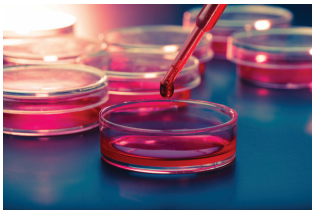
FCS FOOD CONSULTING SERVICES

NEWSLETTER

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LEGIONELLA OUTBREAK

An outbreak of Legionnaires' disease in New York—the largest in the city's history—has left at least 12 people dead and health officials scrambling to contain the deadly bacteria.

“More than 100 cases have been reported in the South Bronx, one of the city's poorest neighbourhoods. Officials have traced the *Legionella* bacteria to cooling towers in more than a dozen buildings”.

"The elderly are especially at risk from this form of pneumonia”.

"All but one of the 12 victims was older than 40 years old and all of them had underlying health problems. Cleaning crews have been dispatched across the Bronx to kill the bacteria. The disease is not transmitted person to person. It is primarily spread via air conditioning and similar systems.”

Source BBC. Follow the link to get the full story http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-33856450

The article above shows that *Legionella* infection is a reality, and can happen seemingly out of nowhere. The actual case here, is most likely a build-up of germs over time, where the risks were ignored or unattended. As with food safety in the kitchen, an active management system is needed in order to prevent such concerns from occurring. As the investigation continues, the liable parties will have an irreparably-damaged image, never mind the legal ramifications relating to negligence.

Food Consulting Services have risk evaluation and control programmes that have been developed in accordance with the requirements of the European Legionnaires' Disease Surveillance Network (ELDSNet), who focus on travel-associated Legionnaires disease.

Our *Legionella* audit programme has been established to help you identify and minimise the risks which would allow *Legionella* to proliferate in your water system, and also to help you in complying with the above requirements.

For further information on how FCS can help reduce the risk of *Legionella* infection, and ensure compliance, please contact one of our professional consultants.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO ASSIST THE *LEGIONELLA* MANAGEMENT TEAM

1. *Any dead ends in the water system must be eliminated. The water stagnates, which creates an ideal breeding ground for* Legionella *and other bacteria.*

2. *Any major maintenance projects performed on the hot water system must be followed-up with flushing out of the hot water system with at least 50mg/litre chlorine or raising the hot water temperature to 80ºC.*

3. *All documents that must be signed off by various parties should ideally be updated once per year and signed by each party again to ensure all people are aware of their responsibilities at all times. This includes information memos, appointment letters and secondary staff member training.*

FOOD TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Bacteria grow most easily between temperatures of 5^{o} and 65 ^{o}C, which is referred to as the 'Bacterial Temperature Danger Zone'. All efforts must be made to keep foods out of this temperature range. Temperatures between 20^{o} and 45^{o}C are particularly critical and support the most rapid growth of bacteria. We highlight this critical zone as an additional critical non-conformance on our audit.

In its simplest form, managing temperature control, means keeping foods outside this range at all times. The R962 legal requirements insist that all hot foods be kept above 65^{o}C and all very high-risk cold foods be kept at 4^{o}C or below, whilst any other cold food must be below 7^{o}C .

High cooking temperatures are not the "be all and end all" of food safety, but form one of the five pillars of food safety. If one pillar falls, the food safety structure collapses.

In reality, what this means is that display temperatures, cooking, cooling and reheating practices all have to be monitored, and that a standard operating procedure should be written and adhered to, at all times.

All raw meats must be cooked to a minimum core temperature that is sufficient to kill any bacteria present. This is usually a temperature of 70^{o}C for 10 minutes. Quicker cooking times demand higher temperatures.

Once cooked, all hot foods must be maintained at a minimum of 65^{o}C at all times.

If these hot foods are to be kept for later or there are left overs that are to be stored for the following service there are procedures that need to be adhered to and monitored.

Hot foods may be cooled to a temperature of 46^{o}C (time frames vary significantly) and then must be placed within a refrigeration unit that is dedicated for cooling. This can be a shelf in a cold room that is away from any potential contaminants. A blast chiller is the ideal.

Similar requirements are needed for defrosting and reheating procedures. These must be monitored, because if high risk products are mishandled bacteria may grow and produce heat-stable toxins, which will ultimately lead to food poisoning.

It is this point that makes it clear why high cooking temperatures are not the "be all and end all" of food safety, but form one of the five pillars of food safety. If one pillars falls, the food safety structure collapses.

HANDLING FOODS

1. *Ideally, defrost all foods within a refrigeration unit overnight. Alternatively defrost them evenly and do not allow the core temperature to rise above 4 ^{o}C.*
2. *Foods left out for cooling must be monitored. Best practice indicates that once foods have lost its initial steam and has boiled off (usually around 50^{o}C to 60^{o}C and certainly above 46^{o}C), the foods should be refrigerated in a cold room, uncovered on an upper shelf in an area away from contamination, and labelled as the cooling section. The foods should be covered as soon as they have cooled sufficiently.*
3. *Foods should be reheated at a minimum of 70^{o}C for 10 minutes to ensure that foods are safe for consumption.*
4. *Avoid cross-contamination of foods during preparation and storage, including in the fridges and freezers.*

MANDELA DAY

"What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead"

– Nelson Mandela 1918–2013.

Mandela day, the 18th of July, is not just a day to celebrate Nelson Mandela's birthday, it is a day to celebrate his life and legacy and join in honouring his life's work of changing the world for the better. This Mandela Day, Food Consulting Services joined the global movement.

On the Friday preceding Mandela Day, the 17th of July, the auditors and various representatives from other parts of our team gathered food, blankets and toys to drop off at Kitty and Puppy Haven in Midrand.

The shelter, which has been in operation since 2007, started its "ALEX PROJECT" in 2010—a programme initially dedicated to the Alexandra Township, but now operates in many townships across Gauteng.

They do great work in rescuing, rehabilitating and re-homing many animals, not only cats and dogs.

Besides dropping off goods, we also spent time with some of the animals, and got down to some "dirty work" of painting paving stones to help make the shelter look a lot nicer.

Although our contribution was in the greater scheme, relatively minor, any amount that you can do helps! We encourage everyone, every day, not just on Mandela day, to do as Nelson Mandela envisioned and live out his legacy of making a difference in others' lives.

"Saving one animal won't change the world but it will change the world for that one animal"

GET TO KNOW FCS

(rear, left to right): Ryan Shaw, Kerri Gilfillan, Dirk Mare, Veronica Pittendrigh

(front, left to right): Vilasini Moodley, Bronwyn Thaver, Christina Chetty.

Pictured above are some of the members of our Laboratory Technicians who are instrumental in testing of the samples from our Hygiene Audits, FMCG clients, Special Surveys, etc.

Laboratory Technicians are not only tasked with testing the samples for the various microbiological analyses in our array, but they must also adhere to a very strictly monitored quality control system to ensure the relevant tests are performed, and results are interpreted, according to the strict standard set by our independent accreditation authority, the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS).

In an effort to allow our clients to become more familiar with us as a company we have introduced the "Get to Know FCS" segment in this newsletter.

The intention is to introduce our clients to all the personnel and departments involved in keeping the high quality standard expected and enjoyed by using the services available at Food Consulting Services.

Our Lab Technicians are also all highly qualified with appropriate tertiary qualifications in the biological sciences to enable them to perform the various testing methods and result interpretations with the best possible accuracy.

The diverse operations of FCS would not be at all possible, and especially at our high standard, if we did not have the services of our excellent Laboratory Department.

Should you be interested in using our services, which may include microbiological investigation of food poisoning complaints. Please feel free to contact one of our professional consultants or one of the members of the laboratory management.