

Miss Neville-Rolfe's minute of

Private Office
Mr Copton

Dr Cassett
Mr Cabbill
Mr Hollis
Mr McIvor



Mr Amalar
Dr Aerner
Mr Haddon
Mr Gwath
Mr Atwood

FDX 561

Mr Crickshaw
Mrs Attridge
Mr Dickinson
Mr Meldrum
From the Minister

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HH
Mr McKinley
Mr Trevayon

Miss Neville-Rolfe

RESTRICTED

The Rt Hon John Major MP
Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Treasury Chambers
Parliament Street
London
SW1P 3AG

J. Jeffrey 4/7

RS 4.7. / 4/5/87

Mr Brown 3 July 1989

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2 papers

Dea JH

FOOD SAFETY: PROTECTING THE CONSUMER

Thank you for your letter of 23 June.

I appreciate your reluctance to agree to any additional expenditure on food safety until we have looked at the case in detail. Equally I cannot accept that the cost should be met from within existing public expenditure and running cost provisions without knowing what the scale of the problem is. This does, of course, involve colleagues in other Departments who have responsibilities in this area. The whole subject now has a dangerously high public profile and we must be able to counter the criticism that adequate resources are not being devoted to food safety thus endangering public health.

In any event the problem goes wider than the proposals for new legislation set out in the White Paper. There may be an under-resourcing problem already and some of the changes in the Bill are in fact needed to implement obligations under EC Directives.

We need to look at all of this thoroughly including ways of improving value for money, as soon as useful data is available from local authority associations. Unfortunately they have been rather slow in responding on the subject. But, I would hope that we would consider this during the summer and well before the Bill is introduced into Parliament. I understand that officials are in touch on this.

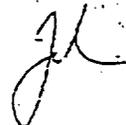
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/In the meantime ...

In the meantime I propose that when we launch the document
 should say that we are looking at the resources devoted to food
 safety enforcement to ensure that they are adequate and reflect
 good value for money. Our first step is to establish what local
 authorities are doing at present and how this varies across the
 country. *I expect that there will be a list of questions on this at the launch.*

I am copying this letter to members of MISC 138, Douglas Hurd,
 George Younger and Sir Robin Butler.

Yours sincerely,



JOHN MacGREGOR