

Summary of discussions at the FSA Board meeting on 5 December 2018

The FSA is delivering a two-year programme to prepare the food and feed regulatory regime for the UK's exit from the EU. The Board considered and endorsed a further series of progress reports and specific measures for the FSA's Day One exit-readiness, and also reflected on a briefing received in advance of the meeting, from Defra officials, about delivering the new Import Notification System.

The Board's emphasis continues to be on preserving current levels of consumer protection and confidence, noting that consumers would be best served by a largely unified approach across the UK, whilst respecting devolution arrangements. The Board discussed progress on the delivery programme for Day One readiness.

The development of an integrated strategic approach to surveillance was reviewed, and the Board was satisfied that, on current plans and progress, this would be in place for Day One. The Board commended the innovation in the new approach, particularly the ability to predict food risks rather than react to them, as under current arrangements.

The Board was satisfied with the incident management arrangements for EU Exit, and welcomed the continuing emphasis on exercises to prepare for incidents specifically connected with leaving the EU. The Board welcomed confirmation that the FSA would continue to take risk management decisions and lead on handling in food safety incidents, post-Exit. The Board considered further detail of the future arrangements for risk analysis, and the roles and responsibilities of the Scientific Advisory Committees.

Board members discussed progress on strengthening protections for food allergic consumers, a top priority for the FSA. Measures in the last 18 months have included:

- instigating a world-leading research programme on adult onset allergy
- a successful 'easytoASK' campaign targeting food businesses and young adults (the most vulnerable age group)
- improving recalls of food, where allergy issues are a prevalent cause
- supporting prosecutions in allergy cases

The FSA and Defra are reviewing allergen regulation for food that is pre-packed for direct sale, which will shortly be issued for consultation. The Board agreed that labelling provided important protection, but could not be the only answer. The outcome of the review should avoid unintended consequences in business behaviour, reducing choice, trust and confidence for allergic people, when the 2014 FIR regulations had delivered a significant step forward in these areas.

The Board noted the link between the allergen issue, and the results of a review commissioned by the FSA into the delivery of food standards official controls. The review provided evidence that in general, the current arrangements were unsatisfactory, under resourced, struggling to recruit skilled staff, and hampered by inflexible regulation. The Board agreed that a comprehensive redesign was required, which would provide better assurance, more agility, and help local authorities to evidence that they meet their statutory obligations.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the FSA Board will be on 13 March 2019 in London.

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.