

Summary Report – 10 September 2025

Business Committee Meeting

INFO 25/09/02 - Report by Timothy Riley

The Committee considered the following items:

Chief Executive's (CE's) Report to the Business Committee (FSA BC 25/09/03)

The CE mentioned an incident involving Botulism in cattle, which had emerged since her report had been drafted. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) had assessed that the risk to public health was negligible as the strain was not thought to pass to humans through the food chain, but the incident had involved the deaths of over 700 cattle. Food-chain information had identified animal feed affecting three suppliers and five farms, relating to waste products from a large-scale bakery being used in animal feed. Confirmation through sampling was being awaited. There were currently no concerns that needed to be raised to the Business Committee.

The Committee heard about Operation Bantam, on the illegal supply of unfit food into the human food chain, and Operation Cedar, involving counterfeit rice products where lower-grade rice was misrepresented as higher-grade. Operation Bantam had spanned several years and had been affected by delays in the Crown Court but had led to the first custodial sentences marking a milestone for the NFCU.

The FSA's Financial Position was discussed noting a small projected overspend on the Westminster resource budget. Contingency funds were held for such an eventuality but there were several current financial risks that could lead to a call on these funds, so the Executive was keeping a close watch on the financial position in case corrective action was required as the year progressed. The pay settlement had exceeded budgeted expectations though some contingency was retained for this. It was also pointed out that budgets for Northern Ireland and Wales were separate and could not be used to cross-subsidise across regions.

The Committee also asked about withdrawal of approval from Birmingham Halal Abattoir outlined in the report, noting that four prosecutions were underway for breaches of food hygiene law at the abattoir. The site had since reopened as new business with different directors and DEFRA was involved in decisions regarding export approvals for the new business.

Performance Report for Q1 2025/26 (FSA BC 25/09/04)

Junior Johnson told the Committee that the volume of **Incidents** had increased from 861 to 949, but this was considered to be largely due to a transition between two IT systems and was likely also due to improved detection capabilities. Some double-counting was also suspected with the new incident management system expected to improve accuracy from Q2 onwards. It was acknowledged that methodology changes, including the removal of notifiable diseases from counts had skewed priority metrics. The Committee raised questions about capacity and

sustainability and the need to reassess capacity and automate processes was acknowledged. Joint working with UKHSA was underway to optimise management of outbreaks of foodborne disease.

Nathan Barnhouse updated the Committee on **Local Authority Performance** noting that local authorities were prioritising higher-risk establishments, while lower-risk inspections remained below pre-pandemic levels. Concerns remained around the local authority workforce, and Nathan explained that work was underway to investigate the scale of any impending “cliff edge” linked to the workforce demographic profile. It was noted that seventy-four local authorities had now fully migrated to the Food Standards Delivery Model with a further 21 testing the model and 57 recording by offline means. Upcoming changes to the Food Hygiene Delivery Model would enable local authorities to triage new business registrations and prioritise interventions based on risk, along with flexibilities for remote inspections of the lowest risk premises, under certain circumstances. Nathan gave an update on the rollout of the resource tool explaining that it was ready to be launched this autumn.

Carmel Lynskey and Rebecca Sudworth gave an update on **Market Authorisations**, which covered the launch of the CBD consultation and delays affecting this year's delivery, stemming from the implementation of reform. This had required the development of a new Ministerial Determination Instrument to replace the Statutory Instrument, which had added legal complexities in Wales and Scotland, where the additional workload had created resource difficulties. It was suggested that the FSA may need to consider operating at a different pace across the UK unless the issues could be addressed. The Committee asked for an updated forecast of how many requests it was expected would be received, especially in the light of recent reforms, and the projected pace of authorisations given the increase in the rate that risk assessments were being completed. The CE agreed that this would help Board-level decisions on future prioritisation.

The Committee heard a **Science** update from Rick Mumford which covered new indicators introduced to measure the use and impact of the FSA's publications. The Committee proposed including externally funded science projects in the KPIs. It was noted that the amount of sampling was down due to rising lab costs with the focus shifting to targeted, intelligence-led surveillance and the CE proposed it would be useful to provide a breakdown of sampling spend and outcomes for future reports.

A brief update on the **Trade & International** slides in the report was introduced by Anjali Juneja who highlighted that a Section 42 commission had been received from the Department of Business and Trade for the India Free Trade Agreement.

On the **budget position**, Ed Clift expanded on the update from the CE report, acknowledging the resource budget was tight; but that there was a capital underspend due to lease changes for the London office.

Regulation Action Plan Commitments (FSA BC 25/09/05)

David Holmes introduced the discussion focussing on the FSA's progress against four specific commitments made under the Chancellor's Regulation Action Plan (published March 2025), with a delivery target of March 2026. The FSA had delivered the commitments on the food standards model and was on track to deliver all four commitments, though some risks remained including around trade audits as well as around food hygiene controls, where the legislative progress was dependant on Ministerial clearance across three nations and securing parliamentary time.

There was also an update on the Innovation Research Programme funded by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), supporting the FSA's commitment to proportionate regulation and easing burdens on businesses.

The Committee commended the progress noted in the paper, especially the completion of the work on food standards. There was a discussion about implementation of the regulatory reduction targets. It was clarified that the FSA would not be allocated an individual target as part of the 25% burden reduction work, but all departments would be expected to contribute to the overall reduction. The FSA's work to support a successful SPS agreement would be important in achieving a reduction in regulatory burdens on business; it was noted that doing this work well was the best way in which the FSA could help to reduce regulatory burdens.

The Committee acknowledged strong progress and delivery against commitments, while recognising strategic risks and resource limitations.

CCP Sandbox Progress Report (FSA BC 25/09/06)

The paper on the Cultivated Cell Product (CCP) Sandbox, was introduced by Thomas Vincent and focused on the achievements of the first six months of the programme and the planned activity for the next six months, highlighting the launch of the business support service and achievement of the timelines for the first sprint.

The Committee suggested international comparisons of the UK's regulatory attractiveness, and it was explained that European and US-based stakeholders viewed the UK as a model for regulatory innovation, with early US approvals based on small-scale production, possibly requiring reassessment at scale. The importance of planning for scale-up and distinguishing between discovery and commercialisation phases was noted and it was pointed out that a variety of participants had been selected for the sandbox –to help ensure we had these insights included in the programme.

Animal Feed (FSA BC 25/09/07)

This was the first dedicated Business Committee discussion on animal feed, recognising its foundational importance to the FSA's origins. The aim was to provide assurance on operational delivery and regulatory oversight, and to consider making this an annual reporting item.

Natasha Smith introduced the item and covered Market Authorisations for feed-additives. The possibility of introducing fees for Market Authorisations was raised and Rebecca Sudworth noted that it had been considered but given the context of the SPS agreement no further work was planned at this stage. The Committee raised concerns about the relative ease of introducing novel products via feed and the need for robust scrutiny.

The Committee asked whether the feed delivery model could be applied to food sampling. The effectiveness of the feed delivery programme, developed in response to critical EU audits and run in partnership with National Trading Standards (NTS) since 2014, was highlighted. There had been things that could be taken from it to be used on the Food Standards side as part of the national Food Standards delivery model, most notably the development of an annual set of priorities for local authorities. The CE cautioned against assuming direct transferability to food regulation, particularly as the key factor in improving feed delivery had been the transfer in 2012 of funding for controls into the FSA as a ring-fenced budget, which we know would not be possible in respect of the funding local authorities receive for food controls. She also noted the use of earned recognition through third party assurance in feed regulation.

The issue of feed supplements was raised, and it was suggested that there could be further discussion on supplements and cross-agency responsibilities in the upcoming Tuesday briefing ahead of the Board meeting.

It was suggested that feed be regularised as a standing annual item for future Business Committee agendas.

Annex A: Business Committee Papers – 10 September 2025

- [Minutes of 9 June 2025 Business Committee Meeting](#)
- [Action Arising - Business Committee](#)
- [Chief Executive's Report to the Business Committee](#)
- [Performance Report Q1 2025-26](#)
- [Regulation Action Plan Commitments Update](#)
- [CCP Sandbox Progress Report](#)
- [Animal Feed](#)