

CASE STUDY

Quick thinking and sharp communications saves the reputation of the humble banana



Fyffes Ltd is one of the largest tropical produce importers and distributors in Europe. As a brand it is most closely linked with their importation of nearly 500,000 tonnes of bananas per year.

The food safety team at South Derbyshire District Council received two complaints about bananas bought from a local retailer that had vivid red discolouration inside them. One of the complainants took to social media expressing fears that the banana had been intentionally contaminated by being injected with blood. Council officers saw that the story was about to go viral and needed to act quickly. The Council sampled the banana and contacted banana importing giants Fyffe's for help and advice. Very quickly they were able to allay fears to the complainants and via social media that the discolouration was due to a bacterial contamination which was totally harmless to health.

"We're very thankful that the EHS got in touch with us early on – it's vital that public concerns are dealt with promptly and efficiently. Issues like this can cause the complainant undue worry and stress and our priority is to alleviate their concern and ensure their safety. When broadcast via the press or social media, this sort of thing can knock consumer confidence and cause widespread unnecessary tensions.

- Paul Barratt, Fyffes

KEY POINTS

- Regulatory officers are keen to help protect reputable businesses.
- Consumers trust advice given by regulatory officers.
- Regulators can react quickly using their network of contacts to offer business support.

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