

Foreword

The Food Standards Agency's Welsh Language Scheme 2008 – 2012 was prepared in accordance with the Welsh Language Act 1993. This was the FSA's second Scheme and it was approved by the Welsh Language Board on 4 June 2008.

Since then, the FSA has been successfully implementing the Action Plan agreed with the Welsh Language Board to ensure that the Agency meets its objective of full compliance with the Scheme by 2012. As from 1 April 2010, the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS), an executive agency of the FSA, formally merged with FSA. Amongst other things this affects the delivery of Welsh Language services in the integrated organisation. With the agreement of the Welsh Language Board, the former MHS' Scheme has been discontinued and the FSA's scheme has been extended to cover the delivery of meat hygiene services in Wales.

The existing FSA Welsh Language Scheme was therefore revised and approved by the Welsh Language Board on 31/03/2010.

The Scheme was approved under section 14 of the 1993 Welsh Language Act.

Background to the MHS:

The MHS was established on 1 April 1995 as an executive agency of the then Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, taking over meat inspection duties in fresh meat premises from some 300 local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales. The role of the MHS is to help ensure that the meat industry safeguards the health of the public, and the health and welfare of animals at slaughter. This is achieved through the delivery of official controls in approved fresh meat premises. These controls require specified inspections of all animals, carcasses and offals through risk-based audits to verify that approved fresh meat premises comply with EU Food Hygiene Regulations. The MHS carry out these controls in slaughterhouses, cutting plants, farmed and wild game facilities and co-located minced meat and meat products premises. The MHS have a statutory duty to provide these services on demand, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, throughout England, Scotland and Wales. On 1 April 2000, the MHS transferred to become an executive agency of the Food Standards Agency (FSA). On 1 April 2010, the MHS was dissolved as an executive agency and became part of the FSA's Operations Group.

From 1 April 2010 onwards, the MHS' commitments as set out in its Welsh Language Scheme were transferred to the FSA. Therefore the whole of the expanded FSA will now follow the FSA's Welsh Language Scheme which is managed by the FSA's Welsh Language Unit, based in Cardiff. The principles and procedures will apply universally across the single structure. As previously, all of its contact with the 'public' will be subject to the Welsh Language Scheme's Prioritisation System.

From this date on, the Welsh Language Unit will discuss the needs of the new Operations Group as regards Welsh language provision with staff and ensure that it follows any steps noted in the Welsh Language Unit Action Plan so that the FSA (including its new Operations Group) becomes fully compliant with its Welsh Language Scheme by the end of 2012.

It is with great pleasure that I now announce that this refreshed Welsh Language Scheme (2008 – 2012) extends across the whole of the enlarged FSA.

TIM J SMITH

Chief Executive, Food Standards Agency

01 April 2010