

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?

It is important to review how public health delivery and communication is delivered in Scotland, as this consultation has revealed the complexity of provision across a range of bodies.

The new food body, taking on the scope of the existing FSAS, already has its work cut out to establish and deliver on its core remit, whilst building good working relationships with other agencies and organisations within Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Perhaps the right time to review public health responsibilities is once the new body has been established. A further examination of who is best placed to deliver what aspects of public health could then be carried out.

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?

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.

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.

We need to ensure that Scotland does not become isolated from the relevant work that is going on across the rest of the UK, and beyond. There are already a number of advisory committees in place that we should be able to tap into rather than replicate, to ensure good communication and use of resources. We should also ensure representation on these committees, or have an appointed person to look out for Scottish needs present on each.

We may also need to be flexible in building in the ability to pull together working groups on specific issues, able to deliver a fast response to issues that need expert input. A pool of organisations / individuals that may be available with the right expertise should be established, as well as the ability to pull in experts from other places.

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

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

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

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.

Testing regimes are important in the enforcement armoury, but they are not the whole answer.

We need to ensure that we strengthen our supply chain assurance, so that scrutiny is the norm. Acknowledging and supporting schemes which encourage this will help. For example:

- Organic is a highly regulated food system. Any product sold as 'organic' must comply with strict rules assuring consumers they are buying genuine products that can be fully traceable back to the farm. Independent organic inspectors accredit every step of the supply chain, meaning buying organic offers consumers a more confident choice about the food they buy and

eat. Organic supply chains are regularly inspected at every stage and the Soil Association provides rigorous certification standards, developed in partnership with experts across the country. We work closely with our licensees on their production and processing systems to maintain integrity and to ensure consumers are getting a true organic product.

- The current and potential impact of the Food for Life Catering Mark in the foodservice sector, now awarded primary school catering services in 6 Scottish local authorities, reaching 1 in 5 primary schools. UK farm assurance such as QMS is mandatory for all meat products, and this system provides an independent annual inspection, as well as encouraging caterers to make step by step progress towards using more local, free range, fairtrade and organic ingredients, and producing healthier and more sustainable menus.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

- Comments

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?

Our food system in Scotland, the UK and globally is increasingly complicated with many stages required to get food to where it needs to be. This industrialising process has brought with it economies of scale and opportunities for a wide diversity of food. However, the end result after decades of specialising at a macro level is quite depressing, with environmental, social and economic effects indicating system failure, from biodiversity loss and climate change to obesity.

The Scottish Government has a strong policy which recognises the importance of food in our society. Richard Lochhead reflects on the paradox in Scotland in his introduction to *Recipe for Success*. 'Despite producing fantastic food and drink we have one of the poorest diet-related health records in the developed world' (p iv).¹

Food production and consumption has a huge impact on our daily lives, including directly on:

- Our health and well-being, and therefore on costs to individuals and to society. Diet related diseases are debilitating and expensive.
 - o Diabetes affects 1 in 20 people in Scotland.
 - o In 2010, over a quarter of adults in Scotland were obese.
 - o By 2030, the cost of obesity to Scotland (both direct and indirect costs) is estimated to be between £0.9-3 billion with adult obesity predicted to rise to 40%.
- Our environmental challenges:
 - o biodiversity loss
 - o soil and water pollution
 - o climate change - globally, food production, distribution and consumption is estimated to account for one third of human-caused global warming effect.
- Our local economies, particularly in fragile farming areas, and on SMEs.

- Our landscape and our culture must to be looked after to support our valuable tourist industry, and ensure it is a place accessible and amenable for the people of Scotland.

It is important that the new body provides information to the public not just on public health, but also including well researched, environmentally sustainable diets. We need to take a long term view of our food system and the health of individuals and planet are linked. Sweden has carried out much research on this and is educating the public about both healthy and sustainable diets based on solid research. An example of this holistic approach provided by Malmo City Council, who have adopted the 'Eat SMART' messaging:

EAT S.M.A.R.T.

Eat S.M.A.R.T. is a model developed by the Institute for Public Health in Stockholm Region with input from the National Board for Consumer Policies and the National Food Administration. Eat S.M.A.R.T. is an information and education resource that presents an approach that helps you to both eat healthily and decrease your impact on the environment. The approach is based on research in the health and environment sectors. Eat S.M.A.R.T. is built on the Swedish nutrition recommendations combined with the environmental goals of Sweden.

S.M.A.R.T. STANDS FOR:

- S**maller amount of meat
- M**inimise intake of junk food/empty calories
- A**n increase in organic
- R**ight sort of meat and vegetables
- T**ransport efficient

From Policy for Sustainable Development and Food, Malmo City Council.
<http://www.malmo.se/English/Sustainable-City-Development/Sustainable-food-in-Malmo.html>

Looking at smart purchasing to also support local economies would chime well with the push for local purchasing and development of resilient, regionalised supply chains and help to ensure consistency with our national food policy.