

Summary of discussions from the FSA Board meeting 20 June 2018

On **EU Exit**, the discussion focused on arrangements for future risk management decisions. The Board concluded that public health, consumer trust, and business confidence would be best achieved by a mechanism which sees as little change as possible from the current, tried and tested arrangements. They wished to see the majority of risk management decisions being taken by the FSA, and more significant, higher profile or wider policy matters with a food safety component should be decisions for Ministers, on the basis of independent, science and evidence-based advice from the FSA. It was essential that any Ministerial decision-making rested with health Ministers, because public health decisions should be demonstrably separate from the Government's interests in the food and farming economy. Clarity of accountability for decisions was essential.

The FSA intended to create a regulatory forum, to engage officials in departments with a lead interest in food safety and standards, to support this approach. The Board endorsed this, noting that it should also help avoid internal barriers to trade in food within the UK.

The Board acknowledged that in the short-term Ministers may wish to also finally approve technical risk management decisions, but sought a clear timeline for the FSA taking these decisions, with the appropriate powers. The Board wished to see the FSA retain its autonomous and independent powers to manage food safety incidents, which require urgent and evidenced risk management decisions. The Board urged the speedy conclusion of these discussions.

In response to the to Mid-Point Programme Report on **Regulating Our Future (ROF)**, the Board welcomed the progress being made to transform the way food businesses in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are regulated. They confirmed the component parts of the model that need to be in place in advance of the UK leaving the EU, and endorsed implementation of the remaining elements required to complete the regulatory transformation following EU Exit.

The Board were updated on the action taken so far as part of the **Cutting Plants and Cold Stores Review**, including work being done to engage stakeholders. The Board commented on the responsibilities of local authorities and FBOs in ensuring standards in slaughterhouses and cold stores were maintained and improved. The Chair noted the need for the Board to be clear and ambitious in its expectations of business, as work on animal welfare has shown that the FSA can influence better business behaviour, over time.

The Board considered the adequacy of controls on **Raw Drinking Milk (RDM)**, a specific risky food group. Board members noted the absence of science or evidence that raw drinking milk delivered health benefits. The Board said it did not rule out prohibition of the product if the controls put in place proved insufficient to protect consumers generally, and particularly vulnerable consumers. The Board approved a series of additional controls to be introduced, and urged the newly formed producer group to help producers be fully compliant. Consultation would move forward promptly on how to achieve these additional controls rather than whether they should be introduced. On cost recovery, the Board recorded their strong preference for recovering the costs of these controls from business, particularly in the context of risky foods. The FSA would now adopt a proportionate escalation approach, with the specific triggers for returning to the question of the effectiveness of controls being agreed at the September Board meeting.

The Treasury has now approved the business case to expand the capability and capacity of the **National Food Crime Unit (NFCU)**, and allocated funding to support this. The Board welcomed the support of the Government for the expansion of the unit. The Board agreed to proceed with phase two, noting that if funding was subsequently jeopardised then plans would have to be scaled back, and that the full suite of legal powers still needed to be secured. The Board requested a full organisational review of the NFCU, to be conducted after three years, to be assured about the overall delivery and the appropriateness of the structuring.

The Board agreed its **international strategy** paper, which aims to reinforce the FSA's position of influence at the international level, with a particular focus on our global leadership on food safety and on approaches to regulatory modernisation.

[The papers discussed are available on our website](#) and a video on demand recording of the meeting will be available on the FSA's website on Monday 24 June.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the FSA Board will be on 19 September 2018 in Cardiff.

You can [register to attend in person or online](#). As places may be limited, please wait until you receive an official confirmation of your registration before making arrangements to attend. If you need help registering, or have any queries, please contact tel: 020 8481 3302.