

FSA Science Council Chair's report to the FSA Board

Professor Sandy Thomas

Council Chair

14 March 2018

FSA Science Council



Sandy Thomas



Laura Green



Paul Turner



John O'Brien



Sarah O'Brien



Mark Rolfe



Mark Woolhouse



Patrick Wolfe

FSA Science Council

What it is:

An independent expert committee of the FSA

A Chair and up to seven members

What it does:

- ✓ high-level, expert strategic insight, challenge and advice to the FSA's CSA and to the Board and executive on the FSA's use of science
- ✓ help ensure that the FSA identifies, sources, integrates and uses the best scientific evidence and expertise from all relevant disciplines to inform and evaluate its work

Initial priorities

WG1: Science capability and assurance (Chair: Laura Green)	WG2: Risk and certainty (Chair: Mark Woolhouse)	WG3: food system risks and horizon scanning (Chair: John O'Brien)
<p>How can the FSA get confident that we have access to the right science capability and capacity and using it to the best of our ability?</p>	<p>What does the Council advise to be best practice in establishing and communicating risk and certainty?</p>	<p>What should the FSA do to improve its horizon scanning capability and its understanding of global food systems risks and opportunities?</p>
<p>Phase 1: how FSA identifies and accesses the science it needs</p> <p>Phase 2: how FSA uses science</p>	<p>Phase 1 : principles and advice on how FSA establishes risk and certainty</p> <p>Phase 2: how risk and uncertainty are communicated</p>	<p>Phase 1: desk study to synthesise existing evidence + insight on global food system risks</p> <p>Phase 2: identify key issues, implications + recommendations for FSA</p>

Progress

- Phase 1 outputs reported back to Council 13 December
- Phase 2 outputs from WG1 and WG2 to be reported to Council 27 June for approval
- WG3 (horizon scanning/global food system risks) to report later in 2018

How the Council is working

- Engaged and working together, good blend of expertise and perspectives
- Every member on two WGs and each WG Chair has led their WG well
- Need to maintain focus and be selective to make sure we remain strategic
- Progress depends on significant contribution and time from Council, FSA and Secretariat
- Will need to manage demands and best use of Members' time - initial effort of 3 concurrent WGs probably not realistic as a steady state

Relationship with the FSA

- ✓ Clear steer from Heather on top priority questions for the Council really helpful
- ✓ Heather at both Council meetings (with Laura at the second)
- ✓ Very good engagement + support from Guy and the Secretariat
- ✓ Good relationship developing with the FSA, in particular through Guy and FSA officials at WG meetings
- ✓ Frankness from FSA about needs + opportunities to improve
- ✓ Close and direct interaction with the FSA Board is motivating and encouraging

FSA science

- Overall, concur with the view that FSA science is not broken - there is a lot of good practice and capability
- Also areas that can be strengthened
- Opportunities to be more strategic, consistent, and deliberate
- Articulate more clearly how the FSA works and how it follows good practice

Strategic science issues for the FSA

- Use of experts
- Organisations need to use the best science, and what that means for now and for the future
- Getting the basics right: trust and communication
- Changing technology and food systems: what does the FSA need