

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD
INFORMATION PAPER

**UPDATE PROVIDED BY FSA WALES ON OUTBREAK OF *E. COLI* O157
IN SOUTH WALES AND SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS**

Background

An outbreak of *E. coli* O157, which resulted in over 150 cases, including one fatality, and affected 42 schools, occurred in South Wales in the period September to December 2005. In all, 28 children and five adults were treated in hospital. The outbreak was declared over on 20 December 2005.

Investigations

A wide-ranging investigation is underway. South Wales Police are leading the investigation. FSA Wales continues to participate in regular police investigation management meetings along with local authorities and the National Public Health Service for Wales.

Chief Medical Officer's Review

The Acting Chief Medical Officer for Wales commissioned a review of the outbreak to determine whether any urgent measures needed to be put in place to protect public health. The review report was published on 6 January 2006. Action is already underway in relation to many of the recommendations addressed to the Agency. The Agency has formally responded to the Chief Medical Officer's review and is a member of the steering group to consider the recommendations made in the review and ongoing action.

FSA Incident review

In November 2005, the Agency reviewed its internal handling of the outbreak against its protocol for the management of incidents.

Public Inquiry

The National Assembly for Wales has established the inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2005 under the chairmanship of Professor Hugh Pennington with the following terms of reference:

“To inquire into the circumstances that led to the outbreak of the *E. coli* O157 investigation in South Wales in September 2005 and into the handling of the outbreak; and to consider the implications for the future and make recommendations accordingly.”

FSA Wales will liaise closely with the Inquiry team over the input required from the Agency but a timetable for the Inquiry is not yet available.

**Secretariat
June 2006**