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A HEALTHIER SCOTLAND: CONSULTATION ON CREATING A NEW FOOD BODY

The Regulatory Review Group (RRG) is responding, by way of this letter, to the consultation on *Creating a New Food Body*.

The RRG is an independent business-led committee¹ which works to promote and develop a culture and environment where both business and Government work together to create better regulation for all. The remit of the group includes advising Scottish Government in all aspects of the Better Regulation agenda, and we align our activities and our aspirations with the Scottish Government's Purpose of increasing sustainable economic growth.

RRG welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government's plans to create a new Scottish body for food safety, food standards, nutrition, food labelling and meat inspection which is running concurrently with the Food Standards Agency consultation.

RRG would offer the following observations which we hope would be of benefit:-

- The new food body should adopt and respect the established principles of better regulation (regulation is transparent, proportionate, consistent, accountable and targeted only where needed). Regulation is necessary to provide consumer protection but it also has an important role in driving

¹ This response reflects the collective view of RRG but the position of individual member organisations may vary on some aspects.

business competitiveness, exports and sustainable economic growth. Ensuring regulators apply the appropriate balance between economic and other regulatory objectives, combined with appropriate national consistency and local responsiveness in delivery and implementation are key to this.

- RRG is aware of continuing concerns in respect of resource and training issues in the areas of environmental health and trading standards, most recently highlighted in the Audit Scotland '[Protecting Consumers](#)' report.
- Regarding the option of reducing duplication by taking greater recognition of industry standards, RRG member, NFU Scotland believes the new food body for Scotland should take greater account of the considerable reduction in risk associated with a farm that is Farm Assured. More effective communication between Farm Assurance Schemes and Local Authority inspectors could prevent unnecessary duplication of resource, time and cost in low risk areas, freeing up time and resource to concentrate on high-risk bottlenecks within the food chain.
- RRG recommends fully engaging with business at an early stage to ensure the potential impact of proposed legislation is understood as this helps avoid unintended consequences and create the regulation right first time. RRG believes that engaging in open and constructive dialogue in the initial process and through the development of the regulation leads to a better understanding of issues. In Scotland, on the advice of RRG, Business and Regulatory Impact Assessments (BRIAs) should be completed for all Scottish legislation with the potential to impact on business. This is an area FSA (Scotland) takes seriously, submitting BRIAs as and when required. We trust that the new food body will act with the same diligence and business-focus.
- Experience has shown that many of the challenges that businesses raise with RRG can be, or could have been, resolved easily by all parties meeting together at the outset, finding common ground or improved understanding, and then working to find a solution. Although challenging at times multi-lateral pre-development, in general, brings an even better solution that everyone is committed to, and a saving of resource. It allows issues to be tackled before they become problematic and helps to improve understanding, consistency and transparency.

RRG would be happy to provide any further information that would be helpful. More information on the Regulatory Review Group can be found at [Better Regulation – Regulatory Review Group](#).

Yours sincerely



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