

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?

- No specific comment

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

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, but co-ordination with activities in other areas is essential.

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 current FSA supports and has access to an excellent range of independent scientific advisory committees. These committees have been the source of several authoritative and influential reports on important aspects of food safety. Currently the FSA can table questions with these committees to obtain opinion and advice to inform policy decisions. The new Scottish body must retain the ability to access these important sources of advice. It would be extremely costly and difficult to duplicate this function within Scotland. Failure to access this expertise will result in a diminution of the quality of evidence available to support policy decisions.

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 vast majority of issues are likely to be relevant to the UK as a whole. This is particularly pertinent to microbiological and chemical food hazards. It would be expensive duplication to attempt to mirror these

activities for the same hazards on either side of the border. To attempt to do so is likely to result in a diminution of the quality of research and evidence.

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.

- No. This should be a joint activity in combination with the Health Department, as the research questions overlap to a very significant extent.

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.

- For the reasons outlined in the answers to questions 4, 5 and 6, it is a mistake to attempt to pursue such a course.

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.

- No. The horsemeat incident was not a failure of statutory powers. It was a result of criminal activity that can be dealt with adequately under existing legislation.

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.

- No

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

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.

- No specific comment

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.

- Relationships with the EU will be hard to manage in a different way, as the FSA will remain the relevant competent national authority in dealing with the EU.

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.

- No specific comment

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?

- No specific comment

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

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?

- It is a principle of the current FSA that they are committed to transparent, evidence-based policy. That principle must be preserved in this transition.