



PRESS RELEASE

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How low should you go?

The European Commission is currently considering new food storage rules that would require retailers to maintain food at 2° Celcius, several degrees below current standards. For small convenience stores, electricity is already a major business cost and these proposals would add considerably to them. In some cases, it could require the premature replacement of chillers or the installation of air conditioning to meet the new standard. Rural shops in particular cannot go on absorbing higher and higher costs in this period of tight consumer spending and intense competition.

Ken Parsons, Chief Executive of the RSA, commented, "We are not aware of any evidence that current standards are leading to problems with food hygiene. This proposal is quite simply not needed and it seems a classic case of "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". It also seems an early test of the Government's commitment to their Red Tape Challenge. This really is a classic case of red tape that would have significant costs to the industry with minimal benefits to the consumer".

Notes for editors:

The Rural Shops Alliance (RSA) is the national voice for about 7,500 rural retailers. We campaign on their behalf and also help these shops to become more competitive with practical advice and support, to the benefit of thousands of rural communities. Many 'blue chip' suppliers and county councils sponsor and partner the work of the RSA. Our direct contact with rural shops and with these organisations means that we keep in close touch with emerging issues and concerns in our fast changing business sector.

More Information:

Kenneth Parsons	- Tel 01761 462371 Mobile 07980 673675
Gary Hepburn	- Tel 01305 752050
Duty Press Contact	- Tel 07092 048546