



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

**Agenda Item: 7**

Please see attached paper for information.

## **National Diet and Nutrition Survey**

- 1) The dataset from the NDNS adults 19-64 years has been deposited at the UK Data Archive and is available to researchers.
- 2) The FSA Board agreed proposals for the design and content of a core rolling programme for future National Diet and Nutrition Surveys at its open meeting in February 2005. The paper can be found at <http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/fsa050203.pdf>. The Agency is currently discussing co-funding arrangements with the Department of Health. Subject to agreement, implementation of the core programme will proceed with pilot work in 2006 and fieldwork expected to begin in 2007. It is intended that SACN will be consulted on the detailed development of the methodology for the collection of dietary data.
- 3) As part of work on proposals for the NDNS rolling programme a one-day workshop was held on 24 February involving international experts from the fields of dietary surveys, epidemiology and statistics to help develop a strategy to tackle under-reporting in future surveys. The workshop agreed that it was not possible to prevent under-reporting from occurring in dietary surveys such as NDNS, nor were there robust methods currently available to predict under-reporters or to correct or adjust datasets for under-reporting. Therefore the existence of under-reporting in dietary surveys should be accepted. The workshop further considered that NDNS provided valuable data for use in nutrition and exposure assessment in spite of the existence of a level of under-reporting. A number of recommendations were made regarding the use and interpretation of NDNS data, collection of information to help assess and characterise mis-reporting and for further research.

## **Salt Work**

- 4) 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.
- 5) 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](http://www.salt.gov.uk). The first phase of the campaign ran in autumn 2004.
- 6) 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.
- 7) A stakeholder meeting was held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2005 to discuss the next stage of the salt campaign, which is due to be launched in September. There was general support for the two key messages: make 6g your daily limit; and always check the label. Sid the Slug will again be fronting the campaign. Work is underway to

ensure that stakeholders, including industry, undertake parallel activity to support the campaign.

- 8) 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 now provided us with updates on progress or new plans following letters that were sent out in February this year. These are currently being analysed and individual responses are being made to the relevant companies. 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.
- 9) Work this year continues to focus on meat and cereal products. FSA welcomed the recent announcement by Kellogg's that it has reduced salt content of key products by 20% this year. We are expecting to receive a positive announcement from the ACFM in relation to the overall progress of the breakfast cereal sector shortly. Discussions are ongoing with the bread manufacturers following the announcement that it achieved a further 5% reduction in salt in bread in 2004.
- 10) It is more difficult to gauge progress in relation to meat and meat products. However, the BMPA, MLC, FDF joint sodium work group on meat has agreed to provide an update on progress in June. Work is underway to inform guidance for small manufacturers on charging potential microbiological safety implications of salt reduction and there has been an agreement to establish targets for bacon and ham.
- 11) Work to develop targets for those key product categories that contribute most to salt intakes is at an early stage. The first step was to consider the food categories for which targets would be set, i.e. those foods that contribute most to salt intakes and where reductions are possible. The targets will be set to levels that will make a difference to intakes but will also be achievable by the food industry.
- 12) A stakeholder group, made up of a number of representatives from industry and one consumer representative as well as FSA and DH officials, was held in May to allow all sectors to contribute during the development of this work. A further meeting will be held in June. The categories and targets will also be subject to a full public consultation, which should be launched in early Summer 2005.

### **Reducing sugar and fat in foods**

- 13) 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. The Choosing Health White Paper includes a commitment to reduce fat and sugar levels in processed foods
- 14) FSA/DH have met to discuss a joint action plan in this area. A letter is being sent to all interested parties to update on progress and a small stakeholder group will be convened at the end of June to discuss proposals for action.

## School meals

- 15) The FSA is leading on development of target nutrient specifications for manufactured foods used in school meals. These will help caterers meet tougher school meal standards, which were announced by Ruth Kelly in February as part of the package of government actions to improve school food. Consultation on the guidance document will be produced by the end of June 2005.
- 16) The FSA has commissioned pilot interventions in schools in 3 Local Authorities to determine the extent to which nutritional standards can be modified to more easily enable healthy choices at secondary school meals. Outputs are expected from June 2005 and will help develop best catering practice advice and importantly inform the expert panel on the possible practical effects of changes to nutritional standards.
- 17) DfES and FSA have commissioned People 1<sup>st</sup>, the Sector Skills Council for Hospitality and Leisure to draw up a qualification in basic nutrition and healthy catering practice, based on FSA/DH Catering for Health, for school caterers. The package is to be available in June 2005.
- 18) Data from the DfES/FSA survey of secondary school meals in England giving the composition of main food sources eaten at school meals, will be used to model the impact of introducing the nutritional specifications (fat/saturates/sugar/salt) suggested in the "Hungry for Success" initiative. The Agency has commissioned SiG-Nurture Ltd (Nutrition Consultants) to evaluate the nutritional impact of these potential changes in the composition of school meals. Report due early summer 2005.
- 19) Fieldwork for the joint Department for Education and Skills and Food Standards Agency survey of primary school meals has commenced, following a pilot study earlier this year. This survey will 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.

## Signposting

- 20) The Government's *Choosing Health* White Paper and the Agency's Action Plan on Food Promotions and Children's Health include commitments to develop a signposting system that consumers can use at a glance to assess the fat, salt and sugar content of foods and therefore help them make healthier choices.
- 21) The Agency has carried out a series of focus group research to help identify potential signposting formats that appeal to consumers. The first phase of work was published in November 2004 and the findings of further focus group work to develop a suitable Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) based signposting concept, together with a consultation on the nature of the quantitative research being proposed to test the effectiveness of various signposting options, was published on 18 March 2005.

- 22) On 18 May 2005, the Agency published details of the research it would be undertaking to examine which of the four potential signposting concepts (single traffic lights, multiple traffic lights and two GDA based formats one with colour and one without), would be most helpful to consumers in enabling them to assess the nutrient content of the food quickly and easily, as well as preferences between the signposting concepts, and the reasons for those preferences. A “no signposting” option was included in a pilot study to act as a benchmark against which to assess the performance of the different signposting options. The fieldwork will commence later this month and results are expected around the end of July. The research results will be published thereafter.
- 23) Further consumer focus group research is planned to identify the most effective signposting option for use in the UK food retail environment. The results of this research will be published on the Agency’s website later in the summer and will be used to help it develop guidance and criteria for food manufacturers and retailers who want to apply nutritional signposting schemes to their products in the UK.
- 24) The Agency will make a decision on the format of signposting that it will recommend, how a government backed national voluntary scheme should be applied, and what, if any, further information consumers would like to help promote its use in the UK based on the outcome of its research.
- 25) The Agency is aiming to publish finalised guidance around the end of the year, to allow a phased roll-out to begin early in 2006.

### **Nutrient Profiling**

- 26) A nutrient profiling model has been developed by the Agency to help support work to help restrict the advertising and promotion of foods which are high in fat, salt and sugar to children and to help promote the consumption of fruit and vegetables. It also fulfils the commitment in chapter 2, para 24 of White Paper, for the Food Standards Agency to develop nutritional criteria to define ‘foods high in fat, salt or sugar’ and may be used as a tool to help provide advice on nutrition and health claims.
- 27) The Agency has undertaken a number of consultative activities to subject its nutrient profiling model which it has developed with the input of an expert working group, comprising independent nutritionists and dieticians, as well as representatives from SACN (John Cummings and Annie Anderson), industry and a consumer group, to external scrutiny and assessment. Academic nutritionists have expressed their support for the model, its application for regulatory purposes and the approach taken to develop it.
- 28) A total of 21 suggestions arising out of the various consultation activities for possible refinements to the model were considered and prioritised by the expert group on nutrient profiling, and 5 of the issues identified as warranting further investigation are being taken forward.

- 29) The nutrient profiling consultation responses, a note of the academic workshop, a paper on the applicability of the model to a broader range of age groups and the views of the expert group on what work should be carried out to refine and test the model will be published on the Agency's website shortly.
- 30) The results of the refinement work will be discussed with the expert working group on nutrient profiling and presented to SACN for a view on the suitability of the model for its intended use during the summer.
- 31) Once the final model is published the Agency will make it available for OFCOM to use, to help classify foods for the purpose of advertising controls.

### **High, Medium and Low criteria**

- 32) A working group met on 8 March to discuss the development of high, medium and low criteria to help the consumer understand the nutrition composition of pre-packaged composite foods sold through retail outlets
- 33) An absolute value system consisting of three bands (high, medium and low) for fat, salt and sugar; which would apply across all food groups; based on the proposed claims for low and "a lot" criteria on a 100g basis was identified as being the most appropriate approach and is currently being tested with a range of foods/brands available through retail outlets. The results of the testing exercise will be discussed at the next meeting of the working group which will be held on 3 June.

### **Recasting of the current European Legislation on Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula**

- 34) The Commission has convened working group meetings to review the European Directive laying down rules regarding the composition, labelling and promotion of infant formula and follow on formula, with a view to submitting an amended text to the relevant Standing Committee by 2006. Negotiations at working group level are being taken forward on behalf of the UK by the Food Standards Agency.

### **Research**

#### **N14 Programme – Food Choice Inequalities**

- 35) Building on priorities for future research emerging from the Agency's 'Psychosocial review seminar' held in January 2005, two new research requirements for N14 were issued in March 2005:
- 36) Multicomponent nutrition interventions in communities have been shown to have positive effects on nutritional behaviour and physical activity; reinforcing sustainable changes, providing support and building momentum for community change in behaviour. *Healthy Living Challenge N14R0003* would look to investigate the effectiveness of engaging communities to support each other to make changes in their diet and engage in physical activity through a community challenge.

37) Building on previous work on lunchbox surveys / guidance the Agency is looking to actively involve parents / families in improving the nutrient content of lunchboxes. *School lunch box intervention project N14R0004* looks to develop a combined surveillance study to investigate the impact and effectiveness of a range of tools to help parents and children prepare healthier lunchboxes.

## **Update FSA Scotland (Diet and Nutrition Policy)**

### **First Time Self-Caterers Project**

- 1) The aim of this project is to review existing resources designed to meet the needs of the diverse set of first time self-caterers. This diverse set includes students and young people leaving home, looked-after children moving into accommodation, homeless people moving into accommodation, people leaving prison, those recently widowed, people living in B&B accommodation awaiting housing, and adults with special needs living in supported accommodation but catering for themselves.
- 2) Existing resources (in the form of 92 pieces of literature) have been collected from a range of support agencies throughout Scotland and have been collated and evaluated for their contribution as aids to budgeting, food shopping, basic cooking, food hygiene and healthy eating for the various groups. Using focus groups and structured interviews with support workers and their client groups work is now in progress to identify good practice; barriers (perceived or actual) to the use of existing resources; resources that could be adapted for wider distribution; and whether retailer resources and potential links with retailers as programme providers would be useful.

### **Food and Health Alliance**

- 3) FSA Scotland (FSAS) and the Scottish Executive Health Department (SEHD) have jointly established a Scottish *healthyliving* Food and Health Alliance to support development of the Scottish Diet Action Plan (SDAP) and emerging food and health policies and strategies.
- 4) The Food and Health Alliance is jointly administered and supported by the SEHD & FSAS and will aim to engage with all sectors and stakeholders.
- 5) Objectives of FHA :
  - Provide a forum for dialogue & consultation
  - Contribute to definition and focus for Scottish food and health policy.
  - Support delivery of an inclusive structure
  - Facilitate a strategic programme of consultation, information sharing, evidence gathering and partnership development.
  - Provide an opportunity to inform future Scottish food and health policy.
- 6) The Food and Health Alliance now has around 550 members coming from a range of different sectors including health boards, local authority's, schools and industry. An interactive website is currently being developed.

## **Update FSA Wales**

### **AFAL (Awards for Food Action Locally)**

- 1) The Awards for Food Action Locally, intended to highlight the hard work, commitment and enthusiasm exhibited by those engaged in promoting better diet at the local level, will be presented at the FSA Wales' Eating for Health: Policy into Action' nutrition conferences in South and North Wales during May and June 2005.

### **Get Cooking Pilot**

- 2) The web-based 'Get Cooking' toolkit was officially launched by FSAW on 21 May 2005 at a community healthy lifestyles day in South - West Wales. From this date the 'toolkit' will be available on the FSA Wales' website to be used 'off the shelf' in communities across Wales.
- 3) 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.
- 4) The toolkit builds on the materials used during the two pilot phases and comprises a trainers guide and various recipe cards that will be available to download from the FSA Wales website. Hard copy versions will also be produced in due course for those community groups without internet access.