FSA Board backs programme which ‘will have long-lasting and positive impact’ for people with food hypersensitivities

On Wednesday, 16 September 2020, Dr Paul Turner, of the Science Council, addressed Board members on the progress of the FSA’s research programme on food hypersensitivity (FHS), incorporating food allergy and food intolerance.

His report commended the programme as being ‘well-managed, and influential with significant policy implications at a national and international level’, and also praised ‘the dedication of FSA staff and contractors, and the extensive and frequent level of stakeholder engagement’.

The FSA is reviewing its strategy on FHS to ensure it has access to the best available science and evidence, and to support the delivery of appropriate and effective actions to improve food safety and widen consumer choice.

Dr Turner discussed opportunities to further develop the programme’s strategy and direction, and to maximise outputs from existing data and overall impact. The Board welcomed the report and endorsed the recommendations provided, ahead of a full report into the programme being revealed next summer.

Chair Heather Hancock said:

> “This is an important report for us. I think it will have a long-lasting and positive impact for people with hypersensitivity and will aid the FSA in wider areas of our work.”

Meanwhile, the Board were also updated on, and approved, the prioritisation, triage and publication mechanisms of the FSA’s developing risk analysis process. Members requested that the FSA’s commitment to publication of evidence and recommendations be written into the process, and heard that further engagement and testing of the system is planned before the Transition Period ends.

In another agenda item, FSA Director of Strategy Paul Morrison set out more details about work being done to ensure all four UK governments work together effectively at the end of the Transition Period, as he discussed the Food and Feed Safety and Hygiene (FFSH) framework proposals – jointly developed by officials from the four countries, with the objective of being ratified by Ministers by the end of 2020.

Members were offered assurances that work currently being carried out between all countries in preparation for January make the risk of divergence between nations on food standards low.

Furthermore, the Chair informed members that Chief Executive Emily Miles has been tasked with developing a regular written assessment which will provide the FSA's view on the state of play of food standards generally and consumer interests. Officials will bring an update to the Board on this new approach next year.

Finally, Darren Davies, Head of the FSA's National Food Crime Unit (NFCU), updated the Board on the Unit's assessment of the food crime landscape in the UK. A full report is due to be published in the coming weeks alongside the NFCU's list of priority areas for the next year.

A full video of the Board meeting is available to view now.

The FSA Business Committee will meet on Wednesday 23 September 2020. A full agenda and papers are available to view now on the Board meeting section of our website. You can register to watch the meeting online.