

2.16 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of the Minister for Health regarding the updating of food hygiene laws:

Given that the Medical Officer of Health has called for an up-to-date food hygiene law following several incidents of food poisoning in the Island, what action, if any, is being taken to implement one as soon as possible and will labels on food which indicate "Best before" and "Sell by" dates include such legislation.

Senator B.E. Shenton (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

The Food Safety Regulations required to reduce the incidence of food poisoning in the Island are currently being drafted and it is envisaged they will be with Ministers in the next few months. Once there is an outline agreement with Ministers, then there will be a period of consultation with stakeholders. It can be seen, therefore, that the Regulations are not likely to be in place until early 2009. The new Food Safety Regulations will make mandatory food hygiene training for food handlers. The Regulations will also require food premises to have food hygiene policies in place. It should be noted that "Best Before" and "Sell By" dates should be displayed on all food products under existing Jersey Law.

2.16.1 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Given that the Medical Officer of Health's own report says that Jersey had more food poisoning incidents than England and Wales last year, which is not a good signal for standards in this jurisdiction, will the "Best Before" and "Sell By" dates issues be looked at more closely by the Minister? Given his experience, I am sure that he is able to talk to people ...

The Bailiff:

Deputy, unless you can wind up the question very quickly, the Minister will not be able to reply.

Senator B.E. Shenton:

I think that we had 2 very large outbreaks of food poisoning last year. One was to do with some egg white where it was in a Baked Alaska. The other one was more difficult to track down but it was an infection that caused wide-spread disruption among schools and people at Jersey Live and that is the problem with statistics. If you have a particularly bad or large outbreak, it can sometimes push you higher. But we do need to bring our legislation in line with the U.K. because when the U.K. brought theirs in, it did lead to a significant improvement in food hygiene and the health of the population.

The Bailiff:

That concludes the time allowed for Questions with Notice. We now come to Questions without Notice. The first question period is of the Minister for Social Security.