



**Paper for information: Government Updates on Nutrition
Related Activities
FSA**

Agenda Item: 09

Please see attached paper for information.

Agency Strategic Plan

- 1) The Agency Board is to consider how to finalise the Strategic Plan in light of the views stakeholders expressed. The Board's discussion will take place at its Open meeting on 14 October 2004. At the same meeting the Board will also discuss its policy on Sustainable Development.

Agency Research Meeting

- 2) Each year the Food Standards Agency holds an open meeting on research. These meetings usually attract around 200 delegates, including speakers and Agency support staff. The composition of the audience is very diverse and mostly drawn from Agency research contractors or members of academia but representatives from industry and consumer groups are also likely to be present. There is usually a fair representation from the Agency's advisory committees and working parties and a few of the Agency's Board usually attend. Attendance is free on a first-come-first served basis. These meetings have 3 objectives i.e.
 - to update the Agency's stakeholders (research contractors, members of academia, consumer groups, industry representatives etc.) on our research policy and strategy in the light of developments in the UK and elsewhere;
 - to present some of the recent outcomes of the research funded by the Agency and highlight how it might be used either directly or indirectly to the benefit of consumers; and
 - to look ahead over the next 5 years to identify food safety and quality issues and identify what research the Agency might usefully fund to address these issues.
- 3) This year the meeting will be held on Friday 12 November 2004 at the Congress Centre, 28 Great Russell Street, London. Presentations will be made by a mixture of Agency staff and invited external experts. If members would like to attend **please contact the secretariat.**

Nutrition and Health Claims

- 4) SACN discussed a Nutrition and Health claims proposed European Directive at the meeting in February 2004 (SACN/04/07). SACN's comments were forwarded and an amended version of the proposed directive produced. This updated version was forwarded to members on 4th August, comments from which have been forwarded to relevant officials at the Agency.
- 5) Discussions in Council Working Group and in the European Parliament have been suspended due to the European Parliamentary elections and appointment of a new European Commission. They are likely to start again in October. In the meantime the Agency is holding a number of stock-take meetings with stakeholders (to which SACN members were invited) to discuss priorities and identify strategies for securing amendments.

Working in Education

Joint FSA/OFSTED Survey of Good Practice in Whole School Approaches to Food and Nutrition in Primary Schools and Early Year Settings

- 6) The Agency and DfES have jointly funded the above in England. The report Starting Early was published in July 2004 at www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/ofstedearly.pdf
- 7) Results will be disseminated to school Governors, head teachers, caterers, other Government Departments, and others with an interest in school nutrition.

School Meals Research Project

- 8) The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Food Standards Agency commissioned research to assess whether food provided at school lunches in secondary schools in England complies with statutory nutritional standards (introduced in April 2001) and associated guidance. The survey has also assessed the food consumed against the Caroline Walker Trust's nutritional guidelines for school meals (Caroline Walker Trust (1992) Nutritional Guidelines for School Meals. Report of an Expert Working Group. London: Caroline Walker Trust) and gathered information on the influences on food choice that can be modified by schools. The report of this work was published in July 2004 at www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/secondaryschoolmeals.pdf
- 9) The Agency has published the results of the Health Education Trust's work on piloting and evaluating economically viable healthier drinks vending in secondary schools – see www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/vendingreport.pdf The results show that healthier drinks vending can be economically viable if managed effectively. Seventy thousand drinks were sold over the course of the project's 20 week life. Guidelines for healthier drinks vending, which will be disseminated with support from the National Dairy Council, have been prepared and will be available from October 2004.

School Lunchbox Survey 2004

- 10) The second school lunchbox survey was published on 1 September 2004 at www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/lunchbox2004report.pdf
- 11) Findings were similar to the UK wide survey last year and found that children who take a packed lunch to school are still eating far too much fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar in one meal. Further lunchbox menu suggestions along with nutrient information and costs were also published on the Agency's website at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/sep/lunchbox2

School meals

- 12) The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Agency jointly commissioned a survey to assess compliance with the statutory nutritional

standards for school lunches introduced in April 2001 and assessed food choices and consumption by secondary school pupils. The report presents the findings from a nationally representative sample survey of 79 secondary schools in England which provided information about catering practice and food provision at lunchtime, and information on the food selections of 5,695 secondary school pupils age 11-18 years.

- 13) The survey showed that 83% of schools met all the nutritional standards on food provision at the beginning of the service period, but only 47% met them at the end of service. A significant proportion of schools had no formal documentation defining the quality of the catering service, and few caterers had undergone recent training in healthy eating or cooking. It also showed that even in schools where nutritional standards were being met, pupils' food choices were often not in line with Government advice on achieving a balanced diet. The full report is available from our website at:
www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/jul/secondarieschoolmeals

Promotion of foods to children.

- 14) Following a public consultation, the Agency Board agreed the Action Plan on Food Promotions and Children's Diets at its open meeting on 6 July. The Action Plan calls upon a range of stakeholders to work with the Agency to tackle the imbalance in the food promotions aimed at children, and in doing so to encourage children to eat a more healthy diet. The Action Plan can be viewed on the Agency's website (<http://www.food.gov.uk/healthiereating/promotion/>).
- 15) Agency commissioned consultancy work is underway to develop nutrient profiles to define "foods high in fat, salt or sugar" and "healthier choices". The criteria and definitions developed will be relevant in taking forward a range of elements in the Action Plan. Initial discussions have focussed on deciding which nutrients to include and how best to combine them. This has included considering options that take account of the positive contribution to the diet of foods like cheese and dried fruit, as well as their fat, salt or sugar content. The view is that the task, whilst difficult, is achievable. A final report of the work is expected shortly, at which point the Agency will consider how best to seek stakeholders' views on the outcome of the work and its possible applications.

Informing Public, Dissemination and Media Activity

'Advice on fish consumption: benefits and risks' media coverage

- 16) The Agency has updated and issued new advice on eating oily fish subsequent to the SACN report 'Advice on fish consumption: benefits and risks'. Sir John Krebs, Alan Jackson and Dr Charmaine Griffiths from the British Heart Foundation launched the report on 24 June. The launch was well attended and shown live on the FSA website. The FSA press release was made available on the SACN website.
- 17) Sir John Krebs and Alan Jackson received considerable amount of coverage as the main spokespersons. Most of the broadsheets and popular press newspapers

covered the story positively, summarising the main guidelines accurately and emphasising the extent of the research that formed the basis of the report. The 'negative' reporting concentrated on the perceived restrictive nature of the guidelines due to the health risks associated with dioxins in fish rather than the positive message of fish being healthy and that the public can eat more than previously advised.

18) The key messages reported in relation to the report were:

- clear advice on maximum recommended amounts people can eat,
- oily fish is good against heart disease, 7 out of 10 people don't eat any,
- oily fish contains dioxins but the benefits outweigh the risks and
- we hope that this advice will encourage more people to eat oily fish.

19) The report has been forwarded to other EU member states food authorities and EFSA for information.

Agency website Diet and Health

20) The launch of the stand alone Agency website on Diet and Health currently being developed will be later in the Autumn.

Nutrition Forum

21) The Nutrition Forum held a meeting on the 22 June 2004 where a presentation on Food and Health Policy in Scotland illustrating the work being supported by the Scottish Executive and FSA Scotland were discussed. Updates on the Food and Health Action Plan and the FSA Draft Strategic plan were also provided.

22) A paper providing an update on the informal review of the Nutrition Forum was discussed. It was agreed that the terms of reference of the Nutrition Forum would be reviewed following release of the Public Health White Paper in the Autumn, as this may affect the structure and nature of the Forum.

23) A copy of the minutes of this meeting and will be placed on the Agency's and Department of Health website in due course.

24) The next meeting of the Nutrition Forum will be held on 9 November 2004.

Salt Campaign

25) The Agency is committed to reducing salt intakes and has agreed, in line with SACN recommendations, a long-term aim to achieve the average salt intake to 6g for adults by 2010.

26) The Agency launched the major Public Health Campaign on salt in September with a supporting salt website which can be found at www.salt.gov.uk

27) The campaign is one of public health education and the advertising, across all media, focuses on health messages raising awareness of the link between salt and hypertension and the subsequent impact on health. The advertising will continue until December. The campaign messages have been endorsed by the British Heart Foundation (BHF) and the Stroke Association. The Salt Campaign will be measured for effectiveness with tracking research.

Reformulation of Foods by the Food Industry

28) The Agency and Health Departments are holding ongoing discussions with food manufacturers and retailers, trade associations and caterers about salt reduction. Additionally the FSA is continuing to monitor the levels of salt in different foods through a series of mini surveys. For the duration of the Campaign the Agency logo will appear on the BHF salt leaflet.

29) The Agency and the Department of Health have continued the programme of meetings with all sectors of the food industry on salt reduction work. Since plans were initially submitted in February, these meetings have secured an additional 16 salt reduction plans which have been received or are due to be submitted to the Agency by September; and commitments to further action from another 16 organisations.

30) Information on reductions achieved have also been received from some organisations. This includes the FDF which stated that Project Neptune had achieved a 20% reduction in sauces and a 6% reduction in soups in 2003; the Association of Cereal Food Manufacturers announced a further 6% reduction in salt in breakfast cereals in 2003; Heinz has reduced the salt content of its baked beans and 20% cuts in the salt levels of its soups; and Unilever stated that the salt content of its Birds Eye range of foods had been reduced by 16% on average.

31) Details of the commitments received in February were entered in to the salt model, which suggested that these would result in a 0.6g reduction in salt intake by the end of 2005. This is two-thirds of the way towards achieving the interim target of 1g reduction by the end of 2005. However, further commitments are needed to ensure that we deliver the target reduction of 6g by 2010 so more action is required.

32) In her response to industry in June, Melanie Johnson expressed disappointment in the substance of the salt reduction plans received to date. She asked for revised plans by 18th September 2004.

33) An information paper on salt was submitted to the Agency Board in July. This paper can be found using the following weblink:
<http://www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/ourboard/boardmeetoccasionalpapers/saltprogressboardoccasional>
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Mini-surveys

34) In early July, the FSA published the results of an analytical survey of the nutrient content of pizzas, focusing on a limited range of nutrients, including sodium, fat and sugar and a separate survey comparing the nutritional content of baked beans

and canned pasta products, using label information. Both surveys showed that salt levels could vary significantly. For example, one child's pizza was found to contain almost three times as much salt as that found in another similar pizza and for 'standard baked beans', 'beans and sausages', 'standard spaghetti' and 'children's pasta shapes' categories, the product with the highest salt content had between two and three times the amount of salt as the one with the lowest salt content. 32 per cent of the pizzas contained more than 3g of salt per portion and an adult portion (1/2 a 400g tin) of baked beans contained on average 2.7 g salt. For further details see:
<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/jul/saltsurvey>

National Diet and Nutrition Survey

- 35) The final summary volume in the series on the NDNS adults 19-64 years is in the final stages of preparation and will be published later this year. The survey dataset will be deposited at the Data Archive later this year.
- 36) Work commissioned with MRC Human Nutrition Research to analyse the NDNS adults 19-64 years dataset to estimate levels of under-reporting, has been completed and the Agency is considering the final report.
- 37) A workshop for SACN members to consider the findings of the NDNS adults 19-64 years is to be arranged for early 2005. Further analyses of the data focussing on low micronutrient intakes and status will be prepared for this meeting.

Processed food databank

- 38) The Agency has commissioned a processed food databank, which will form a reference tool for establishing a baseline then tracking the nutrient content (particularly sodium) of processed food products, focusing on the market leaders in each product category. Data collection is expected to take place before mid-November 2004 and the results to be reported by the end of this year. The project has been designed to run over 3 years with the data collection and reporting occurring at the same time each year.

Update FSA Scotland

Research on Food Access in Scotland

- 1) FSA Scotland and the Scottish Executive Health Department (SEHD) are interested in establishing “a national retailing map of Scotland”. It is envisaged that it will have several interacting components. As a minimum the map will define in different geographical locations:
 - the size, type and number of stores or other outlets
 - the availability and cost of a “healthy” food basket
- 2) FSA Scotland are currently assessing proposals received for this research.

Hungry for Success

- 3) FSA Scotland was part of the Scottish Executive’s Panel on School Meals which was established by Scottish Ministers in November 2001 to provide costed recommendations and a fully developed implementation strategy to establish standards for the nutritional content of school meals. The final report of this Expert Panel, Hungry for Success, was published in November 2002.
- 4) As part of these new Scottish guidelines FSAS was asked by the Expert Panel to prepare target nutrient specifications for manufactured products. The specifications were published on 25th May 2004 and can be found at www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/niss-00.asp. These guidelines will be monitored as part of the HMIE programme of school inspections and by independent research in 2007. Nutritional software H4S (Nutmeg, 2004) was also produced to help local authorities plan menus and monitor nutritional intake to meet the Nutrient Standards. The Agency in Scotland has recently met with Local Authority caterers to discuss progress made on the implementation of Hungry for Success.

Working Group on Monitoring Progress Towards the Scottish Dietary Targets

- 5) The renewed impetus on diet and health in Scotland has focussed on the need to monitor progress towards an improved diet, in particular the Scottish Diet Action Plan targets, in more detail than has been available in the past. In partnership with the Scottish Executive Health Department, FSA Scotland established a Working Group to assess the requirements for nutritional surveillance in Scotland and monitor progress towards the Scottish Diet Action Plan and other diet related targets. The Group has met five times since June 2003 and it is anticipated that a final report detailing a number of options available for nutritional surveillance in Scotland will be produced by October 2004.
- 6) Following the recommendations of this working group FSA Scotland put out a call for proposals / expressions of interest in August in the Agency’s Research Requirements Document to measure non-milk extrinsic sugar intake in Scottish children and sodium intake in the Scottish population as a whole.

Food Labelling Action Plan – Food Labelling Forum

- 7) FSA Scotland will be hosting the next Food Labelling Forum, which will take place in Aberdeen on 20 October 2004. Details can be found on the FSA website at <http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/aug/foodLabellingforumforaberd een>. This is the sixth Food Labelling Forum to be held and the second time the event has taken place in Scotland. The first Forum took place in London in November 2000. It was set up to build contact and dialogue with organisations and individuals that have an interest in food labelling. The Food Labelling Forum has become an important event to help the Agency to hear consumers' views and concerns.
- 8) The format for the day will comprise of an overview of the Food Labelling Action Plan, and an update of the plan via three presentations. The presentations will include labelling of foods containing certain allergen ingredients, signposting of foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt, and food labelling enforcement. The day will end with a question and answer session.
- 9) The Agency's Food Labelling Action Plan is a wide-ranging plan comprising a mixture of regulatory and voluntary initiatives, which tackle the issues that consumers have identified as priorities. Progress on the Action Plan is reported regularly at the Agency's open Board meetings. The latest Board update (12 February 2004) is available at: <http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/feb/boardupdate130204>

Update – FSA Northern Ireland

Food & Nutrition Strategy Northern Ireland

- 1) The Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland is a key partner on the Department of Health-led Working Group responsible for developing a Food & Nutrition Strategy for Northern Ireland. A draft is currently being prepared to go out for consultation in autumn this year, which sets out key nutritional targets on the reduction of salt, fat and sugars. This will be launched in April 2005.

The Childhood Obesity Task Force

- 2) Established in March this year it has a remit to consider and evaluate options for addressing childhood obesity in Northern Ireland. The task-force comprises senior representatives from the Food Standards Agency, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, the Department of Education, the Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety and the Health Promotion Agency. The task-force has gone out to consultation with a range of stakeholders across the province and is due to bring forward proposals towards the end of this year

The Compulsory Nutritional Standards Steering Group

- 3) A group set up last year to oversee the implementation of nutritional guidelines in schools, following the publication of 'Catering for Healthier Lifestyles'. The Food Standards Agency is represented on this group, along with Catering Managers from each of the Education and library boards, the Health Promotion Agency and a representative from the Community Dietician Network. Nutritional Standards are currently being piloted across 100 schools in Northern Ireland and will be evaluated next year.

The Standing Consultative Forum on Learning for Life and Work

- 4) FSA NI has been invited to be part of the Standing Consultative Forum on Learning for Life and Work. This group has been set up by the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment and will meet for the first time in November this year. The Forum will oversee the implementation of the revised curriculum proposals in the area of 'Learning for Life and Work', a key component of which is diet and nutrition under the Personal Development strand.

Update- FSA Wales

Food and Well Being

AFAL (Awards for Food Action Locally)

- 1) Following presentation of the AFAL awards for initiatives to promote better diet at the local level at two nutrition conferences in May, there have been numerous opportunities to highlight the good practice demonstrated by winners and encourage others to undertake similar awareness raising activities. The winners are also being encouraged to submit their projects as case studies for the 'Foodvision' joint Local Authority/FSA website.
- 2) The award scheme has allowed FSA Wales to build up a more complete picture of the community food projects in existence across Wales, and the information collected will be used to supplement the Sustain Food Poverty Projects database. FSA Wales are committed to running these awards again over 2004-5 with the launch anticipated towards the end of October 2004.

Eating Well for Older People

- 3) As one of the key partners in the Welsh Assembly Government's campaign 'Keep Well This Winter' (KWTW) which aims to keep older people well, warm and safe over the winter months, FSA Wales receive frequent requests to provide information and advice to older people on healthy eating. As a means of providing more comprehensive coverage, a training package for peer educators is being developed with a view to engaging older people in delivering these healthy eating messages to their peers. It is anticipated the training will take place by the end of 2004.
- 4) As part of last years campaign FSA Wales produced a calendar style booklet 'Eat Well- a guide to healthier eating for the over 60's'. This has now been recorded as an audio tape/CD for the blind and partially sighted in partnership with RNIB Cymru along with the other main KWTW messages. The audio resource will be available from the end of September.

Get Cooking pilot project

- 5) FSA Wales ran an enhanced pilot 'Get Cooking' course in four places in Wales between February and April 2004 namely, Milford Haven, Rhyl, Llanelli and Welshpool following the success of an earlier pilot involving four groups of young people during November 2002 and March 2003 in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 6) The overall aim of 'Get Cooking' is to teach young people basic cooking skills so that they feel a sense of achievement and enjoy the experience. Learning about basic food skills, and how to cook, enables young people to make informed decisions about the food they eat. In this way they learn about healthy eating, food hygiene and budgeting tips in a practical and fun way. The main aim of the free six week course was for the young people to learn about cooking: through this it was hoped they gained valuable facts about their own health and wellbeing. At the

end of the six weeks the participants were awarded a certificate and a £10 gift voucher.

- 7) Overall reaction to the 'Get Cooking' course was very positive among both participants and trainers and exceeded expectations. The course made a positive impact on levels of cooking ability, confidence and enjoyment of participants. The recipes were perceived to be at the right level and trainers reported behavioural changes as evidence of hygiene messages in particular as having sunk in. Building on the success of the pilots, FSA Wales plans to develop a cookery course "toolkit" for wider dissemination .

Nutrition Network for Wales

- 8) Consultation to inform the structure and function of the network was carried out in two phases earlier in the year. In-depth interviews with 36 partners led to an initial set of recommendations, which were consulted on more broadly at dedicated workshop sessions at the two FSA Wales nutrition strategy implementation conferences.
- 9) The Wales Centre for Health (WCH) is working in partnership with the Agency on this initiative and has recently produced the final report of the consultation exercise which will be published on the Agency's website shortly. The recommendations of the report will form the basis of the project plan for developing this initiative. Following discussions, WCH are in the process of compiling a scope of work and we anticipate that development of this network will commence this Autumn.

Evaluation of Community Food Assistant Project

- 10) FSA Wales is working in partnership with Powys and Ceredigion Health Promotion, NPHS who are running a 3 year pilot Community Food and Nutrition Programme. The programme will be focussed around Community Food Assistants- unskilled local people who will be trained to support the work of a health promotion officer.
- 11) This initiative is aimed at reducing barriers to access and affordability for residents of the community and thereby reducing the risk of chronic diseases linked to poor nutrition. The main objectives are that by the end of the programme residents will be:
- better informed as to what constitutes a healthy diet; and
 - able to access a number of community based food related projects such as food co-ops, local box schemes, healthy cooking and budgeting courses.
- 12) FSA Wales is a partner of the Advisory Group which oversees the running of the programme, and the Agency will undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme, and assess its suitability for application to other communities in Wales. FSA Wales are currently in the process of awarding the contract for this piece of work and it is anticipated that baseline data will be collected before the

end of the year.