

Aunty May wants you to take care in the kitchen this Christmas – oh yes she does

Legendary panto dame, Allan Stewart, is again centre stage this Christmas, even if it is not on the King's Theatre stage.

In character as the much-loved Aunty May he stars as the face of Food Standards Scotland's (FSS) annual Festive Food Safety social media campaign.



Aunty May wants to keep you right on food safety this December. A character that generations of theatre goers will recognise from pantos over the years, Aunty May will feature in a series of light-hearted information videos to share important festive food safety tips.

The videos will be available to view on Food Standards Scotland's website and social media platforms, with the first launching on Thursday.

Although the delivery is light-hearted, the serious message remains 'take care in the kitchen and stick to good festive food safety practices' that can help people in Scotland avoid becoming ill from food poisoning and reducing any potential impact on NHS services. This year's campaign is reminding consumers to pay particular attention to food labelling, especially 'use by' and 'best before' dates.

The latest FSS food safety tracker in June 2020 highlighted

that one in three people Scots don't know that a 'use by' date is the best indicator to determine that food is safe.

Food Standards Scotland's Head of Food Protection Science and Surveillance Dr Jane Horne said: "As we get ready for our usual Christmas traditions and prepare our favourite festive foods, the way we celebrate will likely be different than normal this year.

"Whether you're able to be with family and friends or keeping it within your household, the one thing that should remain the same is the safe preparation and cooking of food in your home.

"The 'use by' date is important in terms of food safety and used on foods that go off quickly, such as pigs in blankets, pate, cooked sliced meats, dairy products and prawns.

"You shouldn't use any food after the 'use by' date, even if it looks and smells okay, as it might contain harmful bacteria.

"A 'best before' date indicates food quality, so after the date the food will be safe to eat but its flavour, colour or texture might begin to deteriorate."

Other key food safety and money-saving tips are:

- Follow storage instructions on food labels which will state how long you can keep the food (particularly once opened) and whether it needs to go in the fridge.
- Planning is key to save money and food waste. Why not go for a turkey crown if you have fewer people to feed or a small chicken instead of turkey?
- Remember that frozen veg is just as good as fresh and will keep throughout the festive season.
- After turkey or other meat is carved, cool leftovers

then store them in fridge for up to two days – or freeze to use later. Leftovers can also be great ingredients to make other meals, such as soup or curries.

Additional advice, such as defrosting and cooking your turkey, can be found on the Food Standards Scotland website www.foodstandards.gov.scot/christmas