FSA Board Meeting - March 2026: Agenda and Papers

Chesham Suite, The Rembrandt Hotel, 12-18 Dorchester Road, Weymouth, DT4 7JU

The agenda for this meeting includes:

- Programme Update: How the FSA is Preparing for a UK-EU SPS Agreement
- Future of Food Regulation Programme
- Healthier Food Targets and Reporting
- Foodborne Disease - Update
- Final Report from the External Effectiveness Review of the FSA Board
- Report from the Chair of the Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC)

09:00 Chair's Introduction and Chair's Report

Professor Susan Jebb presents the minutes and actions from the previous FSA Board meeting in December 2025 and presents the Chair's report.

FSA 26/03/01- Minutes of 10 December 2025 Board Meeting

FSA 26/03/02 - Actions Arising

Minutes of the Closed Discussion of CLO 25/12/01 - Market Authorisations - Prioritisation

(CLO 25/12/01 was discussed in closed session at the December 2025 Board Meeting)

09:20 Chief Executive's Report (FSA 26/03/03)

Katie Pettifer presents the Chief Executive's report to the FSA Board.

FSA 26/03/03 - Chief Executive's Report

09:50 Programme Update: How the FSA is Preparing for a UK-EU SPS Agreement (FSA 26/03/04)

Laura Blair and Sam Faulkner present an update on the Food Standards Agency's work to support UK Government preparations for a UK–EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement

FSA 26/03/04 - Programme Update: How the FSA is Preparing for a UK-EU SPS Agreement

10:10 Future of Food Regulation Programme (FSA 26/03/05)

Beth Chaudhary, Rachel Cooper, Nathan Barnhouse and David Holmes present a paper setting out the work undertaken to establish the Future of Food Regulation programme, following the November 2025 budget announcement.

FSA 26/03/05 - Future of Food Regulation Programme

10:50 Break

11:10 Healthier Food Targets and Reporting (FSA 26/03/06)

Beth Chaudhary, Rachel Cooper and David Holmes introduce an update on the Government's commitment to introduce mandatory healthy?food sales reporting for large food businesses and to set targets to increase the healthiness of sales

FSA 26/03/06- Healthier Food Targets and Reporting

11:40 Foodborne Disease -Update (FSA 26/03/07)

Rebecca Sudworth and Natasha Smith present a paper setting out the evidence gathering plan and initial findings to date from the investigation into possible causes for the increases in Campylobacter and Salmonella in official data published by UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)/Public Health Bodies for 2024, along with next steps.

FSA 26/03/07 - Foodborne Disease -Update

12:00 Final Report from the External Effectiveness Review of the FSA Board (FSA 26/03/08)

Timothy Riley and Christopher Westwood introduce the Final Report from the External Effectiveness Review of the FSA Board

FSA 26/03/08 - Final Report from the External Effectiveness Review of the FSA Board

12:20 Report from the Chair of the Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC) (FSA 26/03/09)

Rhian Hayward introduces his report as the Chair of the Wales Food Advisory Committee (WFAC) on the activity of the Committee for the period April 2025 to March 2026.

FSA 26/03/09 - Report from the Chair of the Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC)

12:35 Report of March ARAC meeting (INFO 26/03/01)

INFO 26/03/01 - Report of March ARAC meeting

12:45 Report from the Chair of the Business Committee (INFO 26/03/02)

INFO 26/03/02 - Report from the Chair of the Business Committee

12:55 Reports from the Chairs of the Food Advisory Committees (Oral Reports)

13:05 Any Other Business

13:10 Questions

13:20 Close

Questions to the FSA Board

We are keen to ensure, as far as is practical, that questions are addressed in the discussion at the Board meeting. Notwithstanding discussions on the day, all questions will receive a written reply within 20 working days of the meeting.

For questions that do not relate to a paper on the agenda, please email? correspondence@food.gov.uk and we will aim to respond within 20 working days.? Please note these submissions and their replies will not generally be published.

Please note questions are listed below in the order in which they were received.

Question 1

From: Dr Mark Tallon, Managing Partner, Legal Products Group Ltd

The cultured meat industry has invested heavily in the UK novel foods system especially in regulatory sandboxes.

Under Recital 115 of the European Biotech Act the European Union is going to specifically exclude Sandboxes from novel foods.

In relation to the 3 tests put in place for exemptions to dynamic alignment the sandboxes do not:

1. Result in lower standards than the EU
2. Do not restrict access to EU animals or goods entering GB
3. Has no impact on EU complaint goods being exported to the EU

As this seems a statement of fact has this issue been discussed with the EU in relation to the European Biotech Act, and have the already agreed in principle that sandboxes are outside of the scope of any agreement?

Answer:

While it has been confirmed that an SPS Agreement would follow a model of dynamic alignment with EU law, including the authorisation of regulated products, the EU has accepted there would be a limited number of areas where the UK would need to retain its own rules (referred to as ‘exceptions’). However, exceptions will only be agreed if they meet strict conditions set by the EU.
Which exceptions are included in the Agreement, their scope and operation, depends on the outcomes of negotiations. Whilst we cannot give a running commentary on negotiations and must protect their confidentiality, we will, as always, work as transparently as possible with our stakeholders.

We have been following closely the progress of the EU's Biotech Act proposal, which is aiming to turn the EU into a globally competitive biotechnology and biomanufacturing hub through addressing funding shortages, regulatory fragmentation, and barriers to scaling biotech innovation. We will continue to follow of the Biotech Act proposal as it progresses.

Question 2

From: Cefyn Jones, Founder, The Hemp Hound Agency

In light of ongoing UK–EU SPS discussions, and the potential for alignment on novel foods, I would like to ask how the FSA intends to ensure regulatory certainty for sectors currently progressing through the UK system—particularly where significant investment has already been made.

Specifically, in relation to Article 4 determinations, does the Board see an opportunity for the FSA to provide early clarity on product categories where there is credible evidence of historic consumption, in order to establish a stable domestic position prior to any SPS implementation?

For sectors such as hemp and CBD, where businesses have spent several years and substantial resources navigating the novel foods process, such clarity could prevent unnecessary duplication of effort and support both consumer safety and market continuity.

More broadly, does the Board consider that the use of Article 4 determinations could form part of a proportionate, risk-based approach to maintaining UK regulatory leadership in areas of traditional food use, even in the context of closer EU alignment?

Answer:

The novel food consultation process (also known as an Article 4 determination request) is available to businesses who are unsure of the novel food status of their product. Under the current process, businesses seeking to market their product in Great Britain (GB) can submit an Article 4 request and supporting evidence using the FSA's Market Authorisation Service.

Following the UK – EU Leaders' Summit on 19 May 2025, the UK and EU published a Common Understanding document, confirming that future negotiations on an SPS Agreement with the EU will follow a model of dynamic alignment with EU law in SPS policy areas (subject to any exceptions being agreed). This includes the law on the novel foods consultation process. In the EU, Article 4 consultation requests are sent to an individual Member State, and it is this "recipient country" that verifies the validity of the request and evaluates the novel food status.

The details of the proposed UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement are subject to negotiation and existing domestic/GB rules for Article 4 requests will continue to apply until this Agreement is?implemented.

Question 3

From: Cefyn Jones, Founder, The Hemp Hound Agency

Can the Board clarify how Article 4 determinations will be approached where an application includes evidence not only of historic consumption, but of prior regulatory acceptance or tolerance by UK authorities (including the FSA and Home Office)?

Where such evidence indicates that certain hemp-derived products, including extracts, have previously been accepted or permitted within food contexts, on what basis would these products remain subject to novel food authorisation rather than non-novel determination?

Furthermore, if regulatory alignment results in greater reliance on EU processes, how will the FSA ensure that this body of evidence—reflecting UK regulatory history and practice—is given appropriate weight, rather than being disregarded within a framework that does not account for it?

Answer:

Novel foods are any food that was not used for human consumption to a significant degree within the United Kingdom (UK) or the European Union (EU) before 15 May 1997.

It is the responsibility of food businesses operators to determine whether the foods they intend to place on the market are novel. However, the guidance on the FSA's website explains that hemp seeds, hemp seed oil, ground hemp seeds, (partially) defatted hemp seeds and other hemp seed-derived food are not novel. Water infusion of hemp leaves (when not accompanied by the flowering and fruiting tops) are also considered not novel. This is because there is evidence to show a history of consumption before May 1997. This is not the case for CBD extracts themselves and any products to which they are added as an ingredient (such as hemp seed oil). The novel food status of CBD was confirmed in January 2019. There are currently no authorised CBD extracts or isolates on the market.

The Article 4 process provides a route for food business operators to request a novel food status determination in cases where they are unsure of novel status but have evidence of a history of consumption. When making such a request, the food business operator is required to complete a technical dossier and provide supporting evidence to demonstrate a history of consumption in the UK or EU before 15 May 1997.
Following the UK – EU Leaders' Summit on 19 May 2025, the UK and EU published a Common Understanding document which states that the UK should be involved at an early stage, contribute appropriately for a country that is not a member of the EU on legal acts that are within scope of the Agreement and that the UK Government should also be consulted at an early stage of policy-making.

The UK government has begun negotiations with the EU on the proposed Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement. While those negotiations are ongoing, we cannot comment further on the Agreement.

Question 4

From: Cefyn Jones, Founder, The Hemp Hound Agency

In light of recent FSA communications advising businesses to prepare for EU-led authorisation processes, and indicating that applications may not reach a UK ministerial decision before potential SPS implementation, can the Board clarify how stakeholders should interpret the relevance of the current UK novel foods pathway?

Specifically, where businesses are being encouraged to consider EU applications, while still being asked to continue engaging with the UK system, what level of reliance can reasonably be placed on the UK process delivering a meaningful regulatory outcome?

In this context, how does the FSA justify the continuation of assessments under the current framework, and what assurance can be provided that ongoing engagement with the UK system will not result in duplication of effort or regulatory disadvantage for applicants?

Answer:

The UK Government has set out its ambition to improve the UK's trade and investment relationship with the European Union (EU). This includes seeking an SPS Agreement with the aim

of helping to boost trade and deliver benefits to businesses and consumers in the UK and the EU.

It is currently expected that the UK will continue to apply existing domestic/GB rules while an Agreement is implemented, and the existing GB market authorisation process for novel foods continues to operate. However, the UK Government is aiming for an Agreement to be implemented by mid-2027 and this means a substantial number of applications in the FSA/FSS Market Authorisation Service are unlikely to reach the point of ministerial decision before the Agreement is in place.

To ensure we prepare for a smooth transition to the proposed new system under an SPS Agreement we have adopted principles for prioritisation of market authorisation applications currently in the system, which will be kept under review as negotiations progress. The UK and the EU are aiming to reach an agreement by the next UK-EU Summit, which is likely to be this Summer. Please note, prioritisation of an application does not guarantee a positive safety assessment, nor that ministers will decide to authorise the product.

We have written to applicants to inform them as to what this means for their application and actions they may wish to consider. As implementation of the SPS Agreement approaches, it is for businesses to decide whether they wish to continue to engage with the FSA's market authorisation process, or if they wish to focus on gaining approval in the EU.

Question 5

From: Abigial Farr

Are the board aware that the UKSHA in Surrey Sussex and Kent are taking away the investigation of infectious diseases from local authorities, due to the "lack of resources" within local authorities, but come back to us to carry out follow up, but without providing the wider context of their investigation, deskilling officers and reducing the argument for EH resource. The UKSHA have stopped any investigation of campylobacter by local authorities and themselves, and all communication with the ill person's, despite this being the most prevalent food poisoning.

As part of the FSA's work In this area, will they involve and challenge the UKSHA, where necessary, the unilateral changing of food poisoning investigation, from officers with local knowledge, to a more remote process, as without investigation, sources of the food poisoning is unlikely to be found? Many thanks

Answer:

FSA is aware of an operational change agreed between UKHSA and Local Authority Environmental Health teams to change how a small proportion of questionnaires are gathered at a local level. This change was made to streamline response for all parties, and we understand the decision was made in partnership with EHOs. If you have any further queries/concerns on this, please discuss it with UKHSA.

Question 6

From: Nottinghamshire County Council Trading Standards

The Board paper refers to engagement with stakeholders. Certainly in relation to Local Authorities this engagement was done at extremely short notice and a short timescale (one week) which covered the February 2026 half term holiday when a lot of people who would want to respond would be on leave. The document provided was long, detailed and had hundreds of points which would need to be considered. This was sent out at the same time another short notice request for

feedback on other matters had been received by LAs from the FSA.

When the issue of this being very short notice and near impossible task was raised LA's were advised that this timescale was needed to make sure that the FSA met the board meeting deadline. Does the board consider this to be appropriate and/or effective engagement/consultation with stakeholders? If it's not considered a consultation by the FSA, we note that these engagements have been/are being used to form and shape content within this paper to help form decision making by the FSA and because of how the data was collected they may not be a true representation of views.

Answer:

Thank you for your comments and questions which we received ahead of the March Food Standards Agency (FSA) Board meeting and were referenced by FSA Chief Executive, Katie Pettifer, during the meeting.

Officials undertook an intensive period of stakeholder engagement in January-February 2026 to bring the Board an update on progress since the November 2025 announcement. They worked hard over this period to reach as many stakeholders as possible in the time available as outlined in Annex 1 of the Board paper. The high-level feedback has been used to shape early thinking, however as discussed at the events and outlined in the paper, this is the first stage in a planned series of engagement with stakeholders.

We are at a very early stage in this work. Many of the questions posed are the issues that officials will work through as we move into the more detailed design and policy development post-March Board.

- We have not yet determined whether feed is in scope - further work is required to help understand if it is feasible.
- There are currently no proposals confirmed about what role third party assurance schemes could play in the future system. We intend to explore how they might contribute as officials move into detailed policy design and development.
- This work will look at how centralised data and streamlined processes may be used to improve the regulatory system, and the Board agreed that in-person checks will remain important in any future system.
- We do not envisage third party assurance providers taking formal regulatory samples.

Officials are working closely with other government departments, such as OPSS, and will continue to do so throughout the programme. As we move into the detailed design stage, officials will develop options that include consideration of the Primary Authority Scheme and feedback on this that has been received from a range of stakeholders.

We remain committed to ongoing collaboration with stakeholders throughout the next phase of design and development. The Board met with senior stakeholders on 16 April and had an open and useful discussion with them about the programme. We are committed to maintaining close oversight as these proposals develop.

Question 7

From: Nottinghamshire County Council Trading Standards

Within the proposals, not particularly highlighted, and within the FSDM reporting, again not highlighted, there is reference that this may be expanded to include feed work. Whilst absolutely linked, if the FSA is considering this why has this not been communicated clearly and effectively to feed officers so that they are also able to engage at an early stage within this process? LA

Feed Officers seem to be unaware of these proposals.

Will the national regulator cover all aspects of food? Currently some of this function is spilt between FSA, DoH and DEFRA? This can cause some problems for LAs, businesses and other regulators and can cause issues to be fragmented. Is it proposed within this review that all elements of food work will be joined up?

There is also a real chance that a two-tier system could emerge between the larger businesses and smaller/medium enterprises, the latter who may not have been engaged within this consultation and may be outside the scope of some of this reform. How does the FSA propose preventing a two-tier system and effectively engaging with smaller/medium enterprises for their views.

Will there be mechanisms to share data/intelligence collected by the FSA in relation to interventions, audits and corrective actions undertaken by both themselves and third-party assurance schemes with LA regulators to enable them to have a comprehensive intelligence picture, particularly in relation to business within their LA area?

Throughout this document, food standards work and indeed trading standards work has only been fleetingly mentioned. Only food safety functions seem to be highlighted, and in Annex 2 only specific reference is given to EH views which have been collected. Is there any reason any reason TS roles, functions and views haven't been proportionally referenced?

Answer

Thank you for your comments and questions which we received ahead of the March Food Standards Agency (FSA) Board meeting and were referenced by FSA Chief Executive, Katie Pettifer, during the meeting.

We are at the very early stages of this work, and as outlined in the Board paper and during this discussion, this is the first round of a series of planned stakeholder engagements. Officials undertook an intensive period of stakeholder engagement in January-February 2026 to bring the Board an update on progress since the November 2025 announcement. Officials worked hard over this period to reach as many stakeholders as possible in the time available as outlined in Annex 1 of the Board paper.

This included engagement with environmental health and trading standards teams and a short briefing was provided to the National Agricultural Panel.

We have set out an ambitious programme of reform, but it is important that we are pragmatic in how we go about delivering it. For this reason, the current scope of the work is limited to food to ensure that the resources are available within the FSA and within the stakeholder organisations that we will need to work with us to deliver on the government's request. As the programme develops, impacts on and opportunities for the feed sector will be scoped, assessed and considered and we are committed to engaging with relevant groups during each phase of the programme.

As we are at a very early stage in this work, many of the questions posed are the issues that officials will work through as we move into the more detailed design and policy development post-March Board. However, we want to specifically address key points that you have raised:

- There are currently no proposals confirmed about what role third party assurance schemes could play in the future system. We intend to explore how they might contribute as officials move into detailed policy design and development.
- The programme will look at how centralised data and streamlined processes may be used to improve the regulatory system, and the Board agreed that in-person checks will remain

important in any future system.
- We do not envisage third party assurance providers taking formal regulatory samples.

Officials are working closely with other government departments, such as OPSS, and will continue to do so throughout the programme. As we move into the detailed design stage, officials will develop options that include consideration of the Primary Authority Scheme and feedback on this that has been received from a range of stakeholders.

Question 8

From: Nottinghamshire County Council Trading Standards

Within the proposal there is comment that the FSA are looking to move to using third party assurance schemes to undertake inspections of the larger premises. This would obviously be a chargeable service. If as proposed funding for LA regulators will be through a cost recovery model this will mean in affect that a business will be paying twice, How do the FSA perceive this to be cost effective model base on comments in point 16 of Annex 2 where it states the " the FSA have been urged to be mindful of the context where their operating costs have already increased substantially"? Would it not be better for Local Authority regulators to undertake these assurance inspections as part of their normal activities? which would also prevent the fragmentation of regulation and intelligence and would also mean a business would only be paying once.

It is not unlikely that roles to fill the third-party assurance schemes would need to be resourced from officers who currently sit within local authority regulators. Has this been considered as a further skills drain from LAs?

How would any issues identified during a third-party assurance audit be translated into a business risk profile and who would manage this

Answer:

Please see answer to Question 6 above.

Question 9

From: Nottinghamshire County Council Trading Standards

In light of the Elliot report following the horsemeat scandal, focus was placed on maintaining a robust and joined up inspection system and checks by regulators at all levels to highlight problems. One of the findings of the report was that there was a reliance on data and paperwork rather than inspections and sampling. How does this proposed reform promote those findings within the Elliot report and how will independent formal samples on which corrective/enforcement actions etc be procured at these larger businesses?

Samples are not normally procured during third party assurance scheme visits and if they were, and thus not procured formally by a regulatory body/Competent Officer. How is it proposed that any formal regulatory sampling and subsequent enforcement follow up work, if needed, could be effectively undertaken?

Returning to take formal samples, should serious matters be found during informal sampling, could introduce delays, loss of key evidence and be burdensome to businesses if repeat visits were needed etc. This could also and cause a delay in protection to the public and identification of food safety issues. How is this more efficient and/or effective?

Answer:

Please see answer to Question 6 above.

Question 10

From: Nottinghamshire County Council Trading Standards

Most businesses have multi functions e.g. importer, retailer (both online and in person) and manufacturer in one site. How would it be decided how to approach these, who has primacy over these visits and who will decide which model they fit into, could a business be subject to inspection by both FSA and LAs?

It is likely that Trading Standards and Environmental Health services will still need to visit premises to undertake other work including Metrology, Feed, Health and Safety and other functions and this will not reduce the incidence of visits. Has it been considered that the proposals could increase the number of regulator visits to businesses?

Similarly with the FSA's proposed work in the online space TS have a huge breadth of advice and guidance they pass to businesses across the full scope of a business's needs rather than focussing on one area. There is a real chance that this will lead to the siloing of skills and create a further burden to businesses having to navigate even more regulators and incur a greater cost. What work has the FSA undertaken to understand the full breadth of work and activities that TS and EH undertake whilst at these premises, and with their online presence, rather than just the singular food element?

With the proposal that the FSA will take over certain function from LAs, has consideration been given that in turn central government funding to LAs to undertake food work may in turn be reduced placing a greater resource burden on LA regulators?

Answer:

Please see answer to Question 6 above.

Question 11

From: Nottinghamshire County Council Trading Standards

In relation to Annex 2 point 10. where it comments about concerns with the Primary Authority Model and conflict of interest, it should be noted that there are in built mechanisms, including review by the secretary of state, should there be disagreement with Assured Advice which has been issued.

Primary Authority functions also cover a wide range of other non-food focussed legislation and business advice provision. Primary Authority offers a wide range of statutory tools within the scheme, including the development of business inspection plans which direct, in a not too dissimilar manner to what the FSA is proposing under the third-party assurance scheme, an inspecting officer to focus inspections on key parts of a business operation. There is nothing to suggest these existing schemes could not be further expanded or integrated. Has the FSA considered the use of Primary Authorities and the inspection plans etc in its Future of Food Regulation proposals? This would seem to complement the existing risk-based work undertaken by LAs and be easily expanded and implemented.

Answer:

Please see answer to Question 6 above.

Question 12

From: Elizabeth Lewis, BAFSAM Secretary General, BAFSAM, AIC, UK Pet Food and BETA

Feed additives are recognised to constitute the highest number of regulated product applications received by the FSA. Since November 2023, more than 40 feed additives with positive ACAF opinions remain stalled in the risk management phase. As highlighted previously, these non-safety related delays to approval are having significant negative business and economic consequences with the situation now critical for the feed additive industry.

In this context, please could the FSA Board clarify:

1. What economic impact assessment was conducted before deciding not to prioritise the authorisation of feed additives before mid-2027?
2. On what grounds are additive applications, with the benefit of a positive ACAF opinion (in some cases passed over 24 months ago), not deemed being 'very near the end of the process'
3. What assessment has the FSA made of the impact that current delays in feed additive authorisations are having on innovation within the UK feed and pet food sectors, and what steps are being taken to mitigate these impacts?
4. Given the intent is dynamic alignment, what solutions are actively being pursued to allow at least EU authorised feed additives to enter the market before mid-2027 to minimise further damage to the industry?
5. In parallel, what contingency plans are being developed to allow market access should negotiations extend beyond mid-2027?
6. When may we expect the Regulated Products Application Register to be updated to indicate the priority status of each application to provide transparency to the feed industry and assist business decision-making?

Answer:

1. We have given a great deal of consideration as to the best approach, to ensure we prepare for a smooth transition to the proposed new system under a Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement. The principles for prioritisation of applications currently in the system were agreed by the FSA and FSS Boards and Health Ministers and will be kept under review as negotiations progress.
2. Given the volume of applications in the Service, and the average time it takes to reach a ministerial decision, a substantial number of applications are unlikely to reach the point of ministerial decision before the SPS Agreement is in place. We consider an application to be close to the end of the process if they are at the final stages of risk management, for example, where we have already consulted publicly on the application. Officials have written individually to all applicants in the Market Authorisation Service to advise them of the impact the planned SPS Agreement will have for their application.
3. We have not carried out a specific assessment as to the potential impact of delays in authorisation on innovation in the sector. Recent reforms to the Market Authorisation Service, including the removal of periodic renewal requirements reduced unnecessary burdens for feed businesses. In June 2025, the FSA Board considered a paper on further proposals to streamline the Service. The Board were supportive of the proposals in principle and reaffirmed their strong commitment to reforming the Service. However, in light of the uncertainty introduced by the SPS negotiations, the Board considered officials should wait for more clarity on the form that dynamic alignment may take and the likely timeframe before progressing.
4. Details of any potential transition arrangements for any in-scope legislation are subject to negotiation and not yet confirmed. We will provide further detail on our approach to the proposed transition as soon as we can. The principles for prioritisation of applications

currently in the system were agreed by the FSA and FSS Boards and Health Ministers and will be kept under review as negotiations progress.

5. As work progresses on the Government's stated ambition for an SPS Agreement with the EU, the FSA will continue to closely monitor the progress of negotiations and actively consider what impact the Agreement might have on our work. Any changes in the expected timeline of any SPS Agreement will be communicated with stakeholders when we are able, and we will continue to consider the implications of any changes for our approach to the Market Authorisation Service. We are committed to engaging with businesses throughout this process, and we will continue to work as transparently as possible with our stakeholders.
6. Officials have written individually to all applicants in the Market Authorisation Service to advise them of the impact the planned SPS Agreement will have for their application. All applications will remain in the Service, and the register of applications will reflect which phase each application is in. There are no plans for the register to show priority status.

We understand concerns from industry about the time taken to bring feed additives to market under the current GB market authorisation process and appreciate the impact this extended uncertainly is having.

The FSA will, as always, work as transparently as possible with our stakeholders across the industry while protecting the confidentiality of the negotiations. Since the Board meeting, the Chair has arranged to meet representatives from feed industry trade organisations to discuss the potential impact of an SPS Agreement further.

Question 13

From: Marika Graham-Woods, Executive Director and Chairman of the Board of the CTA, CTA - Cannabis Trades Association

In the CEO report, the FSA states that 'a substantial number of applications are unlikely to progress to ministerial decision before the Agreement is in place', while the Programme Update confirms that Great Britain would 'dynamically align' with EU SPS rules and that the scope of legislation remains under consideration.

Taken together, this suggests that businesses are being asked to continue investing in a UK system that may not deliver authorisations before it is overtaken by an EU-aligned framework.

Can the FSA explain, clearly, what businesses are expected to plan for?

Specifically, should businesses proceed on the basis that EU market authorisation will become the primary route to market in Great Britain, and therefore that current UK applications carry a risk of becoming redundant or duplicative?

Is the FSA actively planning for a period of dual compliance, where businesses must meet both UK legacy requirements and EU-aligned rules, and if so, what concrete support will be provided to SMEs facing that burden?

Can the FSA confirm whether CBD products will fall fully within the scope of SPS alignment, or whether they remain outside it?

At a strategic level, is the FSA preparing for regulatory convergence with the EU, or the continuation of a distinct UK system?

Finally, the Board papers do not address Article 4 submissions or full-spectrum products. Where do Article 4 submissions sit in this future model, will they remain valid, and how are full-spectrum products expected to progress through a system that has so far primarily supported isolates?

Answer:

The proposal for dynamic alignment means that the UK would align with all EU legislation within the scope of the UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement and, once the Agreement enters in force, rules applying in the UK would be updated in line with EU rules as they change over time.

The EU has accepted there will be a limited number of areas where the UK will need to retain its own rules (referred to as 'exceptions'). Which exceptions are included in the Agreement, their scope and operation, depends on the outcomes of negotiations. Whilst we cannot give a running commentary on negotiations and must protect their confidentiality, we will, as always, work as transparently as possible with our stakeholders.

Defra have published an indicative list of EU legislation they currently view as being in scope of the proposed Agreement (this includes any related EU rules made under the listed EU legislation), which does include novel foods. The list will be updated once negotiations have concluded.

Dynamic alignment would mean that, once an SPS Agreement is in place, an EU market authorisation would be required to market a regulated product in GB (subject to any exceptions being agreed during the negotiations with the EU). EU authorisations already apply in Northern Ireland. Businesses would no longer apply to the FSA/Food Standards Scotland for authorisations and would have to apply under EU legislation instead, and EU authorisations will in future cover the whole of the UK.

This means that products already authorised by the EU and the conditions attached to those authorisations, would also apply in GB once the Agreement enters into force. Existing GB authorisations would cease to apply.

Details of any potential transition arrangements for any in-scope legislation are subject to negotiation and not yet confirmed.
It is currently expected that the UK will continue to apply existing domestic/GB rules while an SPS Agreement is implemented, and the existing GB market authorisation process for novel foods continues to operate. Similarly, existing domestic/GB rules for Article 4 requests will continue to apply until this Agreement is implemented.

Under dynamic alignment, the Common Understanding states that the UK should be involved at an early stage in EU legal acts, contribute appropriately for a country that is not a Member State and that the UK Government should be consulted at an early stage of policy-making.
As implementation of the SPS Agreement approaches, it is for businesses to decide whether they wish to continue to engage with the FSA's market authorisation process, or if they wish to focus on gaining approval in the EU.

Question 14

From: Carl Haffner, CEO, Haffner International

I have 3 questions.

1. Can the FSA clearly define the intended end-state regulatory framework for CBD and hemp derived products in the UK post UK EU SPS negotiations, including whether the UK will maintain an independent Novel Foods pathway or move towards alignment with EU EFSA standards?
2. What protections or transitional assurances will the FSA provide to businesses that have already invested significantly in UK Novel Foods dossiers, in the event that SPS alignment

introduces new or duplicate compliance requirements?
3. How does the FSA intend to prevent or mitigate a dual compliance burden for UK CBD operators who may be required to meet both UK Novel Foods and EU SPS/EFSA requirements simultaneously, particularly for full-spectrum products?

Answer:

Following the UK – EU Leaders' Summit on 19 May 2025, the UK and EU published a common understanding document, confirming that future negotiations on an SPS Agreement with the EU will follow a model of dynamic alignment with EU law in SPS policy areas. This includes the law on regulated food and feed products in Great Britain (GB).

The EU has accepted there will be a limited number of areas where the UK will need to retain its own rules (referred to as 'exceptions'). However, exceptions will only be agreed if they meet strict conditions set by the EU. Which exceptions are included in the Agreement, their scope and operation, depends on the outcomes of negotiations.

Detailed negotiations with the EU have begun and the UK and the EU are aiming to reach an agreement before the next summit, which is likely to be this summer. Whilst we cannot give a running commentary on negotiations and must protect their confidentiality, we will, as always, work as transparently as possible with our stakeholders.

As the UK Government is advising that businesses should start to prepare now on the assumption that the UK will dynamically align with EU legislation within scope of the Agreement, businesses may wish to assess possible impacts and consider the regulatory strategy for their products.

Under dynamic alignment, an EU market authorisation would be required to market a regulated product in GB (subject to any exceptions being agreed during the negotiations with the EU). EU authorisations already apply in Northern Ireland. Existing GB authorisations would cease to apply. Details of any potential transition arrangements for any in-scope legislation are subject to negotiation and not yet confirmed. We will provide further detail on our approach to the proposed transition as soon as we can.

The government is committed to working with industry on preparing for implementation, noting that the precise detail and timing of this process – including legislative arrangements are subject to discussions with the EU. It is a priority for this government to deliver clear and timely information, and we will publish what we can as negotiations proceed.

Question 15

From: Dr Duncan Campbell, Public Analyst, The Public Analyst Service Limited

In the November 2025 Budget the Government asked the Agency "to streamline food standards and hygiene regulation for large and regulation-compliant supermarkets." , also stating "The FSA will develop a consistent, national approach in England for the regulation of large food businesses."

Does the Board agree that this request puts equal emphasis on food standards and food hygiene and that the scope of the request includes large food importers and manufacturers as well as retailers?

Does the Board acknowledge that breaches of food standards regulation generally occur at manufacturing rather than retail level?

Will the Board consider introducing central coordination of food standards enforcement of large manufacturers and ensuring that funding is provided for adequate specialist audit of these food businesses together with targeted sampling and analysis of ingredients and final products?"

Answer:

The Board have agreed that, following a request by the Government in the 2025 Budget, the programme should develop proposals for a national system of regulation for regulating large food businesses in England.

With government funding now in place, the Future of Food Regulation programme will explore a national system of regulation alongside other broader reforms that will make the food safety and standards system more resilient.

Officials will consider the next steps on how a national system of regulation could function, building on the work already completed and the valuable information the pilot in the retail sector brought. Other sectors will then be engaged, conducting an initial discovery on their operating models to assess whether or how this might apply to large businesses beyond the retail sector.

We remain committed to ongoing collaboration with stakeholders throughout the next phase of design and development.