
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Report by Catherine Brown, Chief Executive

GENERAL ACTIVITY UPDATE

1. Since my last report to the Board in July, I have continued to meet with a wide range of stakeholders, including the Trading Standards Institute (TSI) and the Chartered Institute for Environmental Health (CIEH), the Provision Trade Federation (PTF), the Food and Drink Federation (FDF), and Tesco, to discuss issues of mutual interest, including the post-EU exit regulatory framework, and their involvement in the FSA's work on Regulating our Future and Our Food Future.
2. I have continued my regular update meetings with other Government Departments, including Geoff Ogle, Chief Executive of Food Standards Scotland and Defra to continue our close working and discuss a wide range of shared interests. I contributed, through interview, to the Triennial Review of Public Health England (PHE). I recently also met with Cefas to discuss the scientific and technical expertise they provide to support the FSA in delivering shellfish official controls and the Regulating our Future principles and their relevance to our future work together.
3. I also met the Director of the Government Property Unit in Cabinet Office this month to discuss the development of government accommodation "hubs" and our needs after the exit from Aviation House.
4. In July, I was particularly grateful to the National Pig Association, who arranged a visit to an outdoor breeding and growing farm in East Anglia as well as another opportunity to visit the Spalding abattoir and cutting plant. I and a number of colleagues had a fascinating day understanding the issues facing commercial pig production.
5. I also joined colleagues from our Cardiff office and Welsh operations at the Eisteddfod as part of their summer consumer and stakeholder engagement programme and was very impressed by their energy and effectiveness. The bi-lingual online game that we have developed to help children engage with food safety attracted a great deal of positive attention from children and teachers.
6. Last week, I had the pleasure of speaking at the GODAN (Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition) Global Summit in New York about the importance of open data to support innovation in the food system and empowering consumers. Guy Poppy, CSA, Steve Wearne, Director of Policy

and I also took the opportunity to meet with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in Washington where we discussed how greater openness and transparency of data sharing initiatives can leverage improved compliance from food businesses and improved outcomes for citizens and areas in which we may be able to work more effectively in collaboration.

EXIT FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION

7. Alongside the Steering Group established in June, we have now identified EU Exit Leads across the FSA who will act as focal points for the UK's exit preparation in their work areas. The FSA will be working closely with the Department for Exiting the EU on the UK's withdrawal and future relationship, liaising closely with other key departments. I would like to thank the central EU and international team and teams across the FSA for the extra work they are putting in to support this programme.
8. The FSA will continue to prioritise the protection of public health and consumer interests in relation to food, to do this effectively it is important that we understand and listen to consumers' perceptions on the food system and how these may have changed following the referendum. We have therefore commissioned consumer insight research to explore and understand current consumer concerns and interests with regards to food post-referendum.
9. As I said in my July update to the Board - until exit negotiations are concluded, the UK remains a full member of the EU and all the rights and obligations of EU membership remain in force. Therefore the current legal framework remains the law and this is a message we are reinforcing to stakeholders and members of the public. During the negotiations period the FSA will continue to negotiate, implement and apply EU legislation.

CAMPYLOBACTER CAMPAIGN

10. The reworking of the methodology for the *Campylobacter* retail survey analysis to allow equitable comparisons between retailers has now been completed. The Advisory Committee on Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF) as well as Acting on *Campylobacter* Together (ACT) Board members were consulted before we agreed the new testing protocol.
11. The retail survey recommenced at the beginning of August. It is expected that the first set of results with the new methodology in place will be published in February 2017, collating the data from samples collected from August to December 2016.

12. Following the letter sent to retailers by the Chair earlier in the year, I am pleased to report that almost all of the major retailers have expressed a willingness to publish their own *Campylobacter* testing data.
13. As the Board has previously discussed, the FSA will set and agree data standards and criteria so that we can be assured of the robustness of the data to be published. Retailers who consistently publish their data and sampling in line with the criteria will be removed from our retail survey, although we will reserve the right to comment on their results. The retail survey itself will continue until 2020 and we will continue to publish results from those major retailers who refuse to publish their own data and the results from independent and smaller retailers.
14. I am delighted to report that early data on human cases of Campylobacteriosis from PHE suggests that numbers are beginning to fall. Of course, it is still early days and the figures have yet to be fully validated, but the indications are good that we are at last seeing a downward trend.

OUR FOOD FUTURE

15. The research and conference on Our Food Future continues to bring us interesting new partnerships and opportunities. We are about to start work with six other organisations in the food sector on a joint project to understand the potential role of the consumer as citizen i.e. as a member of wider communities and interested in more strategic issues, in the food system. We are also embarking on an insight project to understand consumers' priorities to support the Board in deciding where the FSA should focus our efforts.

OUR PEOPLE

16. FSA Voices, our staff advocacy scheme, is 6 months old. We've recruited almost 300 FSA Voices over this short period of time and they have helped us increase our external engagement significantly. We are reviewing the scheme with the aim to plan for its continued evolution.
17. We have just completed our internal Whistleblowing Awareness Week campaign, which was designed to inform staff about how they could raise a concern at the FSA. The campaign involved an introductory video, which I was involved in, alongside a series of Yammer and Foodweb content. We will conduct an evaluation to review its effectiveness in the coming weeks.

18. In anticipation of the Civil Service wide People Survey going live on 3 October, we've begun our internal awareness campaign to encourage a high response rate, which maximises the benefit we gain from analysing the results which inform our organisation development work through the year.
19. Also this month I particularly enjoyed a visit to our teams in York, who showcased some of the work they do there, and the opportunity to get together with a number of our veterinary and field operations leaders and talk about welfare and other issues.
20. I have continued my work as Diversity Champion for the FSA and have been pleased this month that following a number of focus groups earlier this year for staff who identify as Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME), we are now progressing with the creation of an FSA BAME employee network. The network will have a link into the activities and events available across the wider Civil Service Race Network and a specific BAME network group lead will feed into our FSA Diversity Working Group.
21. I also enjoyed meeting a handful of enterprising women who have established a Women's Network Yammer Group. This has been formed to support and inspire women to achieve their full potential through networking and sharing ideas, and is also linking in to wider cross Civil Service initiatives.

SCIENCE UPDATE

22. On 7 September, we published the results of FSA-funded research carried out by IPSOS MORI, to evaluate the changes to legislation governing official controls in pig slaughterhouses.¹ The findings of the Process Evaluation will help the FSA understand how the legislative changes to controls in pig slaughterhouses have been rolled out and how they are operating in practice, and will help the FSA apply lessons learned to similar interventions. The Monitoring Framework recommendations will help the FSA monitor the impact of these legislative changes using a sound basis.
23. On 12 September, we published the results of another piece of FSA-funded research, also carried out by IPSOS MORI². This work explored whether there was a change in culture and standards in meat plants where plant staff act as 'spotters' to flag up defects on carcasses and offal, prior to the official inspection carried out by Official Veterinarians or Meat Hygiene Inspectors. The aim was to see whether encouraging line operatives to take an active role

¹ <http://www.food.gov.uk/science/research/ssres/foodsafetyss/fs101112-0>

² <http://www.food.gov.uk/science/research-reports/ssresearch/foodsafetyss/fs517003>

in assisting meat hygiene inspectors in this way would improve meat safety standards and encourage a sense of ownership towards food safety amongst line operatives. Data were also collected on detection rates and accuracy. Analysis of the data indicates that line operatives can play an important role in assisting in the identification of abnormalities. The findings suggest the spotter initiative could lead to a number of benefits including higher detection rates. This is obviously very positive in the context of the Regulating our Future initiative.

Antimicrobial Resistance

24. In its discussion of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) at its meeting in July 2016, the Board concluded that AMR was a matter of importance to consumers, to the Board and the FSA, that our interest was driven by championing the consumer interest in food, and that the FSA has a role to play in supporting the wider ambitions for overcoming AMR.
25. The Board wished to understand more clearly the specific areas of focus of the FSA in terms of complementing the roles and responsibilities of other parts of Government in combatting AMR. At the time of writing this report, the Government had not yet published its response to Lord O'Neill's review of antimicrobial resistance. We anticipate that this will provide clarity on which parts of Government will lead the response to the range of recommendations in the review, and provide a framework for a specific and defined contribution by the FSA.
26. The Board also noted the need to design and execute this contribution in line with the objective in our strategy to achieve great things with small resources, and asked for specific objectives and impacts which meet this ambition.
27. Lord O'Neill called on UN agencies for human and animal health and for food and agriculture to bring together a global group of experts to help everyone agree those antibiotics that should be banned or restricted from use in agriculture. The FSA has the lead across UK Government for food safety aspects of the work of Codex Alimentarius, the global body established jointly by WHO and FAO to protect consumers and promote trade. Codex recently agreed the setting up of an AMR Task Force. As a preliminary step in this work, the UK will be hosting a working group, which the FSA will co-chair with Australia and the USA. The working group will help define the scope of the AMR Task Force's work, and the terms of reference for the science provided to the Task Force by the relevant UN agencies. We are already working with Defra and Department of Health to prepare for this meeting, to be held before the end of 2016, and are pleased that Defra has agreed to share the financial costs of the event.

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28. Lord O'Neill also called on major food producers, retailers and regulators to agree standards for 'responsible use' in agriculture, as a basis for labelling or certification schemes. In line with the FSA Board's commitment to encouraging openness we believe that providing greater transparency about business standards will incentivise rapid improvement, support innovation and reward responsible businesses. We will therefore work with others across Government and beyond to encourage food manufacturers, assurance scheme organisations and retailers to develop these standards, and incorporate them into assurance schemes and to establish clear expectations about the information on usage of antibiotics that industry should publish as open data.
29. Lord O'Neill also calls for improved surveillance. We will shortly publish the report from a systematic review we have commissioned of AMR in commensal and pathogenic bacteria in food. This data is limited at present. One of our corporate objectives for the current year is to develop a new strategic approach to surveillance, and we will apply this approach first to surveillance for AMR in food.
30. In summary, the FSA is currently contributing to wider government efforts through:
- a. Its role as UK lead in Codex where we are (jointly with Australia and the US) convening a meeting to set the objectives for a Codex Working Group on AMR;
 - b. Working to encourage the adoption of clear transparent reporting standards that help consumers have access to and understand information about the responsible use of antibiotics in the food chain;
 - c. Continued focus on improving the scientific evidence base relating to antimicrobial resistance in the food chain through supporting relevant research and improving surveillance.
31. In this context I was pleased that we published the fourth of our Chief Scientific Advisor's reports, on the subject of AMR in the food chain, in time to inform discussions at the United Nations on this issue later this month.
32. I am appreciative of those who have taken time to share their thinking on this issue, following up on the presentation that the Board received from the British Poultry Council on this issue at its last meeting, including Red Tractor and the Alliance to Save our Antibiotics as well as retailers, the British Pig Association and others.

REGULATING OUR FUTURE AND THE FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME

33. It is encouraging to see strong engagement from a wide range of industry players in the Regulating our Future programme. A recent workshop I attended with a wide range of businesses reiterated messages we have heard consistently from business over the last several years about how critical the FHRS is in terms of the regulatory model, and how its sustainability and robustness needs to be central to the future.
34. In this light we continue to develop proposals for the delivery of a FHRS statutory scheme in England as part of the Regulating our Future programme. We are monitoring the impact of introduction of the statutory scheme in Wales and will have proposals ready to present to Government by the end of 2016. We are also looking to non-legislative alignment of the voluntary scheme in England with the statutory schemes in Wales/Northern Ireland and are currently trialling cost recovery for requested FHRS re-visits with around 40 local authorities in England. Assuming no issues are identified, we will roll-out this approach nationally in early 2017.
35. FSA are working with Rutland County Council to implement FHRS in October, resulting in all 326 local authorities in England operating the voluntary scheme.
36. The second national consistency exercise has recently been completed where local authorities were asked to assess an on-line scenario (with an expected rating of 5 - 'very good'). The majority (97%) determined the business in the scenario to be either 'good' or 'very good' in hygiene performance. Overall the results evidence improving confidence in the scheme and that local authority officers are performing assessments consistently. We are addressing any issues or areas where further support is required with local authorities.
37. Final preparations are being made for the statutory scheme in Northern Ireland which is expected to come into force on 7 October. FSA NI has been working closely with the Northern Ireland Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Implementation Group (consisting of representatives of each of the 11 district councils), in order to address any issues in terms of implementing the scheme. Separately, Northern Ireland is also developing regulations that will require the publication of hygiene ratings by food business operators providing an online ordering service. There will be a separate public consultation on this new provision in due course.
38. FSA Wales are continuing to work with local authorities and Welsh Government to prepare businesses in Wales for the new regulations that will

come into force in late November. The regulations will require takeaway food businesses to publish a bilingual statement on certain hardcopy publicity materials directing customers to the food hygiene ratings website and reminding customers they have a legal right to ask the food business for their food hygiene rating when they order.

FOOD CRIME

39. The Institute of Food Safety, Integrity and Protection (TiFSiP) is producing a fraud resilience guide for industry, which the NFCU is endorsing. Due to be published in October, this work will complement the launch of an industry guide to working with the NFCU during the same month.
40. Following the Board's discussion in May and the announcement of the steering group membership in July, we have been progressing work to deliver the two year review of the NFCU. The review team have been gathering views from stakeholders and this work will continue over the next 5 weeks or so, with the aim of producing a draft report for discussion at the FSA's Board meeting in mid-November.

INCIDENTS

National Outbreak of *E.coli* PT34

41. Since the 23 June the FSA has been working with Public Health England (PHE) to investigate an outbreak of a rare strain of *E.coli* O157. When the outbreak was publically declared over on 11 August, 161 cases of illness had been reported with the latest date of onset of a primary case being 5 July.
42. All of the epidemiological evidence including several analytical studies indicates an association with the consumption of mixed salad leaves and eating out of the home. No other associations have been identified.
43. Although the outbreak has officially been declared as being over, the FSA continues to work with PHE, local authorities and food businesses to try to identify the specific source for the outbreak. Both PHE and the FSA have published news stories and provided advice to consumers relating to the handling of salad and vegetables.

Scottish Outbreak of *E.coli* PT21/28

44. On 21 July Health Protection Scotland notified Food Standards Scotland (FSS) of an outbreak of *E.coli* O157 PT21/28. To date (as at 9 September 2016) there are 20 confirmed cases, including one fatality. Investigations have shown an association between the cases reported and the consumption

of a blue cheese known as Dunsyre Blue, which is produced from unpasteurised milk by Errington Cheese. FSS are continuing their food safety investigations together with the local authorities. FSA are also supporting FSS in investigations into this outbreak.

45. The FSA followed up with the relevant local authorities and food businesses to ensure that the implicated cheese was removed from the market.

SENTENCING FOR FOOD HYGIENE AND FOOD SAFETY OFFENCES

46. The positive results that can be achieved through multi-agency work on criminal investigations and prosecutions was demonstrated with the conviction of Anthony Bagshaw and his sentencing to 10 months imprisonment at Stafford Crown Court on 22 August 2016. A multi-agency investigation was carried out by the FSA and Staffordshire Trading Standards following the receipt of footage that had been captured by covert cameras that were installed in Mr Bagshaw's approved slaughterhouse in Leek, Staffordshire by Hillside Animal Sanctuary; a non-profit organisation.
47. As a result of the investigation, charges against Mr Bagshaw were laid jointly by the Crown Prosecution Service (acting for Defra and Staffordshire County Council) and the FSA's prosecution team. In May 2016, at the first hearing in the case, Mr Bagshaw pleaded guilty to 24 offences, which included: serious animal welfare breaches; food safety offences (including illegal slaughter without inspections taking place); movement of animals without informing the Secretary of State; and trading standards offences (sale of meat without traceability information). At Stafford Crown Court on 22 August, the Judge sentenced Mr Bagshaw to 8 months imprisonment for the food safety offences and an additional 2 months imprisonment for the animal welfare/movement offences, with no separate penalty for the other offences. In sentencing, the Judge remarked that Mr Bagshaw "disregarded regulatory requirements deliberately and over a long period [of time]"; and that the food offences "put food safety seriously at risk" and had the effect of "undermining confidence that the public have in regulatory controls on food" and that the offences demonstrated "wanton cruelty".
48. The case marked the first occasion on which the FSA has used covert footage captured by an animal rights organisation as evidence in a criminal case. The sentencing on the food safety offences also demonstrated the positive results that we are beginning to see following the introduction of the new sentencing guidelines on food hygiene and food safety offences.
49. Preston City Council prosecuted One Stop Shop (subsidiary of Tesco) for hygiene offences as adequate procedures were not in place to control pests

and food was sold that was unsafe. An inspection (December 2014) found dead mice in-store as well as other evidence of rodent activity. A Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice was served to close the shop immediately and officers permitted reopening when they were satisfied remedial measures had been carried out. A guilty plea was entered at Preston Magistrates' Court and the case was referred to Crown Court resulting in an £80k fine and the retailer order to meet costs of £11k.

50. Birmingham City Council closed a city centre pub kitchen following an inspection in February 2015 which found evidence of mouse droppings and dirty conditions in the kitchen and bar areas. A Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice was served on the kitchen area and only lifted when adequate cleaning and remedial work was satisfactorily completed. The pub's owner, Mitchells & Butlers Retail Limited was sentenced at the Crown Court after earlier pleading guilty to three offences under the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013. The company which runs 1,700 pubs and restaurants across the UK was fined £105k and ordered to pay £9,528 in costs. The premises have since been re-inspected and received a 5 FHSR rating.

51. West Sussex Trading Standards prosecuted Forge Farm Meats following a customer complaint and subsequent investigations that included taking 11 samples of meat from West Sussex butchers and restaurants. 8 samples found goat meat that was offered for sale as sheep meat. The investigation traced the origin to a Spanish business and information was shared with Spanish authorities. The company pleaded guilty to 2 misrepresentation offences under The Food Safety Act and received a sentence of fines and costs exceeding £8k. The fraud investigation resulted in 2 butchers receiving cautions and a meat wholesaler receiving a warning letter. The investigations are ongoing ensuring that all businesses involved are no longer selling falsely described meat.