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For the Attention of Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors

Nottinghamshire Schools with Catering
provided under contract from NCC Catering Services

1st March 2013

Dear Colleague

Below is a press release that you might find useful to include on your school's web sites or for response to queries parents might have.

"Nottinghamshire County Council is confident it knows where its meat comes from"

Nottinghamshire County Council says it has all the necessary safeguards in place to trace where the meat it buys come from.

County Council procurement group manager, Steve Carter said: "We can trace the source of all of our meat products and are confident that our suppliers are taking all necessary action in response to the current reports relating to traces of horsemeat entering the food supply chain."

"Our two meat suppliers have rigorous manufacturing processes and specifications in place to meet product standards and prevent any cross-contamination. And our robust procurement contracts also ensure that there are strict controls on where ingredients are purchased."

"Our meat suppliers are UK-based, they're also subject to testing at source by environmental health and trading standards officers."

The Council uses Maloney's butchers in Tuxford for the majority of its fresh meat supplies and Brakes for a small number of selected lines. The meat is used in school meals, meals at home, county buildings, food dished up at its day centres and residential homes as well as food outlets at the Council's country parks.

"Meat from Maloney's is supplied to us straight of the carcass from Maloney's own manufacturing unit in Nottinghamshire, so the butcher can provide us with full traceability," added Steve.

"All school meals provided by the Council, for example, are prepared from scratch using fresh ingredients, so for example we know exactly what goes into our burgers and meat pies."

All meat supplied by Maloney's uses animals which are allowed to graze freely in the fields and parks in and around the county - from wild venison from Sherwood Forest and beef from Holme Farm in Rampton to pork from East Drayton and Hockerwood Farm in Upton. The company's suppliers provide Maloney's with statements confirming provenance of the meat.

On an average day, the Council serves 42,000 meals across 272 of 285 county primary schools and 30 of the 45 county secondary schools – a four per cent increase on this time last year. It also wheels out a 1,000 meals at home to older people across Notts each day.

Brakes has reassured customers that none of its products are sourced from suppliers involved in recent press reports and that none of its own products have been implicated either.

Nottinghamshire County Council, Lawn View House, 40, Station Road, Sutton in Ashfield. NG17 5GA

The company has also confirmed that all of its branded beef product suppliers have positively reconfirmed the source, traceability and processing of their meat.

However, as a further precaution, Brakes is currently carrying out appropriate testing of specific products.

For information please also be aware that similar checks and assurances would be needed for any other food being provided in school by the provider – for instance before and after school clubs, parent events and fundraising.

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact your area catering manager or myself and we will be pleased to help and offer support if necessary.

This letter is being sent to Catering Managers and Cook Supervisors by post as well.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Fifoot', with a stylized, cursive script.

Helen Fifoot
Team Manager, School Catering
Catering & Facilities Management
Nottinghamshire County Council