

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1: Should the scope of the new food body extend beyond the current scope of the FSA in Scotland? If yes, what specific extensions of scope would you suggest, and why?

- We do not think the scope of the new body should extend beyond the current scope at this stage. The new body should be established and any changes introduced incrementally.

2: Should the new food body and the Scottish Government continue the arrangements for independent and partnership work on diet and nutrition set out in Annex A? If not, what changes would you suggest, and why?

- Yes, the arrangements for independent and partnership work should continue.

3: Are there any additional roles, responsibilities or functions in respect of diet and nutrition that you think the new food body could take on to help deliver an improvement to the health of the people in Scotland? Please give details and reasons.

- No, not at this stage. The new body should consolidate its position in the first instance.

4: What steps do you think could be taken to ensure the new food body is able to access the best available independent expert advice it needs to underpin its work on food safety and public health nutrition in Scotland? Please give reasons.

- The new body needs to have the skills, expertise and resources to do this and implement the findings. This includes assessing and synthesising evidence as well as commissioning research. Universities should be able to advise on clinical academic leads in this area and Health Boards will be able to identify public health input. The availability of national expert advice should also be protected through consideration of additional training and mentoring of key staff to ensure sufficient succession planning.

5: Do you consider that the new food body should focus its research and surveillance activities on issues that are particularly pertinent to Scottish citizens or should it also contribute to science and evidence programmes on wider issues which have relevance to the UK as a whole? Please give reasons.

- The focus should be primarily on issues pertinent to Scotland, while maintaining an awareness of, and consideration of, the national context of these.

6: Do you agree that the new food body should be responsible for the coordination of all Scottish Government funded research on food safety and public health nutrition? What steps could be taken to raise the profile of the new food body as a research funder across the UK and beyond? Please give reasons.

- Possibly, but we are unsure of the full implications of this, e.g. in the Chief Scientists Office this would need to be considered more fully and consulted on.

7: Do you have any further suggestions for how the new food body could establish a strong independent evidence base for food safety, food standards and nutrition policy? Please give reasons.

- Review of the application of national audit processes in this area.

8: Do you consider that the new food body would require any further statutory powers, in addition to those that the FSA already has, to equip it to deal effectively with incidents such as the recent horse meat substitutions, and to prevent such incidents happening? Please give reasons.

- We do not have sufficient detail on these powers to comment at this stage.

9: Do you have any further comments about how the new food body might ensure that it can deal effectively with contraventions of food standards and safety law? Please give reasons.

- Effective cross-border working of agencies should be enshrined in any new legislation or operating policy.

10: Should the new food body take on any roles and responsibilities not currently fulfilled by the FSA in Scotland? If yes, please give details and reasons.

- No, not at this stage.

11: Please tell us your views about these suggestions for changes to the delivery of official food and feed controls. Do you think that the new food body should work in a different way with local authorities? Please give reasons.

- We believe that there would need to be further discussion with local authorities about this point to ensure an effective approach and that there is agreement on the way forward.

12: Do you have any views on how the new food body should assure delivery of official controls and meet the relevant EU obligations? Please give reasons.

- If the new body is going to undertake additional activities, then there is a risk of duplication of efforts which must be avoided. The new body should prioritise key areas of work to begin with and expand its role as required or is feasible.

13: Are there any additional or alternative relationships that you would suggest that would help the new food body achieve the Scottish Ministers' objective of longer, healthier lives for the people of Scotland? Please give details and reasons.

- Links with industry are important but the new body needs to resist any attempts by industry to determine policy or influence its practice.

14: Do you have any suggestions about how the new food body can engage effectively with consumers, both in developing policy and providing information and advice?

- The new body need to look at different ways of engaging with consumers and the public which would involve different media and forms including specific issues e.g. related to a particular topic and ongoing engagement e.g. through committees or groups. Additional measures could include greater clarity of food labelling, FSA public awareness notices within large food retailers (including concern notification contact details), guidance on food handling on packages containing particularly risk prone substances.

15: Do you agree with the suggested approach to ensuring the new food body's independence from Government and the food industry? Do you have any further suggestions for how the new food body could best establish and maintain its position as an arms length part of Government? Please give reasons.

- Yes, it is absolutely critical that the new body is independent - and seen to be independent - regarding its work and the advice it provides.

16: Do you have any further comments, or suggestions, on the creation of a new food body for Scotland that are not covered by any of the previous questions?

- No further comments.

