refer to samples assessed more than one week subsequent to delivery.



TABLE 3a

BREAKDOWN OF RESULTS - SUPPLIERS 1982/3

A. MAJOR SUPPLIERS (OVER 50 SAMPLES ASSESSED 1982/3)

SUPPLIER	AIS YEAR	No. OF SAMPLES ASSESSED	No. OF SAMPLES OUT OF SPEC	% OUT OF SPEC	No. OF REGIONS SUPPLIED	REGIONS SUPPLIED 1982/83
CASE & SONS	82/83	207	27	13.0	7	Oxford
	81/82	23	1	4.3	2	Wessex
	80/81	110	15	13.6	4	W. Midlands
	79/80	22	0	0	2	N.E. Thames
	78/79	52	14	26.9	2	N.W. Thames S.E. Thames S. Western S. Wales
YOUNGS	82/83	195	7	3.6	8	Oxford
	81/82	113	6	5.3	4	Wessex
	80/81	19	1	5.3	3	East Anglia
	79/80	68	1	1.5	1	West Midlands
	78/79	1	0	0	1	N.E. Thames S.W. Thames S. Western S. Wales
ROSSFISH	82/83	56	3	5.4	6	Oxford
	81/82	116	13	11.2	5	Yorkshire
	80/81	105	10	9.5	6	West Midlands
	79/80	41	0	0	4	S.E. Thames
	78/79	72	15	20.8	7	Forth Valley Lanarkshire
KILTIE	82/83	69	7	10.1	3	N. Western
	81/82	65	1	1.5	3	Mersey
	80/81	95	14	14.7	3	Trent
	79/80	21	3	14.3	3	
	78/79	-				
TOTALS (Major Supplies)	82/83	527	44	8.3		
	81/82	538	48	8.9		
	80/81	379	37	9.8		
	79/80	298	28	9.4		
	78/79	332	72	21.7		

TABLE 3b

B. INTERMEDIATE SUPPLIERS (BETWEEN 10 AND 50 SAMPLES ASSESSED 1982/83)

\* insufficient samples for significance

SUPPLIER	AIS YEAR	No. OF SAMPLES ASSESSED	No. OF SAMPLES OUT OF SPEC	% OUT OF SPEC	No. OF REGIONS SUPPLIED	REGIONS SUPPLIED 1982/83
EVERFRESH	1982/83	44	2	4.5	2	Mersey N. Wales
	81/82	3	0	0	1	
	80/81	-				
	79/80	-				
	78/79	-				
LION	1982/83	43	6	14.0	3	Trent N.E. Thames N.W. Thames
	81/82	163	10	6.1	7	
	80/81	120	10	8.3	4	
	79/80	140	21	15.0	7	
	78/79	237	53	22.4	10	
CHALDUR	1982/83	31	4	12.9	1	Northern
	81/82	31	4	12.9	2	
	80/81	24	4	16.7	1	
	79/80	27	4	14.8	2	
	78/79	1	0	*	1	
VINCENT SORGE	1982/83	25	6	24.0	2	Yorkshire Northern
	81/82	5	1	20.0	2	
	80/81	7	0	0	2	
	79/80	1	0	*	1	
	78/79	2	0	*	1	
CHAS NAYLOR	1982/83	24	6	25.0	1	Yorkshire
	81/82	81	18	22.2	1	
	80/81	40	2	5.0	1	
	79/80	28	3	10.7	1	
	78/79	22	4	18.2		
J SYKES	1982/83	22	2	9.1	1	N. Western
	81/82	19	1	5.3	1	
	80/81	17	0	0	1	
	79/80	21	0	0	1	
	78/79	15	2	13.3	1	

B. INTERMEDIATE SUPPLIERS (BETWEEN 10 AND 50 SAMPLES ASSESSED 1982/83)

\* insufficient samples for significance

SUPPLIER	AIS YEAR	No. OF SAMPLES ASSESSED	No. OF SAMPLES OUT OF SPEC	% OUT OF SPEC	No. OF REGIONS SUPPLIED	REGIONS SUPPLIED 1982/83
CORRIGAN	1982/83	18	3	12.5	2	Lanarkshire Forth Valley
J.H. McPHEE	1982/83	14	2	14.3	2	Lanarkshire Forth Valley
W. SPROSTON	1982/83	13	0	0	1	N.E. Thames
	81/82	17	1	5.9	2	
	80/81	15	3	20.0	2	
	79/80	22	3	13.6	2	
	78/79	24	5	20.8	2	
J. LIPSCOMBE	82/83	11	1	9.1	1	N.E. Thames
F. SMALES	1982/83	11	1	9.1	1	Yorkshire
	81/82	11	0	0	1	
	80/81	4	1	*	1	
	79/80	-	-			
	78/79	-	-			
J. MARR	1982/83	11	0	0	2	Northern N. Western
	81/82	17	0	0	2	
	80/81	24	7	29.0	2	
	79/80	45	6	13.3	4	
	78/79	12	4	33.3	2	
TOTALS	82/83	267	33	12.4		
(Intermediate Suppliers)	81/82	174	10	5.7		
	80/81	197	30	15.2		
	79/80	140	13	9.2		
	78/79	105	25	23.8		

TABLE 3c

C. MINOR SUPPLIERS (LESS THAN 10 SAMPLES ASSESSED 1982/83)

\* insufficient samples for significance

SUPPLIER	AIS YEAR	No. OF SAMPLES ASSESSED	No. OF SAMPLES OUT OF SPEC	% OUT OF SPEC	No. OF REGIONS SUPPLIED	REGIONS SUPPLIED 1982/83
HEDGES FROZEN FOODS	1982/83	6	1	*	2	Trent Yorkshire
CATERFROST	1982/83	6	0	*	1	Forth Valley
POLAR FOODS	1982/83	6	0	*	1	Lanarkshire
SIDWELL & KAYE	1982/83	5	0	*	1	West Midlands
HALSTONES	1982/83	4	0	*	1	Forth Valley
SILVER FISH SUPPLY	1982/83	4	0	*	1	N. Western
FRESHCOLD	1982/83	3	2	*	1	Trent
WM AGNEW	1982/83	3	0	*	1	Forth Valley
COOL FOODS	1982/83	2	0	*	2	Lanarkshire Forth Valley
WM BENNETT	1982/83	2	0	*	2	Yorkshire
	1981/82	2	0	*	2	Northern
BRAKE BROS	1982/83	2	1	*	2	Oxford
	81/82	5	0	*	2	S.E. Thames
	80/81	2	0	*	1	
DALES	1982/83	2	0	*	1	Mersey
	81/82	8	0	*	1	
A. BACRAC	1982/83	1	0	*	1	N.E. Thames
MICHAEL HOLDSWORTH	1982/83	1	0	*	1	Trent

C. MINOR SUPPLIERS (LESS THAN 10 SAMPLES ASSESSED 1982/83)

\*insufficient samples for significance

SUPPLIER	AIS YEAR	No. OF SAMPLES ASSESSED	No. OF SAMPLES OUT OF SPEC	% OUT OF SPEC	No. OF REGIONS SUPPLIED	REGIONS SUPPLIED 1982/83
S.J. MARREN	1982/83	1	0	*	1	Trent
MENUMASTER	1982/83	1	0	*	1	Northern
	81/82	1	0	*	1	
	80/81	1	0	*	1	
	79/80	8	1	*	4	
	78/79	12	0	*	2	
REGAL SEA FOODS	1982/83	1	0	*	1	Northern
	81/82	5	0	*	1	
ASHFORDS	1982/83	1	0	*	1	West Midlands
FLEMMING	1982/83	1	0	*	1	Forth Valley
DICK CROWDY	1982/83	1	0	*	1	West Midlands
CATERING PROD UNIT & NEWC. AREA STORES	1982/83	3	0	*	1	Northern
TOTALS	1982/83	56	4	7.1		
	81/82	46	3	6.5		
	80/81	131	11	8.4		
	79/80	61	5	8.2		
	78/79	46	1	2.2		
COMBINED TOTALS - GROUPS A, B AND C						
	1982/83	850	81	9.5		
	81/82	758	61	8.0		
	80/81	707	78	11.0		
	79/80	499	46	9.2		
	78/79	483	98	20.2		

### 3. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The following comments are based on information gathered by the AIS during the 1982/83 contract period.

It must be stressed that these observations and any conclusions derived from them relate to samples collected at random from a large number of hospitals, most of which will only have been visited once during the contact period. They must therefore be regarded as an indication of the situation at a particular hospital at a specific point in time. The fact that samples are collected throughout the country however does provide a very good picture of the overall situation in the United Kingdom.

The number of samples assessed from each region varied and thus the smaller the sample size, the greater the effect, percentage wise, for each individual failure. Similarly where a merchant is supplying a small number of samples, failures have a considerable effect in percentage terms.

#### 3.1 Sample Failure Rate

The failure rate of samples assessed in 1982/83 had risen slightly from 8.0% to 10.0%. The number of regions with a failure rate higher than 10% was 5; the same as 1981/82.

#### 3.2 Regional Variation in Sample Failure Rate

Two regions, S.W. Thames and East Anglia recorded failure rates of less than 5%; the former maintaining a good record established over the past three years, and the latter showing a dramatic improvement on the 14.8% figure achieved in 1981/82.

A further 7 regions had a failure rate of 10% or below. Yorkshire maintained its position at the foot of the table with a failure rate of 17.1% compared to 17.3% in 1982/83.

### 3.3 Suppliers

These have been divided into three groups:-

- A. Those from whom more than 50 samples were assessed
- B. Those with between 10 and 50 samples assessed
- C. Those with less than 10 samples assessed

Because of the small number of samples obtained from suppliers in group C, the percentage failure rate is not recorded, being of little value.

#### 3.3.1 Major Suppliers (Group A)

Unfortunately in elevating Cases' status from intermediate to major suppliers, the failure rate had increased from 4.3% to 13.0%.

Both Youngs and Rossfish showed improvement when compared to 1981/82 but Kilties failure rate increased considerably from 1.5% to 10.1%.

It is interesting to note that the Lion Fishing Company which usually figures prominently in this group has been relegated to the status of intermediate supplier.

The overall failure rate for the group was 8.3% compared to 8.9% in 1981/82.

#### 3.3.2 Intermediate Suppliers (Group B)

Care should be taken when examining the results from suppliers in this section as a difference of one failure can be significant when viewed on a percentage basis.

The Lion Fishing Company, which last year was one of the major suppliers, showed an increase in the number of failures from 6.1% to 14%.

Vincent Sorge and Chas Naylor recorded poor figures of 24% and 25.0% failures respectively.

Sproston and Marr showed dramatic improvement compared to last year. Neither firms products registered a failure compared to a 20% + figure last year.

### 3.3.3 Minor Suppliers (Group C)

Insufficient samples were encountered from companies in this group for percentage failure rates to be meaningful. Only 4 samples from 3 of the 21 firms were found to be outside the specification standards.



#### 4. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Whilst the overall standards of handling practice were generally good, there is still room for improvement in certain areas.

On numerous occasions, both catering and supplies staff were uncertain as to the actual delivery dates of certain batches of fish, and it was obvious that some samples had remained in deep freeze for many months.

It should be made clear to caterers that deep freezes are merely retarding spoilage and correct stock rotation is essential if good standards are to be maintained.

It should also be remembered that regardless of the nature of the consumer all efforts should be made to ensure that the quality of fish delivered does not fall below the minimum standard as laid down in the specifications. One large hospital visited, whose patients were mainly mentally subnormal or geriatric, stocked frozen fish of extremely poor quality. It consisted of frozen pieces of whole fish and fillets mixed indiscriminately and purchased at a "bargain" price. The catering officer concerned was of the opinion that as all the fish served to his customers had to be minced first, there was little point in paying a premium for good quality, and his bargain buy was perfectly acceptable. Needless to say the quality of this fish was appalling and one would suspect that the amount rejected after cooking, would be considerable.

A number of cases of substitution were discovered - usually whiting in place of haddock. Whereas there may be no price differential at certain times of the year, and either species is acceptable to the caterer, the onus is on the supplier to ensure that his containers are labelled with the correct species.

#### 4.1 Operation of the A.I.S.

Unfortunately as in previous years similar problems were again presented to the AIS during the series of visits made in 1982/83.

- a) Inaccurate information as to delivery dates. The efficiency of the service is impaired considerably if time is wasted travelling to hospitals whose fish is delivered on a day different to the one shown on the list supplied to the AIS. Whilst the request to telephone in advance may sound simple, a typical 10 minute telephone call to 30 hospitals represents some 5 hours, and this time would have to be lost from sample collection and assessment. In one case the list supplied was two years out of date! Could the supplies department please check the accuracy therefore of the lists they provide.
- b) Although the requirements for a 30 amp power supply and the consequent requirement for a trained electrician, is stressed before each visit; occasions still arise when the selected site offers no such facility. Hopefully this problem will be alleviated with the request that the name of the hospital engineer be provided to the AIS prior to the visit. He will be contacted before the team arrives to ensure that the required services do exist.
- c) Whilst the importance of security is understandable, the reluctance of some catering managers to release samples has caused considerable delays on more than one occasion. Steps have been taken to resolve this problem by asking the supplies department to provide a letter of authorisation to the AIS, prior to their visit.

5. CONCLUSIONS FOR 1982/83

- 5.1 There has been little change overall in the quality of fish supplied to hospitals in the U.K.
- 5.2 Whilst 9 regions in England could be considered reasonable, with failure rates of 10% or less, a closer look should be taken at the 5 regions whose failure rate was in excess of 10%. Yorkshire is particularly disappointing, coming at the foot of the "league table" for the second year in succession.
- 5.3 Both Youngs and Rossfish, as major suppliers, showed good results with failure rates of 3.6 and 5.4% respectively; both having improved since last year.
- 5.4 Whilst the quest for good value is to be commended, the practice of buying poor quality fish because it is cheap is false economy as much of this fish is rejected by the consumers. It should be remembered that in general, one gets what one pays for.
- 5.5 The efficiency of the AIS could be improved considerably if more attention were paid by the hospitals to the supply of accurate delivery dates, and the provision of technical services as requested.

D. Harrison