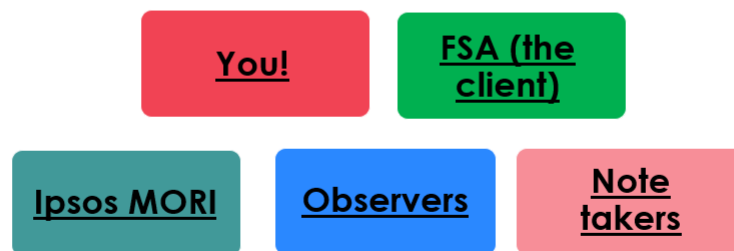


2.4 Reconvened workshops stimulus

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) wants to better understand consumer (public) views on their Future Delivery Model

We are interested in your **thoughts, views, concerns and questions!**



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Ground rules...

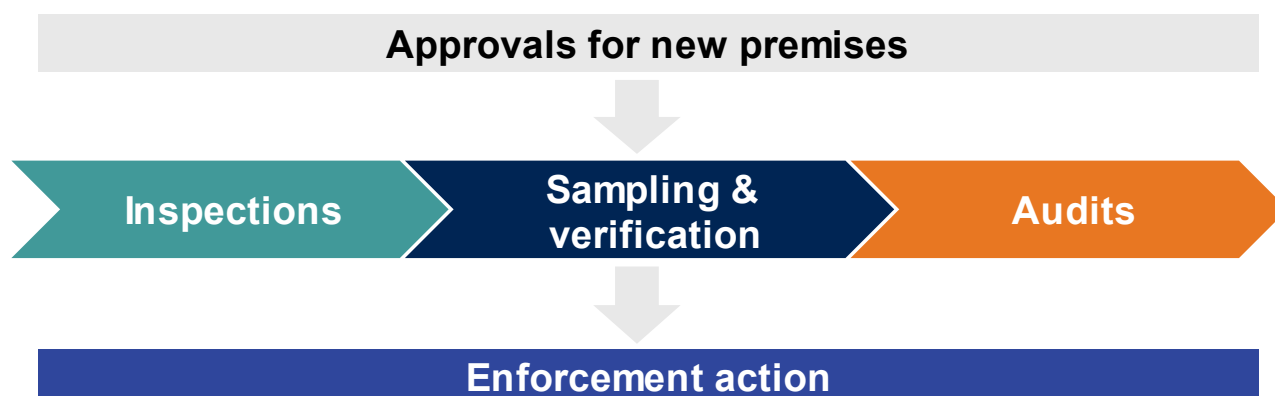
1. Listen **respectfully**, without interrupting.
2. Listen actively and with an ear to **understanding others'** views. (Don't just think about what you are going to say while someone else is talking.)
3. **Any question is a good question.**
4. Criticise ideas, **not individuals**.
5. Commit **to learning**, not debating. Comment in order to share information, not to persuade.
6. Stay on topic and **try to be concise**.
7. **Avoid** blame, speculation, and inflammatory language.
8. Allow everyone the **chance to speak**.
9. **Avoid assumptions** about any member of the group or generalisations about social groups. Do not ask individuals to speak for their (perceived) social group.
10. **Be patient** with other participants and the team – we have a lot of information to get through.
11. Feel free to share your thoughts about this event with **friends and family**.

Housekeeping

- Keep distractions to a minimum (i.e. mobile phones)
- Take a break if you need to (i.e. to use the bathroom, or to attend to anything urgent)
- We will have an official break for 10 minutes

The current Official Controls process

Every year, 2.6 million cattle, 10 million pigs, 14 million sheep and lambs and 950 million birds are slaughtered in the UK. The Food Standards Agency regulates the meat industry through their Official Controls.



The Future Delivery Model

- Seeks to take a more tailored, risk-based approach.
- Clearly sets out the role of the FSA in providing assurance activities, with food businesses responsible for producing safe food.
- Greater focus on joint initiatives and sharing knowledge across the sector.



Your questions answered

What checks take place for meat being imported from outside the UK?

Imported meat is checked as part of border controls by the Port Health Authorities. It is up to the overseas plant and the overseas regulator to meet another country's standards. Meat imported into the UK has to meet the standards we set for domestic meat producers.

How long has the FSA been inspecting businesses?

The Meat Hygiene Service was established in 1995. The FSA was created in 2000 following the BSE outbreak.



Your questions answered

How does inspection differ depending on the animal involved?

All carcasses are visually and manually inspected to some degree for signs of pathology or other indicators of unfitness for human consumption. There are some variations between species as to whether inspection is visual only or also physical e.g. feeling the carcass / cutting into it.

Do inspectors change or rotate between businesses?

FSA employed inspectors have a base plant. They are required to move around their area if needed, but this is normally infrequent.



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Your questions answered

What enforcement activities can the FSA carry out?

The FSA can force businesses to shut permanently if there is sustained non-compliance and a clear threat to public health. They can also issue fines, and take further legal action against a business owner. In some cases, this could result in a prison sentence.

What happens if a business is found to be non-compliant?

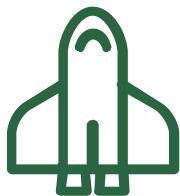
If a business is non-compliant, essentially all work stops until it can prove that it is compliant again. This would remain the case under the new approach.



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The case for change



Developments both domestically and worldwide are rapidly reshaping the UK's food system and putting pressure on the current delivery model.

The FSA must adapt to these changes in order to ensure continued high standards of food safety and consumer protection.

There is also a need to more strongly incentivise compliance in order to further improve standards.

Three key factors



Technology is changing the speed and methods of food production. There has also been an **increase in data collection** across the industry.



The **Covid-19 pandemic** has highlighted challenges caused by the resource-intensive nature of the current model, and has offered up opportunities to work differently. This includes remote audits and certain qualified plant staff undertaking some inspection duties.



The **UK's exit from the EU** has had a significant impact on the resources required to provide our trading partners with necessary assurances about the UK's food control system. E.g. Official Veterinarians have been involved with additional assurance activities around exported meat and meat products.

Arthur, Meat Hygiene Inspector



- Arthur has worked in plants across the Northern Region since he first began his career over 25 years ago.
As he is not stood on the production line for 8-10 hours a day anymore, he has time to do things he previously struggled to fit in like Health and Safety training and performance management. For example, he can now carry out more animal welfare spot checks and sampling activities.
He can now download his day's duties directly from the system to his smartphone. Since he's had training and used it a few times, he really sees the benefits of this new technology.
- As a long-serving Meat Hygiene Inspector, he believes that there should be 100% independent meat inspection in every plant and challenges the view that highly compliant plants should do some of their own carcass inspection. He feels this is how it has always been done and he is concerned about the impact on his job of the new approach.

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Sarah, Official Veterinarian

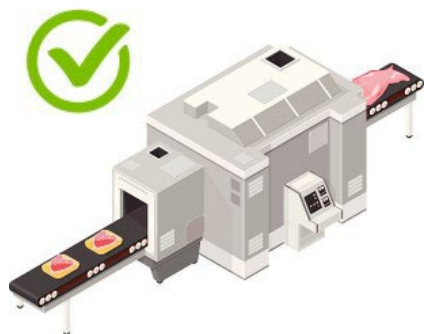


- Sarah has worked as an Official Veterinarian for four years. She enjoys the variety of her role and the opportunities to learn about new things.
- She provides guidance to food businesses to improve their procedures in the production of safe food. An important part of her job is to ensure that changes to legal requirements are followed up and implemented.
- However, she is concerned that she will lose some control if food businesses have more accountability in certain processes and she spends less time on-site.
- If she only attends the plant for audits and unannounced visits, she worries about losing her knowledge of the plant. She is also concerned that her relationship with the business employees may not be as good as it was.

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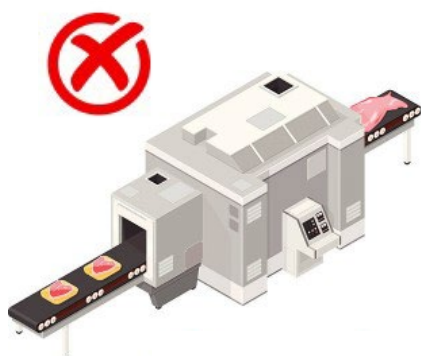
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Jameson's Meat



- Jameson's Meat is a slaughterhouse that specialises in beef and lamb. The business prides itself on meeting high standards related to hygiene and animal welfare, building on its long history in the industry.
- It has had consistently excellent audit and unannounced inspection results for many years. The team are always striving to improve and maintain their reputation.
- Because of their record of compliance, some staff at the plant have been trained in conducting aspects of carcass inspection and have started to do this as part of their role. A Meat Hygiene Inspector from the FSA still attends the plant every day. But instead of inspecting the carcasses on the line, they carry out other activities instead. The plant is also audited and receives unannounced inspections.
- The greater transparency in the new approach has led to increased business as retailers are keen to use this plant as part of their meat supply chain.

Smith Brothers



- Smith Brothers has had a number of concerns identified at audits and unannounced inspections over the last few years. Although there has been some improvement recently, the plant receives a low score in the risk assessment tool. This means a Meat Hygiene Inspector will remain permanently present on the production line to inspect every carcass.
- Another Meat Hygiene Inspector from a high performing plant is now able to attend the business more frequently for unannounced inspections. They have received training from this MHI and they have started to put together a plan for improving their compliance.
- Although the plant manager is hopeful things will get better, he feels the system is unfair as their score does not reflect recent improvements. He also worries about the public having access to their compliance score as this could reduce demand for their products. Some retailers have already chosen not to use the business because of this.

Tim, household shopper



- Tim is a father of two who tries to buy organic ingredients when he can. He tends to do the weekly shop in his household and often looks at the labels of food before buying something.
- He likes the way meat products now have a label showing the performance of the abattoir that the meat came from.
- He will always buy meat with a high performing label. However, he worries about what his children eat at school as he doesn't know the performance of the plant where the meat came from.

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Fast & Fresh Supermarket



- The Fast & Fresh buying team know the power of consumer demand and expectations. They want to meet a range of consumer shopping budgets, ensure that the meat they source is safe for everyone and is traceable. They recognise the importance to some customers of high animal welfare standards.
 - Regardless of the product range, consumer safety is their number one priority. They feel that the inclusion of the meat plant's compliance score on the packaging is valued by their customers.
- The FSA shares its compliance data with the supermarket's own assurance teams and vice versa. This means they can check that the results are consistent, and any issues and trends can be more easily identified. This helps the supermarket to act on any issues quickly, and provides additional assurance about their supply chain.

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Thank you for taking part in this discussion!



If you would like any more information on food safety, or other food-related issues, please visit the following websites.

For UK-wide advice, please visit:

Food Standards Agency: <https://www.food.gov.uk/food-safety>

NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-prepare-and-cook-food-safely/>

NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-poisoning/>

If you are located in Wales, please visit:

Public Health Wales: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/food-safety-and-hygiene/>

Food bank resources:

Citizens Advice: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/help-if-on-a-low-income/using-a-food-bank/>

The Trussel Trust (UK-wide): <https://www.trusselltrust.org/>

FareShare (also operates in Cardiff and Belfast): <https://fareshare.org.uk/>