

FSA concludes major four-year PATH-SAFE programme enhancing UK surveillance of foodborne disease and antimicrobial resistance

The FSA led, cross-government and cross-sector programme of pilot research, delivered with over 65 partners, including UKHSA, DEFRA, APHA, FSS, EA, VMD, DHSC and CEFAS took a One Health approach, recognising that the health of people, animals and the environment are deeply connected.

Launched in 2021, PATH-SAFE sought to find new ways of tackling and managing FBPs and AMR and enhance bio-surveillance across the UK's agri-food system. It has delivered new tools, data and partnerships that are already influencing national strategies and outbreak response.

Key Achievements

- **New surveillance methods:** the programme developed new approaches to surveillance including wastewater monitoring, which have helped highlight the risks associated with, for example, hospital waste discharges and the spread of pathogens and AMR into the environment.
- **Stronger data and insight:** over 8,300 samples and 12,500 isolates were sequenced, and some of this data has helped create new baselines, enhancing understanding of FBP and AMR in different contexts such as livestock and imported feed
- **Innovations at scale:** genomic data platforms for pathogens like Salmonella and E-coli were created and are now being trialled across government
- **Better coordination:** PATH-SAFE strengthened cross sector partnerships and brought in new stakeholders from industry and local government
- **Strategic Influence:** PATH-SAFE has been cited in major UK strategies including the UK Biological Security Strategy, and the AMR National Action Plan 2024-2029, reflecting its alignment with wider national priorities
- **Early policy impact:** the programme's inclusion in high-profile research and surveillance reports, such as the Veterinary Antimicrobial Resistance and Sales Surveillance report, offers early evidence of its long-term potential impact.

Impact metrics from the PATH-SAFE programme

PATH-SAFE: Pathogen Surveillance in Agriculture, Food & the Environment Programme



Looking Ahead

An independent evaluation found that the programme delivered strong value for money, helped reduce duplication across sectors, and laid the groundwork for a more integrated, efficient surveillance system. The evaluation outlines a number of general recommendations to maximise the long-term impact of the work. These include:

- scaling up successful methods through dedicated funding and wider adoption
- sharing tools, data and learning across organisations to build capability
- continuing to monitor long term outcomes and cross sector collaboration
- supporting efforts to address data sharing barriers across government by contributing to the development of clear guidance on data protection, metadata standards, linkage, and anonymisation
- prioritisation and coordinating future surveillance initiatives across departments.

The FSA is committed to supporting these next steps and continuing to champion a joined-up, One Health approach to surveillance.

Building on the work of PATH-SAFE, the FSA is developing a national Food Surveillance Programme (FSP) to strengthen the UK's food safety and authenticity monitoring. The Programme focuses on boosting lab capacity, advancing testing methods, supporting cross-government collaboration, and using innovation and data to protect biosecurity. More details are available on the [FSP webpage](#) and in the [September FSA Board Meeting pages](#).

“PATH-SAFE has shown what's possible when we coordinate across sectors with a shared mission. We now have new tools, stronger partnerships, and actionable insights that are already shaping decision-making. The next step is to ensure this momentum continues with long term investment and clear cross government ownership.”??

Rick Mumford, Head of Science Evidence and Research, at the Foods Standards Agency

The full evaluation report and supporting materials are available [here](#).