

Horsemeat found in Edinburgh school

COUNCIL TEST RESULTS CONFIRM PRESENCE OF HORSEMEAT IN MINCE SUPPLIED TO A SCHOOL KITCHEN

Test results carried out by the City of Edinburgh Council have confirmed that a batch of frozen mince containing between 1% and 5% horsemeat was supplied to one of the city's PPP1 primary schools prior to the product being recalled by distributor 3663 on 8 March 2013.

Since 14 February, scientists at the Council's Edinburgh Scientific Services laboratory have been undertaking a testing programme of meat products under the direction of the Food Standards Agency as part of their UK-wide authenticity survey.

In addition to this, the laboratory is also carrying out testing of processed meat products supplied to schools, residential homes and other Council establishments.

Eighty-five meat product samples have been taken from Council catering establishments to date and all except one have tested negative for the presence of horsemeat.

Results now available from a sample of frozen beef mince taken in late February from the shared kitchen of Pirniehall & St David's Primary Schools show that it contained between 1% and 5% horsemeat. The results have been reported to the Food Standards Agency.

Catering supplies at Edinburgh's PPP1 primary schools are procured by the PPP contractor, who in turn source frozen mince from 3663.

On 8 March, [3663 recalled all batches of this frozen mince beef product](#) after one batch tested positive for horsemeat.

Council investigations have established that mince from this batch was also supplied to a further four PPP1 primary school kitchens, namely Oxbgangs PS, Craigroyston PS, Braidburn SS and Forthview PS. It is not possible to confirm whether or not mince from this batch was served to pupils prior to the product recall.

A letter from Mike Rosendale, Head of Schools and Community Services, has been sent to parents of pupils at each of the six schools in question, advising them of the test results and reassuring them that there is no risk to health from consuming horsemeat.

☒ Councillor Cathy Fullerton, Vice Convener of Education, said: "It's very important to emphasise that there is no risk whatsoever to people's health from consuming horsemeat, but obviously we all want to be certain that we know exactly what we are eating.

"This is why the Council chose to seek extra assurance that our external suppliers were not providing any products containing horsemeat by carrying out our own testing.

"Parents can be reassured that we have taken absolutely the correct course of action in immediately making sure there is none of this frozen mince remaining in school kitchens.

"We have written to all parents in the six schools to let them know about this and will be happy to discuss any further queries they may have."

☒ Alison Johnstone, Green MSP for Lothian and food spokesperson for the Scottish Greens, says the confirmation that horsemeat was found in mince supplied to an Edinburgh school is further proof that we need to rethink our approach to food.

Alison said:-"This latest revelation will be a great worry for parents and it proves we need greater investment and increased

traceability in our publicly-procured meals. The council's website claims that it uses local suppliers for meat so it is extremely important we are told what has gone wrong.

"I have real concerns about the way our schools have moved away from real meals cooked in proper kitchens to ready meals heated up in microwaves. It's also hard to have confidence when the many of our schools are supplied by massive companies who describe themselves as strategic outsourcing providers rather than caterers, and whose main motive is profit. This isn't exactly suprising as public procurement favours cheaper bids.

"In recent months in parliament I have highlighted the Soil Association's Food for Life programme which currently ensures one in ten schools in Scotland has confidence about where its food comes from. I again urge ministers to increase their support for the scheme and encourage local authorities to adopt it.