FSA Board Meeting - June 2023

FSA Board Meeting - June 2023: Video and Minutes

The agenda and papers for the FSA Board Meeting on Wednesday 21 June 2023.

Video of FSA Board Meeting June 2023

Minutes of FSA Board meeting - June 2023

PDF
Gweld FSA Board Meeting June 2023 minutes as PDF(Open in a new window) (234.04 KB)

FSA Board Meeting - June 2023: Agenda and Papers

Agenda and papers for the FSA Board meeting on 21 June 2023 at the Olympic Suite, Clayton Hotel, Belfast

The agenda for this meeting includes:

- Annual Chief Scientific Adviser's (CSA) Report
- Foresight Function and Horizon Scanning – Annual Update to the Board
- Risk Analysis Process and Regulated Products Service – Quarterly Report
- Update on Veterinary Supply, Modernisation and Support for the Small Abattoir Sector for 2023/24
- Review of the Food Advisory Committees (FACs)
- Director of FSA in Northern Ireland Report
- Retained EU Law (REUL)

09:00 - Chair's Introduction

Professor Susan Jebb presents the minutes and actions from the previous FSA Board meeting in March 2023 and presents the Chair's report.

FSA 23-06-01 - Minutes of the FSA Board Meeting on 22 March 2023

FSA 23-06-02 - Actions Arising

9:20 - Chief Executive's Report to the Board (FSA 23-06-03)

Emily Miles presents the Chief Executive's report to the FSA Board.

FSA 23-06-03 - Chief Executive's Report to the Board

9:50 - Import Controls and the Target Operating Model (TOM) (FSA 23-06-04)

Anjali Juneja and Simon Dadd present an update on the process that has been followed for determination of the Target Operating Model, risk categories, and the next steps.

FSA 23-06-04 - Import Controls and the Target Operating Model (TOM)

10:10 - Annual Chief Scientific Adviser's (CSA) Report (FSA 23-06-05)

Robin May delivers his third annual report to the Board as the Food Standard Agency's Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA), reflecting on the past 12 months in the role.

FSA 23-06-05 - Annual Chief Scientific Adviser's (CSA) Report

10:30 - Foresight Function and Horizon Scanning – Annual Update to the Board (FSA 23-06-06)

Sam Faulkner and Michelle Patel deliver an update on the FSA's foresight function, covering the findings so far and our response to them; and the plan to continue to develop our foresight capability over the coming year.

FSA 23-06-06 - Foresight Function and Horizon Scanning – Annual Update to the Board

10:50 - Risk Analysis Process and Regulated Products Service – Quarterly Report (FSA 23-06-07)

Rebecca Sudworth, Lexi Rees, Ruth Willis, and Chris Rundle present an update on the performance of the FSA's risk analysis process including applications progressing through the regulated products service, and issues that the FSA has proactively chosen to consider.

FSA 23-06-07 - Risk Analysis Process and Regulated Products Service – Quarterly Report

11:30 - Break

11:50 - Update on Veterinary Supply, Modernisation and Support for the Small Abattoir Sector for 2023/24 (23-06-08)

Junior Johnson and Richard Wynn-Davies present an update to the Board on the things we are doing to ensure that we provide reliable and efficient Official Controls.

FSA 23-06-08 - Update on Veterinary Supply, Modernisation and Support for the Small Abattoir Sector for 2023/24

12:10 - Review of the Food Advisory Committees (FACs) (FSA 23-06-09)

Anthony Harbinson presents an an overview of the informal review of the Food Advisory Committees (FACs), discussions that have taken place to date, and recommendations for the FACs.

FSA 23-06-09 - Review of the Food Advisory Committees (FACs)

12:30 - Director of FSA in Northern Ireland Report (FSA 23-06-10)

Andy Cole presents a high-level overview of the work of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in Northern Ireland over the last year.

FSA 23-06-10 - Director of FSA in Northern Ireland Report

12:50 - Retained EU Law (REUL) (INFO 23-06-01)

Katie Pettifer and Sam Faulkner present an update on progress of the UK Government's Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill (the "REUL Bill") and outlining preparations for delivering reforms before the powers in the Bill cease to be useable in June 2026.

INFO 23-06-01 - Retained EU Law (REUL)

13:05 - Break

13:50 - Report from the Chair of the Business Committee (INFO 23-06-02)

Ruth Hussey presents a paper giving a summary of discussions at the Business Committee meeting that took place on 12 June 2023.

INFO 23-06-02 - Report from the Chair of the Business Committee

14:05 - Report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) (INFO 23-06-03)

Timothy Riley presents a paper giving a summary of discussions at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) meeting that took place on 16 May and 13 June 2023.

INFO 23-06-03 - Report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC)

14:15 - Reports from the Chairs of the Food Advisory Committees (FACs) (Oral Reports)

Oral reports from the Chairs of the Food Advisory Committees by Anthony Harbinson and Peter Price.

14:20 - Any Other Business

14:25 - Question and Answer Session

14:35 - End of Board Meeting

Questions to the Board

We are keen to ensure, as far as is practical, that questions are addressed in the discussion at the Board meeting. Notwithstanding discussions on the day, all questions will receive a written reply within 20 working days of the meeting.

Question 1

Asked by: Impossible Foods
Aneke Schwager Director Government Relations

In relation to: Risk Analysis Process and Regulated Products Service – Quarterly Report, Retained EU Law (REUL)

Question: “Does the Board encourage and expect the FSA to leverage possible efficiencies and apply pragmatic discretion within the REUL GMO framework, and avoid undue delays during the approval process? More specifically, would this include the recognition of detection methods validated in jurisdictions with equivalent regulatory standards, thereby protecting food and consumer safety whilst supporting innovation and confidence from businesses working in and with the UK?”

Question 1: Answer

Our Regulated Products Approvals Service teams are reviewing how we operate, to refine and streamline the regulatory framework we inherited from the EU in order to support growth and innovation, while ensuring consumers are kept safe.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Food Standards Scotland (FSS) act together as the Food Safety Authority and are responsible for managing applications for the authorisation of Regulated Products, including GMOs, through the UK risk analysis process. A legislative requirement of the GMO process is for the submitted analytical method for each application to be evaluated and validated by the National Reference Laboratory (NRL).

With previous applications, where possible and for efficiency, the FSA/FSS have reviewed and accepted detection methods that had been validated by the EU Reference Laboratory (EURL). These applications were classed as ‘pipeline’ (where assessments and method validations had been conducted by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the EURL respectively before the end of the EU Exit transition period whilst the UK was still part of the EU regulatory framework). As we move forward, we can no longer rely exclusively on EURL validations, since many of our applications are now being received in parallel to the EU. This means that, in many

cases, the submitted methods have not yet been validated by the EURL.

To ensure sufficient capability for the validation of detection methods and to fulfil our legislative duty to appoint an NRL, the FSA/FSS has designated LGC Ltd as the NRL responsible for delivering core GMO functions.

More broadly, we are investigating opportunities to remove unnecessary delays in the Regulated Product approval process, including products subject to the GMO framework, under the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill (REUL Bill). Within the specific constraints of the REUL Bill, we aim to be ambitious in using the opportunity to reform regulations by 2026 to streamline the application process, to speed up authorisations and to make the process easier to navigate for applicants. Specifically, we are looking at ways to consolidate the approvals processes set out in legislation for each regulatory regime to create more consistent timelines and requirements.

Fundamental reform, beyond improving the procedural elements of the GMO framework, such as the recognition of other regulators opinions, will require additional resource for policy development and analysis and will be considered as part of our longer term reform strategy.

Question 2

Asked by: BRC
Andrea Martinez-Inchausti, Deputy Director of Food

In relation to: Annual Chief Scientific Adviser's (CSA) Report

Question: "The recent enquiry and subsequent Coroner’s report into the death, by anaphylactic shock, of Celia Marsh, has re-emphasised the importance of constant and clear consumer education.

What is the FSA budget and resource allocated to consumer education and campaigns to help allergic consumers manage their diagnosis?”

Question 2: Answer

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has a dedicated Food Hypersensitivity (FHS) team working to improve the quality of life for people with FHS. The team work closely with the communications team to identify opportunities for consumer aware-ness campaigns. In the last three years, the FSA has engaged in two high profile campaigns with a specific focus on food allergies. The communications team have a total of £150,000 allocated towards all marketing and campaign spend in this financial year. Below is an outline of the consumer-based campaigns including overall reach of each.

Speak Up for Allergies phase 1: The first campaign entitled Speak Up for Allergies launched in February 2021, and targeted young people aged 18-21 and their friends. With the Covid restrictions at that time, the campaign focused on the importance of young people talking to takeaway food business on the phone about their food allergy before placing an order, and not to rely on the text box within ordering apps, even if it’s a meal they’ve ordered before. The campaign activity reached 412,600 people with the campaign video having over half a million views. We worked with partners such as Just Eat, Uber Eats, Dig In, NUS and Mumsnet to engage with businesses, parents and young people themselves. Through these channels we reached almost 1 million young people and consumers, and 200,000 food businesses operators.

Speak Up for Allergies phase 2: Launched in February 2022, and this time targeting young people and food businesses with a total spend of £180,000. The young people element of the campaign focused on empowering young people and their friends to speak up in a restaurant

about food allergies; and the food business campaign promoted the important role that they have in protecting people with food allergies. We paid to promote posts across social media to direct food businesses to our online resources which included online allergen management training. We developed campaign videos which was promoted to businesses and young people using social

media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and Facebook. We also worked with influencers to target young people with allergies and their friends on Instagram and TikTok.

The total reach of the paid spend for the young people's element of the campaign was 1,024,844 with the young people's webpage receiving 14,862 visits in the 2week campaign period. We provided businesses with over 1.5 million opportunities to see this campaign and generated 23,470 visitors to the Allergen checklist page. We worked with over 120 partners organisations to deliver messages to over 200,000 businesses and saw a 700% increase in downloads of resources.

Question 3

Asked by: Food and Drink Federation
Anna Zarasvand

In relation to: Risk Analysis Process and Regulated Products Service – Quarterly Report

Question: "The government have set objectives of supporting innovation. Therefore, should the risk-based approach identified in the FSA's code of conduct not be equally adopted by the FSA with regard to the authorised list of CBD products?

Is there any rational/reason why identical validated CBD cannot be applied across different foods? If not then why is innovation (of CBD products) being tied up in red tape?"

Question 3: Answer

The novel food authorisation process is based around a single, specific food. This food is subject to an application and a defined set of proposed uses made by the applicant. This enables us to take a risk-based approach to ensuring that food safety risks are identified and managed by the applicant seeking authorisation for their product. The authorisation process provides consumers with the reassurance that each novel food we authorise is safe, and our consumer surveys have shown that this reassurance will increase consumer confidence in CBD products. When CBD authorisations are issued this will allow further legal innovation in the CBD market.

We encourage applicants with very similar products to work together to submit joint applications to minimise the data needed to be generated or come to arrangements to share data. Where applicants apply and are granted data protection under the regulation, the FSA and FSS cannot use the proprietary data for the benefit of other applicants without the permission of the data owner. This is to protect the investment of innovators.

We are also seeing a lot of variation in the composition of the CBD ingredients seeking authorisation. It is a complex product and this is reflected in the depth of consideration given to the ingredients to ensure they meet the criteria of the novel foods regulations: to be safe, not misleading and not nutritionally disadvantageous. We continue to encourage applicants to work together to share data relevant to their ingredients, where appropriate.

Question 4

Asked by: Association of Independent Meat Suppliers
Simon Dawson, Policy Advisor

In relation to: Update on Veterinary Supply, Modernisation and Support for the Small Abattoir Sector for 2023/24

Question: “In relation to Part A: Improving Quality and Reliability of Veterinary Supply when will FSA publish the timetable for letting the contract for supply of OVs and Official Auxiliaries (OAs), which is due to expire in March 2024?? A condition of extending this contract by 12 months from its original expiry date of March 2023, was production of a FSA commercial strategy. Can a progress update be provided on production of this strategy?”

Question 4: Answer

FSA has commenced preparations for the re-tender of the FSA Delivery of Official Controls Contracts, with the public retender on target to start later this year, pending attaining the relevant approvals from Cabinet Office. We have a number of activities already underway including regular engagement with Cabinet Office to ensure the FSA delivers against all conditions set during the approval of the previous extension.

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