

Summary of discussions at FSA Board meeting March 2021

FSA Director of Policy, Rebecca Sudworth told the Board that all FSA-led preparations for the end of the Transition on 1 January had been completed on time. She explained the FSA's focus was now on working with the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (Defra), other colleagues across Government, and stakeholders from all sectors of industry on the phased introduction of certain border controls that were part of the EU trade agreement.

She emphasised that the FSA is continuing to put resource and effort into working with businesses to ensure they understand how to work within this new post-Transition Period environment, particularly in relation to the implications of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

FSA Chief Executive, Emily Miles told the Board about some current priority areas of work for the FSA. She reminded CBD businesses about the upcoming deadline for CBD novel food applications, encouraging businesses to submit their applications to the FSA before 31 March 2021 as novel food authorisation is the only route to compliance.

Emily provided the Board with an overview on two ongoing Salmonella outbreaks linked to frozen breaded chicken products and took the opportunity to remind the public to check the cooking instructions on food packaging, to cook food at the right temperature and for the correct length of time to ensure that any harmful bacteria are killed.

Emily also updated the Board on a Defra-led public consultation on genetic technologies. Chair, Ruth Hussey, notified the Board of her intention to write to the Defra Secretary of State emphasising the need for appropriate and consistent regulatory oversight for these new technologies to underpin confidence in their use as well as the importance of providing clear information for the consumer.

At yesterday's business committee meeting the Board discussed the impact of COVID-19 and the unprecedented challenges it has created for Local Authorities (LAs) in delivering their statutory food functions. In [December the FSA Board](#) agreed that the FSA's current guidance and advice for LAs gives the best possible framework for the short term and should be extended beyond January 2021 until end of June 2021. The FSA has adjusted its expectations of local authorities due to COVID-19, recognising that food businesses categorised as lower risk could have their planned inspection delayed where local authority resources have been diverted to respond to the pandemic; and asking that local authorities continue with the high priority activities detailed in the FSA advice.

The Board agreed that the effects of COVID-19 have given renewed impetus to our strategic drive for regulatory reform and agreed that the FSA should look at developing a pathway out of the current situation of a substantial number of 'overdue inspections'.

The full [agenda and Board papers](#) are available on the FSA website.