

## RESPONSE FROM THE UK GOVERNMENT

### 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?

**Comments** – this is a matter for the Scottish Government. The UK Government hopes that all constituent parts of the new food body, however constituted, will maintain collaboration and build coordination with organisations performing analogous functions in other parts of the UK.

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?

**Comments** - this is a matter for the Scottish Government and the new food body.

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.

**Comments** - this is a matter for the Scottish Government and the new food body.

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.

**Comments** – The UK Government suggests that the new food body works with other UK bodies where appropriate to jointly commission and share access to the best available advice and evidence.

There are important benefits for consumers, for wider public health, and for industry, in having a consistent UK approach and effective operational handling of food safety issues. With the establishment of the new food body we hope that all UK administrations and food bodies will work together to avoid mixed messages to the public on food safety.

To help underpin policy decisions, and provide economies of scale and best use of national specialists and their expertise independent scientific advisory committees that advise on food and related issues will continue to be accessible to the new food body.

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.

**Comments** - The UK Government suggests that, to make best use of available resources, the new food body works with the other UK food bodies to jointly commission appropriate research, surveillance and scientific advice on issues common to all. The provision of independent scientific advice from such bodies as the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens and the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition will remain UK wide and accessible to the new food body.

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.

**Comments** - The UK Government suggests that the Scottish Government and the new food body may wish to work with other UK research funders to help ensure coordinated programmes and avoid duplication.

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.

**Comments** - this is a matter for the Scottish Government and the new food body.

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.

**Comments** - this is a matter for the Scottish Government, though if possible Scotland should ensure wherever possible that requirements are common across the UK to avoid potential confusion to consumers, business, regulators and enforcement bodies.

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.

**Comments** - this is a matter for the Scottish Government and the new food body.

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.

**Comments** - this is a matter for the Scottish Government and the new food body.

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.

**Comments** - this is a matter for the Scottish Government and the new food body.

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.

**Comments** - this is a matter for the Scottish Government and the new food body.

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.

**Comments** - this is a matter for the Scottish Government and the new food body.

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?

**Comments** - this is a matter for the Scottish Government and the new food body.

14: 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.

**Comments** - this is a matter for the Scottish Government and the new food body, however the provisions of the Food Standards Act 1999 provide a useful model.

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?

**Comments** – The UK Government hopes that Scotland will integrate (as has been done in England) nutrition policy with the wider body of public health work on diet-related health problems, alcohol, obesity and physical activity. This can strengthen relationships with all those with an interest in ensuring good nutrition and health.

It should also be noted that in any pertinent European Union or other international negotiations the UK Government will retain primacy.