

## BUSINESS COMMITTEE REPORT

### 2 SISTERS FOOD GROUP

1. The FSA accompanied the Select Committee on a visit to 2 Sisters Food Group (2SFG) premises Site D on 12 July. Following that meeting the Select Committee have acknowledged and welcomed the efforts the FSA has made in ensuring 2SFG is meeting the commitments it gave to the Committee.

The FSA has continued to work closely with Public Health England (PHE) to investigate food borne outbreaks.

### LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES IN FROZEN VEGETABLES

2. On the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018, we were made aware of a *Listeria monocytogenes* outbreak. Since December 2015, the total number of cases of listeriosis reported across the EU is 47. This includes 11 UK cases (8 in England and 3 in Scotland) and 9 deaths (2 in UK). The cases were linked to frozen vegetables including sweetcorn produced by a Greenyard production plant in Hungary following the bacterial outbreak strain being detected at that site. Affected product had been distributed to over 100 countries and territories.
3. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018, EFSA published a joint ECDC-EFSA Rapid Outbreak Assessment. A joint Food Standards Agency, Food Standards Scotland, Public Health England and Health Protection Scotland statement was also issued, reminding people that most frozen vegetables, including sweetcorn, need to be cooked before eating.
4. Greenyard also have two UK plants that supply to several large retailers, wholesalers and foodservice businesses in the UK. On the 5<sup>th</sup> July Greenyard UK undertook a recall of all affected products with best before dates later than the 13<sup>th</sup> August 2016. FSA worked with the company to quickly assess UK distribution and issued a Product Recall Information Notice (PRIN) to inform consumers of the issue. We also alerted other countries with distribution from the UK via the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF).
5. This outbreak was the first time that the EU Commission had activated the newly formed Crisis Coordinators Network which was formed following recommendations made after a previous incident involving fipronil contamination of eggs in 2017. This network is tasked with communicating risk management decisions across EU Member States during major incidents. In this incident, the network helped to ensure that a uniform approach was taken across EU Member States with regards to the decision to recall affected product and the associated communications.

## **HR UPDATE**

### **Pay and reward update**

6. Pay is our top commitment in the Civil Service People Survey corporate action plan. We have engaged a pay and reward consultancy to assist us in developing a strategy that will outline longer term plans to develop and implement reward policies, practices and process to support delivery of our strategic objectives. Work is ongoing and they will report back to EMT in early October. The publication of this year's Civil Service pay guidance in late June saw a departure from the 1% pay award policy with departments now able to make average pay awards within a new range of 1%-1.5%. Departments will be able to give average awards higher than this in exchange for plans to improve workforce productivity. Before building a business case, departments must discuss options with Treasury and I am arranging to meet with them in September.

### **Diversity Council**

7. Our new diversity and inclusion strategy sets out three commitments: attract and retain a diverse workforce, champion inclusivity across our leadership and management community and, embrace and support staff networks in strengthening our diverse and inclusive culture. To ensure we deliver our commitments we are establishing a Diversity Council. I will chair the Council and as well as representatives from employee networks and trade unions, membership will include a number of employees selected through an expressions of interest exercise. The Council will hold its first meeting on 1 October.

### **Women's Network**

8. The FSA Women's Network is an example of a successful network, built by staff for staff with its membership growing to over 140 members in a short time. The Network aims to promote an inclusive culture regardless of gender, provide a safe space to raise concerns, identify and address potential barriers for women and provide an opportunity to network and share ideas. FSA Women is focussing on three key objectives for this year; confidence building, improving assertiveness and building stronger networks with colleagues and other Women's Networks. Gender inequality is still around and we have the opportunity to use the network to help us to drive gender balance at all grades where women or men are under-represented and to play a wider part in improving diversity and inclusion in the FSA.

## **PROSECUTIONS**

9. Although FSA Legal or the Crown Prosecution Service currently have fourteen prosecution cases in court for food hygiene or animal welfare breaches, only one case was concluded since my last report. This was an animal welfare prosecution that resulted in three convictions being secured:

At Norwich Magistrates Court on 13 and 14 August 2018, convictions for animal welfare offences were secured against the business operator of a slaughterhouse in Norfolk, formerly operating as Simply Halal (Banham) Limited, and against two

members of the slaughter staff. The breaches were identified following covert filming at the premises by the Hillside Animal Sanctuary in early 2016. As in other recent cases based upon such covert filming, there were a number of legal challenges for the CPS to overcome before the case could proceed to trial. Ultimately, a trial date had been set for the case but, ahead of the hearing, each defendant agreed to enter guilty pleas to some or all of the charges that they faced. Roger Carr, the business operator of the slaughterhouse, entered pleas to two of the charges that he faced, whilst the slaughterman Akhtar Mahmood and William Lanham, who was responsible for the movement of animals in the slaughter hall, entered guilty pleas to 10 charges each. Upon conviction, Roger Carr was fined £400 and ordered to pay £1,000 in prosecution costs, whilst Akhtar Mahmood and William Lanham were each fined £600 and ordered to pay £1,000 in prosecution costs.

10. Ultimately, it is for the courts to decide upon the sentence that they impose on those that they convict. However, the commitment shown by FSA staff in bringing this matter to court over an extended period, demonstrates that animal welfare is a high priority for the FSA and we take all alleged breaches extremely seriously.