



Groceries Code
Adjudicator

News from the Adjudicator

Edition 1



Welcome to the first edition of *News from the Adjudicator*. I do hope you find the information it contains useful and interesting. The newsletter will be published quarterly. If you have comments on it and ideas for future features please contact me via enquiries@gca.gsi.gov.uk.

This newsletter's purpose is to spread awareness of how the Groceries Code Adjudicator can ensure fairness in the supply chain and help create an effective and world-leading groceries sector. In this edition you will Meet the CCO, Max Gillibrand – the Code Compliance Officer at Marks and Spencer, learn about actions we plan in response to the YouGov survey results and can follow progress on my Top 5 issues.

This month there has been increased interest in the GCA's role as a result of coverage of Tesco's financial reporting announcement, and I am considering what action to take.

In interviews I have given in past weeks I have talked about the need to achieve culture change in the groceries supply chain. I believe the GCA is well placed to make a difference and the newsletter provides examples of steps I am already taking. However, the reality is that the GCA cannot achieve significant change alone.

We are working closely with the retailers' Code Compliance Officers to bring about change – and you can read more about this below - but my message to suppliers is that you have responsibilities too.

First, you have to bring hard evidence to me about practices you believe breach the Groceries Supply Code of Practice. Without a strong body of fact-based information I cannot launch an investigation or prove a breach of the Code has taken place. So if you genuinely want me to use my powers to tackle the issues in this sector then the responsibility lies with you to give me the evidence to act.

Second, help accelerate change by challenging the practices that have grown up in the sector that have added layers of complexity and cost to your business. A better approach for suppliers and retailers would be to make the supply chain simpler and more efficient and both sides have a role in that.

Christine Tacon

Christine Tacon



In this edition:

- Making Progress on Top 5
- What next for GCA
- Meet the CCO Max Gillibrand, Marks and Spencer
- Spreading knowledge about the GCA

Making progress on the Top 5



The GCA continues to work with the retailers on the big issues facing suppliers. The GCA identified forensic auditing as one of the top five issues where suppliers report that large retailer practices adversely affect them. Direct suppliers should have received information on forensic auditing from the large retailers by now, or will do so soon.

At recent meetings with CCOs the Adjudicator requested all retailers make statements to their suppliers on their forensic auditing practice by the end of October. The eight retailers who signed up to a voluntary two-year time limit for such audits were asked to fully implement that commitment by March 2015, at the latest. Read [more](#) about GCA action on other issues at the recent quarterly meetings.

What next for the GCA

In June we shared the main results of the first market survey commissioned by the GCA. Since then we have been working hard to respond to the findings. Thank you to all who took the time to provide your comments. Read [more](#) about the results and what will happen next.



Meet the CCO

Max Gillibrand, Code Compliance Officer at Marks and Spencer plc has answered News from the Adjudicator's questions about his role at the retailer. Read [more](#) about his 28 years with Marks and Spencer, the challenges facing a CCO and the achievement of which he is most proud.

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Spreading knowledge about the GCA

Since the GCA's conference in June, the Adjudicator has made a range of visits to meet suppliers, trade associations and other bodies interested in the work of the GCA. Engagement has continued with key groceries sectors and media coverage of the GCA's role has grown – at home and overseas. Journalists from Belgium, Japan and New Zealand interviewed Christine Tacon following the conference. Highlights of the past three months include:

- Speech to the International Guild of Agricultural Journalists.
- Presentation to the PPMA - read it [here](#) and view the interview Christine Tacon gave at the Show [here](#).
- Addressed the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and NFU Council in Warwickshire.
- Met a wide range of stakeholders at the British Retail Consortium Annual Retail Industry dinner.
- Face to face meetings with groups of suppliers in Bristol, the Borders, Cheshire, Manchester and London, arranged by third parties including the Food Ethics Council, the Federation of Bakers, Deloittes and Pinsent Masons.
- Discussions with the New Zealand Competition Authority.
- Visit to Iceland Foods Limited's headquarters as part of a programme of visits to meet each retailer's corporate teams (Asda, Waitrose, Morrisons, Aldi and Tesco already visited).

