

Inaugural report on UK food standards cautions of challenges ahead

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Food Standards Scotland (FSS) have today (27 June) launched **Our Food: An annual review of food standards across the UK**, an in-depth review of our food standards. It is the first in a series of reports due to be published annually, as part of our ongoing commitment to transparency and so that parliamentarians, trading partners and consumers at home and abroad, remain aware of the changes and challenges to our food system.

This inaugural annual report comes after the food system has faced two years of major upheaval following the UK's departure from the EU, the significant effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and more recently the disruption caused by the war in Ukraine.

Despite these significant pressures, the report concludes, with a degree of caution, that food standards in the UK have largely been maintained. However, while there has been no evidence of a drop in standards, the report warns of challenges ahead.

Two of the main concerns identified are the fall in the number of inspections of food businesses, as a consequence of the resourcing pressures faced by local authorities. Secondly, the delay in establishing full UK imports controls for high-risk food and feed from the EU has reduced the ability to prevent the entry of unsafe food into the UK market.

FSA Chair, Professor Susan Jebb, said:

"This first joint report reflects on a period during which there has been significant concern about the impact of world events on food standards and safety.

"It is encouraging for UK consumers and our international trading partners that this report provides reassurance that the high food standards we enjoy in the UK have been upheld during a really tough period for the food system. However, the effects of recent momentous events are still being felt, and will continue to have an impact on our food systems for many years to come.

"We are under no illusions that there are major challenges ahead. Establishing full UK import controls on food from the EU by the end of next year is a priority. The longer the UK operates without assurance that products from the EU meet our high food and feed safety standards, the less confident we can be that we can effectively identify potential safety incidents.

"As the report also points out, local authority inspections declined during the reporting period. Even though there are signs of improvement, particularly on hygiene inspections, local authorities continue to face resourcing constraints which could affect progress.

“We, along with our partners in government, must all make sure that the current challenges in the food system are resolved in a way that puts us on course for a safe, healthier and more sustainable future food system.”

[View the annual report.](#)