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1 SUMMARY

1.1 This report updates on two highlight areas of activity in Food Standards Agency (FSA) in Wales. It also signposts to other key areas of achievement in Wales mapped against the strategic outcomes of the FSA's Strategic Plan 2015 - 20 and the separate Wales Annex to the plan as published on 1 July 2015.

1.2 The Board is asked to:

Note: progress on the delivery of the introduction of a new model to deliver animal feed official controls and the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in Wales.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 This paper updates the Board on two specific activities in Wales which have contributed to the delivery of the FSA's Strategic Plan. A more detailed overview of all activities of the FSA in Wales, mapped against the strategic priorities, is provided in Annex 1.

3. STRATEGIC AIMS

3.1 The strategic aims of the FSA in Wales are to contribute to the delivery of the FSA's Strategic Plan 2015 - 20¹ and to deliver on the separate Wales Annex to the Plan.²

4. HIGHLIGHT ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST OUTCOME

Outcome 1 – Food is Safe: Animal Feed Official Controls in Wales

4.1 The publication of the FSA's Report on a Food and Feed Law Enforcement Stocktake in Wales and Final Response to Pennington Recommendations assessed the extent to which the Pennington recommendations had been implemented by local authorities. This report also considered official feed controls. While the report highlighted the significant improvement in compliance with food hygiene law by food businesses in Wales, it also indicated a less positive outcome with regard to official feed controls.

¹ <https://www.food.gov.uk/news-updates/news/2015/14025/fsa-publishes-strategic-plan-for-food-we-can-trust>

² <http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/FSA%20strategy%20Wales.pdf>

4.2 Following these concerns, Ministerial agreement was obtained for revenue support grant funding of £490k to transfer to the FSA in Wales to progress official feed controls. This commenced on a recurrent basis from April 2015. Since 1 April 2015, animal feed official controls have been delivered by local authorities in Wales on a regional basis with central coordination by the FSA. The new delivery model ensures funding is appropriately targeted and allocated to local authorities according to risk. In its first year of operation, a target of 2,386 inspections was identified for the 2015/16 interventions programme. This target was exceeded with 2,431 feed inspections being carried out. Interventions also identified 235 feed establishments no longer trading, improving the accuracy of animal feed establishment registers. The key achievements of the new animal feed delivery model in 2015/16 were:

- 102% of feed inspection programme completed;
- feed activity carried out in all local authority areas;
- over 1,200 additional inspections conducted in mid and west Wales compared with previous years;
- improved accuracy of feed establishment databases;
- development of an All Wales Service Plan;
- development of a Memorandum of Understanding between the FSA and all feed regions;
- a coordinated sampling plan with 163 out of a target of 166 feed samples taken (98.2%);
- full spend against the budget for 2015/16 of £490k;
- provision of training to feed officers; and
- import controls on animal feed carried out at ports in Wales.

4.3 This new model demonstrates a significant improvement in the delivery of animal feed official controls in Wales, with interventions now being carried out on a risk basis across all feed regions.

4.4 Outcome 2 – Empowering Consumers: The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)

4.5 Implementation of the FHRS and provision of support to the Welsh Government (WG) has continued to be a focus for activity of the FSA in Wales. In February 2015, a report was produced on the first year of implementation of the statutory FHRS in Wales and the operation of the appeals system. The report was laid before the National Assembly for Wales on 27 February 2015.³ A second report which reviewed the period 28 November 2014 – 27 November 2015 was laid on 25 February 2016.⁴ The findings of the review indicated that appeals were being dealt with fairly and in accordance with the Statutory Guidance. The number of appeals had increased since the first year of the scheme; of the 104 appeals a total of 15 resulted in changes to the food hygiene rating.

³ <http://www.food.gov.uk/wales/news-updates/news/2015/13655/food-standards-agency-wales-report>

⁴ <http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/gen-ld10597/gen-ld10597-e.pdf>

- 4.6 The FSA in Wales has been working in collaboration with WG to introduce new regulations on publicity materials. These will come into force on 28 November 2016 and will require takeaway food businesses to publish a bilingual statement on certain hardcopy publicity materials directing customers to the food hygiene ratings website. If a takeaway leaflet or menu shows food for sale, as well as the price and method of ordering the food without visiting the premises, it will need to display a statement to remind consumers that they can check the food hygiene rating of the food business. The statement will also remind consumers they have a legal right to ask the food hygiene rating when they order. The regulations will create offences for dealing with publishing inaccurate food hygiene ratings.
- 4.7 FHRS is a key public health protection measure in Wales. Since mandation in Wales, standards have been improving more quickly than in England - the number of 5 rated businesses has grown from 45% to 63% in the first two years of mandatory display. 83% of Welsh businesses approve of the mandatory scheme.

5. FORWARD PLAN: PRIORITIES FOR FSA IN WALES

- 5.1 Priorities for future activities will include the need to ensure engagement with WG in relation to Welsh Government 'Towards Sustainable Growth: An Action Plan for the Food and Drink Industry 2014 – 2020'. Close collaboration is also relevant in relation to the Well Being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 which places a statutory duty on listed bodies to make sure when making decisions they take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future. While the FSA is not a listed body, when acting on behalf of Welsh Ministers (eg when making regulations) we will need to comply with the Act. Other key priorities will be to:-
- increase our insight and engagement strategy to ensure that Welsh consumer voices fed into FSA advice and policies.
 - undertake consumer analysis to help inform our understanding of areas of Welsh consumer interest in relation to food safety and food standards.
 - further develop the feed delivery model in Wales.
 - ensure compliance with the new Welsh Language Standards across the FSA.
 - develop a Herbals and Supplements strategy for the FSA as a whole.
 - further develop the Local authority Smarter Communications platform.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The Board is asked to:
- **Note:** progress on the delivery of the FHRS and the introduction of a new model to deliver animal feed official controls in Wales in Wales.

ANNEX 1

Report by Nina Purcell, Director, Wales and Regulatory Delivery Division Overview of Key Achievements of the FSA in Wales – January 2015 to November 2016 Against the Strategic Plan 2015 - 20

1. Outcome 1 – Food is Safe

Local Authority Audit Programme

- 1.1 The FSA in Wales has committed to audit the delivery of food and feed law enforcement services by all local authorities in Wales over a four year period. Full audits of local authority food law enforcement services have been carried out in 18 local authorities. Full audits are scheduled to be undertaken at the remaining four local authorities by March 2017. In view of the findings of the FSA's Stocktake Report which were reported to the Minister for Health and Social Services, and the introduction of a new model for delivering animal feed official controls, feed law enforcement has not been included within the scope of the full audits from January 2015.

<http://gov.wales/topics/health/publications/health/reports/food/?lang=en>

Follow up audits have also been undertaken at six local authorities that have been subject to full audits of their food law enforcement services in order to assess progress against delivering their audit action plans. Additionally, FSA in Wales' auditors have contributed towards an England and Wales focused audit programme relating to food incidents and alerts handling.

Skin on Sheep Meat

- 1.2 We have been leading on the development of a policy for smoked skin on sheep meat. In 2015, we appointed Liverpool University to undertake a desk based study to review current evidence and their final report, received in November 2015, outlined the further evidence needed to support a hygienic method of production for skin on sheep meat. In July 2016, FSA Wales hosted a stakeholder workshop to explore the next steps for the work on smoked skin on sheep. Delegates at the workshop included industry representatives, trade associations, government and academia. Feedback revealed that there was overwhelming support for the work to continue. Delegates also agreed that an industry led consortium should drive the delivery of the evidence supporting a case for a change that demonstrated no increased risk to public health. The National Sheep Association chaired the industry led coalition at its first meeting on 16 September 2016. The FSA is part of the coalition but will no longer lead this aspect of the work. The FSA will now focus its efforts on gathering science and information evidence to support its message to consumers alongside any enforcement role.

Local Authority Training

- 1.3 The FSA in Wales has continued to fund the delivery of training to local authority enforcement officers in Wales. In 2016, a programme of priority courses was developed based on an assessment of the training needs for local authority officers in Wales. The training courses available for 2016-17 have been identified as Microbiological Criteria for Food with emphasis on *Listeria Monocytogenes*, Reducing the Risks from *E.coli* O157 in Small and Medium Businesses, HACCP training, Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Consistency training, Food Standards, animal feed and training on the Regulatory Information and Management System (RIAMS), which has been adopted by all local authorities as part of the Smarter Communication Project (SCP). A recent evaluation of the training programme indicated that 97% of attendees were positive and felt better informed to perform their functions as a result of the training support provided.

Incident Management

- 1.4 The effective handling on incident management has continued to be a priority. Since January 2015 the FSA in Wales has successfully dealt with 76 incidents, 7 of which were classified as significant. Since January the FSA in Wales has taken part in two cross agency non routine incident training exercises for radiological events. FSA Wales staff have also served as facilitators for the FSA and Food Standards Scotland Joint Venture training exercise for non-routine incidents

2. Outcome 2 – Food Is What It Says It Is

The Food Information for Consumers Regulation

- 2.1 The FSA Wales has continued to work in partnership with local authorities on a programme of awareness raising events to the requirements of the Food Information for Consumers Regulation. To date we have engaged with over 1200 catering businesses at events hosted by local authorities in Wales. Since January 2015 these have included events hosted by Swansea County Council and Neath County Borough Council, workshops with care home providers and school caterers and cleaners, and a presentation to the TSO conference. All local authorities in Wales are actively engaged in raising awareness programmes.

Operation OPSON

- 2.2 Operation OPSON is an annual international initiative coordinated by Europol and Interpol, which encourages the participating countries (mostly European) to hold a focused period of activity each year against fake and illicit food and drink. Enforcement authorities and agencies across the UK, including representatives from the Food Standards Agency's National Food Crime Unit (NFCU), the Welsh Food Fraud Co-ordination Unit (WFFCU), Welsh Local Authorities, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN), Public Analysts, the IPO and industry representatives worked together to take part in Operation OPSON V. In

Wales, co-ordinated operational activity for OPSON V took place throughout November 2015. This was intelligence led, and included a specified “day of action” with the aim to disrupt the production, distribution and sale of illicit vodka. Workshops for Welsh enforcement officers were held in October to provide additional support on identifying illicit vodka from the International Federation of Spirits Producers (IFSP). This intense programme of activity translated on 16 Welsh local authority reports undertaking 193 visits and 14 issues identified.

Administration and Management of the National Coordinated Sampling Programme in Wales

- 2.3 We recognise the important role that enforcement sampling plays in delivery of official controls and consumer protection. To support the delivery of *Food We Can Trust* we are developing our thinking on FSA’s approach to food surveillance, informed by the principles agreed by the Board of the former Regulatory Strategy Programme and the new Regulating our Future Programme and our commitments to become a data-driven organisation. The FSA currently sets the priorities for the National Co-ordinated Food Standards Sampling Programme following consultation with stakeholders. The FSA then commissions UK enforcement authorities to take samples which are analysed by official control laboratories. Data on samples and results are entered onto the UK Food Surveillance System). As from April 2015, the administration and management of the National Coordinated Sampling Programme for local authorities in Wales has been led by the FSA in Wales. A total of 91k has been allocated to fund this programme for 2015/16. The FSA in Wales met with the Welsh Food Standards and Labelling Group (WSLG) to review the national priorities, develop the regional plans and agree on what national priorities we would focus on in Wales. The FSA in Wales has made available an additional 20k this year for additional sampling priorities identified by local authorities via the WSLG.. Initially, it will be used to fund the priority on banned colours, but the balance can be used for other priorities and any new Welsh priorities identified during the year.

3. Outcome 3 – Gathering and Using Science, Evidence and Information

Welsh Food Fraud Coordination Unit

- 3.1 The FSA in Wales has been carrying out a review of the Welsh Food Fraud Coordination Unit. One of the drivers for the review is the need to ensure the way we deal with food fraud in Wales is aligned to the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU). We have met with the Wales Food Fraud Co-ordination Governance Group (WFFCGG) a number of times to discuss the review. The WFFCGG agreed the need for a review that would map the new delivery landscape, the relationships with local authorities and propose a model which will continue to protect consumers from food fraud and align with the NFCU. Although the scope of the review was agreed in April 2016, in July 2016 plans to review the NFCU were announced. External experts have been engaged to oversee the

NFCU's review and ensure it is both rigorous and independent. Stakeholders in Wales have been engaged in the review and the review team is aiming to produce a draft report for discussion at the FSA's Board meeting in November. In light of these developments, we have concluded that it would be appropriate to await the outcome of the review of the NFCU and the Board discussions before making recommendations on the future operation of the WFFCU. We will schedule a further meeting of the WFFCGG to take place following the Board discussions.

Science Evidence and Information Strategy Workshop

- 3.2 On 18 September 2015, a Science and Information Strategy workshop was held in Cardiff. Key stakeholders across Wales, attended and provided valuable input into the development of a Delivery Plan for the FSA Science, Evidence and Information Strategy. The workshop provided the opportunity to explore with the scientific community on Wales our use of science, evidence and information in protecting consumers' interests in relation to food.

4. Outcome 4 – Empowering Consumers

School Engagement

- 4.1 The FSA in Wales is committed to a programme of work with schools. On 15 March 2016, 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 and has been adapted, in collaboration with Welsh Government, to support the Welsh curriculum. We have continued to the Crucial Crew network which operates in Wales. Crucial Crew is a network of partners including local authorities, the police and the fire service which aims to provide workshops to primary school children with information on a wide range of important safety issues and services. During 2015/16, the FSA in Wales participated in over 30 Crucial Crew type events delivering food safety information to around 24,000 children (71% of the annual birth cohort in Wales).
- 4.2 The FSA in Wales has continued with a series of theatre in education workshops in schools in some of Wales' most deprived areas. In September 2015, a new workshop was launched - "*The Ghastly Gravy on the Starship Gastromo*" focusing on introducing 5-11 year olds to the "4C's" – Cooking, Cleaning, Chilling and Cross-Contamination. Using theatre, puppetry and a series of interactive workshops young people learn the importance of food-hygiene and kitchen safety. Since 2015 over 146 schools and 20,000 young people have taken part in the project and a further 180 schools will be involved during this academic year. In October 2016, the FSA in Wales and Performance in Education (PiE) was awarded the Gold Award for Innovation at the prestigious EVCOM Clarion Awards for its theatre in education

programme. The EVCOM Clarion Awards recognise exceptional performance in Corporate Social Responsibility and sustainability, including environment, diversity, equality, community, charity initiatives, education, ethical, health and welfare issues.

Consumer Engagement

- 4.3 The FSA in Wales undertook a review of its consumer engagement activities during 2015. As a result, a revised programme of community based engagement was agreed for the 2016 summer period. This provided for FSA in Wales' presence, with an interactive food safety pantomime and various activities targeted at younger consumers, at key events across Wales including the Eisteddfodau, the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show, the Caerphilly Big Cheese festival and agricultural society shows held in Pembrokeshire and Anglesey.

Consumer Campaigns

- 4.4 Consumer campaigns have continued to be a feature of the FSA in Wales. Media campaigns, undertaken over the period of this report have included, Food safety Week, Food Information Regulations, Summer Eating, Listeria, Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Christmas and Valentine campaigns and the Burger versus Steak campaign which took place in August 2016.

5. Outcome 5 – Aligning Incentives

Agriculture Strategy for Wales

- 5.1 The FSA in Wales is actively contributing to Welsh Government's proposals to develop an Agricultural Strategy for Wales. FSA Wales officials have attended a series of stakeholder events leading to the launch of the strategy by the then Deputy Minister for Farming and Food, Welsh Government on 4 June at the Wales Farming Conference 2015. Discussions with Welsh Government have focused on encouraging references to FSA functions including food safety and standards, global food security and authenticity within the Agricultural Strategy and we are in negotiation on securing a presence on a steering group which will be established to develop the action plan underpinning the Strategy.

Strategic Action Plan for Red Meat Industry 2015-2020

- 5.2 We have contributed to Meat Promotion Wales' (Hybu Cig Cymru) public consultation on a Welsh Red Meat Industry Strategic Action Plan 2015-2020. The vision for the Plan is to create a profitable, efficient, sustainable and innovative industry, which safeguards the future of the Welsh red meat industry and sustains the sector's contribution towards a thriving rural economy. The contribution from FSA Wales serves to strengthen the Plan throughout in terms of clarifying the responsibilities of those producing or

supplying red meat to safeguard supply- chain safety and authenticity for the benefit of consumers. It also identifies where there are opportunities to work in partnership with the FSA on exploring the potential for developing innovative, hygienic, red meat alternative production methods.

Welsh Government Food and Drink Industry Board

- 5.3 The FSA in Wales is a key partner in relation to the delivery of Welsh Government 'Towards Sustainable Growth: An Action Plan for the Food and Drink Industry 2014 – 2020'. We are able to contribute in relation to food security and food safety elements of the Action Plan. We continue to work closely with Welsh Government and the Food and Drink Industry Board to protect consumers and develop and maintain consumer confidence in the Welsh food chain network.

Regulating our Future

- 5.4 A number of staff in the FSA in Wales are actively involved in taking forward proposals for a more effective, robust and sustainable system of ensuring that food businesses comply with the regulations put in place to protect consumers interest.
- The Regulating our Future programme activity is now gathering momentum with engagement with a range of food industry/business stakeholders to further refine the proposals.

6. Outcome 6 - Being the Best Organisation we can be

Organisational Structure

- 6.1 In 2015 the structure of the FSA in Wales was reviewed. The team has been restructured to be more effective and provide greater flexibility to utilise resources and people more efficiently. Amongst other benefits the restructure has increased our ability to use intelligence, knowledge, and evidence more effectively to promote and drive incident prevention strategies. We have ensured that Learning and Development activities for FSA in Wales' staff support the 'Our Ways of Working' programme to build a vibrant, progressive, learning organisation. We have continued to promote continuous improvement projects and tools to deliver value for money and more efficient ways of working both in the FSA in Wales and across the organisation. We finalised the effective roll out of Wisdom as the FSA central records and document management system and ensured that all staff in Wales were adequately trained. . We have ensured that the FSA in Wales' Staff Survey Action Plan is fully implemented. In 2015 we increased our engagement index from 59% to 63% in Wales which was 3% higher than the FSA as a whole. We have strived to build a vibrant, progressive, learning organisation that attracts and retains the best staff who are engaged and motivated to deliver.

Smarter Communications with Local Authorities

- 6.2 The FSA in Wales has been collaboratively working to improve the way we communicate with local authority Directors of Public Protection Wales (DPPW), as well managers and officers involved in delivering food and animal feed official controls. Following a successful pilot with eight local authorities, in July 2016 a new communication system was rolled out across all 22 local authorities in Wales. As a result of the project, communications including, food alerts and enforcement updates are being more effectively targeted. Local authority officers now receive FSA communications in their language of choice i.e. Welsh or English, and are able to subscribe to information which is relevant to their area of work. The new system is provided via RIAMS, a web based platform. A survey of local authority officers has revealed that 88% of users of the new system have expressed their satisfaction compared to 44% previously.

Welsh Language Standards

- 6.3 In May 2015, the Welsh Language Unit contributed to the 12 week standards investigation looking at the FSA's approach to provide bilingual services. The FSA's current statutory Welsh Language Scheme, which describes how we fulfil our legal obligation to provide for the Welsh speaking public, will be replaced by new [Welsh Language Standards](#) which will demand more from us as a public body. Before these standards can be enforced, the regulatory body, the Welsh Language Commissioner, must first determine which standards should specifically apply to the FSA. We are waiting our draft compliance notice.