
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Report by Catherine Brown, Chief Executive

1 GENERAL ACTIVITY UPDATE

- 1.1 Since my last report to the Board, in January, I have continued to meet with a wide range of stakeholders including: the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD), the Health and Safety Executive, the British Meat Processors Association (BMPA) and Tulip (UK) Ltd, the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), the British Poultry Council and Aldi. Our discussions have continued to focus on: sustainable future delivery models that meet the needs of consumers and responsible businesses; campylobacter reduction; and on consumer interests in regard to animal welfare. I am also discussing anti-microbial resistance and the role of the meat industry with an increasing range of stakeholders. The National Farmers Union annual conference, which I attended again this year, as ever provided a great opportunity to hear about developments at the start of the food chain.
- 1.2 I have also continued to build links with Civil Service wide networks, attending the Civil Service Leadership Group and the Whitehall and Industry Group (WIG) Annual Reception at the London Guildhall.
- 1.3 I was pleased to be involved with the civil service wide International Women's Day celebrations earlier this month, delivering a speech at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) event in Swansea. The events held across the country showcased how women could change and challenge perceptions and also provided great networking opportunities.
- 1.4 On 14 March I attended a Welsh Language day in Cardiff arranged by the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) Welsh Language Unit. As part of this unique event, I had the opportunity to learn more about the language and how history has shaped the use of it today. I also took part in a fun and interactive Welsh taster session where I was able to put some of my Welsh into practice. It was good to hear from FSA staff about their experiences of working and living through the medium of Welsh and seeing the language at work across the Agency.
- 1.5 I apologise for an unusually long report on this occasion – but I think it reflects a particularly busy and productive period for the FSA!

2 CAMPYLOBACTER CAMPAIGN

- 2.1 We published the second set of results from the second year of our Campylobacter retail survey of fresh whole chilled chickens on 25 February 2016 and I'm delighted to say that for the 2nd quarter in a row we've seen a significant reduction in Campylobacter levels on a year-on-year basis.

- This quarter, 10.7% of chickens tested positive for the highest level of contamination (i.e. over 1000 colony forming units per gram (cfu/g), down from 18.9% during the same period last year, as well as down from 14.9% in the previous quarter. While some of this reduction may, of course, be due to seasonal effects, it is highly plausible that at least part of this reduction was a result of new/ increased retailer interventions during October-December 2015.
 - It was also encouraging to note that there was a statistically significant reduction in the overall prevalence of chickens positive for Campylobacter, from 74.3% in October-December 2014 to 58.9% in October-December 2015.
 - Specific mention should go to Morrisons, as the only retailer which had a significantly lower prevalence of levels of Campylobacter above 1000 cfu/g (5.4%), compared to the average among all the other retailers.
- 2.2 Nevertheless, the target of less than 10% of birds at the most heavily contaminated level at the end of slaughter was not met by the deadline of December 2015 and we've had to roll it forward to the end of 2016 as recognised by the Board in July 2015. Clearly there is still much to be done and we need to ensure that the recent momentum is maintained with the industry stepping up the introduction of their interventions across all their sites. The Board today will discuss the next steps in the Campylobacter campaign to ensure that the drive to reduce Campylobacter levels in chickens is continued.
- 2.3 I should also mention that we are in the process of reviewing all our research work in Campylobacter; we held a Workshop on 8 and 9 March with interested stakeholders where they were given the opportunity to question the researchers and the next stage will be for independent reviewers to assess the quality and value of the work done against the specific objectives. It is hoped that the reviewers will be able to report by May 2016.
- 2.4 Last month, Javier Dominguez and I visited Thorne Poultry processing plant near Doncaster. This new poultry processing plant aiming to process birds at a line speed of 12,000 birds an hour is a joint project between Thorne poultry and Baader-Linco and it was fascinating to see the new machinery, much of it being installed for the first time in this country, and all informed by best practice in campylobacter reduction. It was pleasing to see the commitment by a major player in the independent poultry supply sector to playing their part in reducing campy, and to hear that they had been inspired to take this approach by our launch workshop in 2014 when they had heard from us about the impacts of campy and our campaign, and from others in industry about best practice.
- Update on burgers served rare in catering outlets
- 2.5 At its meeting on 28 January, the Board asked for a regular update on action to implement its decision of September 2015, and for us to consider the scope for increasing the pace of planned activity. Modelling the effectiveness of interventions through the supply chain is a key input to the further advice and

we are seeking scientific input from Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF) to help with this. We are therefore accelerating this work and anticipate being in a position to produce initial outputs from the model in May 2016.

- 2.6 An update on the elements of our implementation plan is given below.

Advice to producers, caterers and local authority enforcement

- 2.7 Our interim consolidated advice to the catering industry and local authorities was published on the FSA “help shape our policies” page earlier this month, following consultation with key industry and enforcement partners. Whilst it focuses on establishments preparing and selling burgers, this includes advice on controls throughout the supply chain for food businesses supplying those caterers, as this will form a crucial part of their pre-requisite controls. Local authorities and catering industry representatives have welcomed the clarification of the FSA position by producing this guidance and are actively engaged in its implementation. Further targeted advice aimed at those food businesses involved in slaughter, and producing minced meat and/or meat products for use in burgers that will be less than thoroughly cooked will be published in April.
- 2.8 In April, all of the updated advice above will be published on a new resource page on the FSA website. The advice will be kept under review and updated with outputs from further research when these are available.

Consumer messages

- 2.9 Following previous consumer research and continuing discussions with industry representative groups, we have commissioned further, more detailed research to analyse the effectiveness of consumer messaging at point of sale. Field research will start at the end of March 2016, with top line results expected in late April 2016. This will be used to inform our guidance on consumer messaging, ensuring it is effective and consistent.
- 2.10 We will also be continuing our discussions with industry and local authority representatives, who are particularly keen to engage with us around the need for and content of consumer advisory statements in situations where catering outlets are able to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of local authority enforcement, a 6-log₁₀ reduction in bacterial contamination (i.e. equivalent to thorough cooking) from a combination of steps other than thorough cooking.
- 2.11 Additional research to gauge levels of existing consumer understanding of the FSA message around cooking burgers in the home has been commissioned and is also expected in April 2016. This is part of a tracker survey and so will provide a baseline against which we can measure any subsequent changes in consumer awareness and claimed behaviour.

Modelling interventions in the burger production chain

- 2.12 We are grateful to Gary Barker, Roy Betts and David McDowell, who are the three members of the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF) who have agreed to assist us with the science to support developing advice for caterers and local authority enforcement on time/temperature combination that would achieve a 4–log₁₀ reduction in relevant pathogens, with the full Committee to consider further at its next meeting on 30 June 2016.
- 2.13 As described above, we are accelerating work to develop and apply a model to assess the effectiveness of interventions through the supply chain. The three Committee members identified above will also advise us on the model and the data to support it. Our work so far indicates that while data is available on some potential interventions, there are significant evidence gaps for others. Filling these evidence gaps would allow us to further refine the model and consider the cumulative impact of other possible interventions, but this would require further research. We would look in the first instance to the food industry to fund any such research.

Identification of triggers for re-consideration by the FSA Board

- 2.14 The establishment of triggers for foodborne pathogens is being progressed in conjunction with Public Health England (PHE). The national STEC O157 data was considered by the cross governmental Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group (EFIG) in December and will be considered again at their next meeting on 7 June 2016. It is of note that overall UK laboratory reports for STEC O157 for first 9 months of 2015 were lower than those for the same period over the past 10 years. PHE are looking at novel approaches to mining their enhanced surveillance data to identify indicators in relation to consumption of burgers and potential association with sporadic cases of STEC infection. We are due to meet next with PHE on 1 April to discuss progress and timescales.

Phenylbutazone sampling in horses for food chain

- 2.15 Phenylbutazone is a widely used veterinary anti-inflammatory treatment for horses. It is not permitted for horses that are destined for human consumption, as it may rarely cause human health effects.
- 2.16 Last February 2015, based on the very low level of bute found in horses submitted for slaughter for human consumption and the costs of the programme we moved to a surveillance programme which included sampling both randomly (5%) and on an intelligence led basis.
- 2.17 From April 2016, we will be reverting to the 0.16% sampling level for phenylbutazone established by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate under the National Surveillance Scheme for 2016, though we will continue with additional intelligence based sampling as appropriate.

3 REGULATING OUR FUTURE

- 3.1 The achievement of the FSA's strategic goal of 'Food We Can Trust' will require a fundamental redesign of the way regulation is delivered for the benefit of consumers. The success of any future, sustainable regulatory delivery model depends on gaining buy-in and commitment from key stakeholders and partners. I am therefore delighted to report that we gained widespread support from over 70 key industry bodies, consumer representatives and other regulators from across the UK at the launch event held on the 10 February in Cardiff. The FSA shared five key principles that will underpin the first phase of an extensive and structured consultation with external stakeholders.
- 3.2 I was particularly pleased that FSA Board members, Roland Salmon and Ram Gidoomal, as well as the Chair and Deputy Chair, could attend to observe at first hand the lively discussions and ideas generated on the day; and it was clear from listening to our stakeholders that we were not the only ones thinking about change.
- 3.3 I was also pleased to be invited to speak at the Year Ahead for Regulatory Services conference organised by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO), Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) and the Local Government Association (LGA). We are all facing similar challenges and it proved a useful forum to talk about how we can tackle them together in the interests of consumers.

4 OUR FOOD FUTURE

- 4.1 Before Christmas we conducted public dialogues to understand how consumers might respond to the changes to the food system that scientists and experts foresee in the medium-term. We used the opportunity of publishing the report to bring together over 150 experts and stakeholders from across the food industry, science and civil society at the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre in Westminster for a summit which we called [Our Food Future](#). We used the findings to create a short film and infographics, and live-broadcast the event itself.
- 4.2 The surprise was the level and calibre of online engagement we were able to achieve: we were joined by over 6,000 people from across the world, online.
- 4.3 On the day, over 3,000 social media posts using #OurFoodFuture were shared and retweeted over 29,000 times, with an estimated reach to 4 million people. For several hours in the morning #OurFoodFuture was the 3rd highest trending topic on twitter in the UK. The Thunderclap, alerting people to the start of the event and reminding them to tune in to the webcast, had a social reach of close to a million people, and was pivotal in bringing so many people in online. Feedback from attendees so far has been universally positive.
- 4.4 We came away with some clear allies and priorities, some interesting new strategic relationships and are looking forward to engaging further with

stakeholders on the issues that the research and the summit raised, and to this ongoing dialogue informing our policies and priorities in this area in the future.

5 OUR PEOPLE

- 5.1 The recognition and reward schemes that we have in place have continued to help us celebrate and share staff achievements and successes; and to value the loyalty and commitment of those who have long service.
- 5.2 Staff members have been forthcoming in telling us about the commendable work and inspirational behaviour of their colleagues, and in the last year 179 individuals have been nominated for awards under the 'Icing on the Cake' Scheme, some for their achievements as teams.
- 5.3 In October 2015, the Long Service Award Scheme was extended to include staff who have 25 years combined continuous service in the Civil Service and other central or local government employers. 31 achieved this milestone during the year and I wrote a letter of thanks to them, and awarded a certificate of recognition as a memento. Under the Scheme, they will also receive a day's paid leave in the year to take when they wish. A handful of colleagues achieved the even more notable milestone of exceeding 40 years in service and the Chair and I took them for a celebratory lunch to mark the occasion!

6 SCIENCE UPDATE

Publication of key science strategy documents

- 6.1 The FSA Science, Evidence and Information (SEI) Strategy Delivery Plan 2015-20 was published on 22 February 2016, following its agreement by the Board in November. At the same time FSA published two supporting documents which give more detail and invite comment on the specific activities we will carry out. The SEI Programme of Work 2016 sets out the main activities of our programme over the five years of the strategy, while the Forward Evidence Plan 2016 gives more detail on the areas of new science and evidence work we hope to embark upon in the coming financial year. These documents are published (and will be updated annually), to inform stakeholders on our plans and to invite their input on better ways to formulate our needs, existing evidence that might meet our needs, and opportunities to work together.

Antimicrobial Resistance

- 6.2 In November 2015, I reported that the FSA had commissioned the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) to conduct a systematic review to increase our understanding of the role food production, processing and consumption plays in the development and spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The review is now well advanced and the final report is due at the end of March. It will

then undergo peer review and we anticipate publishing the report in May 2016.

- 6.3 The Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF) has established a sub-group to consider topical issues in relation to AMR and the food chain. This AMR subgroup is currently considering a draft microbiological risk assessment on Meticillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) in the food chain and it is anticipated that this risk assessment will be published in Spring 2016.
- 6.4 In December 2015, we consulted the ACMSF AMR sub-group on the presence of colistin-resistant *Salmonella* and *E. coli* with the *mcr-1* resistance gene, which had been confirmed in pigs on a farm in England. The group supported the FSA assessment that in light of the currently available evidence, the direct and indirect risks to human health via the food chain are very low in the short term (with varying levels of uncertainty). Testing for colistin resistance in *E. coli* from retail poultry meat has been included as part of the EU harmonised survey on AMR in retail meats, which started in January 2016.

Joint FSA/EFSA International Workshop on Foodborne Viruses

- 6.5 On the 23-25 February the FSA, in collaboration with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), hosted a joint workshop on foodborne viruses, held at the Royal Society, London. The event brought together nearly 130 experts from more than 20 different countries from Europe and beyond. The aim of this event was to identify knowledge gaps around three principal foodborne viruses - Norovirus, Hepatitis A and Hepatitis E viruses - and to prioritise the identified research questions to be tackled going forward. This event has delivered a clear picture of the most pressing research priorities for foodborne viruses and in addition has created a constructive environment for cooperation at national and international level, which we hope will continue as we pursue our priorities in this area.

Application of Sensor Technologies to Food Sector Challenges

- 6.6 In late January this year, the FSA and the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) held a joint workshop that explored the challenges faced by the agricultural industry and the food sector, with specific challenges around delivering Official Controls in slaughter houses. The workshop brought together a wide range of experts from multiple disciplines, ranging from astrophysicists to food technologists and Official Vets, and utilised a validated, structured problem-solving methodology called TRIZ. The workshop identified a number of key areas where research and developmental effort should be focused, and also explored opportunities for the STFC to enable the application of technologies and capabilities to meet the identified challenges. The final report is currently being drafted for publication later this spring.

Microbiome workshop

- 6.7 FSA worked with the Institute of Food Research who hosted a workshop on 28 January to provide an overview and discussion on current research on the microbiome, with representatives from the ACMSF, FSA, other Government Departments and external experts. Areas discussed included:
- an overview of microbiome research: priorities, challenges and opportunities;
 - the impact of diet on the microbiome in early life and for lifelong wellbeing;
 - the microbiome in later life, foodborne pathogens and the implications for health;
 - understanding the role of food in the transmission of viruses and the impact of the virome;
 - leap-frogging technology to understand the relationships between foodborne pathogens and their surrounding microbial communities.
- 6.8 ACMSF recognised the value of this research in supporting risk assessment, and noted that changes in diagnosis in human infection and in testing foods will have a great impact on public health surveillance. A full report on the workshop will be published before the end of March, and a seminar on the microbiome will be held in Aviation House on 27 April.

Application of the 'Internet of Things' to FSA priorities

- 6.9 In my September 2015 update, I reported the launch of a joint call for pilot research projects focused on the 'Internet of Things', co-funded with IT as a Utility, a network which is part of the Digital Economy Programme, funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. Four projects were funded, which are now nearing completion. In early March an open workshop about the research and its implications was held in London. Project reports will be published following peer review. The four projects are:
- A University of Nottingham team is looking at how food-growing communities can use Internet of Things to share data that improves the accountability of local-produced food.
 - A University of Lincoln team is working with a consumer panel to help them understand how their own fridge usage might lead to healthier habits and save them money.
 - A University of Aberdeen team is investigating how inexpensive sensors can be used by catering businesses to operate both more safely and more efficiently and potentially track a food history that helps deliver recommended best practices (co-funded by Food Standards Scotland).
 - Tiny data loggers are being investigated by the University of Birmingham to track the journey of long-life sandwiches to monitor their integrity and that of the cold-chain that supports their delivery.

EAT Study

- 6.10 This month saw the publication of the FSA-funded EAT Study on preventing food allergy. This represents years of commitment and work by the FSA. In 2008 we committed to do more than assess available evidence and commissioned cutting-edge research to build the evidence base on which to make advice for consumers.
- 6.11 The study¹ was published in the New England Journal Medicine – the most prestigious general medical journal in the world – and will be read by over 600,000 people in 177 countries. EAT will form a central piece of evidence to inform our cross-government review of infant feeding advice.

7 FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME

- 7.1 The Bill in Northern Ireland putting the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) on a statutory basis received Royal Assent on 29 January and became the Food Hygiene Rating Act (Northern Ireland) 2016. On 2 March we launched a public consultation on the main regulations and orders required to give effect to the Act and the intention is that the main provisions will come into effect on 1 October 2016. The Act contains a regulation making power, brought in at Consideration Stage of the Bill, regarding the publication of ratings online where businesses in scope of the scheme provide a facility to order food online. To inform the drafting of this regulation we are undertaking research to understand consumer behaviour and expectations when ordering food online and have held a series of meetings with industry representatives to discuss the provision and explore solutions.
- 7.2 In late February, a report² on a review of operation of the appeals system of the statutory scheme in Wales for the period from November 2014 to November 2015 was submitted to the National Assembly for Wales. The review was informed by local authorities and research with food businesses. The review found that appeals were being determined in accordance with the Act and statutory guidance, and that the number of businesses making an appeal had increased since the first year of operation of the scheme. The research with businesses highlighted the need for clearer information to be provided about different aspects of the appeals process.
- 7.3 We are now finalising the case for mandatory display of ratings in England for consideration by Ministers. If Ministers agree with our case, we will be working up detailed proposals for the legislation that will be needed and on which we would undertake a full public consultation.

¹ <https://www.food.gov.uk/science/research/allergy-research/t07051>

² Links to the report: English: <http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/gen-ld10597/gen-ld10597-e.pdf> and Welsh: <http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/gen-ld10597/gen-ld10597-w.pdf>

- 7.4 The 'Where's the Sticker' campaign has been running since late February. This features a combination of social media and outdoor advertising with posters on telephone kiosks.

8 FOOD CRIME

- 8.1 On 24 February, National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) staff, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and two local authorities executed search warrants at premises in North London. The intervention followed NFCU-led inquiries into the supply of 2,4 Dinitrophenol (DNP), a toxic chemical misused as a slimming aid, to Eloise Parry in 2015. Miss Parry died in April 2015 and her death was attributed to her consumption of DNP. A significant quantity of DNP in capsule and powder form was seized from the premises and a 28 year old man was arrested by officers from the MPS. Discussions are on-going with local authority and police partners about how the investigation will be taken forward and by whom.
- 8.2 Following its leading role in the UK response to Operation OPSON, NFCU analysts will shortly begin analysing the resulting intelligence. An international initiative co-ordinated by Europol and Interpol, Operation OPSON encourages participating countries from around the world to hold a focused period of activity against counterfeit food and drink. This analysis will be published after the official publication of the OPSON results by Europol/Interpol in the summer.
- 8.3 The Food Crime Annual Strategic Assessment (FCASA) is in the final stages of internal approval and will be published by the end of the month. The FCASA, a joint assessment conducted by the NFCU on behalf of the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland outlines the current understanding of the dimensions and nature of the food crime threat to the UK and highlights significant gaps in that understanding. It will be used to set the priorities for the UK response to food crime over the year ahead.
- 8.4 FSA Wales has recently met with the Wales Food Fraud Co-ordination Governance Group (WFFCGG) to assess the Welsh Food Fraud Co-ordinations Unit's (WFFCU) role and how it could align itself to the established National Food Crime Unit (NFCU). The WFFCGG noted that the operational role of the WFFCU has evolved and it was agreed that further work is required to understand what is now needed to support Local Authorities in tackling food fraud across Wales. The WFFCGG agreed that FSA Wales would take forward the review that will map the new delivery landscape, the relationships with Local Authorities and propose a model which protects consumers from food fraud.

9 INCIDENTS

- 9.1 The FSA became aware via media coverage on the 23 February of a large recall in Germany of Mars confectionery resulting from contamination of a range of products with pieces of red plastic. The affected products were manufactured at the Veghel plant in the Netherlands and initial information

supplied by Mars through their Primary Authority suggested that the affected products had not been distributed to the UK. Further investigations, however, revealed that contrary to this initial view, potentially contaminated products had been distributed to the UK. Following discussion with Mars, the FSA issued a Product Recall Information Notice on the same day informing consumers of the issue. Mars also initiated a product recall of the affected product and issued a media statement in the UK. In all 55 countries were affected by this recall.

- 9.2 On the 24 February, the FSA received notification from Lidl UK that they believed affected product had also been distributed directly from Mars Germany and was on sale in their UK stores. After distribution details had been confirmed, Lidl issued a public recall notice on the 25 February and displayed point of sale notices in all their outlets to provide advice to consumers. The FSA also issued an update to the earlier Product Recall Information Notice informing consumers of the additional products that were affected.
- 9.3 Investigations into the cause of the contamination are ongoing.
- 9.4 The FSA was notified by Sainsbury's on the 3 February that routine testing had detected low levels of *Listeria monocytogenes* in a batch of Camembert cheese. As a precautionary measure Sainsbury's took the decision to recall a number of its Camembert products with use by dates up to and including 6 March 2016 and point of sale notices were displayed in their stores. The FSA issued a Product Recall Information Notice and a RASFF alert on the 3 February as the product was manufactured in France.
- 9.5 Further testing by the Co-operative and Asda of Camembert cheese from the same supplier identified further issues with *Listeria monocytogenes* on the 8 February. As a result both retailers conducted recalls and displayed point of sale notices in their stores. The FSA issued a further Recall Information Notice and an updated RASFF alert on 9 February. Industry is conducting a full investigation into the cause of the issue with the French manufacturer and will report their findings to the FSA.

10 SENTENCING FOR FOOD HYGIENE AND FOOD SAFETY OFFENCES

- 10.1 Since the new sentencing guidelines for food hygiene and food safety offences came into force from 1 February 2016, there have been a number of significant convictions reported by local authority colleagues in the period both before and after that date.
- 10.2 The London Boroughs of Ealing and Kingston upon Thames worked together to bring a prosecution against the 99p Stores Ltd (who have since been purchased by Poundland Plc). The company was found guilty on January 22 of 13 offences under Food Hygiene and Health and Safety Regulations, committed in both their Kingston and Ealing Stores. Both establishments were found to have significant rodent infestations which included a dead rat found on a rack in the Ealing store room. The two cases presented together resulted

in a significant fine of £416,114 including costs. The Ealing case was first heard in the Magistrates Court where the company pleaded guilty, but was sent to the Crown Court for sentencing, because magistrates did not consider their sentencing powers were sufficient.

- 10.3 On the same date in January, following a prosecution brought by Newham Council at Snaresbrook Crown Court, the owners of a restaurant in Plaistow were sentenced having been found guilty of supplying unsafe food. Kamran Memon and Farhana Memon, who also pleaded guilty to other food hygiene offences, were each ordered to undertake 250 hours of community service and were prohibited from operating a food business. The prosecution followed a food poisoning incident at an event where the couple's restaurant had provided the catering.
- 10.4 The operator of a takeaway in Spalding was sentenced to 12 months in prison on 5 February 2016 at Lincoln Crown Court for serious food hygiene breaches. Rafat Thoun, who had pleaded guilty to 11 offences under the food hygiene regulations, was also prohibited from participating in the management of any food business for life, following the prosecution brought by South Holland District Council.
- 10.5 Stockton Council worked with Home Office immigration staff on a case against Chai Wallah restaurant. The officer stated it was the "worst case of poor hygiene experienced in 20 years of inspections" with offences including dirty food preparation and storage areas, clothing, containers, equipment, shelves and pipework. Large amounts of perishable food were stored at room temperature and there was a lack of hand-washing facilities. The restaurant was also employing an illegal immigrant as chef. The owner, Mr Qureshi, received a custodial sentence of 3 months for each of 8 offences, totalling 21 months in jail.
- 10.6 Finally, Blackpool Council successfully prosecuted the owner of an unregistered restaurant who had a history of non-compliance dating back to 2002. Mr Choudhury of Maharaja Restaurant attempted to evade enquiries by saying it was not his business and wasn't trading. The owner received a custodial sentence of 4 months imprisonment.

11 REPORT A FOOD PROBLEM SERVICE

- 11.1 The alpha service for Report a Food Problem went live this month. This allows consumers to report a food problem they have experienced or seen (e.g. rat in restaurant, foreign object in food), and directs the report to the local food safety/environmental health team responsible for food businesses in the area. The service has had over 4,000 visits (as at 9 March) and we are getting good feedback.

12 RESILIENCE

- 12.1 Following a review of our command and control response to a non-routine food or feed incident, the FSA has now published a revised Incident

Management Plan. Work has continued in reviewing a number of supporting and critical Standard Operating Procedures with a number of these work streams completed.

- 12.2 The Executive Management Team has now agreed the implementation of the FSA's first Annual Exercise Programme. The 2016 programme will deliver a range of exercise events both internal and external and varying in complexity and context. Plans involving external partners include a Department of Health/Public Health England/FSA exercise, a pan-European exercise (involving the competent authorities of Spain, Germany, Ireland, Portugal and the UK (including FSS) and an FSA/FSS exercise. The latter is scheduled for 22 March and will focus on testing three specific elements of our emergency response, namely strategic decision-making, risk management, and Briefing Cell management.
- 12.3 Work continues on developing the FSA response to the 2016 National Risk Assessment including the finalisation and submission of risk statements to the Cabinet Office, ahead of a number of impact scoring workshops scheduled for April 2016.

13 ENGAGEMENT – COOKIN CASTLE

- 13.1 On 15 March, the FSA in Wales launched Cookin Castle, a new online interactive website intended to teach and promote healthier eating and good food hygiene practices to children aged 8 – 11 years old. This new educational online resource www.cookincastlewales.co.uk was originally developed by Food Standards Scotland. The Scottish version has been adapted to support the Welsh curriculum by introducing and reinforcing key messages on healthy eating and food hygiene practices. The resource for Wales has been developed in collaboration with Welsh Government.