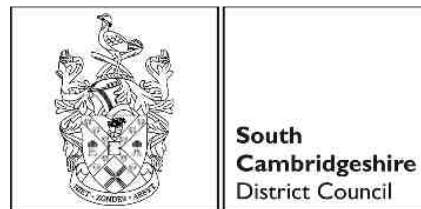


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Our ref: NA/
Your ref:
Date: 19th September 2008

Environmental Health Services
Contact: Mr N Atkins
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Dear

UPDATE ON ODOUR NUISANCE FROM PREMIER FOODS, CHIVERS WAY, HISTON

I write following a recent meeting at the above premises during which, the ongoing odour problems were discussed with representatives of Premier Foods. I note that whilst the odour may be offensive in nature and may be a nuisance, it is not "prejudicial to health".

It was previously brought to the attention of the management that these issues have persisted over a prolonged period and we would need to discuss the options available to bring the matter to a satisfactory resolution.

In order to update you with the current situation, I can briefly report the results of that meeting as follows:

There have been a number of problems that have occurred during the introduction and commissioning of the new digestion plant at the factory, which treats effluent from the plant prior to its' discharge into the public sewer. The odour at that time was associated with the biomass used in the digestion plant being removed/replaced and the deliveries of the product during that period.

Operational difficulties as a result of the biomass being contaminated with oil caused further problems, and are still ongoing.

A drainage problem in the sewer, where effluent is discharged, had also exacerbated the situation.

As the odour has been a particular problem since the introduction of the new digestion plant, it was felt reasonable that investigations had previously centred on this particular stage of treatment. Investigations had not revealed a problem with this equipment and it is fully enclosed in order to create the anaerobic conditions that are required for it to function correctly.

The newly installed plant is not the cause of the problem.



Odour assessments were carried out in the vicinity and it was established there was a secondary cause of localised odours emanating from the waste storage area.

Employee shift patterns have now been amended, in order to retain staff on site for longer in this area, to improve housekeeping and reduce low level odours from this location.

The records of when odour had been a problem, which were kept by residents, were previously submitted to Premier Foods and they confirmed this had led to them looking at other plant on site. The main cause of the odours has now been confirmed as being the balancing tank situated before the digestion plant. This un-sealed structure had not been utilised for sometime, but with the increase in output it is now being brought back into use periodically.

Consequently, a new roof structure will need to be installed on the balance tank. This roof will be sealed onto the existing tank and only vented by a centrally located relief valve.

The large structure will need to be fabricated off site and installed once delivered. It is anticipated finance for this extensive engineering work will be agreed at a meeting during the week beginning the 22nd September and fabrication will commence in due course. Obviously, this type of work will need to be undertaken by a specialised company and their "lead-in times" and delivery dates are outside the control of Premier Foods. Premier Foods has agreed to submit a plan of action with time-scales to this Department for this work.

In the meantime, employees will carry out odour-monitoring assessments and a log kept of the results.

It has also been agreed that a newsletter, or similar be distributed to nearby households explaining the situation and what is being done to overcome the problem. It is anticipated this information will also contain a phone number, which local residents can contact to report odours from the factory.

In conclusion, the original investigations were centring on the wrong piece of equipment and coincidental problems were masking the underlying problem. However, the problem has now been identified and remedial action commenced.

The remedial action required will be an expensive and lengthy process and unfortunately it is anticipated the odour problems experienced will inevitably continue until the works are completed. However, this solution should benefit all those affected in the long term and this Department will be watching developments with interest.

I hope the above gives some indication of the extent of communication and work that is currently being undertaken. I wish to assure you the matter is being fully investigated by this Department and we still hope to be able to resolve the situation in an amicable way.

Yours sincerely

N ATKINS
Environmental Health Officer

