

A year at the **Food Standards Agency** 2008/09



Safe food and healthy eating for all



**FOOD
STANDARDS
AGENCY**

Contents

4 **Message** from Deirdre Hutton

6 **Looking forward** by Tim Smith

7 **The FSA – who we are**

8 **Keeping your food safe**

- 8 Food Safety Week
- 9 Safer food, better business
- 10 Scores on the doors
- 11 Protecting you from food incidents
- 12 Fighting food fraud
- 13 Keeping meat safe
- 14 Advice on allergies
- 15 Food colours

16 **Healthier food – giving you a choice**

- 17 Saturated fat
- 18 Healthier choices when eating out
- 19 Reducing salt levels
- 20 Front-of-pack labelling
- 21 Advertising to children
- 21 Recipes online

22 **Working with you**

- 22 Local food action in Wales
- 23 Citizens' forums
- 23 Come to our committee meetings
- 24 Science
- 25 Tune into the FSA
- 26 Working with schools



Message

from Deirdre Hutton, Chair



I have had the great privilege of chairing the Food Standards Agency for the past four years and, as my term comes to an end, it is a good moment at which to reflect both on the Agency's approach and the way in which it has developed.

The values of putting the consumer first, independence, transparency and being science- and evidence-based remain central – and I have no doubt it is for that reason that consumer confidence in us, as a regulator and source of trusted advice, continues to rise.

The Agency's understanding and use of regulation has grown over the years. Although we use our powers to enforce food law, we also believe that giving consumers clear, accurate and understandable information, so that they can make their own choices, is one of the best ways of regulating the market.

There are many ways in which we seek to give consumers useful information, including:

- **front-of-pack labelling** – we look to supermarkets and manufacturers to provide clear front-of-pack labelling in the way that helps consumers most
- **more advice when eating out** – we are working with high street restaurants to ensure they provide healthier choices and more information, including calorie details on menus
- **naming companies that sign up to our initiatives** so that it is easy to find out which businesses are taking action on issues such as reducing salt levels, providing healthier options for eating out and better labelling

- **scores on the doors** – this is a ratings scheme that is designed to give consumers information about standards of hygiene at their local food businesses, whether these are supermarkets, restaurants, cafés or takeaways
- **eatwell website** – our dedicated consumer advice and information site, which provides a wide range of practical healthy eating and food safety tips, covering all ages and stages in life

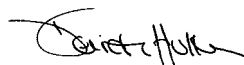
But food is delivered to consumers by industry, not the regulator, and it is important to recognise the contribution made by the many food businesses up and down the country. Much of the advance in our dietary health work has happened through constructive co-operation with food businesses and their willingness to work with us to the benefit of the consumer.

While the challenges in dietary health continue, so do those in food safety, which remains the central role of the Agency. Although the Agency has been successful in managing food safety over the past few years,

it will require continued attention by the food industry, the Agency and enforcement authorities to maintain this. Consumers must also take their share of responsibility for storing and cooking food safely.

I believe I leave the Agency in good heart. It has continued to develop over the past few years, improving and broadening its science base, streamlining the management of food incidents and becoming more sophisticated in its approach to risk and regulation. We have worked with many partners in the achievement of our aims and have learned that partnership and co-operation generally serves us – and the consumers who remain our central focus – well.

My thanks go to the many hundreds of people I have met and worked with over the years. In particular, I am grateful to the Agency's staff, the Chief Executive and the Board for their support and their determination to put the interests of consumers first.



Dame Deirdre Hutton

Looking forward

by Tim Smith, Chief Executive

Food is a big deal. People care a great deal about it. Barely a day goes by without some food-related story in the media, whether it's the life-prolonging properties of a particular 'super food', or a safety scare.



For the public, it can be hard to weigh up all the contradictory information out there about food. That's where the Food Standards Agency comes in. If you want the facts on food, we're the standard – saying what we don't know, as well as what we do.

Of course, that's not all we do. We are working to deliver the key priorities of our Strategic Plan to 2010 – food safety, eating for health and consumer choice. And much of what we do

doesn't hit the headlines. This report gives a flavour of some of our work, but it can't possibly describe everything.

In the coming year, our drive to reduce the nation's salt intake will continue with a new phase of TV and press advertising. And behind the scenes my colleagues will carry on working with manufacturers, retailers and caterers to reduce the amount of salt in the food we eat, as well as saturated fat. The Agency will also be doing more work with caterers on menus and on front-of-pack labelling, to make sure that people have the information they need, at a glance, to make healthier choices.

On the food safety front, a national 'scores on the doors' scheme is set to be a big piece of work for us, giving people the information they need about a food business's

hygiene standards. And we will continue to work with the poultry industry to reduce levels of campylobacter bacteria in chickens. We intend to pick up the pace in our work with local authorities to help them improve their effectiveness.

We will carry on developing our new Strategic Plan for 2010 to 2015 and continue changing the structure and management of the Agency to enable us to meet future challenges. We will be working in partnership with the devolved Governments to achieve our joint aims.

If you would like to find out more about our work, read on. Or visit food.gov.uk and our consumer advice site eatwell.gov.uk

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Tim Smith

The FSA

– who we are

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is an independent Government department, working at ‘arm’s length’ from the Government. We are governed by a Board, rather than reporting to specific ministers, and can publish our advice.

Our main work is to:

- give information to the public to help them make choices about food
- advise the Government on food safety and healthy eating
- work with businesses ‘from farm to fork’ to help them produce safe food
- work with local authorities and other food law enforcement bodies to help them take appropriate action to keep the public safe
- make sure food is tested regularly to check it is safe to eat
- fund research into a wide range of food issues

We base our decisions and advice on the best science and evidence available – and make sure we explain how and why we make each decision.

Food shoppers in 2009 face many decisions about what to buy. The Agency aims to give people the facts they need to make more informed choices.

This report highlights some of our work from the past year and also looks ahead to how we will continue to improve food safety and ensure healthier choices for consumers.

If you would like detailed information about the FSA’s delivery of its strategic objectives and how we spend our budget, this can be found in the *FSA Annual Report and Accounts* at food.gov.uk/aboutus/publications/busreps/annualreport

Find out more
food.gov.uk/aboutus/



Keeping your food safe

When we eat, we all want to be confident that the food is safe. And this is at the heart of the Agency's work.

Food Safety Week

In June every year, Food Safety Week highlights the importance of sticking to the basic principles of food hygiene as a simple way to prevent serious food poisoning.

There are an estimated 850,000 cases of food poisoning each year in the UK with about 500 people a year dying from food poisoning.

Cases of the top two food poisoning bugs, salmonella and campylobacter, soar during the summer months and the bugs could easily come from your own kitchen or barbecue.

Food Safety Week is just one part of our work to reduce these cases of foodborne disease in the home.

For Food Safety Week in 2008, the FSA worked with a number of organisations, including local authorities, schools, businesses, online information group Netmums and the campaign group Focus on Food, to promote the Agency's GermWatch campaign and help reduce food poisoning.



Find out more
[eatwell.gov.uk/
keepingfoodsafegermwatch](http://eatwell.gov.uk/keepingfoodsafegermwatch)

To make sure food is safe to eat, we:

- advise the public about food safety issues, including food hygiene, chemical safety and food allergy
- work with the food industry – including farms, caterers, manufacturers and retailers – to help them produce safer food
- fund research on a wide range of food safety issues
- work with local authorities to help them enforce food law

This section highlights just some of the work we have done this year to make sure that your food is safe to eat.

Safer food, better business

Safer food, better business (SFBB) is an innovative and practical approach to food safety management.

The Agency has developed it to help small businesses put in place food safety management procedures and comply with food hygiene regulations.

In February 2008, the Agency launched an interactive SFBB DVD that helps small catering and retail businesses use the SFBB packs and includes films demonstrating key food hygiene messages. An online version was launched in June 2008. With voiceovers in 16 different languages, the films are an invaluable training tool for food businesses.

SFBB is part of a range of guidance material produced by the Agency for caterers and retailers. In Scotland, the Agency's CookSafe and RetailSafe materials, including the CookSafe e-learning software, are extensively used.

Safer food, better business for care homes

Following the success of packs for small catering and retail businesses, different cuisines and the interactive DVD, the Agency launched a supplement in May 2008 for caterers and staff working in small residential care homes. The supplement, which is intended to be used with SFBB for caterers, covers food safety issues that are specific to care homes, such as food brought in as gifts to the residents and mini or 'satellite' kitchens separate to the main kitchen.

Find out more
food.gov.uk/sfbb

Find out more in Scotland
food.gov.uk/cookretails Scot

Coming up...

SFBB for childminders

In summer 2009 the Agency is launching a new SFBB pack for registered childminders and childcarers on domestic premises (looking after the child in the childminder's home, rather than the child's home).

Childminders who provide meals or snacks, or reheat food provided by a parent or carer, are required by law to have a written food safety management system. SFBB for childminders has been designed to provide an easy and practical way for them to put a system in place.

Find out more:
food.gov.uk/childminders

Scores on the doors

‘Scores on the doors’ schemes are designed to give you information about standards of hygiene at food businesses. The score reflects the findings of the local authority when the business was most recently inspected.



Experience suggests that, as well as helping you make informed choices about where you eat or buy food, such schemes also encourage businesses to improve standards.

Following a public consultation, the Agency is developing a six-tier national scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, while Scotland will continue with a two-tier scheme. The schemes will cover restaurants, cafés, takeaways, sandwich shops and other places for eating out, as well as supermarkets and other retail outlets.

Consumer research will help decide what symbols and descriptions should be used for each of the tiers, and consumer representatives are helping oversee development of the six-tier scheme.

Find out more
[food.gov.uk/scores](https://www.food.gov.uk/scores)

Protecting you from food incidents

A food incident is anything that happens in the production or distribution of food that means it might not be safe to eat.



There are lots of potential causes of food incidents, including environmental contamination (fires, spills and leaks), natural chemical contamination (mycotoxins, algal toxins and others), microbiological incidents and incidents on farms.

The Agency's *Annual Report of Incidents 2008* gives details of these incidents and what action was taken to protect consumers.

In April 2008, the FSA published guidance for food businesses on preventing and responding to food incidents. An online system was also launched to make it easier for local authorities to report food incidents to us.

Find out more food.gov.uk/foodindustry/incidents



In 2008 the Agency handled 1,298 investigations into food incidents, including high-profile incidents such as:

- dioxins in pork – dioxins are chemicals that get into food from the environment and are associated with a range of health effects when there is a long-term exposure to them at relatively high levels
- melamine in milk – melamine is an industrial chemical that should not be present in food

Fighting food fraud

Food fraud is when someone deliberately attempts to deceive consumers about food for financial gain.



In April 2009 the Agency launched the Food Fraud Advisory Unit – whose members come from a range of enforcement organisations – to provide advice to any UK local authority involved in investigating food fraud.

Although there are many kinds of food fraud, there are two main types:

- The sale of food that is unfit and potentially harmful, such as:
 - recycling of animal by-products back into the food chain
 - packing and selling of beef and poultry with an unknown origin
 - knowingly selling goods that are past their 'use by' date

- The deliberate misdescription of food, while not necessarily unsafe, deceives consumers about the nature of the product, such as:
 - products substituted with a cheaper alternative, for example, farmed salmon sold as wild, and Basmati rice mixed with cheaper varieties
 - making false statements about the source of ingredients, such as their geographic, plant or animal origin

Although we do not believe that there is a significant problem in the UK, consumers have a vital role to play in tackling food fraud by reporting any known, or suspected, food fraud.

Find out more
food.gov.uk/foodfraud

Keeping meat safe

The FSA is responsible, through the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS), for ensuring that meat plant operators fulfil their duty to produce safe food.



The MHS also safeguards the health and welfare of animals at slaughter. This work is carried out on demand 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, at more than 400 abattoirs, cutting plants and game-handling premises.

Over the past 12 months MHS officials have inspected more than 775 million birds, 15.6 million sheep, lambs and goats, 7.9 million pigs and more than 2 million cattle before they entered the food chain.

The MHS works with businesses to support compliance, but if they fail to meet the required hygiene standards action is taken. In the past year the MHS took 156 formal and 1,721 informal enforcement actions, including Remedial Action Notices to stop production in the short term and Hygiene Improvement Notices to secure longer term improvements. The most serious offences are prosecuted in the courts.

The Agency also takes action to suspend or withdraw the approval of meat establishments where serious deficiency exists.

Find out more
food.gov.uk/foodindustry/meat/mhservice

BSE

The Agency is responsible for advising the Government on whether changes to the BSE controls are acceptable on grounds of risk. In December 2008, we supported a proposed increase in the age, from 30 months to 48 months, at which cattle slaughtered for human consumption are tested for BSE. The decision was taken following expert scientific advice that the increased risks to human health from raising the testing age are very small, and assurances that BSE surveillance would continue to be effective after the change.

Find out more
food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2008/dec/bse

Advice on allergies

If you or someone in your family has a food allergy or intolerance, you will know all about the difficulties involved in buying food or eating out.



The Agency carries out a lot of work to make sure that consumers have as much good advice as possible and that food manufacturers and retailers give consumers appropriate information about their products.

Our work on food allergy this year includes:

- ‘chef cards’ – cards that people with an allergy or intolerance can use when they’re eating out to let restaurant staff know what foods they need to avoid
- online training tool – a course for local authority food law enforcement officers and food businesses to improve their awareness of food allergies



Find out more
eatwell.gov.uk/allergy

Allergy alerts

Sometimes foods might not be safe for people with certain food allergies or intolerances because the allergy information on the label is missing or incorrect. When this happens the foods will often be withdrawn or recalled. The Agency issues allergy alerts online, by email and by text message, to warn people who have a food allergy or intolerance about these incidents.

To sign up for these free alerts visit: food.gov.uk/safereating/allergyintol/alerts

Food colours

Research shows that some artificial food colours could be linked to increased hyperactivity in some children.



These colours are used in a wide range of foods that tend to be brightly coloured, including some soft drinks, sweets, cakes and ice cream.

In 2008, the Government agreed to the Agency's proposal for a voluntary ban on six colours. Throughout the year, more shops, manufacturers, caterers and restaurants added their products to the list of those that are free of the colours.

The Agency publicises the product ranges, so that you know which foods are free from these colours, and to encourage more businesses to take part in the voluntary ban.

Find out more
food.gov.uk/coloursadvice



Healthier food

– giving you a choice

One of the Agency's key aims is to make it easier for everyone to choose a healthy diet.



In order to make healthier choices, we need to be armed with information about what is in food, what we should try to eat more or less of, and the best ways to prepare meals. It is also helpful, when trying to eat more healthily, if the foods we buy contain less of the things we should cut down on, such as salt and saturated fat.

We carry out a range of work to ensure that there are healthier food options available and that you have the information you need to make the choices you want. In the past year this has included the following:

- Through working with retailers, manufacturers and caterers, there have been significant developments in reducing salt and saturated fat in food, and improving the range of healthier options when eating out.
- The research into front-of-pack labelling, and the development of calorie information on menus, will provide more information about the food you buy, in a way that is clear and easily understood.

This section tells you more about our work to ensure that you have healthier choices when buying and eating food.



Saturated fat

You might have seen newspaper adverts early in 2009 showing that just by trimming the fat off meat, you can reduce your saturated fat intake.



Or maybe you signed up to receive our daily 'satfat' text tips on your mobile phone. These were parts of a major campaign the Agency ran to promote the simple and practical steps that can be taken to reduce the amount of saturated fat people eat.

On average, adults in the UK eat 20% more than the recommended maximum levels, increasing their risk of heart disease, but consumers had told us that they are often not sure how to cut down on the amount of saturated fat that they eat.

In response, the campaign highlighted the main ways to reduce saturated fat intake – for example, cutting the fat off meat, switching to lower-fat dairy products, and comparing labels and choosing the option that is lower in saturated fat.

The campaign, which was one of the many ways in which we are supporting people to eat more healthily, also featured television adverts highlighting the dangers of eating too much saturated fat.

Find out more
eatwell.gov.uk/satfat

Coming up...

Getting the calorie balance right

Following our success in working with retailers and manufacturers to reduce salt, and the saturated fat campaign work, the Agency is working with industry to reduce saturated fat and sugar levels in foods and reduce portion size where this can help reduce saturated fat intake and contribute to tackling obesity.

The work will run in two stages, looking first at soft drinks, biscuits, cakes and pastry, and

chocolate confectionery. This will be followed by a focus on dairy products, meat products and snacks.

Following public consultation, voluntary recommendations will be made to industry encouraging them to reformulate foods and soft drinks and also to consider portion sizes. All of this will help to reduce the amount of saturated fat and help to tackle obesity.

Healthier choices when eating out

In a survey in June 2008, more than four out of five people told us that restaurants, pubs and cafés should make it clear what is in the food they serve.



The Agency believes that you should be able to make healthier choices when eating out as well as when eating at home – to ensure you have these choices, we are working with high street restaurants and catering companies for them to provide you with more choice and more information.

As a result, in the past year healthy eating commitments were made by major food companies throughout the UK, including workplace caterers, family dining restaurants, quick service restaurants, pub restaurants and coffee and sandwich shop chains.

This means that healthier options are now more widely available to you every day when you eat out.

Commitments by the restaurants and caterers include:

- reducing salt and saturated fat in bestselling products
- increasing the number of healthier options

- making children's menus healthier
- swapping sauces, dressings and frying oils for lower-fat alternatives
- providing customers with more nutritional information

Our work is also resulting in positive changes being made to more than 1.6 million meals served in the workplace every day, including the introduction of more nutritionally balanced menus, healthier recipes, 'healthy choice' labelling and healthy eating promotions, such as loyalty schemes to encourage employees to buy fruit.

In addition, many popular high street names are introducing calorie information on their menus for the first time, making sure that it is clear and easy to see at the point where customers choose their food.

Find out more
[food.gov.uk/
healthycommitments](http://food.gov.uk/healthycommitments)

Reducing salt levels

It's more difficult to cut down on particular ingredients if they are 'hidden' in so many of the foods you buy. You might not add much salt to your food, but 75% of the salt we eat is already in the food we buy.



Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure, which can triple the risk of suffering heart disease or a stroke, so the Agency is committed to reducing people's average intake to 6g a day by 2010. This could prevent more than 20,000 premature deaths a year.

The latest figures on the amount of salt eaten highlight the positive impact of the Agency's work – as the levels of salt have been reduced in foods, daily salt consumption in the UK has fallen from an average of 9.5g to 8.6g. These reductions are already saving lives.



As well as showing you how you can eat less salt, the Agency sets voluntary targets for retailers and manufacturers to reduce the salt levels in foods that make the largest contribution to salt in our diet. These include bread, meat products, cereals and convenience foods such as pizza, ready meals and savoury snacks. Many retailers and manufacturers have already reduced salt levels in their products and others have promised to do so.

Find out more
food.gov.uk/healthiereating/salt

Front-of-pack labelling

If you don't have hours to spend in the supermarket, how can you tell how healthy the food is and still make it to the checkout in good time?



The answer is to have information on the front of packs that tells you what you need to know at a glance.

We encourage supermarkets and manufacturers to use clear labelling that helps you to choose healthier options. One way to do this is using traffic light colours on labels to show whether the food has high, medium or low amounts of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt.

In the past year, the traffic light labels were adopted by more retailers and manufacturers, covering food from breakfast cereals to cakes. More than 40 retailers and producers now support the use of traffic light labels.

Find out more
eatwell.gov.uk/trafficlights

Coming up...

Clearer labels

We are developing our work on labelling by taking forward the findings of a robust independent study that has shown that shoppers would benefit from the adoption of a single approach to front-of-pack labelling. It has also shown that the label that is most helpful to consumers combines the words 'high', 'medium' and 'low' to indicate nutrient level, traffic light colours to illustrate this and percentage of Guideline Daily Amount.

Find out more:
food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2009/may/fsaresponse

Advertising to children

The FSA has been concerned for many years about the impact on children's diets of a lack of balance in food advertising.



Our 'nutrient profiling' model helps determine what foods can be advertised during children's TV and has helped reduce the number of adverts for less healthy foods seen by children.

In March 2009, our Board recommended that the 'protein cap', which prevents foods containing high levels of fat, salt or sugar being classed as 'healthier' just because of their protein content, should be retained. Removing the protein cap would have allowed a limited number of additional products, mainly breakfast cereals and some crisps, to be advertised on television to children.



Find out more food.gov.uk/healthierating/advertisingtochildren/nutlab

Recipes online

There is no shortage of recipes online, but how many include nutritional information alongside the list of ingredients and instructions?

In January 2009, we brought together recipes from Agency-commissioned cooking projects into one section containing nearly 200 recipes. All the recipes include nutrition, allergy and food hygiene information.

Find out more: eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/recipes

Working with you

The Agency often gets out and about with consumers, taking our messages directly to local groups, schools and events.

FSA Scotland's (FSAS's) *Recipe for Success* has involved going on the road with celebrity chef Phil Vickery to demonstrate how easy it is to cook up delicious and nutritious meals, as well as how to handle food safely and hygienically. FSAS also goes to events such as the Royal Highland Show to promote the Agency's key messages with activities, including interactive games and cookery demonstrations.

The Scottish Government Healthier Scotland Cooking Bus is 25% funded by FSAS, and travels to schools and communities throughout Scotland teaching consumers how to cook simple nutritious meals from scratch. FSAS has also been hosting events in partnership with key care organisations in order to capture the views of older people.

FSA Wales' educational resource trailer aims to raise awareness of food safety and healthy

eating issues, with a specific focus on schoolchildren. The Agency works in partnership with schools, local authorities and other safety organisations for these events and also attends agricultural shows and other public events.

FSA Northern Ireland (FSANI) worked with Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster to find out what students' attitudes to food are, which resulted in *Fresher Food: A student survival guide to food*. This guide has also been adapted for sixth form pupils and will be used as a teaching resource in Northern Ireland schools.

FSANI launched *The Good Life Magazine* in 2009 to provide nutrition information and advice for the over-60s. The magazine also covers general areas of interest for this age group and includes puzzles and recipes. Two bingo games have also been launched – Eatwell Bingo, based around the Agency's

eatwell plate, and Beat the Bingo Bug, which was produced for Food Safety Week in conjunction with the Food Safety Promotion Board and the Environmental Health Service in Northern Ireland.

Local food action in Wales

Since 2003, FSA Wales has run the annual Awards for Food Action Locally. The awards are open to all individuals or organisations whose work aims to improve the diet of their local community in Wales. This includes community and voluntary workers, those in education, caterers, shops and food producers.

Find out more:
food.gov.uk/wales/nutwales/afal/afal2009

Citizens' forums

Our citizens' forums help us to engage more effectively with individual consumers and have a continuing conversation with the public on food policy.



There are 10 forums around the UK, with the members of each reflecting their particular area. Through the forums we aim to:

- understand the top-level concerns of consumers
- develop a deeper understanding about the particular concerns that consumers have in relation to food
- test FSA policy and ensure that the views of consumers are taken into account at all stages of the policy-making process



Find out more
[food.gov.uk/aboutus/
how_we_work/acce](https://www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/how_we_work/acce)

Come to our committee meetings

The Agency has several independent committees and working groups, including various expert scientific advisory committees (SACs), and the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committees (FACs). Meetings are open and are a great opportunity for consumers to attend and ask questions about the Agency's work.

The committees provide advice to the FSA and help ensure that the Agency's advice to consumers is always based on the best and most recent evidence. The FACs advise the Agency particularly about matters relating to their specific region.

Find out more:
[food.gov.uk/aboutus/
committees](https://www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/committees)

Have you ever wondered what science has to do with your daily cooking and eating? Science is at the heart of the Agency's work and the advice we give to consumers, from preparing food safely to healthy diets for teens, from safe levels of salt to managing a food allergy.

Coming up...

Seeking your views

The Agency will be running events in 2009 and 2010 to find out your views on a number of food issues.

In June 2009 more than 60 consumers got together with representatives of the Agency in Manchester to share their views on issues such as salt, saturated fat and advice on nutrition when eating out.

They were also given an opportunity to comment on the strategic plan that the Agency is developing.

We carry out and commission extensive scientific research and surveys to ensure that our advice is based on the best and most up-to-date science. This means that our advice might change in the light of new research.

For example, in November 2008 we issued new advice to pregnant women on their maximum caffeine intake, recommending a daily limit of 200mg – roughly two mugs of coffee a day – to minimise the risk to their baby. Our previous advice was 300mg, but new research showed that the lower limit was more appropriate.

We also recommended, following a review of the scientific evidence, that the Government should change its advice on the risk of children developing a peanut allergy.

Previously, there were concerns that where there is a family history of allergy, children could develop a peanut allergy as a result of their mother eating peanuts during pregnancy or while breastfeeding. However, a new review of all the science found no clear balance of evidence that either eating or avoiding peanuts during pregnancy, while breastfeeding or in the first few years of life protects children from developing a peanut allergy.

Spreading our message

To help spread our science messages further, the Agency took part in one of Europe's largest science events, the BA Festival of Science, which featured six days of events, talks, debates and hands-on activities. Agency staff took part in expert panels and our Chief Scientist Andrew Wadge did a live webcast in which he debunked some of the myths surrounding food scares and explained the science behind the headlines of food stories.

Take part in the debates

The Agency welcomes your involvement in our ongoing debates about food and science. One way you can get involved is via the Chief Scientist's blog. He writes regularly on the food topics of the day, explains the issues behind the headlines, and talks about what he and the Agency's scientists are up to. Feel free to visit the blog and comment on his views or join in the varied discussions with other visitors.

Find out more:
food.gov.uk/scienceblog



Tune in to the FSA

You can watch adverts from our campaigns along with our other videos on safe and healthy food on our youtube channel.

Find out more:
youtube/foodstandardsagency

You can also watch live webcasts of FSA Board meetings – or listen to them on the phone or watch them online later. The Board holds regular open meetings –

usually every month – that give the public an opportunity to see how the Board goes about discussing the Agency's policies and reviewing its work.

Interested members of the public can register and go along to ask questions and listen to the Board's discussions.

Find out more:
food.gov.uk/aboutus/ourboard/boardmeetings

Working with schools

Children love food and we want them to know how to choose, cook and eat safe healthy foods.



That is why we develop and support schemes throughout the UK to help them acquire food knowledge and skills appropriate to their age, as outlined in the Agency's food competency framework.

Schemes that we have run with schools in the past year include:

- **Something to Chew On** – a 10-week programme run with the Manchester United Foundation, in which seven and eight year-olds are stimulated to learn about the Agency's food competencies through a mixture of classroom and physical activity. Their parents also attended workshops to help them find out how to carry on the good work at home.
- **What's Cooking? Kick & Cook** – run in partnership with the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation, this encourages young people aged 11 to 14 to learn about healthy eating and food safety through practical cooking at the club stadium.
- **Hygiene, Healthy Eating and Activity in Primary Schools** – Food Standards Agency Scotland teamed up with Scottish Rugby and the Scottish Football Association for a programme that aims to reach 10,000 children in 350 schools each year over the next three years.

- **Teaching tools for schools** – we launched two interactive tools that help deliver the food competency framework, for teachers to use with their pupils. ‘Myfoodspace’ is a DVD that helps 9 to 11 year-olds learn about food labels and use them to make healthier choices, and ‘Dish it up’ is a CD to help 11 to 12 year-olds consider their food choices throughout a school day and link these to aspects of the competency framework.

- **Elementary food hygiene training** – the Agency in Scotland gave financial support to more than 200 secondary schools to provide certificated elementary food hygiene training to more than 12,400 pupils. This is part of a three-year initiative that began in 2007.

The Agency also encourages young people to give their opinions on food policy through the School Council Network that it has developed. School councils from 10 primary and secondary schools contribute to the Agency’s policy making on a regular basis – for example, they gave helpful advice on the approach and look of the ‘Dish it up’ CD.

Find out more
food.gov.uk/healthierating/nutritionschools



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