

Board Report – Chief Executive

General activity update

1. Since the last Board Meeting, I have continued to build and maintain our strong working relationships with government departments, regulators and other stakeholders. I have met regularly with representatives from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) and Food Standards Scotland (FSS).
2. I have met with representatives from Asda, Tesco, Marks and Spencer, the British Retail Consortium (BRC), the Food Industry Intelligence Network (FIIN), the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), Red Tractor, Which?, the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance (RUMA), the Association of Independent Meat Suppliers (AIMS) and the British Meat Processing Association (BMPA). I have also had discussions with counterparts in Canada and New Zealand.
3. I appeared before the All Party Parliamentary Food and Health Forum on 30th October alongside Sir Bernard Jenkin MP and Hilary Benn MP to discuss EU Exit.

EU Exit

4. Board members will receive a verbal update on our work in relation to EU Exit at the meeting. Areas of focus in recent weeks include preparing the required Statutory Instruments, the UK Framework, import arrangements, recruitment, restructuring, surveillance, funding, working with the devolved administrations, governance structures and the design of clear decision-making processes.

International

5. At the CCFICS (Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Certification and Inspection) conference in Brisbane our work in plenary and behind the scenes was instrumental in securing a recommendation for advancement of the guidelines for the use by regulators of data from voluntary Third-Party Assurance to Step 5 (the only text that the Committee considered that was advanced in the Codex process). Our case was strengthened by demonstrating our experience with these approaches in the primary production, dairy and feed sectors over the last decade, and our plans for their further development as part of the ROF (Regulating Our Future) programme. We retained the position of the UK chair of the electronic working group that will now develop these further towards final adoption in 2020, and so will continue to drive the work forward.
6. We were influential advocates for proposals to establish the global architecture for international exchange of information on food fraud, integrity and authenticity, referencing the work that Andy Morling has led internationally at the investigative end of the spectrum and highlighting the need for progress too at the regulatory end.
7. We achieved the objective of enhancing the FSA's reputation as a world leader in approaches to regulatory modernisation, through our work in plenary and our presentations on UK experience and approaches at two of the three lunchtime side-events. In turn, this should help us to build trust and confidence in the UK regulatory system both now and after EU Exit.
8. We participated in CCFH (Codex Committee on Food Hygiene) in Panama City, the focus of which was to drive forward work on the revision of the general principles of food hygiene. We have also visited South Korea to deliver presentations at an international symposium on food safety and radiological protection and have

engaged with counterparts from the New Zealand Food Safety Authority to identify opportunities for engagement and dialogue in 2019.

9. We continue to deepen our relationship with the Canadian government, at federal and provincial level, sharing our experience of regulatory reform and specifically, our use of emerging technologies.

Allergens

10. Recent tragic events continue to show the importance of our work on food allergy policy and we have been engaged in a wide range of activity since the last Board meeting. The Prime Minister announced a review of food labelling on 2nd October. Since then, we have been heavily engaged in discussions with Defra, FSS, the Devolved Administrations and the DHSC to develop policy options and identify other potential improvements to protect consumers. We have also had discussions with several key stakeholders from patient groups and the food industry and we have shared our social research on food allergy to inform the policy debate. The consultation document is now being refined and is expected to be released in January 2019 and will likely run for six weeks.
11. It is important that we do not prejudge the outcomes of the consultation, but we are clear that any changes must bring clear benefits to consumers, not unnecessarily restrict their choices and be implemented by all affected businesses. Labelling is very important, but a wider package of solutions, including evidence-based research and effective enforcement activity is always required.
12. The FSA also supported the recent successful prosecution following a police investigation, as well as a joint inspection by Lancashire Trading Standards and Environmental Health, of a restaurant owner and manager who were charged with manslaughter in connection with the death of 15-year-old Megan Lee. Dr Chun-Han Chan, an internationally renowned member of the FSA's food allergy team, prepared an expert witness statement to support the successful prosecution which has resulted in both men receiving custodial sentences of two and three years respectively. This prosecution sends a powerful message to food business operators of the consequences of a cavalier approach to allergy risks.
13. Our **Easy to ASK** campaign (**Always** ask about allergens, **Speak** up, **Keep** safe), which encourages young people to ask about allergens when eating out, won the Civil Service Campaign of the month for November 2018. Entries were judged by Alex Aiken, Executive Director for Government Communications, and selected Directors of Communications. The FSA campaign was praised for having clear, precise objectives and effectively using insights to shape the strapline, narrative and channels of communication. The judges also went on to say that the hashtag and mnemonic were 'neat, clever and well deployed' and the timing, of 'fresher's month' was an obvious but sensible hook.
14. Our communications team are handling numerous media enquiries in relation to allergens. We have provided an extensive contextual piece on the data being used by the media, both in writing and in conversations with reporters. There has also been interest in our report into food standards delivery, for which Michael Jackson, Head of Regulatory Standards and Assurance, has given an interview.
15. BBC Watchdog interviewed the Chair following their investigation into six high street chains. The BBC found there to be inconsistencies in how companies provide allergen information across their businesses, with around 15% failing to do what's legally required. The BBC has now provided us with their information and we are working with the relevant LA's and the companies to address these failings.

Cutting plants and cold stores review

16. Colleagues from Operations, ROF, Policy, and officials from FSS have developed an action plan for the roll out of the recommendations of the review and have engaged several industry stakeholders in this process. We expect to finalise a detailed implementation plan in December 2018.

CCTV In slaughterhouses in England

17. As of 5th November, the vast majority of slaughterhouses (88%) had either fully complied with the requirements on CCTV or were in the process of complying. Of the remainder, 5% of premises were not operational at that date and 7% of slaughterhouses had no CCTV system in place to which the FSA is taking enforcement action against. We hope that all FBOs (Food Business Operator) appreciate the benefits that CCTV can bring, and we continue to work with businesses and Defra to ensure full compliance.

Regulating our future - food business registration

18. Online FBO registration has now successfully launched across 10 LAs (Local Authorities), the latest of which being Antrim and Newtownabbey. To date, there has been a total of 78 FBO registrations across all 10 LAs, with people using smart phones, laptops and tablets to complete the registration. We are receiving good feedback from pilot LAs and users to help further develop this service, particularly the benefits of registration data being received directly to LA management information systems (MIS) and we are developing a programme to do so. We recognise that some LAs may have their own standalone systems and we will be developing approaches to ensure they are included in the rollout. We are also engaging with LA senior IT leaders to increase our understanding of the IT landscape. Over the coming months we will be rolling out the digital service to other LAs.

Social science symposium

19. Behavioural insights into tackling food crime, the cost of illness and consumer attitudes to food-related issues were all discussed at the Food Standards Agency's second-annual Symposium of Social Science. The series of events, held in England, Wales and Northern Ireland during November, were part of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Festival of Social Science. More than 100 stakeholders from academia, other Government departments, business and NGOs heard about how social science directly informs real-life policy making in a government context. The event held in London on 5th November featured a keynote address showing how an interventions model was used to improve hand hygiene in hospitals from Professor Susan Michie, the Chair of our Advisory Committee for Social Science.
20. The second event took place in Cardiff on 12th November. Following a keynote presentation from Dr Chris Bear of Cardiff University on the opportunities and challenges of edible insects in the UK, delegates were taken through a range of social science studies and asked to consider future opportunities for social science for the agency. The final event took place in Northern Ireland on 13th November. This event featured a keynote speech from Professor Moira Dean of Queens University Belfast about the perceptions, attitudes and behaviours about food 'from farm to fork'. Findings from new research exploring consumers' perceptions of reformulation were

shared, as well as the development of social science techniques for open policy making.

21. This is the first time that we have run events in all three of the countries that we serve and is part of our plans to ensure that our social science has impact inside and outside the organisation, building our reputation for robust and innovative science and strong evidence.

Award nominations

22. We were nominated for two awards for Our Ways Of Working (OWOW) programme. An Engage award for 'Voice of the Employee' and a Guardian Public Service 'Transformation' award for which we were shortlisted to the final three.

Procurement

23. We have been commended by the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) for our work on the tendering of the Courier Contract that is used for transporting biological samples and for our support of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in our procurement activity, a key objective in the wider Government Procurement Strategy. This project demonstrated strong joint working between Operations and Procurement to deliver an outcome that CCS have cited as an exemplar of working with SMEs. This work will be used in wider marketing material to promote the use of SMEs across Government, highlighting the excellent work that the FSA team has done.

Non-executive director role

24. I have accepted an invitation to join the Non-Executive Advisory Panel to the new Office for Product Safety and Standards, part of the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Announced in January this year, the new unit forms a central part of the Government's response to the recommendations of the Working Group on Product Recalls and Safety. It represents a significant upgrade in the approach to product safety in the UK and, for the first time, provides dedicated expertise to lead on national product safety challenges.