
MINUTES OF THE FSA BOARD MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2016 AT AVIATION HOUSE, LONDON FROM 09:00-12:00

Present:

Heather Hancock, Chair; Tim Bennett, Deputy Chair; David Brooks; Henrietta Campbell; Ram Gidoomal; Rosie Glazebrook; Stewart Houston; Heather Peck; Jim Smart; Paul Williams

Officials attending:

Catherine Brown, FSA Chief Executive
Steve Wearne, FSA Director of Policy
Jason Feeney, FSA Chief Operating Officer
Julie Pierce, FSA Director of Openness, Data and Digital
Rod Ainsworth, FSA Director of Regulatory and Legal Strategy
Maria Jennings, FSA Director of Northern Ireland and Organisational Development
Chris Hitchen, FSA Director of Finance and Strategic Planning
Nicky Elliston, Head of FSA Executive Office & Board Secretariat
Patrick Miller, FSA Head of Science Strategy and Governance
Nick Laverty, FSA Enforcement Policy Development Manager
Richard Hoskin, FSA Head of Incidents and Resilience
Javier Dominguez, FSA Veterinary Director

Guests:

Reg Smith, Agricultural Director for Faccenda and Chairman of the British Poultry Council Antibiotic Stewardship Scheme

Apologies:

Professor Guy Poppy, FSA Chief Scientific Adviser
Nina Purcell, FSA Director of Wales and Local Delivery

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Chair welcomed two new Board members, Stewart Houston and Paul Williams to their first meeting.
2. The Chair gave apologies from Professor Guy Poppy, FSA Chief Scientific Adviser and Nina Purcell, FSA Director of Wales and Local Delivery.
3. The Chair reminded all Board members to declare any relevant conflicts of interest before discussions.
4. There were no items raised for discussion under Any Other Business.

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 18 MAY 2016 (FSA 16/07/01)

5. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the 18 May 2016 meeting.

ACTIONS ARISING (FSA 16/07/02)

6. Further to the discussion at the May Board meeting, the FSA's Director of Regulatory and Legal Strategy agreed to provide the Board with a note on legal issues relating to accessing CCTV footage in slaughterhouses following the introduction of WATOK (Welfare of Animals at the Time of Killing (England) Regulations 2015).

ACTION: FSA Director of Regulatory and Legal Strategy

7. Board Secretariat to amend the minutes of the May 2016 Board meeting to formally record the attendance of David Brooks and Rosie Glazebrook.

ACTION: Board Secretariat

CHAIR'S REPORT

8. The Chair said the list of engagements she had undertaken since the May 2016 Board meeting would be published on the FSA website. The Chair highlighted her meetings with: Meurig Raymond, President of the National Farmers' Union (NFU); Professor Chris Elliott; George Eustice MP, Minister for Farming, Food and the Marine Environment; Jane Ellison MP, Minister for Public Health; Rebecca Evans AM, Minister for Social Services and Public Health; Lesley Griffiths AM, Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs accompanied by the FSA's Deputy Chair; Rachel Maskell MP, Shadow Environment Secretary, accompanied by the FSA's Chief Executive; and John Allan, Chairman of Tesco. The Chair also mentioned her tour of Moy Park poultry plant and her delivery of the keynote speech at a Deloitte All-Ireland Food and Drink dinner.
9. The Chair said the new Board member for Wales would be appointed imminently and thanked the Deputy Chair for chairing the meeting of the Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC) the previous week. Similarly the process for appointing the new Board member for Northern Ireland would also be concluded in the next few weeks.
10. The Chair said Ministers were content with the FSA's proposals for the review of the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU). Three appointees to the expert panel had been made: David Kenworthy, Chair of UK Anti-Doping and former Chief Constable of North Yorkshire Police; Paul Wilgloss, Director of Food Technology at Marks and Spencer; and Richard Lloyd, former Executive Director at Which?. The FSA's Director of Regulatory and Legal Strategy would take the Review of the NFCU forward and report back to the Board at the November 2016 Board meeting.
11. Regarding the outcome of the recent EU Referendum in the UK, the Chair said all food law remained in place and Food Business Operators (FBOs) should be in no doubt that there was no change to the requirement for them to maintain compliance with all food law. The Chair said many FSA employees and contractors were EU citizens and there was no change to their employment position. She reiterated the value the Board placed on their contribution to the work of the organisation and emphasised that the FSA fully supported their right to work in an environment free from discrimination.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT (FSA 16/07/03)

12. The Chief Executive (CE) said the FSA had established a team to co-ordinate our response to the referendum result with the efforts of others across government. There would be significant new work to be undertaken as the position became clearer, but it was also essential to continue to take forward the key work in the strategic plan and to deliver business as usual activities to deliver “food we can trust”.
13. The CE updated on the outcome of Food Safety Week which had taken place the previous week and had focussed on informing and supporting consumers on the safe reduction of food waste. We had: secured over 200 pieces of press coverage; worked in partnership with Waitrose, Aldi and local authorities to reach a huge number of consumers; and hosted a well-attended stakeholder event with presentations from Neighbourly, FareShare, Tesco, M&S and Food Foundation. The FSA Voices initiative had been instrumental in getting the message out to consumers using the “Eat it Cook it Freeze” hashtag on social media.
14. The FSA's Chief Scientific Adviser should provide the Board with an update on the FSA's science agenda in light of the outcome of the EU Referendum result.

ACTION: FSA Chief Scientific Adviser

15. The FSA's Director of Policy confirmed that following the recommencement of the Campylobacter retail survey in August 2016, the first set of results would be published by the end of the year and would distinguish between individual retailers.

UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT OF A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSMENT OF FOODS WHICH MAY PRESENT AN INCREASED LIKELIHOOD OF HARM (FSA 16/07/04)

16. The Chair welcomed Patrick Miller, the FSA's Head of Science Strategy and Governance, to the table and invited the FSA's Director of Policy to introduce the paper.
17. The FSA's Director of Policy said the Board's September 2015 discussion on burgers served less than thoroughly cooked in food service was the first application of a new framework we had developed for foods that might pose an increased hazard per serving. This paper updated the Board on our further development of the framework.
18. The framework was based on the principles in our strategy to 2020 that people have the right to be protected from unacceptable risks, balanced by the responsibility to manage personal food related risks where they can.
19. Supporting the application of the framework was a decision tree, intended for use by risk managers in the organisation, to support and structure consistent, transparent and coherent decision making.
20. The FSA's Chief Scientific Adviser and he had convened a working group with members drawn from our scientific advisory committees to support the further

development of the framework, decision tree and supporting guidance. Work was progressing well and we would bring the revised material back to the Board in November 2016 for approval.

21. The paper posed one question that had emerged from our work with the working group to date. Our proposal was that, in order to identify the foods to which we should apply the framework, we saw 'change' as the key criterion. This could, for example, be: a change in exposure, such as the number of people consuming a food; a change in the nature of the hazard; a change in our knowledge or understanding of the risks; a change in the acceptability or effectiveness of the existing controls framework for that food; or a change in the way a food was produced or prepared that effectively made it a new product.
22. The Director of Policy suggested it was important that we identified criteria explicitly and applied them consistently to avoid the potential for the criticism, which we saw last year when we first proposed a framework, that the framework may be used selectively to demonise certain foods.
23. The Board suggested applying the framework to all currently known "risky" foods, including shellfish, to confirm we were happy with the controls in place before the criterion of change was then adopted.
24. The Director of Policy said the FSA did not have a list of "risky" foods. In the September 2015 Board paper (FSA 15/09/04 Development of the framework for controls relating to foods where risks per serving are significant and its further application to burgers served rare in catering outlets) we had referred to the closest thing we had to such a list which was the analysis based on a large study on infectious intestinal disease in the UK which had identified, among broad classes of food, chicken and shellfish as having a higher risk per serving of foodborne disease and hospitalisation relative to other foodstuffs.
25. Beyond using that, and in light of discussion to date with the expert working group, we would struggle to identify further existing foods that satisfied a clear rationale for inclusion without additional criteria having been set.
26. The Chief Executive said our experience with applying the framework to raw drinking milk and rare burgers had shown how much time and resource was required and cautioned that to undertake similar work on shellfish would be problematical given the other priorities the Board had identified. However, the criterion of 'change' may cause us to apply the framework sooner than we might otherwise have anticipated due to the potential impact of climate change.
27. The Director of Policy assured the Board that the decision tree to come to the Board in the November 2016 paper would show how factors such as risk per serving of different foods, the severity of the hazard and the proportion of the population likely to be exposed were considered in applying the framework.

28. A Board member welcomed the role the *ad hoc* working group of our scientific advisory committees had played in this piece of work, and the input such groups could add to Board discussions.
29. The FSA's Head of Science Strategy and Governance agreed with the Board that the framework was not just about new foods; it would also facilitate and provide a structure for the review of decisions and controls already in place, just as, and in a similar way, it would identify the triggers which would prompt the review of foods that had already gone through the framework. In order to be consistent and transparent, we would need to articulate the reasons for a review using the framework in either case.
30. The Director of Policy agreed with the Board about the importance of monitoring and surveillance to gather intelligence to identify changes that made foods more or less risky which, in both instances, would trigger application of the framework. He agreed that the November 2016 Board paper would refer using the outputs from work on emerging risk, horizon scanning and surveillance to inform our assessment of when risks were changing.
31. In concluding the Chair said:
- The Board recognised that this remained work in progress at this stage.
 - Applying the framework to shellfish would be scheduled into the forward work programme and the timing would need to reflect its relative priority, considering other work.

ACTION: Board Secretariat

- We should continue to reflect with the *ad hoc* working group on 'change' as a criterion but the Board did not yet consider it the only, or key, criterion.
- Monitoring capability and triggers should be considered in the November 2016 Board paper.
- When it came to the working title of the framework, brevity and simple language ("risky foods") would better aid consumer understanding.

ACTION: FSA Director of Policy to these three instructions forward

AN UPDATE ON BURGERS SERVED LESS THAN THOROUGHLY COOKED IN FOOD SERVICE OUTLETS (FSA 16/07/05)

32. The Chair welcomed Nick Laverty, the FSA's Enforcement Policy Development Manager, to the table and invited the FSA's Director of Policy to introduce the paper.
33. The Director of Policy said this extensive and comprehensive paper showed the work undertaken across the Agency on this topic. He said the primary focus on rare burgers had been on providing guidance for businesses and local authority enforcement on appropriate controls. This had been supported by advice from the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF), most recently for example, on the efficacy of treatments including lactic acid and steam when used together with a 4-log reduction through cooking. We were also working closely with Public Health England (PHE) to ensure that the available surveillance data allowed us

to identify any increase in foodborne illness caused by STEC that may be related to burgers which had been an important part of the Board's discussion in September 2015.

34. We had completed underpinning consumer research which would be instrumental in our continuing discussions with the food service sector on messages at the point of ordering, and in designing our consumer information campaign.
35. Our consumer information campaign in August 2016 would bring together messaging that burgers should always be thoroughly cooked at home and introduce messaging about risks and controls relating to choosing less than thoroughly cooked burgers in food service outlets. This messaging would equip consumers with the knowledge to probe and challenge food service outlets on the controls they had in place.
36. We were asking the Board whether it was satisfied with the progress made, and to identify any further actions that would enhance our ability to protect consumers and their interests.
37. We had one question we were asking the Board, resulting from innovation within the sector. We knew some in industry were considering other processing steps which delivered an equivalent to the kill step of thorough cooking while allowing burgers to be served pink. Therefore we were asking the Board to consider whether burgers prepared such that they delivered the same level of protection as thorough cooking (a 6-log reduction rather than a 4-log reduction) needed to have the same consumer messaging in place as those serving less than thoroughly cooked burgers that relied on "source controls" to meet the position adopted by the Board.
38. Removing the requirement for a statement in those cases would be risk-based, as it would recognise that such burgers were as safe as burgers cooked in that the core achieved a temperature of 70 degrees for 2 minutes, as per ACMSF guidance, and that those thoroughly cooked burgers did not require specific labelling. We recognised however that this would lead to consumer messages about what might seem to be the same product – a less than thoroughly cooked burger – that varied depending on setting. This was a complex challenge, but not an impossible one.
39. The Deputy Chair said he was pleased with the progress on rare burgers that had been made since the Board first considered the issue in January 2015.
40. He said WFAC had discussed the importance of clear consumer messaging about eating burgers at home versus eating them in food service outlets and the Chair of the Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee (NIFAC) said NIFAC had also noted that strong consumer messaging was vital.
41. A new Board member said as someone just coming to this, he thought it was an excellent piece of work and struck a good balance between allowing consumer choice and protecting public health.

42. A Board member said she had concerns about FBOs maintaining controls and local authorities maintaining enforcement standards and she hoped the answer lay in innovation by industry to deliver the desired 6-log reduction.
43. The Director of Policy reassured the Board that the introduction of specific approvals for establishments supplying minced meat intended to be eaten raw or lightly cooked, a proposal which was currently the subject of a public consultation, would reinforce the importance of the specific activities such establishments undertook and bring transparency to the HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) controls applied upstream. He also reassured the Board that competent authorities (LAs and the FSA) already carried out verification of businesses' controls and procedures in line with the FSA advice, and this had not been put on hold until the consultation was complete.
44. He agreed with the Board about the importance of clear consumer messaging and noted that as with all our communication activities we would undertake careful evaluation of our success in getting key messages over.
45. The Chair said she appreciated that FBOs that were able to prepare less than thoroughly cooked burgers such that they delivered the same level of protection as thorough cooking may not want to have any consumer messaging. The Agency, however, needed consumers to be alert to the risk from this specific food. If a member of the public was able to order a less than thoroughly cooked burger in an FBO which had delivered 6-log reduction, and saw no messaging at all, then that person could remain unaware of the wider risk, and not understand that specific special measures had been taken to mitigate the risk in that particular FBO. She therefore believed the group of FBOs achieving 6-log reduction should still have messaging to explain that they had taken approved steps to mitigate the risk to consumers from this generally risky product. This would promote the FBO's own commitment to food safety and reinforce the need for the public to be aware of the risks in other circumstances.
46. The Board agreed with her that they could not support the absence of any messaging in such FBOs. Rather than discouraging industry to innovate to achieve the desired 6-log reduction, the use of such consumer messaging could give those FBOs a competitive advantage.
47. The FSA's Enforcement Policy Development Manager said we were working closely with industry to develop consumer messaging. Our research had shown that consumers responded best to messages which gave context about the risk and contrasted burgers to steak. Our research had included both quantitative desk work and also the use of an innovative app which interacted with consumers while they were ordering burgers in food service outlets as part of a qualitative survey.
48. The CE drew attention to the importance of the work we had done to improve enforcement as well as communication. Enforcement and other interventions by local authorities, supported by the FSA guidance, had helped deter those FBOs who lacked effective controls from entering into this space and this represented a big step forward in protecting public health.

49. In concluding, the Chair said that delivering a regulatory regime which allows for consumer choice takes effort. By considering rare burgers under the “risky foods” framework, we were building confidence in consumers to make choices. When the Board had first discussed rare burgers, there had not been adequate consumer protection in place. It was now clear to FBOs how they could achieve compliance, and to local authorities the situations under which enforcement was warranted. These were all welcome advancements.
50. The Board agreed that clear and concise consumer messaging was critically important and had to differentiate between settings. The Board welcomed innovation from industry and did not want to unintentionally deter it; and the Board did still want some form of wording in FBOs who were able to prepare less than thoroughly cooked burgers such that they delivered the same level of protection as thorough cooking, to inform consumers and allow industry to promote its innovation.

ACTION: FSA Director of Wales and Local Delivery

51. The Board requested that the evaluation of the August communication campaign be shared with them in due course.

ACTION: FSA Director of Openness, Data and Digital

INCIDENTS AND RESILIENCE ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16 (FSA 16/07/06)

52. The Chair welcomed Richard Hoskin, the FSA’s Head of Incidents and Resilience, to the table and invited the FSA’s Chief Operating Officer to introduce the paper.
53. The FSA’s Head of Incidents and Resilience said the incidents and resilience function had four primary responsibilities:
- It provided a ‘24/7’ incident response capability and in 2015 had responded to more than 1500 incidents;
 - It undertook food chain investigations across England, Wales and Northern Ireland;
 - It ensured that the FSA had the capacity and capability to effectively deal with a large incident or multiple incidents regardless of scale and complexity; and
 - It ensured that the FSA made an effective contribution to UK cross-Government resilience planning, including on UK food defence matters.
54. This paper covered the work of the FSA teams in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and reflected the close working relationship we had with Food Standards Scotland (FSS). The four nation approach enabled us to provide a consistent UK incident response capability in protecting consumers. In delivering its responsibilities the Incidents and Resilience function relied on the support and input of FSA colleagues in Science, Policy, Legal and Communications, often outside normal working hours.
55. In terms of incident response, 2015 was a busy year. There was a slight decrease in overall number of incidents but a 150% increase in the number of food recalls and a 40% increase in allergy alerts.

56. In terms of resilience, work had focussed on implementing the recommendations from Exercise Prometheus such as: revisions to the Incident Management Plan; a reduction in our command structure from 3 to 2 tiers to speed up decision making; a revised Briefing Cell Operating Procedure; production of a guidance paper for the high-level Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies; and a resourcing plan for use in the event of an incident having to be managed over a sustained period of time.
57. We also developed our first annual exercise and drilling plan which included small and large exercises.
58. In terms of continuous improvement, we had launched a lean quality management system and adopted a programme of action circles; had revised our incident review; and had initiated the efficacy of recalls project.
59. In terms of incident prevention attention was drawn to the collaborative work that had resulted in production of best practice guidance for UK businesses in relation to the authenticity of herbs and spice which provided advice on how to identify vulnerabilities in supply chains and the types of preventative measures that should be considered.
60. The Chair and the Board commended the production of the best practice guidance which had been welcomed across industry.
61. A Board member emphasised the negative effects of recalls on small businesses in particular and suggested that small businesses be represented on the Stakeholder Reference Group for the Efficacy of Recalls Project.
62. Regarding the Efficacy of Recalls Project, he said an increased number of recalls risked diluting their impact, thereby putting consumers at risk. Recalls could perhaps be reduced by spreading best practice among retailers, as no doubt some would be involved in less recalls than others. It was important to keep the cost of recalls for businesses as low as possible as the lasting financial impact of recalls on businesses could also put consumers at risk. Finally it might be useful to adopt the health and safety approach of capturing near misses to help reduce the number of recalls.
63. In the context of the referendum result it was recognised that it would be essential to ensure that arrangements for managing food incidents across national borders were safeguarded.
64. The Chair concluded by thanking the teams, acknowledging the challenges they faced in responding to incidents, including out of hours working.

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (FSA 16/07/07)

65. The Chair welcomed the FSA's Veterinary Director, Javier Dominguez, and Reg Smith, Agricultural Director for Faccenda and Chairman of the British Poultry Council Antibiotic Stewardship Scheme to the table. The Chair also welcomed Richard Griffiths, Director of Food Policy at the British Poultry Council who was in the audience, and invited the FSA's Director of Policy to introduce the paper.

66. The Director of Policy said the emergence of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) posed a significant global threat. The UK was at the forefront of efforts to understand and counter this threat.
67. While it is not possible to determine with certainty the contribution that the use of antimicrobials in agriculture was making to this issue, there was an increasingly robust consensus that unnecessary use of antimicrobials in animals and agriculture was a significant concern, and that minimising the unnecessary and inappropriate use of antimicrobials was an essential component of global strategies to safeguard antimicrobials that were critical for treatment of serious human infections.
68. He proposed that, working in partnership with industry and other government departments, there was an important role for the FSA which was aligned with our statutory function to “protect public health from risks which may arise in connection with the consumption of food, including risks caused by the way in which it is produced.”
69. The paper proposed the roles and responsibilities that the FSA should have, and asked the Board to agree that we should contribute actively to work on this issue, while achieving the objective in our strategy of achieving great things with modest resources.
70. Reg Smith then talked about progress within the poultry meat sector in dealing with this issue. He said the Stewardship Scheme had been formed in 2011 by the British Poultry Council (BPC) in recognition of the significant problem posed by the use of antibiotics in agriculture across Europe.
71. They had focused on the collection of data initially, which he recognised was relatively easier for an integrated sector such as poultry but would be more difficult for other sectors which were not so integrated. The data collected was shared on a quarterly basis with the regulator, the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD).
72. The Scheme had sought to prioritise its actions by focusing first on the four Critically Important Antibiotics (CIAs) used in poultry: macrolides, glycopeptides, cephalosporins and fluoroquinolones. As a result the sector did not use glycopeptides, had banned the use of cephalosporins and had voluntarily stopped using macrolides, with fluoroquinolones retained as a treatment option in turkeys.
73. The Scheme had also focused on significantly reducing overall use of antibiotics, for example through the removal of in-feed antibiotics. Prophylactic and metaphylactic administration of antimicrobials to day-old chicks had been curtailed. Now work was focusing on further reductions in antibiotic use through the application of alternative therapies which included nutritional support with the diet such as butyric acid supplementation.
74. The Board commended the work of the BPC Antibiotic Stewardship Scheme as an example of leadership that other food sectors could potentially learn from.
75. A Board member said that, through the work of the Animal Health and Welfare Board (AHWB), all sectors had now bought in to the need to address the use of antibiotics in

agriculture. All sectors had a plan but, as they had very different systems, there were varying degrees of progress in catching up with the work of the BPC Scheme. He suggested that it might be reassuring for the Board to hear from other sectors on the work they were undertaking.

76. Board members suggested we focussed the limited resources we intended to apply to countering AMR to those areas where we could make a specific impact, rather than overlapping with work that was being done, or should be done, by other government departments.
77. The Deputy Chair suggested the FSA's specific and particular input should be based on our farm to fork philosophy, making sure the right thing was done in food production to the benefit of consumers' interests by supporting key interventions throughout the food chain. Board members commented that they wanted more specifics about the proposed role and responsibilities for the FSA as set out in the Board paper: these were generic and open to many interpretations.
78. The CE suggested that we all wanted to make sure the system worked to the benefit of consumers and public health. She said that other parts of government had a positive appetite for us to play a role, and that our specific role would be defined by challenging the industry on how it was addressing consumers' interests with pace and ambition, creating the conditions for transparency, and differentiating between the performance of different sectors and players through supporting innovation and giving recognition. The CE said she would update the Board at a future meeting on the specific areas of activity that the FSA was undertaking in this area.
79. In summarising the discussion the Chair said that:
- AMR was a matter of importance to consumers, to the Board and the FSA, and our interest was driven by championing the consumer interest in food.
 - The FSA did have a role to play in supporting the wider ambitions for overcoming AMR.
 - The Board wished to understand more clearly the roles and responsibilities of other parts of Government in AMR. This would allow them to identify and approve the specifics of a defined contribution by the FSA.
ACTION: FSA Director of Policy to provide this analysis to the Board
 - The Board wished to see specific objectives and outcomes/impacts for the FSA, which took into account the wish to limit the resources and senior management time spent, given other pressing challenges and the scale of change facing the Agency.
ACTION: FSA Director of Policy to propose specific objectives for the FSA relating to AMR for approval by the Board
 - Other sectors should be offered the opportunity to update the Board on their progress relating to reduction in antibiotic use.

ACTION: FSA Director of Policy

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE FSA BOARD FROM THE CHAIR OF THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (FSA 16/07/08)

80. The Chair invited the Chair of the FSA's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) to present the paper.
81. The Chair of ARAC said the majority of ARAC meetings during 2015/16 had been chaired by former Board member Paul Wiles with current Board members, Ram Gidoomal and Heather Peck, serving as ARAC members.
82. The membership of four, and then three, Board members on ARAC meant that the minimum membership requirement of five Board members, as set out in the ARAC terms of reference, had not been met. This had come about due to the departure of the two Board members who had represented Scotland and served as ARAC members in the FSA until Food Standards Scotland was created on 1 April 2015.
83. The reduced Board membership on ARAC had been accepted due to the vacancies on the Board. Now with the increase in Board membership, it would be possible to bring the ARAC membership in line with the terms of reference.
84. The 2014/15 Accounts and Annual Report had received a clean opinion from the National Audit Office (NAO) who had noted significant improvements in the process implemented by the FSA's Director of Finance and Strategic Planning and his team.
85. During the year ARAC considered 12 key audit reports: 4 were assigned a substantial assurance level; 6 moderate; and 2 were limited. The two limited reports required significant improvements and related to: the management of service level agreements with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD); and the management of official veterinarians in meat plants. Both of these audits had been requested as staff were aware of issues and implementation dates for remedial actions were now in place.
86. ARAC were satisfied that adequate and proportionate internal audit resources were provided throughout the year to ensure continued effectiveness of Internal Audit.
87. ARAC were of the view that risk, control and governance arrangements in place during 2015/16 were satisfactory. A revised corporate risk register was in place which the FSA Board had signed off. Work was in progress on the development of a control framework which would sit behind the corporate risk register to help identify how controls were operating and how to direct internal audit efforts. ARAC would report on the control framework next year.
88. The Chair of ARAC agreed to consider a Board member's suggestion that information be captured on how risks in relation to cyber security, were managed, to establish the adequacy of controls.

ACTION: Chair of ARAC

89. The Chair confirmed that the incoming Board members for Wales and Northern Ireland would be appointed as ARAC members.

ACTION: Board Secretariat

REVIEW OF THE FSA BOARD AND COMMITTEES TERMS OF REFERENCE AND STANDING ORDERS (FSA 16/07/09)

90. The Chair said this paper fulfilled the annual requirement to review the terms of reference and standing orders. She had also used this opportunity to share the outcomes of the Board Effectiveness Review conducted in the autumn of 2015.
91. In response to a suggestion from a Board member, the Chair agreed that going forward all terms of reference should be looked at together annually.

ACTION: Board Secretariat

92. The Board agreed the recommendations as set out in the paper.

REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRS OF THE FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEES (INFO 16/07/01–02)

93. The Chair agreed with the Deputy Chair, who had chaired the WFAC meeting in the absence of the soon-to-be-appointed WFAC Chair, that a Board discussion on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 should be added to the Board's forward agenda.

ACTION: Board Secretariat

94. The Chair of NIFAC said that in Northern Ireland responsibility for nutrition remained with the FSA which made it appropriate for the FSA Board to discuss nutrition. She said obesity, and the nutritional status of young girls, were of major concern in NI. It was the responsibility of the FSA, as an independent body working within government, to reach across the gaps created by silo working in government and speak up about such issues.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

95. On behalf of the Board, the Chair and Deputy Chair paid tribute and said farewell to Henrietta Campbell, FSA Board member for Northern Ireland and Chair of NIFAC as her term of appointment came to an end on 31 August 2016 and so this was her last Board meeting.
96. The Chair advised that there was no other business and closed the Board meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

97. The next meeting of the FSA Board would take place on Wednesday 21 September 2016 in Aviation House, London.