



THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY

Putting the Consumer First

Annual Report
2004/05



FOOD
STANDARDS
AGENCY

Food Standards Agency Annual Report 2004/05

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Annual Report
2004/05

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Chief Executive's foreword



I am pleased to lay before the Westminster Parliament, the Scottish Executive, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Annual Report for 2004/05. The Report sets out what we have done during the year to protect the public's health and consumers' interests. It also looks to the future through the publication of our Strategic Plan for 2005-2010.

2004/05 was a year of transition, renewal and challenge for the FSA: with the publication of an independent review of our performance, the adoption of a new strategic plan, the appointment of our new Chair, and the largest ever recall of food products in the UK following contamination by the industrial dye Sudan I.

Over the next five years we are committed to making a greater contribution in the area of healthy eating while continuing the good work on food safety. To turn the commitments made in our Strategic Plan 2005 – 2010 into results we know that we have to do more to build on the examples of successful partnership work at local and national levels with local authorities, consumers and industry. We are firm in our commitment to working constructively with our stakeholders in this way, and we recognise the contribution of stakeholders in achieving successes in, for example, reducing foodborne disease and reducing average salt intake.

During 2004/05 the Rt Hon Baroness Brenda Dean conducted an independent review of the FSA to consider how far it had delivered its promises and to what extent it had lived up to its core values. The Review acknowledged the FSA's achievement in building public confidence in food safety, and in creating the modern culture of openness which underpins that confidence. But it also pointed out that in doing so we have raised expectations for the challenges ahead of improving food safety further, better informing consumer choice, and helping to make healthier eating easier. Clearly, we must raise our game. We have published the Dean Review, together with a response setting out how we intend to implement its recommendations, on our website.

Fewer people are now falling ill from foodborne infections than five years ago, and substantial progress has been made towards our five-year target of a 20 per cent reduction in the incidence of foodborne disease by 2006. However, our annual Consumer Attitudes to Food Standards survey shows that food poisoning remains the single biggest food safety concern. This is a continuing priority for us with new targets to reduce foodborne disease in the Strategic Plan 2005-2010, including a 50 per cent reduction of *Campylobacter* incidence in UK-produced chickens by 2010. We have a wide range of initiatives ongoing under the umbrella of the Foodborne Disease Strategy. Greater uptake of risk-based food safety management practices is a particular focus. The FSA has developed a package of innovative and easy-to-understand schemes to help small and medium-sized businesses in the different countries of the UK with the European hygiene regulations being introduced in 2006.

BSE is no longer one of the public's top five prompted food safety concerns. Only a few hundred cases of infection in cattle now occur each year (compared with 37,000 cases at the peak of the crisis). In 2004/05 the FSA reviewed the proportionality of measures protecting the public from exposure to potentially infected meat. Based on this review, the government announced its intention, in December 2004, to switch from a ban on cattle over thirty months of age entering the food chain (the OTM rule) to a more proportionate testing regime, subject to guarantees of robustness in the new system. The FSA has pilot schemes ongoing to ensure that consumers can have equal confidence in the safety of beef under new protection measures.

During 2004/05 the FSA, on average, acted on more than two incidents a day to protect consumers from potentially harmful foods. Many of these alerts related to foods contaminated with potentially carcinogenic red dyes. February 2005 saw the biggest ever recall of food products in the UK, involving over 550 different processed food products identified by the FSA as containing Worcestershire sauce from a batch contaminated with the industrial dye, Sudan I. We believe that we acted proportionately and effectively in addressing this issue in concert with local authorities and the food industry by ensuring that food illegally contaminated with this dye was removed from sale and by providing balanced advice to consumers on the risks and uncertainties.

As a result of the FSA's experience in handling these incidents we are setting up an incidents task force to strengthen controls in the food chain with the aim of achieving a 25 per cent reduction by 2010 in the number of high and medium risk incidents. We are also leading harmonisation efforts at a European level to improve procedures for checking the integrity of imported foods and ingredients across the EC.

Education is a key part of encouraging healthy eating, and the FSA has been working closely with the UK education departments and others on all aspects of food in schools, from assessing the nutritional standards of school dinners to developing teaching materials for the classroom. We are also advising governors on how to reinforce healthy eating messages consistently throughout the school. A particularly practical aspect of our work has been to sponsor research demonstrating the viability of stocking vending machines with healthier items.

We have also made an impact through work such as the first phase of our salt campaign. By March this year we had seen a 70 per cent increase in the number of people claiming to make an effort to cut down. Our aim of reducing average salt intake from 9.5g to 6g per day is a good illustration of why we can't deliver the Strategic Plan on our own. Three quarters of the salt we eat comes from processed foods – which is only going to change gradually through influencing consumer demand and encouraging industry to make healthier eating easier through the reformulation of products. Complementary efforts, in partnership with UK Health Departments, continue to encourage the food industry to reduce the amount of salt used in processed foods and in catering. Many major manufacturers, retailers and food service providers have now agreed to make stepped reductions over the next five years, working towards the 6g dietary guideline for adults by 2010 – a target shared by the Government's white paper, Choosing Health and the FSA's new Strategic Plan 2005 – 2010.

Choosing Health and the FSA's Strategic Plan 2005-2010 aim to make it easier for people to make healthier choices about what they eat. Providing clear, easy-to-understand information on food packaging is one way of doing this, and the FSA has been working closely in partnership with the food industry and others to develop a 'signposting' scheme that will best help consumers to distinguish at a glance between foods that are high in fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar, and those that are the healthier option.



Dr Jon Bell
November 2005

About the FSA Food Standards Agency

Our main purpose

- 1.1 The Food Standards Act 1999 defines our main purpose as:
 - ‘ *to protect public health from risks which may arise in connection with the consumption of food, and otherwise to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food.*’
- 1.2 The FSA was set up to protect public health and to restore public confidence in the way food safety decisions are made. The FSA is a UK-wide body – a non-ministerial government department – operating at arm’s length from Ministers and governed by a Board appointed to act in the public interest. This independence is key to our success in restoring public confidence.

Our core values

- 1.3 We are committed to three core values that govern all that we do. They are to:
 - put the consumer first
 - be open and accessible
 - be an independent voice

Putting the consumer first

- 1.4 Putting the consumer first means:
 - making food safety our first priority
 - ensuring that people have information and opportunities to make choices about food
 - enabling people to understand risks and benefits



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Being open and accessible

- 1.5 Being open and accessible means:
- seeking people's views and being accessible
 - making our policy discussions public
 - explaining the reasons for our decisions and advice
 - communicating in a straightforward and timely way
 - publishing our targets

Being an independent voice

- 1.6 Being an independent voice means:
- being impartial and honest
 - basing our decisions on the best expert advice
 - gaining international respect for UK food safety and nutritional standards
 - publishing our advice

What we do

- 1.7 Our job is to protect consumers from health risks, and otherwise to look after their interests in all matters connected with food and drink. We have a wide remit, involving food safety across the whole food chain – 'from farm to fork'.
- 1.8 We provide guidance to the public on healthy eating, and work with the food industry to make it easier for consumers to make healthier choices. We carry out surveys on nutrition and diet to monitor changing eating habits. We advise Ministers on all issues relating to food safety and standards. We negotiate on behalf of the UK in Europe and other international fora, where much of the legal framework and standards for the food market are set.

- 1.9 We work with our executive agency, the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) (which has a Great Britain remit), with DARD¹ in Northern Ireland, and with local authorities and other government departments across the UK to ensure that regulations on food safety and standards are enforced to protect consumers.

Our Strategic Plan

- 1.10 We launched our Strategic Plan 2005 – 10 on 7 March 2005, following a full public consultation. You can find out more in Chapter 6 of this report. Copies of the Plan can be ordered from Food Standards Agency Publications by telephone on 0845 606 0667, by fax on 020 8867 3225, or by e-mail from foodstandards@ecgroup.uk.com. Our Strategic Plan is published in full, in both English and Welsh, on our website at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/dec/strategicplan. In 2004, we reshaped our internal organisation to help us deliver this new plan; find out more about the current organisation of the FSA in Appendix 1 (About the FSA), Appendix 2 (Our Board and Chief Executive), and Appendix 3 (How we are organised).
- 1.11 In our Strategic Plan, we set out how we will focus our work in four main areas: **Food Safety, Eating for Health, Choice, and How we will deliver**. In the chapters which follow, our key achievements for the past year are set out under these headings.

More information

- 1.12 More detailed information can be found on our website at www.food.gov.uk. A detailed contact list by subject is available at www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/contactus.
- 1.13 We launched two additional websites during 2004/05: www.eatwell.gov.uk offers advice to consumers on making healthier choices; www.salt.gov.uk supports our salt campaign which aims to save lives by reducing the amount of salt people eat.

The FSA's accounts

- 1.14 Information about how we spend our money can be found at Appendix 4 (analysis of departmental expenditure plans). In previous years, the FSA published its Annual Report and Accounts as a combined document, with the resource accounts also available as a separate document. Copies of these reports are available from The Stationery Office, and are also available online at www.food.gov.uk.
- 1.15 From 2004/05 onwards, the FSA's accounts are being published separately from the Annual Report. Copies of the FSA's accounts are available from The Stationery Office, and are also available online at www.food.gov.uk.

¹ the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

2 food safety

Foodborne illness

- 2.1 We set ourselves the target in our first strategic plan to reduce foodborne disease by 20% by 2006. We are continuing our work throughout the food chain – with industry, with our partners in local authorities, and through public health campaigns – to achieve this. Finalised UK figures for the year 2003 show a reduction of 15% in comparison with the year 2000. A key contribution to our strategy to reduce foodborne illness is made by our work with local authorities, with the MHS, and with DARD in Northern Ireland on food law enforcement.
- 2.2 For example, the Eat Safe award scheme in Northern Ireland, launched as a pilot in June 2003, has developed well throughout 2004/05. By the end of March 2005, 86 restaurants in Northern Ireland were entitled to display an Eat Safe certificate. Support for the scheme is growing. The extension of the scheme to Scotland from January 2005 will help to spread awareness of the award, and help consumers to make informed choices about where to eat out. The scope of the scheme has been expanded to incorporate several additional types of catering premises, and there are calls for further expansion. More information about Eat Safe is available on our website www.eatsafe.gov.uk/
- 2.3 Another example is the Welsh Food Hygiene Award Scheme, launched in March 2002. The scheme has made about 2000 awards to date. We plan to evaluate these schemes, and equivalent schemes set up by local authorities in other parts of the UK, by the end of 2006. If the results are positive we will use them to help us promote such schemes more widely.
- 2.4 Throughout 2004/05, we continued our support for an industry-led scheme to monitor *Salmonella* carriage in pigs and to encourage producers to take steps to reduce this. Results published in April 2004 showed a quarter of samples taken from carcasses for the monitoring part of this programme tested positive for *Salmonella* antibodies. Defra and DARD (in Northern Ireland) have developed on-farm action plans to target farms with the highest percentage of positive samples.



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- 2.5 We continued to implement our strategy for reducing *Campylobacter* in chicken and our campaign to improve biosecurity on the broiler farm. In October 2004, we launched a programme of training events organised by individual poultry companies and regional events organised by the FSA in order to promote the key biosecurity messages. We extended our rolling survey of retail chicken in Wales to include Northern Ireland. Surveillance using a similar approach is being piloted in England and Scotland.
- 2.6 The FSA's 'Cooking Bus' has been developed in partnership with the Focus on Food campaign to get across healthy eating and food safety messages to school children in an engaging way. By the end of March 2005, the 'Cooking Bus' mobile kitchen/classroom had visited 35 schools since its launch in November 2003, staying a week at each. Nearly 4000 children and over 560 teachers around the country had been trained. The bus' programme is designed to fit with the National Curriculum and teachers' work objectives.
- 2.7 The venues for the bus' visits are in target areas of social deprivation. The dishes cooked are selected to reflect the age and ability of the children, as well as the ethnic background of the area. The bus was also used successfully for out-of-school community activities in summer holidays of 2004. You can find out more about the 'Cooking Bus' on our website at www.food.gov.uk/healthiereating/bus/
- 2.8 A series of exhibitions and road shows to promote food hygiene messages has taken place around the UK, including presentation of our popular spoof cookery show *Bad Food Live!* at the BBC Good Food Show in Birmingham in November 2004. In Wales the FSA's mobile education resource toured extensively in 2004 promoting key food hygiene and healthy eating messages (in both English and Welsh) to a wide range of audiences at public events, notably the Royal Welsh and other Agricultural Shows. Working with local authorities, schools events were also attended. We attended the Visitscotland EXPO event at the Aberdeen exhibition and conference centre in April 2004 and attracted considerable

interest in the forthcoming changes in food law enforcement arising from European Union (EU) consolidation. At the Royal Highland Show in June 2004 our refurbished interactive kitchen was trialled. FSA NI exhibited at the Royal Ulster Agricultural Show at Balmoral in a joint initiative with the Food Safety Promotion Board and local authorities.

- 2.9 In June 2004 we launched a television advertising campaign to promote messages on good food hygiene practices and how to avoid cross-contamination in the home. The launch of the Campaign coincided with the FSA-sponsored FDF *foodlink* Food Safety Week joint initiative, which also had cross-contamination as its theme. Our Christmas turkey television advert was screened again in Scotland in December 2004.
- 2.10 In 2004/05, we made 15 awards of £10,000 each to local authorities in England to develop and implement local hygiene promotion initiatives, with particular reference to the FSA's 4Cs (cleaning, cooking, cooling and avoiding cross-contamination) Hygiene Campaign messages. One of the projects supported won the Food and Drink Federation *foodlink* Communicating Food Safety National Award in October 2004. Two others were highly commended. Projects included the development of food hygiene advice for new mothers, production of information in specific ethnic languages and for those with learning difficulties, and workshops to provide practical demonstrations of good hygiene practices to a wide variety of community and age groups. A similar scheme operated in Scotland. Awards of up to £10,000 each were subject to competitive bidding and included initiatives aimed at schoolchildren, children in care and those with disabilities, the elderly, and new mothers.
- 2.11 We established the Muslim Organisations Working Group (MOWG) to assist the work of the Food Hygiene Campaign. The group has provided valuable cultural insights into campaign activities and how the campaign's messages can be communicated most effectively and appropriately in Muslim communities. It has also influenced our thinking on communicating to consumers more generally.
- 2.12 In summer 2004 we launched a 'Safe Sheep' initiative. The initiative was featured at the Scot

Sheep, Bath and West, Royal Highland, Great Yorkshire, Royal Welsh and the National sheep event shows. We published a revised booklet 'Producing Beef Cattle for Slaughter' in both English and Welsh. The booklet was launched at the Smithfield Show. We launched a database containing results from microbiological testing in abattoirs to enable UK meat processors to make maximum use of microbiological data and to compare an individual plant's performance with a national data set. More information is available at www.redmeat.org.uk

- 2.13 Our programme to seek alternatives to the mouse bioassay (MBA) for shellfish biotoxin testing continued. The Jellett Test Kit was introduced to run in parallel with the Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) programme on a trial basis. This is continuing in the 2005 season. We will continue to assess high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) as an alternative to the MBA for PSP and also anticipate a trial using LC-MS to monitor for Diarrhetic Shellfish Poisoning (DSP) toxins. Toxicological studies to investigate atypical responses in the DSP test, have been completed and the results are being reviewed.

Changes in the EU legislative framework for food safety

- 2.14 In April 2004, two major sets of EU legislation were adopted by the Council and the European Parliament.
- 2.15 The EU food hygiene regulations will replace current prescriptive food hygiene legislation (some 17 EC Directives, the earliest of which is over 40 years old) with a more modern, flexible and risk based approach. The new regulations set high level objectives for food safety to be achieved, and provide for the development of industry guides to compliance, developed by the food business sectors themselves, to establish how to comply with the requirements. You can find more information about the food hygiene regulations on our website at www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/regulation/europel eg/eufoodhygieneleg/
- 2.16 The EU regulation on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules establishes a framework within which food (and feed) law enforcement is to take place. It emphasises

the need for enforcement to be risk-based and will require Member States to draw up plans establishing the way enforcement is to be undertaken. You can find more information about the regulations on official controls on our website at

www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/Consultations/completed_consultations/completeduk/implement

- 2.17 Both the official feed and food control regulation and the food hygiene regulations apply from 1 January 2006. The work necessary to apply the legislation, including national legislation, guidance for food businesses, and guidance to the enforcement community is being taken forward by means of managed projects, drawing in inputs from across the FSA and MHS as well as from other government departments.

Working with enforcement bodies to help industry comply with the new requirements

- 2.18 For most food businesses the principal change from the existing hygiene regulations is to extend the requirement for hazard analysis in food businesses to a requirement for "HACCP-based" food safety management systems. HACCP² is a risk-based food safety management system, internationally recognised as the most effective, flexible and proportionate approach to managing food safety. Evidence shows that correctly implemented HACCP-based procedures will lead to a reduction in foodborne disease.
- 2.19 On behalf of the UK, FSA staff played a major part in negotiating significant flexibility into the legislation and has worked with industry, stakeholders, and enforcers to develop an innovative approach to food safety management for catering premises, 'Safer Food, Better Business' (SFBB). This approach was developed and refined with a range of experts in food safety, business management, psychology, and enforcement, but at all times led by advice from practising caterers as to which food safety management approaches would work best in their businesses. SFBB builds on the FSA's successful Food Hygiene Campaign to help businesses implement practical and effective systems to manage food

safety. An adapted pack for retailers that will reflect the SFBB framework will also be in place by the end of 2005. Small retail stores will take an active role in the development of this guidance.

- 2.20 Following extensive trialling and refinement, SFBB was launched in September 2005. Its implementation is supported by a twin track approach in England. This consists of a central support package (including the pack itself, materials and training for enforcers and web based support) and a grant scheme for local authorities wishing to provide additional support by taking forward specific projects to help their businesses. You can find more information on our website at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2005/may/sfbbannounce
- 2.21 Whilst there are a number of food businesses who already operate HACCP systems, smaller food businesses, particularly caterers, face significant challenges in complying with the requirements. The FSA has therefore made assisting this sector a priority and is making available a £10 million support package in England over 3 years to support local authorities and other organisations to help small businesses. In Scotland a further £2m a year has been made available during 2004/05 and 2005/06 to help support the introduction of food safety management systems into catering premises. This has been done through the development of the "Cooksafe" manual and also through funding of local authority support to businesses. The aim is to reach 8,000 caterers by the end of summer 2006.
- 2.22 The Cooksafe manual developed in Scotland was produced through a different route, working very closely with local authority enforcement officers from around the country. This approach secured the buy-in from those who will be responsible for applying the law in respect of the requirement for all food businesses to have food safety management systems after January 2006. It also ensures a consistent approach to interpretation and application of the Cooksafe approach. The Cooksafe manual was launched in August 2004.
- 2.23 Further information on our work with enforcement bodies can be found in Chapter 5 – "How we deliver".

² "Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point"

Responding to food incidents to protect the public

2.24 We deal with food incidents which may affect the health of consumers. Our aim is always to be risk-based and proportionate, in collaboration with local authorities and other partner organisations, after seeking the advice of independent experts. We recognise there is no such thing as zero risk, and aim to reduce risk to the level that would be acceptable to the ordinary consumer, whilst taking risks to vulnerable groups into account. Two examples of issues we dealt with in 2004/05 are:

- during 2004, there was an increase in outbreaks and sporadic cases of illness due to non-native types of *Salmonella*. A review of the evidence implicated eggs of Spanish origin, used in catering premises, as the source of many of these cases. Publicity was given to advice on the safe handling and use of eggs and a dossier of evidence was presented to the Spanish food authorities and the European Commission.
- Sudan I is a dye that should not be added to food and is banned in the UK and across the EU because it can contribute to an increased risk of cancer. However, from 2003 the FSA had been alerting the UK food industry found that some spices were being adulterated with Sudan I to strengthen the colour and make the spice look fresher so as to increase its value. In 2005 Sudan I was found to have been added to in a batch of chilli powder used to make a Worcester sauce and then used as an ingredient in a wide range of products. The FSA issued advice to consumers that at the levels present the risk was likely to be very small, but it was sensible to avoid eating any food known to be adulterated; and worked with the industry and local authorities to ensure that any affected foods were removed from sale. Use of the web, email and text message alerts allowed the product recall information to be distributed as quickly as possible direct to consumers as well as enforcement officers and other media, resulting in the FSA website www.food.gov.uk recording its highest ever traffic – 67.5 million hits between 18-24 February 2005.

2.25 The FSA has now set up an incidents task force, with members including senior representatives from the

food industry, enforcement organisations, and consumer bodies, to strengthen existing controls in the food chain. Its aims are to reduce the possibility of future contamination incidents, and to improve the management of such incidents if they do occur. Further information on the task force can be found at www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/taskforcebranch/

BSE testing of OTM cattle

2.26 At its open meeting on 6 July 2004 the FSA Board considered revised estimates of the foodborne risk to public health from replacing the Over Thirty Months (OTM) rule by BSE testing of OTM cattle. The estimates took account of developments in the evidence since the Board last advised on the issue in July 2003. The Board confirmed the FSA's earlier advice to Ministers that replacing the OTM rule by testing for cattle born after July 1996 would continue to be justified on the grounds of the public health risk in relation to food and proportionality, subject to the putting in place of a robust testing system.

2.27 On 1 December 2004, the government announced the start of a managed transition towards lifting the OTM rule. A final switch to testing would happen only once the FSA – assisted by an independent group – had advised Ministers that the testing system was robust. The FSA Board's open meeting of 9 December 2004 considered and approved the independent group's recommendations for a testing regimen and agreed the next stage should be a full trial of the system to assess whether or not it will be robust. The Board considered progress reports on the trials at their open meetings in May and July 2005. Consultation meetings were held with stakeholders across the UK in July. At a subsequent meeting in August 2005, the Board agreed its advice to Ministers that an effective system to test OTM cattle for BSE before they enter the food chain has now been developed. Board papers are available on our website at www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/ourboard/

2.28 Ministers later agreed that a move to BSE testing should proceed, subject to a number of pre-conditions set by the Agency to ensure continued consumer protection during implementation. You can find out more on our website at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2005/sep/bsetesting

3 eating for health

Providing information for consumers on healthy eating

3.1 In October 2004 we launched our new website www.eatwell.gov.uk. The site is packed with practical advice and tips on eating more healthily and understanding food labels, as well as information about shopping, cooking and storing food safely. The new site has been developed as part of the FSA's strategy to help consumers make informed choices, make it easier for people to choose a healthy diet and reduce diet-related disease. FSA advice is underpinned by the latest scientific evidence and many pages on *eatwell* are linked direct to www.food.gov.uk where more in-depth information and the latest news from the FSA can be found.

Salt

3.2 Our aim is to reduce the average salt intake of UK adults from the current 9.5g to 6g per day by 2010, and to reduce the salt intake of children in line with Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN)

age-specific recommendations, also by 2010. To do this we work with UK health departments and with a wide range of stakeholders.

3.3 Our dedicated website www.salt.gov.uk not only explains why too much salt is bad for your heart, but also contains a wealth of information on salt and health, how to read labels and calculate how much salt is in food, the benefits of less salt, and cooking without salt.

3.4 In support of our strategy to reduce salt consumption, in September 2004 we launched our biggest campaign so far. It focused on "Sid the Slug", an engaging campaigning character, and highlighted the dangers of too much salt in the diet. We used television, press and poster advertising, and our website www.salt.gov.uk. Other activities included proactive press work, a teaching pack for schools, and a joint leaflet with the British Heart Foundation.

3.5 The main message was "too much salt is bad for your heart", with consumers being directed to the website for more detailed information. Our campaign to



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reduce salt intake has wide support: you can read examples of endorsements from celebrity chefs, industry, and other stakeholders on the website. We built strong partner relationships for the campaign, resulting in extensive and public endorsement from a wide range of other organisations (e.g., British Heart Foundation, Stroke Association, National Federation of Women's Institutes, Blood Pressure Association, Royal College of Physicians, National Heart Forum, British Dietetic Association, National Consumer Council and Unilever).

3.6 Independent evaluation showed a high spontaneous recall of the campaign character and a comprehensive take-up of campaign messages. In particular there was:

- a 32% increase in people claiming to be making a special effort to cut down on salt
- a 31% increase in those who look at labelling to find out salt content
- a 27% increase in those who say salt content would affect their decision to buy a product "all of the time"

3.7 610 items of coverage (television, press and radio) were generated in the first 3 weeks of the campaign. Independent evaluation showed 84% of coverage was positive. Further activity focusing on salt is planned.

3.8 On average, 75% of salt in the diet comes from processed foods. So to help consumers reduce their salt consumption, we have an extensive programme of work with industry aimed at reducing the levels of salt in a wide range of foodstuffs. We have developed strong collaborative working relationships, including meeting with over 60 industry organisations to encourage them to commit to reducing salt in product ranges. Positive progress has been made resulting in detailed salt reduction plans from over 50 key players. These are published on the FSA and Department of Health (DH) websites.

3.9 We also began work to set targets for key product categories and develop a 5-year framework for self-reporting by industry organisations, in consultation with key stakeholders. The intention was to set targets at levels that would make a difference to intakes but would also be achievable by the food

industry. A stakeholder group – made up of industry and consumer representatives as well as officials – and discussions with sector specific interest groups helped develop draft targets for wider consultation.

Working with schools

- 3.10 We continue to work across government to support food and nutrition activity in schools, including food provision. Central to this work we led cross-government work to develop minimum food and nutrition competencies young people need to live independent lives. The competencies can be found at www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/Consultations/completed_consultations/completedduk/gripswithgrub
- 3.11 In England, we work with the organisation representing school governors to help improve nutrition awareness in schools. The National Governors' Council (NGC) acts as a voice for the 250,000 governors in England, putting their point of view to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and other government departments. During the autumn term 2003, the NGC distributed an information pack and questionnaire. The FSA had carried out a survey of children's school lunchboxes which revealed high levels of saturated fats, sugars, and in particular salt. The information pack drew governors' attention to this survey and highlighted the issue of lunchbox food. It also asked governors to consider food in the wider school context including vending machines, school meals, and breakfast clubs, as well as teaching about food within the curriculum. The full report of the first 100 questionnaires returned, and the results of our school lunchbox survey, can be found on our website at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/apr/ngc
- 3.12 We asked the Health Education Trust to carry out a feasibility study into healthier drinks vending in schools. The key to success was found to be involving students in the decisions made about the machine, its products and prices. The more successful schools used a "whole school" approach to healthier eating so the vending machines support healthier eating messages given in lessons. The FSA is planning to develop for schools a practical guide to introducing healthier drinks vending machines. This will include more detail on how to make the project successful and commercially sound. The full report

of the study can be found on our website at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/apr/vending

- 3.13 In July 2004, we published a joint FSA/Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) report into food and nutrition education resources in nursery and primary schools in England. Ofsted inspectors, accompanied by nutritionists commissioned by the FSA, visited 25 nurseries and infant and primary schools to identify factors that support or prevent the effective use of food and nutrition education in helping children make good food choices. The full report can be found on our website at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/jul/foodinschools
- 3.14 Also in July, we published a report into school meals in English secondary schools by the FSA and DfES. The report shows most schools are meeting nutritional standards but although progress is being made to improve the choice and nutritional quality of food, many pupils do not choose a healthy balanced meal. The full report can be found on our website at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/jul/secondarieschoolmeals
- 3.15 As a result we agreed activity to work with DfES to develop target specifications for processed foods in school meals, pilot and model changes in catering practice, and feed this work into a panel to revise school meal standards; support head teachers and governors in contracting issues; and develop a short accredited catering course for school cooks. The School Food Trust has now been set up by DfES to support schools as they introduce improvements.
- 3.16 In Wales, following a school meals survey in 2003, we have agreed with the Welsh Assembly to undertake research into pupils' food choice and the factors influencing their choice in primary and secondary schools across Wales. We have developed teaching materials for primary school children, key stage 2-3, to promote healthy eating and food safety across a number of curriculum areas, including English, Science, Welsh and Music. The FSA Wales resource trailer has continued to be used in school settings, with priority given to deprived areas, teaching nutrition (and food safety) to children through interactive computer games and quizzes, cookery demonstrations and pantomimes.

- 3.17 In Northern Ireland the Agency is participating in a working group established by the Department of Education, to oversee the piloting of food based nutritional standards in primary and post-primary schools. An evaluation of the pilot scheme is under way and it is expected that the outcome of this assessment will lead to the development of nutritional standards in Northern Ireland.
- 3.18 In Scotland, the FSA is working closely with the Scottish Executive (Health and Education Departments) on the “Whole School Approach” which includes discussing issues such as nutritional education, cooking skills, making presentations to Home Economics teachers and promoting the Agency's “Dish it Up!” resource. In addition FSA Scotland will be supporting the Scottish Executive in the implementation of its 'Hungry for Success' campaign.

Food: the local vision

- 3.19 We continue to support *food: the local vision*, the joint statement by the Local Government Association (LGA), Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS), and the FSA. We share the joint aim of promoting access to safe, sustainable, and nutritious food with the aim of improving community health and wellbeing. The joint statement contains a number of brief “case studies” describing local, or regional, food related initiatives. We want to reinforce the relevance of many local government policy initiatives and therefore the contribution of various local authority services to the food agenda. We acknowledge the key role local authorities play in achieving the aims and priorities reflected in the joint statement.
- 3.20 The dedicated website www.foodvision.gov.uk builds on the original publication by providing detailed write-ups of particular local, or regional, initiatives. Where appropriate, downloads of original documentation on the particular initiative are provided. While researching the various initiatives it became clear it would be helpful to create what we have described as “toolkits”. These draw together good practice from a number of local/regional initiatives in delivering a particular project.

Advice on fish consumption

- 3.21 Following a request from the FSA to weigh the nutritional benefits against possible risks and to develop coherent dietary advice for the public on consumption of fish, SACN, in conjunction with the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT), produced their report '*Advice on fish consumption: benefits and risks*' in June 2004.
- 3.22 As a result of the report, we were able for the first time to recommend maximum levels at which the health benefits of preventing heart disease clearly outweigh the possible risks from dioxins. Based on SACN advice the FSA recommends that men and boys, and women past child bearing age, can eat up to four portions of oily fish a week. Women of child bearing age, including pregnant and breast-feeding women, and girls, can eat up to two portions of oily fish a week. There is good evidence that eating oily fish such as salmon, fresh tuna, trout, and mackerel reduces the risk of death from heart disease, which killed 117,500 people in 2002. You can find the full report on the SACN website at www.sacn.gov.uk
- 3.23 The press briefing held to explain the new advice was webcast live on the FSA's website and then archived as video-on-demand at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/jun/oilyfishwebcast

Vitamin A

- 3.24 SACN issued a draft report in January 2005, reviewing advice about vitamin A. Following a public consultation, the final report was published in August 2005. More information, including the full text of the report, can be found on the SACN website at www.sacn.gov.uk

Fat and carbohydrate in the diet

- 3.25 Several new FSA-funded research studies started during the year. They include a study that aims to determine the optimal quantity and composition of both fat and carbohydrate in the diet to minimise cardio-vascular disease (CVD) risk, a central issue in public health nutrition. Another study is investigating the link between diet in early life, and bone mass and cognitive function at four years of age.

4choice

Signposting

- 4.1 We released new research in November 2004 suggesting that people would like simple front of pack labelling signposts to help them make informed and healthier food choices. Signposting aims to make it easier for people to choose a healthy diet. The idea is to provide 'at a glance' information on labels about the nutritional content of foods. The FSA's Action Plan on Food Promotions and Children's Diet and the government's public health white paper *Choosing Health: making healthier choices easier*³ both identified signposting as a way of helping people make healthier food choices.
- 4.2 Working with stakeholders, we developed a number of options which have been consumer tested. The first phase indicated strong approval and support for front-of-pack labelling, consumers thought this would make it easier to make healthier food choices by improving access to nutritional information. We are now working with the food industry, consumer

groups, and public health groups to develop these – and potentially other – options, to see which concepts will work best in practice. Further research is being carried out to test how people can use these options. We plan to complete this work during 2005. More information about signposting, including examples of all the signposts tested can be found on our website at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/nov/signpostfaq

Promotion of foods to children

- 4.3 Food promotion encompasses TV, print and radio advertising, SMS text messaging, celebrity endorsements, sponsorship of educational materials, point-of-sale promotions, vending machines and voucher schemes, often supported by powerful branding. We have looked carefully at the evidence on the effect of food promotion on children's diets and considered the likely effectiveness of a range of possible actions. The FSA Board has agreed an

³ Available at www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsLibrary/fs/en



Action Plan on Food Promotions and Children's Diets aimed at government, industry, schools and others, and designed to encourage practices that promote healthy eating for children. The plan includes a commitment to publish best practice advice on signposting of foods, meals or snacks high in salt, sugar or fat and of healthier options. Find out more on our website at www.food.gov.uk/news/press-releases/2004/jul/boardpromojuly

- 4.4 In Northern Ireland the FSA has been working with a range of stakeholders to consider and evaluate options for addressing childhood obesity. This Childhood Obesity Taskforce will consult on these options and bring forward proposals later in 2005.
- 4.5 In November 2004, we also launched a formal consultation on our research to develop a scheme to categorise foods based on the nutrients they contain. This research is specifically intended to underpin controls on television advertising aimed at children. The research was led by a team from the British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research

Group, and was overseen by an expert group comprising nutrition scientists, dieticians, food industry and consumer organisation representatives, and policymakers. The research and the consultation documents are available on our website at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/nov/signconsult

- 4.6 Consultation responses received were considered by the expert group, and further work was commissioned to take forward a number of suggested refinements to the model. A further public consultation on the effectiveness of the proposed model ended in September 2005. The outcome of this project will be the development of a nutrient profiling model to support the FSA's work to tackle the current imbalance in the way foods are promoted to children. Further information on nutrient profiling can be found on our website at www.food.gov.uk/healthiereating/nutlab/

Food supplements guidance

- 4.7 Following publication of the report of the UK's Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals (EVM) in May 2003, we introduced advice that applies to some food supplements containing high levels of vitamins and minerals. The advice covers advisory statements to be included on labels and, in a limited number of cases, suggests reformulation. The advice was agreed by the FSA and food supplements industry representatives. The aim of the advice is to protect consumers by providing information which will alert them to the potential for adverse effects, and enable them to make informed choices. The advice was published in May 2004 and can be found on our website at www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/guidance/notes/labelregsguidance/supplementreformguidance
- 4.8 The Food Supplements Directive (2002/46/EC) came into force in July 2002 and was required to be implemented into national laws by 31 July 2003. The aim of the Directive is to facilitate trade across member states and to introduce a safety-based approach to the use of vitamins and minerals in food supplements, and harmonised rules for labelling. The Directive lists vitamins and minerals, and their sources, which can be used in food supplements and allows for these lists to be added to and for substances to remain on the market providing that safety dossiers had been forwarded to the European Commission by 12 July 2005. From 1 August 2005, substances not listed in the Directive or for which dossiers have not been submitted can no longer be used in food supplements. The labelling provisions in the Directive have also applied since this date.
- 4.9 The Food Supplements Directive was the subject of review in the European Court for Justice (ECJ) through a challenge to the legality of the directive by the Health Food Manufacturers Association and National Association of Health Food Stores. The hearing was held on 25 January 2005 and the Advocate General issued his opinion on 5 April expressing his view that the Directive was invalid as elements of it offended principles of proportionality, legal certainty and sound administration. The ECJ has, however, since ruled and found the Directive to be valid.

- 4.10 In the run-up to the law coming into effect on 1 August, the FSA provided some resource to the food supplements industry through part-funding an independent expert to assist businesses, particularly smaller businesses, in their preparation of dossiers, in order to support consumer choice.
- 4.11 The EC Food Supplements Directive (2002/46/EC) also lays down provisions for setting maximum permitted levels of vitamins and minerals present in food supplements. We are currently waiting for advice from the European Food Safety Authority and proposals from the European Commission regarding these levels. It is anticipated that the Commission will bring forward proposals in 2006.
- 4.12 In September 2005, the Board agreed the FSA's advice to Health Ministers on the approach the UK should take on setting maximum safe levels for vitamins and minerals in food supplements in future discussions on this issue in Europe. You can find out more at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2005/sep/boardsept2005

Community food award schemes

- 4.13 In September 2004 the FSA launched a community food award scheme to commemorate the contribution of Dame Sheila McKechnie in establishing the FSA. Dame Sheila, who died of cancer in January 2004, was Director of Consumers' Association (now Which?). The scheme recognises the work undertaken by community food initiatives in making quality food available to people on low incomes and attract £15,000 funding over three years to help them become more sustainable in the longer-term.
- 4.14 The first winners, announced in March 2005, were the Bradford-based Buttershaw 'Eatwise' Project 'Get Fresh' in Dorset. A total of 46 schemes entered the awards. You can find out more on our website at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2005/mar/sheila
- 4.15 Food Standards Agency Wales runs the annual Awards for Food Action Locally (AFAL) scheme, to recognise individual or team contributions to local nutrition initiatives that have made a positive impact on the diet or eating habits of residents in the communities they serve. The awards enable FSA

Wales to identify good practice and encourage others to undertake similar awareness raising activities. More information about AFAL, including details of award winners, can be found on our website at www.food.gov.uk/wales/nutwales/afal/

The Consumer Attitudes Survey

4.16 We conduct an annual investigation into consumer attitudes to food, covering issues such as safety and hygiene, nutrition, diet and shopping. The results help to inform us about consumer trends around food. They also help us to decide the areas we need to focus on if we are to maintain consumer confidence in the regulatory system for food safety and standards.

4.17 The 2004 survey highlighted a number of key trends that have emerged since 2000, including:

- concern about food safety has remained stable over the five years of the survey at around 70%
- concern about raw beef and raw eggs has been decreasing. (beef to 36% from 53% in 2000, and raw eggs to 17% from 26%)
- more than half had no concerns when asked to think spontaneously about wider issues relating to food. This has remained stable since 2000
- when asked if they were concerned about any food issues shown on a list:
 - salt in food was the issue of most concern, at 57% (a 7% increase since 2003)
 - food poisoning was next at 56%, (a decrease of 4% since 2003), then
 - the amount of fat (53%) and
 - sugar (50%) in food
- BSE is no longer in the top 5 prompted food concerns. It has decreased from 66% in 2000 to 44% in 2004
- correct knowledge of 'at least 5 portions' of fresh fruit and vegetables a day remained stable since 2003 at just under 60% (after steadily increasing from 43% in 2000). Half of respondents claimed to have eaten at least 5 portions of fruit and

vegetables the previous day, which represents a 23 percentage point increase since 2003

- among those people who say they look at food labels there has been a statistically significant increase in people looking at nutritional information from 55% in 2000, to 75% in 2004. The largest increases have been with reference to levels of salt, sugar and fat
- concern about the accuracy of food labelling has increased since 2002 with 44% now concerned compared to 34% in 2002
- awareness of the FSA continues to increase year-on-year from 58% in 2000 to 79% in 2004
- since 2003, the FSA has been the most frequently spontaneously mentioned source of information on food standards and safety
- although confidence in the role played by the FSA in protecting health has dipped slightly over the last 12 months, the current figure of 57% represents an overall net increase of 7% in consumer confidence in the five years to 2004

4.18 The full results of the survey are available from our website: www.food.gov.uk/yourviews/surveys/food-safety-nutrition-diet/

5 how we deliver

Independent review of the FSA

5.1 In September 2004, the FSA Board commissioned an independent review of the FSA. Baroness Brenda Dean of Thornton-le-Fylde undertook the review. The terms of reference of the review were:

- to generate an external, independent, authoritative and high-level assessment of whether the FSA has delivered its published objectives
- to assess the performance of the FSA to date, and in particular the extent to which it has operated in accordance with its key values
- to assess the extent to which the FSA, operates effectively as a UK-wide organisation in a policy area that is a devolved responsibility
- to appraise how the FSA is viewed by its stakeholders, and
- to make recommendations to the FSA Board on any identified areas of weakness in the delivery of

its consumer protection role, or in any other aspects of its performance

- 5.2 Baroness Dean's overall assessment was that the great majority of stakeholders interviewed believed that the FSA has performed well in its first five years in improving food safety, building public confidence and creating a modern culture of openness. There is now the view amongst stakeholders that the FSA needs to work hard to build on this positive position, to learn the lessons of its short history and to continue to move forward innovatively.
- 5.3 The FSA Board accepted the 22 recommendations made by Baroness Dean. The report of the review was published in March 2005. It is available, together with a response from the FSA setting out how we intend to implement its recommendations, on our website www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/how_we_work/deanreview



HOW WE DELIVER

Sustainable Development

5.4 In October 2004 the FSA Board Agreed a position statement setting out the FSA's approach to sustainable development:

‘ The Food Standards Agency’s remit is to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food, both now and in the future. In doing so the Agency will take sustainable development into account in all of its activities and policy decisions.’

5.5 A significant effort has been put into implementing this position statement. In particular, we have been concentrating on the important and challenging task of integrating sustainability assessment into policy development and decision making. This has involved the production of guidance for staff on sustainability assessment, which is designed to sit alongside and augment the government's Regulatory Impact Assessment procedures. A public consultation on draft guidance was undertaken in early 2005. This consultation showed considerable support for our

approach and contributed towards the further development of the guidance.

Food Law Enforcement

5.6 We continue to work closely with local authorities and port health authorities to improve consistency and effectiveness in food law enforcement.

5.7 A consolidated and revised Code of Practice and associated Practice Guidance for enforcement officers was published in England and Scotland in October 2004, in Northern Ireland in January 2005 and in Wales in February 2005.

5.8 Our programme of low cost training for enforcement officers across the UK continues. For example, courses run in 2004/05 covered areas such as HACCP, speciality cheese making, and on-farm pasteurisation. Over 500 officers attended the courses. We have also produced a video on sampling techniques which was distributed to all local authorities and professional bodies.

- 5.9 We will be integrating the FSA's programme of authenticity surveys more closely with food standards activities of local authorities. To this end, a new Authenticity Surveillance Sub-group has been formed with representation from 6 regional groups as well as Public Analysts and consumer representatives to plan the future programme.
- 5.10 We are working with local authorities and public analysts to develop and implement a National Food Surveillance System. The system places the data and analytical results from local authority food sampling activities on a national database. The information will help to more effectively target food safety programmes, provide evidence for informed action to protect public health, and direct future sampling programmes and surveillance. Currently, the system is being used throughout Scotland and by over 30% of Public Analyst laboratories in England and their associated local authorities, with further expansion planned over the next few years. The scheme is being extended to Northern Ireland in 2005, and to Wales in 2006.
- 5.11 The enforcement portal on our website was launched in September 2003 to improve communication links between the FSA and local authorities. In March 2004 the portal was a finalist in the Revolution Magazine Internet awards and in June 2004 we were shortlisted for the "Modernising Government" category of the New Statesman magazine New Media Awards. In May 2004, we put all letters from the FSA to local authorities online to provide a more effective means of storing and retrieving up-to-date information and guidance. We have continued to provide information and to update local authorities about current events through officials attending meetings of local food liaison groups, which consist of representatives of Environmental Health and Trading Standards Departments usually on a county basis.
- 5.12 We launched the Engagement of Asian Communities Project to identify the concerns of Asian food businesses and consumers and promote good practice.
- 5.13 To help deal with difficulties in funding placement years for environmental health students, the FSA, in conjunction with Defra and the Health and Safety Executive, piloted a training project during the academic year 2003/04. The project involved the FSA providing placements for students by allowing local authorities to recruit an additional student above that initially planned. This was deemed a success and consequently extended to 2004/05. It has been recognised that the training gives students a wider perspective than they would otherwise gain.
- 5.14 We continue to audit food law enforcement activity by local authorities. By the end of March 2005, 70 authorities in England and 7 in Northern Ireland had been subject to a full audit. In Wales all 22 authorities have received a full audit though in some cases substantial delays had arisen over the publication of the audit reports. In Scotland all 32 authorities received a partial audit once a year for three years up to the end of March 2004, which ensured all areas of the standard had been audited against.
- 5.15 Recent audit themes have focused on statistical monitoring returns, inter-authority auditing and internal monitoring activities. Reports on audit trends have been presented to the FSA Board and the Enforcement Liaison Group. Information on good practice found during our audits has been published on our website, together with copies of all audit reports, and the follow-up action plans developed by the relevant local authorities.
- 5.16 During 2004/05, we initiated a programme of action to work with local authorities to help them to provide more accurate and timely monitoring data on their food law enforcement services. This has included:
- some immediate changes to the current monitoring form to make it easier to use
 - supplementary guidance to local authorities to help them adapt the previous monitoring form to the changes made in the new Code of Practice (issued in England and Scotland in October 2004, in Northern Ireland in January 2005, and in Wales in February 2005)
 - a major review of the detail of the whole monitoring system, launched in January 2005 and involving local authorities, which produced specific proposals to change the way we report

on local authority enforcement activity. These proposals were issued for consultation in March 2005

- in order to engage all local authorities in the review, a series of regional seminars around the UK begun in May 2004, and a meeting of Scottish authorities. About 200 delegates were involved in 2004/05
- in another move to keep all local authorities informed of progress with the review, the issue of a bi-monthly newsletter starting in March 2005

5.17 In 2003, the FSA created the Illegal Meat Task Force. This currently comprises 24 regionally based local authority enforcement officers from the UK and the Republic of Ireland, who have been trained by the FSA in high level investigatory skills and other legal matters. They continue to provide support and advice to local authorities in their regions undertaking investigations into meat fraud.

5.18 Local authorities struggling to meet the costs of expensive investigations have also received financial help from the FSA's Fighting Fund of £200,000. All successful applicants have had significant help with legal costs, surveillance operations, and other associated expenses.

Feed Law Enforcement

5.19 We have taken forward a number of initiatives to strengthen animal feed law enforcement, in liaison with local authorities. We introduced a national inspection plan, which provides local authorities with enforcement priorities and guidance. We have also organised a series of seminars to advise enforcement officers on feed controls on farms. In addition, a video has been produced and distributed to local authorities, showing examples of good and bad on-farm feeding practices.

Imported Food

5.20 A 2002 government review of the organisation of the controls on imported food recommended a Step Change improvement in the co-ordination and delivery of local authority enforcement of imported food controls. The FSA was tasked with taking this forward and was set success criteria to achieve

within the first year of the step change (by March 2004). In May 2004 the government reviewed the FSA's work and agreed a Step Change improvement in controls had been achieved. Subsequently, the FSA Chair wrote to all UK authorities acknowledging the improvements made and emphasising the need for the improvements to be sustained and built on.

5.21 We have continued to work closely with colleagues in local and port health authorities, Defra and HM Revenue and Customs to maintain and build on the work initiated by the Step Change. Activities include:

- a national training programme for all UK authorities with over 2000 enforcement officers trained on imported food controls in the two years to April 2005
- provision of enhanced imported food enforcement guidance
- a database IT system with technical information on imported food controls, provided to all main UK ports of entry for food and some key inland local authorities, and
- audit of the imported food control arrangements for non-animal origin foods and feed in all major UK points of entry and, where necessary, agreeing action plans

5.22 Use of our dedicated imported food helpline and email box to handle enquiries from enforcement officers, trade and the public increased during 2004/05. In April 2004, 182 calls were received by the imported food helpline and 121 emails by the imported food mailbox. In March 2005, 264 calls were received by the imported food helpline and 157 emails by the imported food mailbox.

5.23 During 2004/05 we provided an additional £840,000 funding for enhanced sampling and surveillance of imported food by Port Health Authorities and inland local authorities. 59 awards were made, covering over 140 local authorities and ports.

5.24 More information about our Step Change work on imported food can be found on our website at www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/imports/agency_work/

MHS and DARD

5.25 The aim of the MHS is to safeguard public health and animal welfare through fair, consistent and effective enforcement of hygiene, inspection and welfare regulations in Great Britain. This public health role in Northern Ireland, in respect of some 60 licensed fresh meat premises, is carried out by DARD on behalf of the FSA.

5.26 We set the MHS challenging performance targets on an annual basis. At its open meeting in March 2004, and following consultation with stakeholders, the FSA Board approved a new approach to MHS target setting and agreed a number of outcome-based high-level performance targets for 2004/05. The targets continue to be explicitly linked to FSA strategic objectives as set out in the FSA Strategic Plan. They were published on the FSA website in March 2004. Similar targets are set for DARD in Northern Ireland.

5.27 To strengthen governance arrangements, the FSA Board decided in July 2004 to adopt a new model of governance for the MHS with the establishment of an MHS Board. The MHS Board held its first meeting in November 2004. The Terms of Reference of the MHS Board were set by the FSA Board and are to give strategic direction to the MHS within the overall strategy agreed by the FSA Board, to set targets for the MHS, to monitor its performance, and to hold the MHS to account on behalf of the FSA Board.

5.28 In 2003/04, MHS audits and internal management checks uncovered a number of failures to test casualty cattle between 24 and 30 months. When the failures were first reported, the MHS took immediate action to establish the scale of the problem and to minimise the risk of further eligible animals not being tested. DARD asked that similar failures that had occurred in Northern Ireland (identified in a follow-up investigation carried out in response to the MHS BSE test failures being reported) also be investigated. Although the risk to human health appeared to be minimal, and the testing was primarily an animal disease surveillance measure and not a food safety control, the FSA Board initiated an independent enquiry with the following terms of reference:

- i. to investigate:
 - (a) the reasons for the Meat Hygiene Service's (MHS) and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's (DARD) failure to ensure that animals were tested in accordance with the instructions issued;
 - (b) why these failures were not identified earlier;
 - ii. to make recommendations to improve the robustness of the testing arrangements so as to minimise the likelihood of this, or a similar problem, recurring; and
 - iii. to make a report to the FSA Board and DARD by the end of September 2004.
- 5.29 The independent enquiry noted, based on earlier Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) advice, that the risk to human health if all 24-30 month old casualty animals were to enter the food chain untested is considered to be very low. The enquiry found there were a number of reasons for the testing failures and that all organisations involved – FSA, Defra, MHS and their contractors – contributed to one degree or another. The enquiry concluded that the failures occurred principally because the requirements and objectives of BSE testing were not clearly agreed nor communicated effectively, and not properly monitored by contractors or the MHS.
- 5.30 The FSA Board has considered the findings of the report of the enquiry and has commissioned an action plan to address the report's recommendations in a robust and thorough way. More details, including the full text of the independent enquiry's report, can be found on our website at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/oct/wallreport
- 5.31 More information about MHS enforcement can be found in Appendix 6 to this report.

6 the next five years – our strategic plan

Our Strategic Plan 2005 – 2010

6.1 Our Strategic Plan for 2005 – 10 was published on our website in December 2004 and launched formally on 7 March 2005. The plan sets out proposals in the areas of: Food Safety, Eating for Health, Choice, and How We Will Deliver. Our key aims for the next 5 years are:

Food Safety:

- to continue to reduce foodborne illness
- to reduce further the risks to consumers from chemical contamination⁴ of food

Eating for Health:

- to make it easier for all consumers to choose a healthy diet, and thereby improve quality of life by reducing diet-related disease

Choice:

- to enable consumers to make informed choices

We aim to continue to be the UK's most trusted provider of independent advice on food safety and standards, and to earn that trust by what we do and how we do it.

6.2 Food safety will continue to be our first priority. However, diet-related diseases cause far more illness and premature deaths. We will play our part by promoting Eating for Health, working closely with health departments across the UK. Choice will continue to play a vital role in helping people eat safely and healthily. The principles underlying the way we will implement the plan are covered by **How We Will Deliver**. In particular, we have stressed how we will take sustainable development into account in all our activities and policy decisions. We have also highlighted the importance we attach to working in partnership with all our stakeholders to meet the targets we have set.

6.3 The full text of our Strategic Plan 2005 – 2010 is available on our website at www.food.gov.uk/news/news archive/2004/dec/strategicplan

⁴ Including radiological contamination

Appendix 1

about us

The FSA

- 1 The FSA is a UK-wide body – a non-ministerial government department – operating at arm's length from Ministers and governed by a Board appointed to act in the public interest. This independence is key to our success in restoring public confidence. Our current organisation chart is at Appendix 3. You can find out more about what we do on our website at www.food.gov.uk. The website is updated regularly. A detailed contact list by subject is available at www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/contactus
- 2 We advise Ministers on all issues relating to food safety and standards. Our staff negotiate on behalf of the UK in Europe and other international fora, where much of the legal framework and standards for the food market are set. We provide guidance to the public on healthy eating and carry out surveys on nutrition and diet to monitor changing eating habits.

The FSA Board

- 3 The Board is responsible for our overall strategic direction and for ensuring our legal obligations are fulfilled. The Board consists of a Chair, Deputy Chair and up to 12 other members. The Chair and Deputy Chair are appointed jointly by the Secretary of State for Health, Scottish Ministers, the National Assembly for Wales and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) in Northern Ireland ('the appropriate authorities'). Of other current Board members, eight were appointed by the Secretary of State for Health, two by Scottish Ministers, and one each by the National Assembly for Wales and DHSSPS. Members of the Board each demonstrate substantial achievement in their chosen field. More information about our Board can be found at Appendix 2 and on our website at www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/ourboard/

Day-to-day operations

- 4 The Chief Executive manages the day-to-day operations of the FSA. He was appointed by the FSA with the approval of the appropriate authorities, the Prime Minister, and the Head of the Civil Service under normal Civil Service Commission rules. The Treasury has appointed the Chief Executive as Principal Accounting Officer of the FSA, with responsibility for the day-to-day running of the FSA itself. In particular, he has overall responsibility for preparing the FSA's accounts and for transmitting them to the Comptroller and Auditor General. Our staff are civil servants, accountable through the Chief Executive to the Board.

Accountability

- 5 The FSA is accountable to the Westminster Parliament through the Secretary of State for Health, and to the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland administration through their Health Ministers or equivalents.
- 6 Food safety and standards are devolved matters: the FSA has offices in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, each headed by a Director.
- 7 In Scotland, the FSA provides advice on proposed legislation to the Minister for Health and Community Care in the Scottish Executive. This ensures consistency of approach while allowing the specific Scottish circumstances to be fully taken into account in the implementation of food safety and standards policy in Scotland. The statutory Scottish Food Advisory Committee (SFAC) provides the FSA with independent information and advice on all food safety and standards issues in Scotland. The FSA in Scotland is funded by the Scottish Parliament and is headed by a Director accountable to the Chief Executive of the FSA.
- 8 The FSA is accountable for its activities in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales through the

Assembly Minister for Health and Social Services, whom the FSA also advises on food safety and standards policy and legislation. The statutory Welsh Food Advisory Committee provides the FSA with independent information and advice on all food safety and standards issues in Wales. The FSA in Wales is funded by the National Assembly for Wales and is headed by a Director accountable to the Chief Executive of the FSA.

- 9 The FSA in Northern Ireland is responsible for providing advice and draft legislation on issues across the food chain to the Northern Ireland Minister with responsibility for the DHSSPS. The statutory Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee provides the FSA with advice or information about matters connected with the FSA's functions in Northern Ireland. The FSA in Northern Ireland is funded from within the Northern Ireland estimates and is headed by a Director accountable to the Chief Executive of the FSA.
- 10 The FSA in Northern Ireland liaises closely with the Food Safety Promotion Board (FSPB), which operates on an all-Ireland basis, and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, which operates in the Republic of Ireland only, on food or food related issues.

The Meat Hygiene Service

- 11 The Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) is an executive agency of the FSA operating within Great Britain. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) provides a similar service in Northern Ireland. Its main functions are to ensure the highest standards required by the law for the hygienic production of meat and for the welfare of animals at slaughter are maintained, and to provide a meat inspection service to all licensed meat plants. The MHS also enforces the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) controls in licensed premises. The MHS has its own Agency Accounting Officer (the MHS Chief Executive) and publishes its own Annual Report and Accounts.

Our role as a government department

- 12 The FSA works consistently with the three aims of modernising government: ensuring that policymaking is more joined up and strategic; making sure

consumers are the focus of our work; and delivering public services that are high quality and efficient. We are committed to delivering policy outcomes that matter: we aim to develop our policymaking to ensure we take account of and promote best practice. We have a full range of initiatives on listening to consumers: see the 'Your Views' page of our website at www.food.gov.uk/yourviews/

- 13 On our website we publish targets for our service standards, which are in accordance with the Six Standards for Central Government for: answering correspondence, seeing callers, answering telephone calls, publishing contact points, publishing our complaints procedure and consulting users. Each year we publish details of complaints received by the FSA: see Appendix 5 of this report for details of complaints received in 2004/05.
- 14 We are committed to doing everything reasonably possible to make our services available to everyone, including people with disabilities, ethnic groups, disadvantaged groups and those with particular health needs, and in particular to promoting racial equality. We will continue to consult users and potential users regularly about the services we provide and we will report our findings.
- 15 We are committed to promoting racial equality. The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, gives public authorities a general duty to promote race equality in Great Britain. Under this duty, when they carry out their functions, public authorities must aim to: eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; promote equality of opportunity; and promote good relations between people of different racial groups. While our core values of putting the consumer first and openness are intrinsically linked to these principles, in accordance with the specific duty placed on public authorities we published our Race Equality Scheme on 31 May 2002 on our website at www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/how_we_work/68192

Developing our People

- 16 Our employees, and the knowledge and skills they possess, are our major asset. The development of our staff in line with our core values and Investors in People (IIP) principles is a key aim, and a means of

continuing to develop the organisation and its capacity to deliver.

- 17 As a reflection of this commitment we successfully achieved IIP accreditation in April 2004, and as part of our aim of continuing to develop our staff we will further benchmark our progress against the revised IIP standards through a mid term assessment in November 2005. Our recent 2005 staff attitude survey indicates that staff continue to value the investment we make towards their development.
- 18 We currently provide tailored learning and development opportunities through our development programme which includes a Management Scheme to improve the management capability of our managers. We have developed the programme further to support the skills needed for successful delivery of our Strategic Plan 2005 – 10. This will include activities to further develop leadership skills as well as the skills to support delivery of our strategic plan through partnership working with key stakeholders. The enhanced development programme will be introduced during the first half of 2006.

Diversity

- 19 The FSA aims to ensure everyone who works in, or who is in contact with, the FSA is treated fairly and with respect. Our human resources policies reflect this aim and we take every opportunity to ensure they are updated to reflect any changes. For example we recently met with the Equal Opportunities Commission in Northern Ireland to ensure our policies support the diverse workforce in that part of the United Kingdom. In order that we can benefit from the richness of a diverse workforce, diversity awareness and managing inclusion are central elements of our induction and management development training.
- 20 During the year we were pleased to be awarded the Disability “two ticks” Symbol by the Employment Service in recognition of the steps we have taken to support the recruitment and employment of people with disabilities. Furthermore, in achieving IIP accreditation, our assessor commented on the FSA’s “genuine commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity”.

Recruitment Practice

- 21 We continue to follow the principles of fair and open competition as outlined by the Civil Service Commissioners. We have ensured that when advertising vacancies to the wider labour market we use all the traditional media outlets, while also expanding the usage of our own and other recruitment websites, especially when seeking specialist skills. Our increased use of assessment techniques in recruitment has helped us to identify the most suitable staff to support the FSA in achieving its overall objectives.
- 22 We continually ensure all our recruitment practices support the FSA’s Equal Opportunities policies. We make every effort to ensure that we seek applications from under-represented groups. We also continue to advertise widely in a range of publications aimed at such groups, for example Ethnic Britain Employers Directory, Disability View, as well as continuing our features in Hobsons Ethnic Minority and Science Guides.
- 23 We have continued our strong commitment to the interchange of staff with key stakeholders, as an aid to further developing mutual understanding as well as providing development opportunities for our own staff. Current outward and inward secondments include consumer organisations, enforcement bodies, the European Commission in Brussels, and the European Food Safety Authority. In spring 2005 we began a new initiative to widen the scope of secondments and exchanges. Over time we intend these to include exchanges between FSA locations (Aberdeen, Cardiff, Belfast, London, and our executive agency the Meat Hygiene Service, whose headquarters are in York), and with external organisations including industry and other EU food agencies, as well as maintaining our links with consumer organisations and enforcement bodies. We will also pilot the placement of a small number of FSA staff at Government Offices in the English regions.

Appendix 2

Our Board and Chief Executive

The Food Standards Agency Board

For further information, including latest biographical details of current Board members and their register of interests, please see our website at www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/ourboard/

Dame Deirdre Hutton CBE –
Chair – Appointment announced
March 2005



The following were members of the Food Standards Agency Board during 2004/05.

Sir John Krebs FRS –
Chair – Resigned
April 2005



Julia Unwin OBE –
Deputy Chair



Appendix 2

Our Board and Chief Executive

Michael Gibson –
Board Member for Scotland



Ann Hemingway CBE –
Board Member for Wales



Michael Walker –
Board Member for Northern Ireland
Resigned in May 2004



Dr Maureen Edmondson –
Board Member for Northern Ireland
Joined in September 2004



Appendix 2

Our Board and Chief Executive

Dr Sati Ariyanayagam



Richard Ayre



Chrissie Dunn



Baroness Howarth of Breckland OBE



Appendix 2

Our Board and Chief Executive

Iain MacDonald



Professor Andrew Miller –
Board Member for Scotland
Term ended in February 2005



Graeme Millar –
Board Member for Scotland
Joined in March 2005



Chris Pomfret –
Joined in February 2005



Appendix 2

Our Board and Chief Executive

Vernon Sankey –
Term ended in February 2005



Sandra Walbran



Nelisha Wickremasinghe –
Joined in May 2004



Dr Jon Bell –
Chief Executive of the
Food Standards Agency

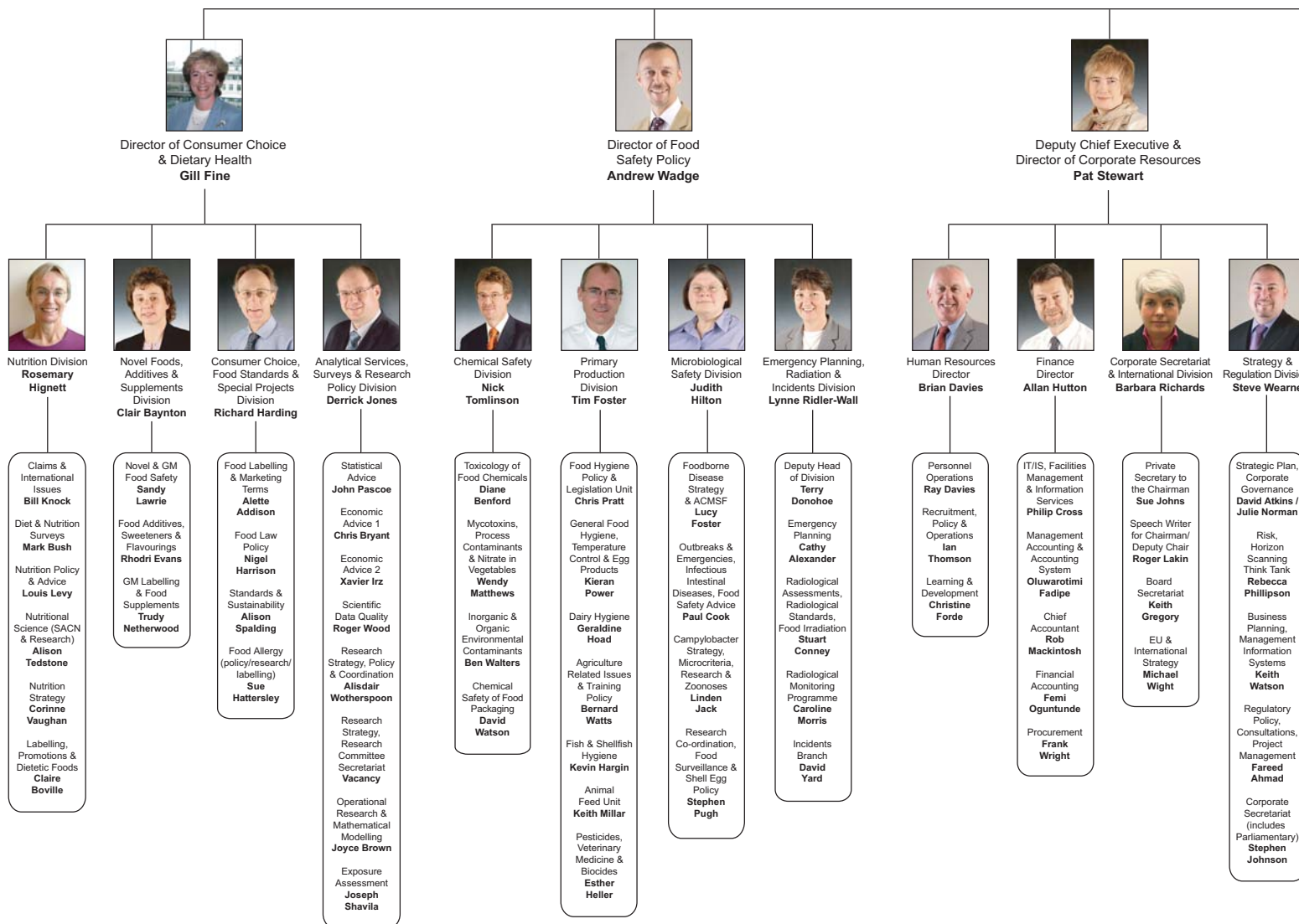


Appendix 3

The Food Standards Agency Executive

Food Standards Agency – Organisation Chart

as of November 2005



A detailed contact list by subject is available at www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/contactus

If you can't see the contact you need, please call the FSA's helpline on 020 7276 8829 or switchboard on 020 7276 8000.



Private Office
Nick Raisen

Chief Executive & Chief Scientific Advisor
Dr Jon Bell



Chief Executive Meat Hygiene Service
Chris Lawson



Director of Enforcement
David Statham



Director of Legal Services
David Dunleavy



Acting Director of Communications
Karen Talbot



Director of FSA Scotland
George Paterson



Director of FSA Wales
Joy Whinney



Director of FSA Northern Ireland
Morris McAllister



TSE Division
Alan Harvey



Veterinary Director & Head of Meat Hygiene and Veterinary Division
Alick Simmons



Enforcement Division
Julie Monk



Food Hygiene Implementation Division
Tom Murray



Imported Food Division
Sarah Appleby

Veterinary Advisor
Adrienne Conroy
TSE Research & SRM Import Breaches (EU)
Steve Dixon
OTM Rule Review & BSE Testing
David Carruthers
SRM Controls
Paul Holley

Deputy Veterinary Director
Peter Hewson
Senior Veterinary Adviser
Kenneth Clarke
MHS Policy/Meat Plant Licensing
David Hart
MHS Policy
John Bush
Meat Plant Licensing/Licensing Policy
Sylvie Sadowski
White Meat & Meat Products
Adrian Dally
Red Meat & Strategy
Joanna Fullick
Veterinary Public Health Research
Mary Howell

Hygiene Technical Support, Food Authenticity, Meat Fraud & Diversity
Colin Houston
Hygiene Technical Support
Rob Griffin
Audit
Vacancy
Monitoring
Geoff Deville
Food Authenticity
Mark Woolfe
Meat Fraud & Diversity
Shaheen Zar
Policy Co-ordination
Clive Langabeer
Audit, Monitoring & Policy Co-ordination
Ailison Gleadle

Food Safety Management (HACCP) Policy
Stephen Airey
Food Safety Management (HACCP) Implementation
Julian Blackburn
Food Hygiene Regulations Applications Project
Catherine Bowles
Official Controls Regulation Application Project
Catriona Stewart

Food Standards Enforcement
John Barnes

Deputy Director
Alex Rae
Food Labelling, General Food Law
Christine Cogger
Meat Hygiene, TSE Controls
Marcus Porter
Emergencies, Imports, EC Food Package
John Guthrie
Animal Feedings, Contaminants, Contact Materials
Robert Madge
Enforcement, Advice to MHS, Hygiene Charges
Barry Proudfoot
Additives, Water, Fish/Shellfish, Irradiation, Specific Foods, GM/Novel Foods, Information Disclosure, Contract/Commercial Liaison
Alison Nunn

Media Relations Manager
Gabrielle Owttram
News Manager
Justin Everard
Marketing
James Brandon
Editorial & Website
David Payne
Public Affairs
Julie Sheppard
Consumer Branch
Jaswinder Bangar
Business Support Branch
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Audit
Marion McArthur

Nutrition Policy
Phil Morgan
Food Safety Policy & Corporate Issues
Phil Morgan
LA Enforcement, Food Hazards, FEPA, Chernobyl Monitoring
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Agricultural Issues - Meat
Diary Policy, Slaughterhouses, BSE MHS Liaison
Animal Feedstuffs
Mike Pender

Deputy Director Food Safety, Enforcement & Consumer Choice
Gerry McCurdy
Assistant Director Corporate Resources
Greg Irwin
General Food Hygiene
Trevor Williamson
Primary Production
Kirsten Dunbar
Audit
Michael Jackson
Consumer Choice
Maria Jennings

Veterinary Advisors
Milorad Radakovic
Alistair Booth
Jose Camara-Diaz
John Hukku
Lawson Wood

Legal Investigators
Gareth Williams
Dave Hickman
Alan Stead
Andy Perry
John Roberts
Keith Bassett
Adrian Morgan
Robert Astley
Marita Benito

Appendix 4

Analysis of Departmental Expenditure Plans

This analysis was formerly published in the FSA's Departmental Report each year. By agreement with HM Treasury, the analysis will in future be published in the FSA's Annual Report.

The aim of the following tables is to provide a detailed analysis of departmental expenditure plans in resource terms, showing resource consumption and capital investment. The scope of the resource tables is restricted to 2001/02 to 2006/07.

Total public spending for the Food Standards Agency – Table 1

This table shows the Departments total public spending splitting the total Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) into resource and capital DEL.

TABLE 1: Total Public Spending for the Food Standards Agency						
	2001/02 Outturn £000	2002/03 Outturn £000	2003/04 Outturn £000	2004/05 Outturn £000	2005/06 Plans £000	2006/07 Plans £000
Consumption of Resources						
Request for Resources:						
1) Protecting and promoting public health in relation to food						
a) administration, inspections, surveillance, managing research and development, education, publicity and publications	88,665	94,982	99,165	105,247	111,777	111,777
b) slaughterhouse inspections and controls	18,135	25,054	24,442	29,847	31,700	31,700
Total Resource Budget	106,800	120,036	123,607	135,094	143,477	143,477
<i>of which:</i>						
Resource DEL ^(1,2)	106,800	120,036	123,607	135,094	143,477	143,477
<i>of which:</i>						
Depreciation	1,510	1,775	1,792	2,466	2,004	2,004
Cost of Capital charges	150	(183)	(96)	(1,587)	762	762
New Provision & adjustments to previous provisions	42	42	396	3,794	42	42
Other non-cash items			70	65		
Capital Spending:						
a) administration, inspections, surveillance, managing research and development, education, publicity and publications	1,158	625	1,195	401	322	322
b) slaughterhouse inspections and controls	359	282	1,897	469	325	325
Total capital budget	1,517	907	3,092	870	647	647
<i>of which:</i>						
Capital DEL ⁽¹⁾	1,517	907	3,092	870	647	647
Total public spending⁽³⁾	106,807	119,168	124,907	133,498	142,120	142,120

(1) Departmental Expenditure Limits, set as part of the 2004 Spending Review

(2) of which, resource "near-cash" DEL

(3) Total public spending calculated as the total of the resource budget plus the capital budget, less depreciation

Departmental Resource Budget – Table 2

This table shows the breakdown of resource spend between MHS and FSA HQ, and what the money is spent on.

TABLE 2: Resource Budget for the Food Standards Agency						
	2001/02 Outturn	2002/03 Outturn	2003/04 Outturn	2004/05 Outturn Estimate	2005/06 Plans	2006/07 Plans
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Consumption of resources by activity:						
a) administration, inspections, surveillance, managing research and development, education, publicity and publications	88,665	94,982	99,165	105,247	111,777	111,777
b) slaughterhouse inspections and controls	18,135	25,054	24,442	29,847	31,700	31,700
Total Resource Budget	106,800	120,036	123,607	135,094	143,477	143,477
<i>of which:</i>						
Resource DEL ^(1,2)	106,800	120,036	123,607	135,094	143,477	143,477
(1) Departmental Expenditure Limits, set as part of the 2004 Spending Review						
(2) of which, resource "near cash" DEL	106,615	119,309	124,537	131,226	141,316	141,316

Departmental Capital Budget – Table 3

This table gives a breakdown of investment or capital spending plans by the MHS and FSA HQ.

TABLE 3: Capital Budget for the Food Standards Agency						
	2001/02 Outturn	2002/03 Outturn	2003/04 Outturn	2004/05 Outturn Estimate	2005/06 Plans	2006/07 Plans
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Capital Spending						
a) administration, inspections, surveillance, managing research and development, education, publicity and publications	1,158	625	1,195	401	322	322
b) slaughterhouse inspections and controls	359	282	1,897	469	325	325
Total Capital Budget	1,517	907	3,092	870	647	647
<i>of which:</i>						
Capital DEL ⁽¹⁾	1,517	907	3,092	870	647	647
(1) Departmental Expenditure Limits, set as part of the 2004 Spending Review						

Capital Employed – Table 4

Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB) gives a much clearer picture of the capital assets used by a department. This is used as the basis for calculating the cost of capital charges paid by departments to reflect the economic costs of holding the assets. This table sets out total capital employed by the department within the accounting boundary, and by its sponsored bodies outside the boundary.

TABLE 4: Analysis of Capital Employed						
	2001/02 Outturn	2002/03 Outturn	2003/04 Outturn	2004/05 Outturn Estimate	2005/06 Plans	2006/07 Plans
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
General Fund	(3,173)	(9,737)	(8,748)	(66,464)	(66,464)	(66,464)
Revaluation Reserve	62	569	545	363	363	363
TOTAL CAPITAL EMPLOYED	(3,111)	(9,168)	(8,203)	(66,101)	(66,101)	(66,101)

Analysis of Administration Costs – Table 5

This table shows the analysis of administration costs.

TABLE 5: Food Standards Agency Administration Costs						
	2001/02 Outturn	2002/03 Outturn	2003/04 Outturn	2004/05 Outturn Estimate	2005/06 Plans	2006/07 Plans
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Gross Admin Costs						
Pay bill	18,666	21,422	22,898	24,578	27,860	28,576
Other	24,184	21,998	26,926	34,566	49,772	46,272
Total Gross Admin Costs	42,850	43,420	49,824	59,144	77,632	74,848
Related administration cost receipts	(11,595)	(10,357)	(11,524)	(14,027)	(22,848)	(22,848)
Total net administration costs	31,255	33,063	38,300	45,117	54,784	52,000
<i>of which:</i>						
Departmental expenditure limit (DEL)	31,255	33,063	38,300	45,117	54,784	52,000
Non-cash AME	–	–	–	–	–	–
Total net administration costs by activity						
a) administration, inspections, surveillance, managing research and development, education, publicity and publications	31,255	33,063	38,300	45,117	54,784	52,000
Total Administration Costs	31,255	33,063	38,300	45,117	54,784	52,000

Staff Numbers – Table 6

This table shows analyses of staff numbers, including the Meat Hygiene Service, in terms of Civil Service Full Time Equivalent (FTEs).

TABLE 6: Staff Numbers						
	2001/02 Actual	2002/03 Actual	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Plans	2006/07 Plans
CS FTEs	2,055	2,175	2,207	2,175	2,175	2,175
Overtime	144	234	178	166	166	166
Casuals	40	51	32	32	32	32
Total	2,239	2,460	2,417	2,373	2,373	2,373

Appendix 5

Complaints received by the FSA in 2004/05

- 1 Full details of the FSA's complaints procedure can be found on our website at www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/how_we_work/fsacomplaintsprocedure As noted in Appendix 1, each year we publish details of complaints received by the FSA in our Annual Report.
- 2 The total number of recorded complaints received by the FSA during the year 2004/05 was 54. Of these, 40 were resolved internally by Divisions, 11 were dealt with by the FSA's Complaints Co-ordinator, 2 were referred to the Chief Executive and 1 was referred to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (the Ombudsman).
- 3 Categorising the 54 recorded complaints results in the following breakdown:
 - **Category A:** No fault, where complaint turned out to be unfounded.
23 cases in total; all of these were successfully resolved after corresponding with the individual complainants
 - **Category B:** Minor oversights and processing delays.
10 cases in total; all were resolved after full explanations were given
 - **Category C:** Complex and novel issues, which caused a delay or other problem.
1 case; this was a complaint regarding a disagreement with the FSA over shellfish bed classification
 - **Category D:** Complaints made in respect of diversity issues.
1 case; this was a complaint regarding the use of subtitles in the FSA's "Sid the Slug" advertising, as televised in Wales
 - **Category E:** Other.
19 cases; these were all successfully resolved after corresponding directly with the complainants in question. All were resolved at Divisional level bar two complaints, which were resolved after being progressed to the Chief Executive.
- 4 The 54 recorded complaints originated from a range of sources. There were 5 from industry/businesses, 2 from local authorities, 1 from the media, 3 from MPs and 43 from members of the public.
- 5 A significant proportion – 32 of 54 complaints – related to the Sudan I incident in February 2005. They were all from members of the public, in most cases complaining about either the difficulty in accessing the Sudan I product lists on the FSA website or the presentation and format of the lists themselves. The problems mainly arose as a result of the unprecedented number of visitors to the website looking for Sudan I information and the speed with which the lists had to be prepared and updated to keep the public informed.

Appendix 6

MHS enforcement

The MHS Inspection Team

- 1 The MHS enforces meat hygiene and animal health and welfare at slaughter legislation in all licensed fresh meat premises. This includes abattoirs, meat cutting plants, and cold stores. Application of the health mark confirms that red meat, poultry meat (white meat) and wild game has been produced in accordance with the Regulations, and under the supervision of an OVS.

MHS Enforcement Policy

- 2 The MHS Enforcement Policy outlines:
 - the major functions of the MHS
 - the principles of enforcement the MHS has agreed to adopt
 - the standards that will be applied when carrying out enforcement work
- 3 It also seeks to ensure that any formal action in which the MHS engages is reasonable, consistent, and proportionate to the risk posed to public health and animal welfare. The policy has been amended in light of the new EU Food Hygiene Regulations which are due to come into effect on 1 January 2006. The policy was issued for a 12-week consultation period in May 2005 as part of a consultation package on the new Regulations, the Manual for Official Controls, and the Industry Guide. The package can be accessed at www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/mhsenforcementpolicy.pdf

Informal Enforcement Action

- 4 Most day-to-day enforcement is achieved by means of straightforward dialogue. Those working for the MHS may speak directly to plant production staff, but will also inform the managers of licensed premises of significant deficiencies. It is a requisite that enforcement action begins with discussion first.
- 5 Selection as to the next stage depends on the risk to

public health, the severity of the offence, and the options available under the legislation. In certain situations, for example, the legislation does not provide for statutory notices (for example, in animal welfare cases).

- 6 Written advice/warnings are appropriate when there is a minor contravention of the Regulations which does not have an immediate impact on public health or animal welfare, or where the occupier fails to follow previous verbal advice.
- 7 Where informal advice is not followed, the OVS may escalate matters up to formal enforcement through the enforcement hierarchy.

Formal Enforcement Action

- 8 Statutory notices may be served due to defects in hygiene, unsatisfactory structural matters, to stop the use of particular types of equipment, to impose conditions on meat production, to close down the operation completely, or to stop a particular practice that contravenes the hygiene provisions of the legislation.

Formal and informal enforcement action taken by the MHS during 2003/04 and 2004/05

Formal Action	Number of Notices, 2003/04	Number of Notices, 2004/05
Improvement Notice served under Section 10 of the 1990 Food Safety Act	1,013	1,225
Regulation 10 Notice (served under Regulation 10 of the Hygiene and Inspection Regulations, as amended), requiring urgent action to be taken to remedy a breach or breaches of the Regulations	565	654
"Minded to" Notice (<u>applicable in Scotland only</u>) which gives the plant operator notice of the intention to serve an Improvement Notice	92	161
Informal Action	Number of Warnings, 2003/04	Number of Warnings, 2004/05
Written warning	6,100	6,205

Source: Veterinary & Technical Directorate of the MHS

Prosecutions

- 9 Legally, prosecutions are taken by the relevant enforcement authority. In practice, in England and Wales they are taken by the MHS for all cases except animal welfare, where Defra prosecute. In Scotland the prosecutor is the Procurator Fiscal.
- 10 Prosecutions are only taken after oral representations have been made to the plant management. Usually – but not always – other enforcement tools (such as written advice/warnings, and/or statutory notices) will have been tried and found wanting before a prosecution is recommended by the OVS.
- 11 Those recommendations are considered against the MHS enforcement policy and the final decision is taken in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors.
- 12 In Scotland, the decision to prosecute rests with the Procurator Fiscal who will consider cases reported by the FSA Legal Department on the basis of recommendations from the MHS, in accordance with the Prosecution Code issued by the Crown Office and the Procurator Fiscal Service.
- 13 In certain circumstances, cautioning (or, in Scotland, a formal warning) will be appropriate – for example, where the criteria for prosecution have been made out, but there have been admissions; there is no history known of the defendant; the offence is less serious, and there is evidence of remorse.
- 15 During 2004/05, a total of 32 cases covering 209 individual charges were brought before the courts. 21 of these cases resulted in conviction, whilst there were acquittals in three cases. The remaining cases were withdrawn or did not proceed for a variety of reasons, e.g., company in liquidation. Additionally, 24 official cautions were issued by the FSA in 2004/05 for offences committed in licensed meat premises.

Alleged contraventions referred by the MHS for possible prosecution in 2004/05

- 14 In 2004/05, the FSA Investigations Branch undertook to investigate 360 alleged contraventions referred by the MHS for possible prosecution. Typically, several referrals will relate to events and circumstances at a particular plant on a particular day. The breakdown of referrals for 2004/05 was as follows:

Legislation	Number of referrals
Food hygiene/safety	270
Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs)	31
Animal welfare	49
Animal by-products	10
Total	360

Source: Legal Services, Food Standards Agency

Appendix 7

Glossary of terms

AFAL	Awards for Food Action Locally
BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
COT	Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment
CVD	Cardio-vascular disease
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DEL	Departmental Expenditure Limit
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DH	Department of Health
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
DSP	Diarrhetic Shellfish Poisoning
EC	European Commission
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EU	European Union
EVM	Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals
FSA	Food Standards Agency
FSPB	Food Safety Promotion Board
FTEs	Civil Service Full Time Equivalent
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point – a documented food safety management system widely regarded as the most effective way of managing and controlling hazards inherent in food handling and production. It is a structured approach based on seven principles, which may be applied flexibly in food businesses of all sizes to ensure that proportionate risk-based controls are in place and safe food is produced.
HPLC	High performance liquid chromatography
LACORS	the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services
LGA	Local Government Association
MBA	Mouse bio-assay
MHS	Meat Hygiene Service
MOWG	Muslim Organisations Working Group
NI	Northern Ireland
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
OTM	Over Thirty Months
PSP	Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning
SACN	Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition
SEAC	Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee
SFAC	Scottish Food Advisory Committee
SFBB	Safer Food, Better Business

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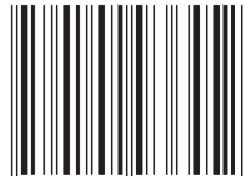
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