

# FSA champions food innovation in the UK with the launch of a new Innovation Research Programme

The IRP is a rapid one-year programme to enhance the UK food regulators' capabilities and specialist expertise in regulating innovative food technologies, with a particular emphasis on precision fermentation.

Precision fermentation is a modern form of the traditional fermentation process. It uses technology that allows the production of new food products through the bioengineering of microorganisms (like yeast or bacteria). These microorganisms are programmed to make new, specific components, including proteins, sugars and fats.

Some precision fermented products are already authorised and currently being used by consumers. For example, fats used in oil-based supplements such as Omega 3.

However, these technologies are increasingly being used in more innovative and complex ways, creating new regulatory challenges, which is why they are the focus of this new programme. For example, it is now possible to precision ferment dairy proteins for use as a milk substitute.

"The launch of this new research programme is the latest development in our ongoing work to support innovation in the food sector while giving consumers a wider choice of safe food."

"We know that some businesses, especially those new to the food sector, are looking for support on their journey towards authorisation. Our new Innovative Food Guidance Hub is a one-stop shop for advice on the regulation of innovative food technologies, while the new business support service provides additional information and guidance to companies who are navigating the authorisation process for their products."

"As part of the programme, we're working to provide greater regulatory clarity to industry on how to gain market authorisation in the UK, ensuring a swifter authorisation process without compromising on food safety."

Professor Susan Jebb, Chair of the FSA

"Clearer, smarter regulation is central to freeing businesses from unnecessary red tape, while maintaining the highest safety standards.

"By better understanding the science of food innovation and supporting industry to bring ideas to market with clear guidance, this Government funded programme will help cut the time it takes from initial research to a viable market product, giving

consumers more choice and growing the economy.”

Lord Vallance, Science Minister

The new programme complements the work of the [sandbox for cell-cultivated products](#), developing regulatory capability and knowledge of the most innovative products, with funding provided by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)’s Regulatory Innovation Office. The programme will create new knowledge that will change and improve the approach to regulating innovative products, including:

- boosting our scientific knowledge to assess the safety of innovative food products
- providing support to industry on how to apply for market authorisation in Great Britain (GB)
- enhancing our role as a global leader in food safety regulation by providing clear guidance on innovative foods.

The new hub builds upon the FSA’s existing guidance on novel foods, while the business support service is an extension of the recently launched [Business Support Service pilot for cell-cultivated products](#). Both services are designed to help businesses understand what is needed to prove their products are safe and help guide them through the authorisation process.

More information on the business support service - including how to submit a Pre-Submission Enquiry Form, the types of support available, and guidance on preparing a dossier can be found on the [FSA website](#).