

MINUTES OF THE FSA BOARD MEETING ON 26 AUGUST 2020

Via Zoom from the Chair's Residence, Arncliffe, North Yorkshire

Present:

Heather Hancock, Chair; David Brooks; Margaret Gilmore; Ruth Hussey; Colm McKenna; Mary Quicke; Stuart Reid; Timothy Riley.

Apologies

Mark Rolfe

Officials attending

Emily Miles	-	Chief Executive
Chris Hitchen	-	Director of Finance and Performance
Maria Jennings	-	Director of Regulatory Compliance, People and Northern Ireland (NI)
Robin May	-	Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA)
Rick Mumford	-	Deputy Director of Science
Michelle Patel	-	Head of Social Science (For FSA 20/08/06)
Julie Pierce	-	Director Openness, Data, Digital, Science and Wales
Steven Pollock	-	Director of Communications
Rebecca Sudworth	-	Director of Policy
Colin Sullivan	-	Chief Operating Officer
Sandy Thomas	-	Chair of the FSA Science Council (For FSA 20/08/07)
Patrick Wolfe	-	Chair of Science Council Working Group 4 (For FSA 20/08/07)

Apologies

Paul Morrison	-	Director of Strategy, Legal, Communications and Governance
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1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a reminder of the updated agenda for the rest of 2020 to allow the Board to effectively consider business given the restrictions of virtual meetings. She welcomed Ruth Hussey to her first meeting since being appointed as Deputy Chair, adding that she would continue in her role as a member of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC). Apologies had been received from Board Member Mark Rolfe and also from the Director of Strategy, Legal, Communications and Governance Paul Morrison. She added that the Director of Communications Steven Pollock would be attending to represent that Directorate. She welcomed Robin May to his first meeting as Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA). She also noted that this would be the final Board meeting for Board Members Stuart Reid and Mary Quicke. She asked whether there were any conflicts of interest that Board Members wished to mention in relation to the agenda. No conflicts of interest were raised.

2. Minutes of 17 June 2020 (FSA 20/08/01)

- 2.1 The Chair said that the minutes of the Board meeting of 17 June had been circulated in draft to Board Members and asked if the Board were content that they represented an accurate account of the discussions at that meeting. The Board indicated that they were content, and the minutes were approved for publication.

3. Actions Arising (FSA 20/08/02)

- 3.1 The Chair asked Board Members if they had any comments on any of the actions, noting that progress on some of the actions had been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board had no comments on the actions.

4. Chair's Report

- 4.1 The Chair explained that a full list of her engagements had been published on the FSA website and consisted chiefly of meetings with Ministers. She explained that the interviews to find a new Board Member for Wales had been concluded and that it was hoped that the new appointee would be with the Board for its September meeting. She added that the new Board Member would automatically become a part of ARAC.

5. Chief Executive's Report to the Board (FSA 20/08/03)

- 5.1 On COVID-19 the CE said that the FSA was now in the process of reversing some of the easements made at the start of the pandemic and that evidence continued to demonstrate that the risk of transmission of the virus through food remained very low. She expressed her thanks to the meat-industry for their cooperation throughout the pandemic and mentioned that there had been a small number of COVID-19 outbreaks in meat-plants and food processing sites.
- 5.2 The CE noted the question that had been received in relation to health marks. She explained that the issue would be covered in greater depth at the September Board meeting. She noted the complexities brought to the issue by the Northern Ireland Protocol as well as the stipulations of the Withdrawal Agreement saying that there would be choices to be made about acceptable markings and a staged response would be necessary.
- 5.3 The CE mentioned two issues not covered in her report. The first was a speech made by the Secretary of State for Health to Policy Exchange the previous week that announced the National Institute for Public Health Protection which included various aspects of science, test & trace and the National Biosecurity Centre into a single organisation focussed on pandemics and diseases. He had also said that he would consult on how public health protection could be embedded more widely in institutional arrangements. She explained that no approach had been made to the FSA about this or any of the

elements of PHE's remit that impact on the work of the FSA but that the FSA watching this with interest and with an awareness of the relevance of public health protection functions to the work of the FSA.

- 5.4 The CE said that, on the Spending review, along with other departments, the FSA had been asked to make a submission for the Westminster budget for 2021 to 2024 by the 24 September. She said proposals were being discussed with HMT and that the FSA had written to the Permanent Secretary at the Minister for Housing and Local Government raising to put on record the FSA's concerns about Local Authority (LA) funding of food officers.
- 5.5 On COVID-19, Colin Sullivan said that the FSA was moving from the emergency response to 'business as usual' incident management. He explained that measures put in place during the management of the pandemic were either being reversed or embedded and preparations were being made in the event of a second wave of infections.
- 5.6 Colin said that, for frontline staff in various categories who had not been able to attend work during the outbreak, each of these categories had now been brought back, meaning that absence levels were very low. Colin expressed his gratitude to frontline staff. He noted that this involved secondments of staff which were now reversing.
- 5.7 Colin explained that there were more than 20,000 food processing plants across England, Wales and Northern Ireland and that a very small number had been affected by COVID-19 outbreaks. In England, the number was 40 premises, including meat and non-meat food processing plants.
- 5.8 Colin spoke about the effective partnership working with LAs, saying that the FSA's guidance to LAs had been revised and updated in relation to reprioritisation of work. He said that this advice extended until the end of September. He noted the question submitted ahead of the Board meeting saying that the FSA was currently surveying LAs to help inform our decisions about expectations for LAs following the 30 September.
- 5.9 On Communications, Colin explained that the FSA had been amplifying central Government messages on transmission and had developed materials for businesses and consumers which had been widely viewed on the FSA website. He explained that the FSA was running its 'Here to Help' campaign to support food businesses operating during COVID-19. This consisted of several tailored guidance pages, case studies and webinars sharing good practice.
- 5.10 Rebecca Sudworth explained that on health marks, there was an appreciation of the complexity and urgency of the issues within the FSA. She explained that there had been frequent meetings with stakeholders across the food industry and that the FSA was very grateful for the information they had shared and the dialogue that had taken place to guide the FSA approach. She highlighted some of the legal issues involved, explaining that from January 2021 there would be up to 5 different health marks available for use dependent on various

geographical factors. She said that the FSA were working at pace to resolve these legal issues and provide guidance.

- 5.11 The Chair explained that the Board was concerned about the issues around health marks and acknowledged that it was also an area of concern for industry. David Brooks noted that there would likely be products being manufactured currently that would be dependent on the resolution of these issues due to the long shelf-life of those products. He said that this would be a concern for businesses to use the correct labelling and transitioning appropriately from packaging stating the product had been produced in the EU to produced in the UK. He said that the quicker this could be resolved the better.
- 5.12 David then asked a question about Cannabidiol (CBD), noting a seminar that the FSA had run the previous week; and a pause from the EU on accepting submissions for CBD approval due to concerns about narcotics. He asked what effect this would be likely to have on the work that the FSA carried out with the CBD industry.
- 5.13 Rebecca explained that on CBD, there would be international discussions necessary to determine in what circumstances a CBD product should be considered a narcotic. She added that from January, the FSA would be ready to accept applications and take its own decisions on these issues. She invited Rick Mumford, Deputy Director of Science, to say more about the Seminar. Rick explained that over 200 participants had joined the seminar with some dialling in internationally. He explained that the seminar had been co-hosted with the accreditation body UKAS and had participation from many of the UKs leading laboratories in this area.
- 5.14 David said that there had been some unease expressed in previous discussions around the extended timeframe being used to get approval for CBD products. He asked for assurance that the EU pause on accepting submissions would not impact. Rebecca explained that there was no target to have all CBD products approved by the end of March but that by then the FSA wanted to have all the necessary submissions to allow the approvals process to be carried out. She explained that the FSA process was not affected by the EU decision.
- 5.15 Colm McKenna noted the announced changes to PHE, acknowledging that many of the implications were unknown but highlighted the need to maintain an awareness of that situation. On the NI Protocol, he emphasised that the complexities around that would not only impact on businesses in NI but on those anywhere in the UK who intended to sell their products in NI and asked for reassurance that the FSA was addressing these issues.
- 5.16 Maria Jennings, Director of Regulatory Compliance, People and NI, confirmed that businesses intending to move food from GB into NI and, in many cases, onwards into Europe would be impacted by the NI Protocol. She explained that work was underway in considering the risks for businesses hoping to send their products in either direction. The CE added that she had been in discussions

with both Defra and industry representatives where these issues were being raised.

- 5.17 Timothy Riley praised the work that had been done to manage down COVID-19 outbreaks in food processing plants and asked whether there was any communications work planned to help public confidence with that sector. Colin explained that there was an awareness that, in publishing statistics that there was not a comprehensive picture but that the overall figure mentioned was one that he was content to make public.
- 5.18 Margaret Gilmore asked about the assurance that could be given in relation to reputational impacts from COVID-19 outbreaks and how these could be managed. The CE explained that the FSA needed to be there to tell the truth about food. She said that the evidence still showed that the risks of transmission through food was very low. The other aspect to the reputational question for food processing manufacturers was about health and safety at work. She explained that in that area, the FSA was not the body with the expertise to be able to give authoritative advice.
- 5.19 Stuart Reid noted the difference in the way that absolute figures can be perceived as opposed to relative figures, noting that 40 outbreaks was a very small number when considered against the number of premises. He asked whether there was an awareness of how that relative figure compared to other sectors and manufacturing industries with a similar workforce demographic and lifestyle. He also asked about whether the FSA's advice about the use of sanitisers was consistent in relation to food safety given the alleged watering down of advice on the 60% alcohol minimum for hand sanitisers.
- 5.20 The Chair suggested that Colin respond to the Board by email on the second point.

Action 1 - Colin Sullivan to provide information about FSA advice on hand sanitisers in food establishments to the Board.

- 5.21 On Stuart's first question, Colin explained that the Joint Biosecurity Centre had been considering this and figures seemed to show that food processing was an area where outbreaks could be more likely than in other manufacturing sectors.
- 5.22 Mary Quicke noted a reference to the IPAFFS system in the minutes of the previous meeting and asked whether further assurances had been received that the system will work when it is required. The CE said that assurances had been received from Defra about the efficacy of the system in June and these were communicated to the Board at that time. She said that this would be watched carefully, and the Board would receive a further update in September

Action 2 - CE to provide an update on assurances of IPAFFS effectiveness to Board in September.

6. Annual Governance Report (FSA 20/08/04)

- 6.1 The Chair introduced the Annual Governance report giving an overview of the paper and the Annexes, covering the Terms of Reference for the Board and its committees as well as the Standing Orders and the FSA's remit, emphasising that this remained broadly as it was before, including where the decisions rest and the extent to which the FSA had powers to direct or instruct, or operated through guidance, advice or influence.
- 6.2 She reiterated the Board's decision at the June Board meeting that the FSA's decisions would not be led by political considerations, which could vary between the three administrations. Political considerations could cause differences in the way that Ministers chose to implement FSA advice, but that advice would be made on public health and consumer interest grounds. Political considerations would be separate from that and not applied by the FSA.
- 6.3 Ruth Hussey highlighted three areas relating to Board effectiveness. Firstly, she mentioned the range of issues to consider including EU Transition, COVID-19, the need to continue with pace on regulatory reform and global issues with regard to trade deals and food safety issues. Secondly, she highlighted issues around appointments to the Board, stressing the need for progress on staying up to strength and maintaining the breadth of experience. Thirdly, she mentioned that, when holding in-person meetings, Board Members would have previously undertaken visits to various food premises and partner organisations that could help provide background assurance and informal feedback. She asked whether there was anything that could be considered to provide that informal feedback and discussion while the Board continues to work virtually.
- 6.4 The Chair said that she had held some discussions with the CE on ensuring that there were ways for Board members to keep receiving the missing informal assurance and feedback previously gained from Board visits and these issues would be considered further. On Board appointments, she said. It was a concern that it took a long time for Board appointments to be advertised or to know that appointments will not be extended. She noted the added complexity brought about by the hiatus on public appointments due to COVID-19 but said the process tended to be slow regardless. She added that she was disappointed by the delay in processing the recruitment of her successor as Chair, having notified the Department of Health and Social Care in December 2019 of her departure in October 2020. She agreed that not having the breadth and the diversity of the Board, undermined the ability to take the broadest possible view.
- 6.5 The CE commented on Annex E, which described the FSA's role and powers. She noted the recent controversy involving OFQUAL, another non-ministerial department, highlighting the importance of clarity about the FSA's remit. She emphasised that the FSA's independence gave the ability to offer advice and guidance in the consumer interest on public health grounds. She noted that the FSA had a wide remit around the consumer interest in food but that it is Ministers that decide policy. She noted that this had been less obvious in the

past because EU membership had meant that decisions around food had often needed to be made on an EU-wide basis but it was important that the FSA's role to advise, and Ministers to decide, was appreciated from January.

- 6.6 David Brooks said he shared the frustration around Board appointments and asked whether there should be a discussion at the next Board meeting over whether temporary easements would be required to the Standing Orders to ensure that Board and its committees remain quorate. The Chair said that it might be necessary to send a paper to the Board to ask that to happen on a temporary basis but added that it was expected that the Board member for Wales would be appointed imminently, so it should not to get to that point.
- 6.7 Colm McKenna asked whether there was a full understanding at ministerial and official level in the ministerial departments of the FSA's remit and, by extension, where Ministers' powers began. The CE said that this had been raised in meetings that she and the Chair had with Ministers and that there would be efforts in the coming period to ensure that Ministers were prepared or this role and to remind them that the FSA's advice is public. The Chair added that she and Maria Jennings had recently met with Minister Swann, Minister for Health in Northern Ireland, to explain the coming shift in the volume of material and the decisions required in him as a result of these changes.
- 6.8 Margert Gilmore said that the induction received on joining the Board was very helpful and asked whether it would be repeated for future appointments. The Chair responded that the induction process would be repeated for the new Wales Board member to give that assurance.
- 6.9 Mary Quicke asked whether, in discussions with Ministers, the importance of the timeliness of responses had been stressed to maintain trust in the food system. The Chair explained that it had been and said that there will be a regular Annex included in the CE's report noting pending Ministerial decisions, which would indicate any back-log that could occur.
- 6.10 No further points were raised by the Board and the Chair noted that the Board was content to accept the recommendations of the paper.

7. Annual Update on the FSA's Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Programme (FSA 20/08/05)

- 7.1 Rick Mumford gave an overview of the paper highlighting the One Health approach of the National Action Plan, for example, work co-funded with DEFRA Plant Health, on the international usage of antibiotics on crops; and the significance of declines in antibiotics being used UK livestock and how that could be influencing the decline in AMR being seen in some areas.
- 7.2 Mary Quicke noted that the paper asserted that the use of antimicrobials is declining while the figures provided seem to suggest an increase. She asked if that could be clarified. She also asked whether, antimicrobial use would feature in discussions around future trade agreements. Stuart Reid

congratulated the team on the work done in this area, stressing that the One Health approach would remain very important and that AMR was a clear demonstration of that.

- 7.3 Rick explained that on Mary's point, the picture, with regard to antimicrobial usage was a mixed one. He said that the data contained areas where levels were static, and others, where there have been significant reductions. He explained that there was a lag between work done in the livestock industry and the effects of that reduction being measurable in terms of AMR. The Chair asked if Rick could say more about surveillance and how it will be maintained outside of the EU surveillance programme. Rick said that there were urgent discussions ongoing about how this will be maintained. The Chair asked if Rick could report back on those discussions through the actions.

Action 3 - Rick Mumford to update the Board on discussions about maintaining AMR surveillance outside of the EU surveillance programme.

- 7.4 David Brooks asked whether it was surprising that the outcomes of antimicrobial reduction were not being seen sooner given the short lifespan of the livestock concerned in many instances. He also asked whether it was concerning that less than 20% of UK consumers were familiar with AMR as an issue.
- 7.5 On the public awareness of AMR, Rick said that this was an important point and could help raise awareness of the issue that could impact on consumer behaviours in areas like cooking in the home and how AMR awareness could be used to enforce messages about good hygiene. On the rate of the decline in AMR, he said it was difficult to know how rapidly that decline would take place. He noted that some of the declines had been quite significant and some of the others were still slow and the reasons were not fully understood.
- 7.6 Robin May, the Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) said that continuity of data was critical for this particularly given the changes arising from changed eating patterns during COVID-19 and expected post EU transition. On the rate of decline of AMR, he said that there was data from the healthcare industry that showed that the rate at which an antibiotic resistant phenotype was lost when antibiotics were removed varied widely depending on the nature of the resistance and the bacteria. This was generally referred to 'fitness cost'. In some cases, the cost to bacteria is relatively low and it takes a long period for that phenotype to be lost. He said he was not too concerned to see a slow decline if the level is going down.
- 7.7 Stuart said that the issue about driving behaviour highlights the point about how the One Health agenda is understood. He said that it would require regulation and legislation to get that to come together to get solutions that are sustainable but also education to change behaviours.
- 7.8 The Chair said that the Board endorsed the progress made over the last year and were content with the direction of the programme and the priorities laid out

in the paper, noting the need to maintain momentum around the surveillance programme.

8. Annual Report on Horizon Scanning Programme (FSA 20/08/06)

- 8.1 Julie Pierce gave a summary of the paper and pointed out that the Horizon Scanning capability, developed in accordance with the Science Council recommendation of 2019, had been engaged over the last 5 months and that it had helped inform the FSA response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 8.2 Mary Quicke asked whether a pandemic had featured on any of the Horizon Scanning lists prior to the outbreak and what had been missing if it was not. Julie said that flu pandemic had featured as a risk on the government risk register, but that she was uncertain whether a novel coronavirus had been included. Rick Mumford said that, while he could not be certain that it was included, there was now an opportunity to marry up the work that was done with the Science Council and others, two years ago to see how well it did. how well it did. The CE added that there was a risk of assuming that the past could predict the future. She explained that in addition to considering past events, the use of scenarios, considering things that were plausible but unlikely, could be beneficial. She explained that Steve Wearne, the Director of Global Affairs, had been taking some work forward to develop a set of scenarios for the FSA but his recent secondment to the Trade and Agriculture Commission, meant that that work had been slightly delayed.
- 8.3 David Brooks asked how the effectiveness of Horizon Scanning was measured, including false positives, that could be picked up and mitigated needlessly. Julie explained that this would need to be designed into the next part of the process. Steven Pollock explained that the Horizon Scanning capability had been used to inform many of the communications campaigns and had been picked up through social media listening campaigns or changes in business behaviours. These campaigns had performed well and were able to be measured through the communications and the campaigning route.
- 8.4 The CE said there had been instances where the FSA had sat back and let industry develop something before the FSA thought through the regulation of it. She said that the success measure of the horizon scanning work would be if the FSA had anticipated new regulatory questions emerging from evolving food industry practice. The Chair mentioned that there was an outstanding action, for good reasons, for the Scientific Advisory Committees around the structure for innovation. She mentioned that, since then, the EU referendum had taken place which had important consequences for how innovation was addressed. She also mentioned the establishment of a new Horizon Scanning Council which was also interested in how the FSA could, as a regulator, keep pace with industry innovation.
- 8.5 Margaret Gilmore asked whether there were obvious trends emerging post EU-Exit and whether issues emerging from that had in any way been side-lined by COVID-19. Julie said that COVID-19 had accelerated the pace of some

changes that were already being observed, such as the industry seeking alternative supply chains or routes to market and particularly responding digitally rather than through the traditional, physical outlets. She said that much of that work was under way and was part of the Achieving Business Compliance (ABC) programme.

- 8.6 The Chair noted that this work was highlighted in the Science Council report and asked Sandy Thomas, Chair of the FSA Science Council, for her assessment of the programme. Sandy said that it was encouraging how far the FSA's Horizon Scanning capability had been increased over a short period. She suggested that there was going to be a need to think about new, near-term challenges including the risk of pandemics from novel zoonotics.
- 8.7 Timothy Riley noted the potential for paradigmatic shifts in food production and how issues arising from those could be predicted, giving the example of a possible expansion in production of lab-grown meat and the use of antibiotics in the medium in which the protein is grown and whether that medium was then regulated as an animal feed.
- 8.8 The Chair said that the Board was clearly very supportive of the work that had been done in this area and looked forward to hearing how they would respond to the question of how the horizon scanning would be assessed in future papers.

Action 4 - Julie Pierce and Rick Mumford to consider the success measures for the horizon scanning work.

9. Final Report from the Science Council Working Group on Data Usage & Digital Technology and FSA Response (FSA 20/08/07)

- 9.1 The Chair welcomed Professor Patrick Wolfe, Chair of Science Council Working Group 4, and asked him to highlight key points of the report's conclusions. Professor Wolfe gave an overview of the issues addressed in the report and the six recommendations the working group had made. He added that the executive summary of the report commented on the importance of transparency in the use of algorithms in building and maintaining consumer trust in the advancement of data-enabled decision making. Julie Pierce then gave a summary of the response from the FSA Executive.
- 9.2 Mary Quicke asked how the FSA could be assured that small, niche, non-standard players were not excluded. She said that, because data sets for larger players were more accessible, the accessible data sets could have less female and less minority representation than was representative of the overall food system. David Brooks asked how industry felt about the recommendations. He also cautioned against mandation of access to data as it seemed contrary to Open Data partnerships that the FSA had sought to develop historically.

- 9.3 Colm McKenna asked what other parties needed to be involved in the work around Open Data and whether they were completely aligned with the FSA's mission to protect the interests of the consumer. He also asked for more detail about 'data sprints' and the advantages they presented.
- 9.4 Julie explained that in terms of data bias, there was no single answer but that there was an ethics workstream incorporated into the projects that would look at issues such as this. The answers would vary between projects, but it would be approached intelligently, mindful of different types of data for the different communities. Professor Wolfe added that there was an amalgamation of traditional statistical methods and that the FSA had long-standing statistical expertise.
- 9.5 On industry engagement, Julie explained that the data strategy had originally been put together with a number of open workshops with industry representation and was shared across all the FSA's networks and social media. She said that the FSA would continue to engage with anyone who wished to become involved with the strategic surveillance work. On the mandation of data access, she explained there may be areas where encouraging industry to share data was more appropriate and others where mandation could be applied. She also outlined a permissioned access model, where the data need not be published but whoever had the correct permissions could access the data.
- 9.6 On data sprints, she explained that the approach taken to strategic surveillance was to take a number of short pieces of work, each lasting 10 weeks. She explained that this had been effective at getting partners to invest their time in the project as they see tangible results quickly. Colm asked whether it was possible, without mandation, to get all the necessary partners involved. Julie explained that the pull would come from other Directorates as the necessary partners would often be identified through the operation of other workstreams, particularly the ABC programme as well as through Operational Transformation. She said it would then be a question of considering how best to consult and engage and whether legal powers were necessary or desirable.
- 9.7 Professor Wolfe said that it was much more a question of persuasion and of incentives and disincentives to sharing across industry. He gave an example of the manufacturing sector where commercial players could seek to monetise their data streams and initially have no interest in sharing. However, in areas such as worker safety or cyber security where a trade body or a group of industry players could agree with help from a regulatory body, data sharing made more sense. Julie added that COVID-19 had accelerated conversations that were taking place across the food system, bringing together people who were interested in how data could help manage the system and understand the transference of risk.
- 9.8 The Chair noted the importance of progress in this area was the FSA's calling card into other parts of Government enabling a statutory contribution and that this was a good way to demonstrate the value of the FSA being around the table. Margaret highlighted the difficulties of achieving mandation without

evidencing efficacy, noting the progress of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme, which was initially introduced as a voluntary scheme before mandatory display could be brought in in some areas. She added that data held by supermarkets through their loyalty card schemes could help with product recalls. She also asked a question about whether there was the right balance between having the statistical expertise within the FSA and being able to contract it in externally when it was required. Ruth Hussey noted the importance of understanding the consumers perspective on where data is obtained. She asked whether consumers were being engaged with throughout to avoid surprises about the way that data was used to drive decisions.

- 9.9 Julie said that rather than wholesale mandated sharing of data, we were looking at more nuance need and approach. This was particularly relevant to the current work on digital platforms. In terms of consumer engagement, she said that there had been there had been no direct consultation for some time and there are questions about how best to engage on issues that can quickly become very technical. She said she would discuss with Steven Pollock and the Executive Management Team about whether there is a good time to talk with people more about how data could be used, the value of data, and whether it was for a wider population discussion or whether it was for those who were particularly interested. Wider engagement with citizens should probably be coordinated through the Government Data Strategy that is expected to be published before end of 2020.

Action 5 - Julie Pierce to discuss consumer engagement on data usage with Director of Communications.

- 9.10 The Chair said that the Board were pleased to receive the Science Council's working group's report on data usage and technology and content to agree the recommendations. On the FSA response to the recommendations, she said that the Board advised caution on blanket mandation of data sharing and noted the importance of consumer engagement.

10. Annual Report from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) (FSA 20/08/08)

- 10.1 The Chair invited Colm McKenna, as Chair of ARAC to introduce his annual report on the work of that Committee. Colm gave an overview of the report and ARAC's activities over the past year. He mentioned the potential for issues around quorum with Mary Quick leaving ARAC but also noted that this would be addressed by the appointment of the new Board Member for Wales.
- 10.2 Colm said that going forward, ARAC would retain the focus on continuing improvement and move to introduce the concept and process of deep dives. He also said that they would consider, with other Board Members, the recently published 'Orange Book' on risk management.
- 10.3 David Brooks noted the limited assurance of the audit. He asked, about what the next steps in improving or blocking off weaknesses identified. Colm

explained that this was the audit from January and that the result had been delayed largely due to COVID-19. He said that all of the recommendations had been accepted and that it would be considered at ARAC in September. He added that there was no significant risk to the FSA.

10.4 The Chair thanked Colm for his work Chairing ARAC and noted the involvement of other Board Members.

11. Any Other Business

11.1 The Chair paid tribute to the contributions of Mary Quicke and Stuart Reid to the Board over the past 3 years highlighting Mary's experience as a food producer, her dairy expertise and knowledge of food exports as well as knowledge of the food landscape and culture of the South West of England. She mentioned that Stuart had brought valuable veterinary expertise to the Board and noted the difficulty there would be to fill that gap in the Board's breadth of experience.

11.2 Stuart thanked the Chair and said that he had also gained significantly from being a member of the Board. Mary also thanked the Chair and praised the work of the FSA in championing consumer interest in food.

11.3 No further business was raised, and the meeting was closed. The next meeting was scheduled for the 16 September 2020.