**EU Food Information Regulation**

The Regulation on the provision on Food Information to Consumers was finally published in the Official Journal of the EU on 22 November 2011 and the new rules came into force on 13th December 2011.

The key issues for the baking sector were sales of products by number, country of origin labelling and frozen goods defrosted for sale.

**Sales by number** - due to an oversight in transferring part of the net quantity provisions from the existing Food Labelling Directive into the Food Information Regulation Proposal, products such as bakery goods, cakes, biscuits, breakfast cereals and some spices which are currently sold by number, will be required to be sold by weight.

Consumers buy products such as bread rolls on the number of items in the pack and are not concerned about the weight of the individual items. However if this provision is not reinstated manufacturers will in future be required to sell these types of product by weight and will incur significant costs (a complete change in the production process will need to be made) with no added benefit to the consumer. The Federation continues to lobby in Europe to reinstate the provision permitting the continuation of selling products by number, rather than by weight.

**Frozen Products Defrosted for Sale** - an amendment to annex V of the proposed Food Information Regulation would in future require products which had been frozen and then defrosted to be labelled 'defrosted'. For the bakery sector this would have a huge impact as many products are baked and frozen in advance at high consumption periods such as hot cross buns at Easter and mince pies at Christmas and burger buns during the summer. It was a convenient process to smooth out demand and ensure continuity of supply. However, if frozen products were required to be additionally labelled this would be an increased complexity to the management of bakeries, it would mean increased costs and may lead to greater confusion amongst consumers.

**Country of Origin Labelling** - the latest amendments would require all products to be labelled in their country of origin or place of provenance. However it is understood that this proposal has not been widely accepted by the other member states. We await the outcome on this development.

All of these issues were satisfactorily resolved.

The new Regulation will apply from 13 December 2014 with the exception of nutrition declaration which shall apply from 13 December 2016.

The Regulation introduces among others, key measures including mandatory nutrition declaration, minimum font size and origin labelling. A clearer indication of allergens and the type of vegetable oil or fat used in a product will also have to be labelled.

In the UK the new Regulation will revoke the 2000/13 (Food Labelling Regulation 1996) in 2014 (3 years after entry into force) and the two pieces of legislation will run in parallel during the transition period.