

Stakeholder update: science and research (December 2022)

In this bulletin we highlight the publication of our annual science update for the FSA Board, the breadth of our research programme outputs and we update you on the PATH-SAFE research programme.

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Highlights

[FSA Board Meeting – December 2022: FSA Science Update 2022](#)

Julie Pierce and Rick Mumford presented a paper giving an annual update on FSA's science, including the development of the FSA's science, evidence and research capability; a review of achievements and the progress made since the last update; and a summary of our future plans.

[2022 – A year in FSA science](#)

Professor Robin May, FSA Chief Scientific Adviser reflects on the FSA's commitment to science and the work delivered throughout 2022.

[FSA Chief Scientific Adviser announces independent reviewers for Scientific Advisory Committees Review](#)

Professor Robin May, has announced the appointment of the independent reviewers for two of the FSA's independent Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs).

[Review of Science Advisory Committees and Joint Expert Committees](#)

We have published the reports of internal reviews of three of its Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs) and three Joint Expert Groups (JEGs).

[Latest consumer survey tracks level of concern around the cost of food and its impact on food safety](#)

New evidence by the FSA has found some people are taking food safety risks because of money pressures and rising energy costs.

[UK consumers give their views on precision bred food](#)

The FSA and Food Standards Scotland (FSS) have published the first phase of a 'Survey of public attitudes towards precision breeding' report, as part of wider efforts to increase their evidence base in the field of genetic technologies.

Congratulations

The Kitchen Life 2 project team (Social Science team at FSA), were shortlisted for both the [Civil Service Award for Best Use of Data and Technology](#), and the [Innovative Methods in the Analysis in Government award](#). The project is underway and is providing fresh insight for the FSA's risk assessment, policy development and behavioural intervention design.

FSA funded research fellow Dr Arthur de Carvalho e Silva, at the University of Birmingham on winning the [Lush Prize Young Researcher Award](#) for our important research on computational toxicology methodologies in chemical risk assessment.

Opportunities

We offer a range of opportunities for researchers to join us, no matter where you are in your career, including internships, studentships and fellowships, or jobs. See below for details on our latest opportunities.

Job Vacancies

[Social Science Researcher](#)

We are looking for a Social Science Research Officer who can provide evidence-based insights across a wide range of future projects on the Social Science team. Supporting senior researchers in varied and interesting projects, you will also have the opportunity to lead your own smaller projects. The work will help the FSA make vital policy decisions, and better understand the way those decisions will impact the lives of the public. (Closing date Monday 2 January 2023)

[Toxicological Risk Assessor](#)

We have an exciting opportunity for a toxicological risk assessor to join the Science Evidence and Research Division. Working on a wide range of projects, from detailed reports to incident response risk assessments, you will engage in varied and fascinating work that will support not only the mission of the FSA but also the health of the wider public. (Closing date Monday 2 January 2023)

Stakeholder feedback

[Food and You 2 Stakeholder survey](#)

We have now published four waves of the FSA's flagship survey, Food and You 2, which collects data on consumers' self-reported attitudes, knowledge and behaviour around food safety and other food-related topics.

This is an opportunity for those who use the findings to take part in a 10-minute survey designed to capture your views on the Food and You 2 report, other outputs and how you're using the data in your work. Your feedback will enable us to make improvements for future waves. The survey will close on Friday 13 January 2023.

If you have any questions about this survey or Food and You 2 more generally, please contact the team at: foodandyou@food.gov.uk

Dates for the diary

FSA Food for Thought seminars

The FSA's 'Food for Thought' seminar series aims to create an accessible knowledge hub to enable collaborative learning and networking on topics across the food industry that align with the [FSA research priorities](#).

Sterling Crew – 26 January

Join us on Thursday 26 January 12 to 1pm, in which Sterling Crew, President Elect of the IFST, Chair of the Food Authenticity Network, discusses what the egg scare can teach us about food crisis management. At the session Sterling, Independent Scientific and Regulatory Advisor to the British Egg Industry Council (BEIC) will provide insight and a case study into how the crisis in 1988 came about and how the UK egg industry recovered and regained consumer confidence.

Ipsos and Trussell Trust – 8 February

Join us on Wednesday 8 February 1 to 2pm, in which Rachel Bull and Grace Wyld (Trussell Trust) and Daniel Cameron (Ipsos UK) will present findings and learnings from Hunger in the UK. This is a major multi-year research project into the scale, profile and drivers of food bank use and destitution in the UK. The project explores who is at greatest risk of a food bank referral, what is driving the increasing need for food banks, what is keeping people trapped in destitution, and what the effective policy and practice solutions are to support people out of food insecurity and prevent destitution

To be added to the invite list for either of these events, please email foodforthought@food.gov.uk and indicate which seminar you would like to attend.

Recent publications

We collaborate with a range of stakeholders on research projects to ensure our work is underpinned by the latest science and evidence. Our publications are available on [our Research and Evidence pages](#), and you can see our latest research highlighted below, categorised by area of research interest.

Antimicrobial resistance:

[AMR in Campylobacter in UK chicken over the last 20 years](#)

We have published a report analysing 20 years of data on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in Campylobacter from retail chicken in the UK.

Behaviour and perception:

[Food and You 2: Northern Ireland Wave 3-4 Key Findings](#)

This report presents Northern Ireland specific findings from Wave 3 and 4 of our Food and You 2 survey, covering the following topics: trust in food, concerns about food, food insecurity, eating out and takeaways, food allergies and intolerances, eating at home, food shopping and labelling and healthy eating.

[Food Hygiene Rating Scheme \(FHRS\) Food and You 2: Wave 4](#)

This report presents findings relating to the FHRS from Wave 4 of our Food and You 2 survey.

[Monthly consumer insights tracker](#)

Research and consumer insight on behaviours and attitudes to food insecurity, food availability, consumer concerns and confidence in the food supply chain.

[Qualitative research to explore consumer attitudes to food sold online](#)

Ipsos was commissioned to carry out research to understand consumer attitudes towards purchasing food online including the perceived risks associated with this. It sought to capture attitudes around purchasing food through a range of different online retailers including online supermarket websites, delivery service apps, social media platforms and food sharing apps.

National Reference Laboratories (NRLs)

NRLs are specialist laboratories responsible for maintaining standards for the routine testing of feed and food. They provide advice and support on methods for official control testing, ensuring the delivery of risk-based and proportionate food enforcement to protect consumers. The NRLs have now published their annual reports, highlighting actions completed for their areas over 2021/22.

- [NRL in GMOs annual report \(21/22\)](#)
- [NRL in Feed Additives annual report \(21/22\)](#)
- [NRL in Chemical Contaminants annual report \(21/22\)](#)
- [NRL in Marine Biotoxins annual report \(21/22\)](#)
- [NRL in Foodborne Viruses annual report \(21/22\)](#)
- [NRL in Anisakis annual report \(21/22\)](#)
- [NRL in Bacterial contamination of live bivalve molluscs annual report \(21/22\)](#)
- [NRL in Trichinella & Echinococcus annual report \(21/22\)](#)
- [NRL in Microbiology annual report \(21/22\)](#)

Chemical Hazards in Food and Feed:

[Radioactivity in Food and the Environment \(RIFE\) report 2021](#)

The annual Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) report found levels of man-made radioactivity remain below the legal limit.

[Nitrate Surveillance Monitoring Program \(Annual Report May 2021 - March 2022\)](#)

This Annual Report presents findings on levels of nitrate in lettuce, spinach and rocket between the 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

Consumer interests:

[Promoting healthy and sustainable diets: How to effectively generate and translate evidence](#)

The FSA commissioned the University of York in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire to explore the barriers to adopting evidence into policy and practice, and develop a set of guiding principles for evidence generators on how to create and translate evidence more effectively.

Foodborne disease:

[Survival of SARS-CoV-2 on the surfaces of food and food packaging materials](#)

In late November 2022, the FSA published the findings of a study which assessed the survival of coronavirus on selected foods and food packaging. [Food Safety Magazine](#) have responded to the research.

Novel Foods:

[Survey of public attitudes towards precision breeding](#)

The FSA and FSS commissioned Ipsos UK to conduct a two-phase social research project on precision breeding. The first part of the two-phase social research project sought feedback from members of the public across the UK on their awareness and attitudes towards precision bred food, and what information about precision bred food is important to them.

[Statement on the Outcome of the \(ACNFP\) workshop on Precision Bred Organisms \(PBOs\)](#)

The Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP) published their statement on Precision Bred Organisms which identifies areas of consensus on scientific issues identified to date by ACNFP. This advice will inform the FSA Board in making decisions on the approach to regulating PBOs in England.

PATH-SAFE programme

Foodborne disease and remote diagnostics

As mentioned in our [last update](#), the £19.2 million of SOF funded, FSA-led, cross-Government [PATH-SAFE programme](#) is underway with numerous activities in delivery, across a wide variety of partners.

In September we were pleased to announce that Fera Science, in collaboration with the University of Lincoln, were awarded a contract to lead on a study of rapid in-field diagnostics to help the programme understand what technology is out there and what stage of deployment it is in. This will include horizon scanning, a technology readiness level study and an end-user needs assessment. The results of these investigations will inform options for the next stages of in-field testing. The co-design of applications with end-users will be critical to ensure real-world applicability.

The project began in September, with future key dates as follows:

- Horizon scanning, technology readiness assessment and end-user needs study all underway and due to report in March 2023.
- In-field testing, guided by preceding aspects of the project, to start June 2023 and report by March 2024.

How you can help

If you are aware of similar technology readiness studies, planned or in progress, please [contact our PATH-SAFE team](#) so we can explore possible synergies across projects. We are keen to connect and communicate with any other ongoing government technology readiness level projects, to maximise the outputs of each of the projects.