



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

Agenda Item: 7

Please see attached paper for information.

Strategic Plan 2005 – 2010 :

- 1) The Agency's strategic plan was published on 7 December and is available on the Agency site at www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2004/dec/strategicplan
- 2) The relevant section on nutrition is copied below.

Theme: Eating for Health

- We will work with health departments and other stakeholders to reduce the average salt intake of UK adults from the current 9.5g to 6g per day by 2010, and to reduce salt intake of children in line with Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition age-specific recommendations, also by 2010. We will monitor progress to ensure that we remain on course to achieve the target
- We will work with health departments and other stakeholders to reduce the average intake of saturated fat (for everyone from age 5 upwards) from the current level of 13.4% to below 11% of food energy by 2010
- By 2006 we will develop, in collaboration with health departments, targets for achieving a balance between calorie intake and energy output
- We will seek expert advice on the health implications of low micronutrient intakes in some population groups. We will look again at our priorities in 2007 if this evidence suggests we need to take action
- By 2006 we will establish targets for the salt content of the 10 food categories contributing most salt to the diet
- By 2005 we will implement survey programmes to track the key nutritional components of meals in major institutions, including schools. We will work with other government departments to set targets to improve the nutritional quality of such meals in line with the UK national targets for Calorie, fat, salt, and sugar intakes
- By 2005 we will have set up a programme of surveys of the Calorie, salt, fat, and/or sugar content of foods and will publish the results to help consumers make informed choices about what they eat
- By 2006 we will develop and promote a simple system for highlighting the salt, fat and sugar content of foods as part of a strategy for reducing intakes of salt, sugar and fat
- By 2005 we will review existing evidence on influences on food choices to identify which are practical and effective and to see where there are gaps in our current knowledge
- We will work with local authorities to develop the Food Vision database of local

initiatives on healthy eating to encourage and spread good practice. We will give priority to initiatives, which help disadvantaged and vulnerable people

- We will encourage all schools that have not already done so to adopt a 'whole school' approach to diet and nutrition
- We will work with the industry to achieve changes in the way food is promoted to children to redress the imbalance between less healthy foods and healthier alternatives

National Diet and Nutrition Survey

- 3) Members have received a copy of the fifth and final volume in the series reporting on the NDNS adults 19-64 years, published on 16 December 2004. This volume summarises the data presented in the earlier volumes, in a style accessible to a wider audience. The survey dataset is in preparation for deposit at the Data Archive.
- 4) Members will be aware of the work on the strategy for tackling under-reporting in future NDNS from the horizon scanning workshop.

Salt Work

- 5) 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.
- 6) The Agency launched a major public health campaign on salt in September 2004 with a supporting salt website which can be found at www.salt.gov.uk. The first phase of the campaign ran in autumn 2004.
- 7) Following completion of the first stage of the campaign, some evaluation research was carried out to ascertain the effectiveness of the campaign. This research has shown significant increases in awareness in key areas, especially among our main target audience of 35+ middle market women. There have also been promising changes in claimed behaviour.
- 8) The Agency is now in the early stages of planning the second phase of the campaign, which is likely to run in summer 2005. A stakeholder meeting is being organised for 21st February 2005.
- 9) The Agency and Health Departments are continuing to hold discussions with food manufacturers and retailers, trade associations and caterers about salt reduction. Positive progress is being made and many organisations have committed to reviewing their programmes after a year.
- 10) Around 20 further plans have been received since the Minister's call for new plans by September 2004. These are currently being analysed and individual responses will be made to the relevant companies in due course. However, it remains

important to receive, from all sectors of the food industry, long-term plans with commitments to stepwise salt reductions commensurate with achieving the 6g population target intake by 2010.

- 11) The outline for the FSA programme of work was put to the Board in July and has since been agreed with DH officials. It will include: obtaining long term plans backed up with clear data for all sectors; establishing targets for ten key product categories (this is a Strategic Plan target); focusing on foods which contribute most to salt in the diet, including meat products (22%) and cereal products (30%); establishing cross industry projects on pizzas, ready meals and sandwiches (which together contribute around 8% of salt to the diet and are highly competitive areas); increasing the emphasis on public procurement and the catering sector; and focusing on children's foods.
- 12) It is intended that the cross industry initiatives, on sandwiches, ready meals and pizzas, will run across the main retailers and relevant key manufacturers (for branded products), and will be similar in nature to Project Neptune. An overall, long-term target reduction figure for each category would be agreed by all participants, with interim targets to be achieved and reviewed on an annual basis.
- 13) The FSA is shortly to commission COI to undertake a review of healthy eating policies within the food industry.
- 14) The Agency is continuing to monitor the levels of salt in different foods through a series of mini-surveys. As part of this series the Agency published a survey on 16 December that looked at the salt content of 77 fresh/chilled, canned and packet soups. The results showed a wide variation of salt levels within each category, with 69% of the soups surveyed providing more than a quarter of the 6g recommended maximum daily intake for an adult. The survey report can be found on the Agency's website at:
<http://www.food.gov.uk/science/surveillance/fsis2004branch/fsis6904>

School meals

- 15) Following the publication in July 2004 of the joint Department for Education and Skills and Food Standards Agency survey of secondary school meals (report available at www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/secondarieschoolmeals.pdf), the two departments have recently commissioned a further survey to assess compliance with the statutory nutritional standards for school lunches, and assess food choices and consumption by primary school pupils. The survey will also provide information about catering practices and food provision at lunchtime. The report of the survey is expected to be published in November 2005.

Reducing sugar and fat in foods

- 16) The Agency Strategic Plan has a target to work with health departments to reduce saturated fat from 13.4% to 11% of food energy by 2010 (for everyone from age 5 upwards). In addition, the Strategic Plan states that by 2006 we will develop (with health departments) targets for achieving a balance between energy in and energy out.

- 17) FSA/DH will be meeting shortly to discuss how best to work together to ensure that these objectives/commitments are achieved. As part of this, Nutrition Division is currently considering ways in which the salt model may be adapted to look at the potential for reductions in the levels of saturated fat and sugar in different food product categories.
- 18) It is important to acknowledge that although as with salt, both education and information and composition will need to be addressed the relative emphasis of these activities may have to be different for sugar and fat.

Research

- 19) New requirements document issue 16 was published on 29 November. The deadline for applications was 4 February. It is intended that successful applicants will be informed by end May 2005. Research requirements included are the ones arising from SACN on riboflavin status and n3 polyunsaturated fatty acid status.
- 20) SACN expressed particular concern about the high proportion of the UK population that have poor riboflavin status as determined by the erythrocyte glutathione reductase activation co-efficient (EGRAC), but it is not known whether these levels have any functional or clinical significance. In fact, dietary data from the same surveys suggests that riboflavin intakes are generally adequate, although there is evidence of low intakes in young adults, particularly young women.
- 21) Proposals are therefore invited to: Requirement Reference: N05R0002

Determine the functional significance of marginal riboflavin status as determined by the EGRAC.

- 22) The publication of the SACN and Committee on Toxicology report on Advice on fish consumption: benefits and risks (see www.sacn.gov.uk) highlighted the need for dose-response studies to examine the response of different body pools to long chain n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids. The report stressed that sufficient dose and fat stores/cells/plasma constituents should be examined.
- 23) Proposals are therefore invited to: Requirement Reference: N05R0005

Investigate measures of status for long chain n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids.

Diet and immune function

- 24) Immune function and inflammation are involved in many disease states e.g. cardiovascular disease, cancer, atopic disease and obesity. There is increasing evidence that diet has direct effects on the immune system and consequently on disease risk. It is, therefore, important to understand the role of diet in modulating immune function, which, in turn, can provide an important functional outcome for the determination of dietary reference values. The recent review of the N05

programme highlighted the need for further work to investigate the role of diet on immune function.

- 25) However, as several projects are currently ongoing within the N05 programme that investigate the role of selenium on immune function commissioning further work is, at this time, of low priority.

N09 Programme Food Acceptability and Choice

Seminar on the psychosocial basis of food choice behaviour

- 26) ND hosted a seminar on the psychosocial basis of food choice behaviour on Thursday 20th January 2005 as part of ongoing work to disseminate findings from N09 R&D and to provide input to Agency on future work linked to target 22 of the 2005 –2010 Strategic Plan. The seminar was well attended with approximately 60 participants from academia, health, government, industry and NGOs.
- 27) The review work completed as part of N09 was well received and welcomed as a good contribution to the area as well as a good introduction to the day to look at priority settings and target groups for future Agency activity. There was a broad discussion throughout workshop and plenary sessions with some broad and detailed suggestions for Agency consideration. Participants were asked to continue to feed suggestions after the meeting to policy staff.

Next steps

- 28) ND will produce a full report of the seminar which will be circulated to those attending and placed on the website.
- 29) ND will consider the opportunities and suggestions from the seminar towards meeting target 22 of the strategic plan (2005 –10).

Upcoming and on-going R&D

Two projects have been commissioned:

- 30) Changes in snacking nature and habitual energy intake and effects on obesity in 11 to 12 year old children 1990 to 2000 (Jan 05 to Aug 05).
- 31) Evaluation of snacking behaviour in children and adolescents: associations with body composition, physical activity and risk of obesity (Mar 05 to Jun 06).

Informing Public, Dissemination and Media Activity

- 32) The Agency has launched a stand alone website on diet and health, which can be found at www.eatwell.gov.uk.

Nutrition Forum

- 33) The Nutrition Forum held a meeting on the 9 November 2004 where a presentation by the National Consumer Council and Staffordshire County Council on their Food Access Project was discussed.
- 34) Owing to the delay in the publication of the Public Health White Paper it was agreed to review the terms of reference of the Nutrition Forum at a future meeting and this may affect the structure and nature of the Forum.
- 35) A copy of the minutes of this meeting will be placed on the Agency's and Department of Health website in due course.

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 will provide a national map of food retailing and describe how availability, access and price vary using local case study sites. These sites will be known as sentinels. The sentinels will be chosen to be nationally representative but will be focused on more deprived areas. The project is designed so that, if the need exists, it can be used as the basis for an ongoing surveillance system of food access in Scotland.
- 2) FSA Scotland have awarded the contract for this study to the University of Edinburgh, which is the lead contractor, together with the University of Stirling, Queen Mary – University of London and the University of Dundee. It will be managed and delivered by the Centre for the Study of Retailing in Scotland (CSRS). It will commence on 1st February 2005 with the final report expected by the end of December 2006.

Working Group on Monitoring Scottish Dietary Targets

- 3) The renewed impetus on diet and health in Scotland has focussed the need to monitor progress towards the Scottish Dietary Targets (SDT). Therefore, FSA Scotland, in partnership with the Scottish Executive Health Department, established a Working Group whose remit was to:
 - Investigate and report ways of assessing progress made towards the SDT to date.
 - Advise on surveillance requirements beyond 2005

The Working Group was convened in June 2003 and met a total of five times.

Both the *Report of the Working Group on Monitoring Scottish Dietary Targets* and the *Response of the Food Standards Agency Scotland and the Scottish Executive Health Department to the Working Group on Monitoring Scottish Dietary Targets* were published on the FSA web site in January 2005 and are available at <http://www.food.gov.uk/scotland/dietarytargetsscotland/>

Following the recommendations of this Working Group FSA Scotland put out a call for proposals in August 2004 in the Agency’s Research Requirements Document to measure progress towards the non-milk extrinsic sugar target for Scottish children and towards the sodium target for the Scottish population.

Food Labelling Action Plan - Food Labelling Forum

- 4) The forum held on the 20th October 2004 in Scotland at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre was the second to be held in Scotland and the 6th to be held by the Food Standards Agency UK wide. The forum provided an opportunity for Scottish Stakeholders to contribute to the work of the Agency.
- 5) The purpose of the Food Labelling Forums is to provide industry and consumers with an update on the Food Standards Agency 18-point action plan, which was

agreed by the Agency Board in 2000. The forum also provides an opportunity for the Agency to build and maintain contacts with stakeholders.

- 6) The event attracted 109 industry and consumer delegates on the day with positive feedback received from delegates. FSAS will produce a report of the days event which will be circulated to delegates and published on the website early in the spring.

Update FSA Wales

AFAL (Awards for Food Action Locally)

1. In November 2004 the FSA Wales launched the AFAL awards 2005 following the success of the previous year's awards.
2. The awards are intended to highlight the hard work, commitment and enthusiasm exhibited by those engaged in promoting better diet at the local level. They are open to all individuals or organisations responsible for initiating and directing activities or events in Wales aimed at improving the diet of their local community.
3. The deadline for entries was 31 December 2004. A total of 45 entries were received spread across all five categories which correspond to the various strands of the Nutrition Strategy for Wales- Food and Well Being. The categories are; initiatives to inform/educate the community, initiatives to promote/facilitate access and availability, initiatives to support weight management, initiatives that demonstrate multi-agency working and initiatives that are innovative in their approach.

Get Cooking Pilot

4. Following the success of a two phase pilot of a community cooking course, 'Get Cooking', FSAW are now developing a toolkit to enable this course to be used 'off the shelf' in communities across Wales.
5. The aim of 'Get Cooking' is to teach young people between the ages of 14 and 25 basic cooking skills in a community setting. The emphasis of the course is to have fun, whilst imparting an increase confidence and ability to cook. At the end of the course it is expected that participants will feel more motivated about cooking for themselves and friends, and understand some basic principles concerning healthy eating and food hygiene in order to apply them to their own health and wellbeing.
6. The toolkit will build on the materials used in the pilot and will comprise a trainers guide and various recipe cards that will be available to download from the FSA Wales website, and in hard copy.
7. The tender for the project was awarded to the British Nutrition Federation. The final product is expected in March 2005.

Uncle Arthur's Barbecue- Primary School Teaching Resource

8. In collaboration with the National Grid for Learning Cymru (NGfL Cymru) and a Wales primary school teacher, FSA Wales has produced a teaching resource pack for primary school children on the themes of healthy eating and food safety. The resources supported by lesson plans are designed to be used across the curriculum areas English, Maths, Science and Music.

9. Uncle Arthur's Barbecue resource pack will be placed on the NGfL Cymru website, a website designed to provide schoolteachers in Wales with easy, free access to high quality bilingual curriculum content in a range of digital formats.

The resource will be launched in Wales in March 2005.

Eating well in later life- training for peer educators to deliver healthy eating messages

10. As part of its continuing involvement in the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Keep Well This Winter' campaign, the Food Standards Agency Wales have developed a training package and resources to promote the key healthy eating messages to the over 65's using peer educators. Over 50 people from across the domain responded to the call for volunteers to partake in this exciting venture. Four one-day training events took place in Gwent, Cardiff and Colwyn Bay, with participants receiving training to equip them to deliver advice and information on healthy eating to groups of older people.
11. The participants learned about the basics of good nutrition and the importance of eating well, particularly in the winter months, and took part in a range of activities specifically designed for use with older people to help get the message across. The volunteers are now looking forward to using this knowledge and the resources to deliver interactive healthy eating presentations from January 2005.
12. The information contained in the FSA Wales calendar style booklet 'Eat Well- a guide to healthier eating for the over 60's' has been recorded as part of an audio resource for the visually impaired 'Keeping Well, Warm and Safe: Tips for older people'. Produced in partnership with 'RNIB Cymru' and 'Care and Repair Cymru', and distributed through NHS Direct Cymru, the bilingual CDs and tapes discuss flu jabs, keeping warm, keeping safe and eating well.

Nutrition Network for Wales

13. A Nutrition Network for Wales is being developed. The aim of the network is to help key players including, health professionals, policy decision makers, teachers and voluntary organisations, to access relevant information that will assist them in improving the diet of the population of Wales and provide a platform for sharing experiences and supporting communication between players.
14. Work on setting up the network is progressing with the launch of the network expected towards the end of the year.

Evaluation of Community Food Assistant Project

15. The Food Standards Agency Wales is currently conducting an evaluation of a three-year pilot Community Food and Nutrition Programme. The programme being run by Powys and Ceredigion Health Promotion and NPHS, aims to train up unskilled local people to become Community Food Assistants and support the work of a health promotion officer.

16. The initial phase of collecting data on baseline is now complete, and the second and third phases will be conducted half way through and at the end of the three-year pilot.

Update FSA Northern Ireland

The deadline for the Food & Nutrition Strategy and the Childhood Obesity Task Force consultation previously reported has been delayed until March 2005.