

Chief Executives Report

1. Introduction

1.1 There has been a considerable amount of activity since the last meeting.

2. MSP Engagement

2.1 Ron McNaughton, Head of the Scottish Food Crime and Incidents Unit, gave a presentation at a meeting of the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on Food on 26 February 2025. The theme of the meeting was food crime, and the other speakers were Professor Chris Elliot, and Helen Gillen of the Food and Drink Federation.

2.2 Ron McNaughton and Robert McGeachy, Head of Public Affairs, had a meeting on food crime with Carol Mochan MSP, the Scottish Labour Party's Deputy Spokesperson on Public Health and Women's Health, on 24 April 2025, and on 06 June 2025 with Audrey Nicoll MSP, the Convener of the Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee. On the 01 May 2025 Ron also met with Liam Kerr MSP and with Sharon Dowe MSP, the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party's Spokespersons on Justice and on Community Safety and on Victims respectively to discuss food crime.

2.3 Ian McWatt, Deputy Chief Executive, Elena McWatt, Head Veterinarian, and Robert had a meeting with Emma Roddick MSP on 26 May 2025, which focused on the work of Food Standards Scotland's Operational Delivery. Elena and Bryan Campbell, Head of Operational Delivery, had a meeting on 27 May 2025 with Tim Eagle MSP, the Conservative and Unionist Party's Spokesperson for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands to also update him about the work of the Operational Delivery Division.

2.4 Elena and Robert had meetings on 05 June 2025 with Elena Whitham MSP, a member of the Scottish Parliament's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee and of the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee, and with Rhoda Grant MSP, the Scottish Labour Party's Spokesperson on Islands, Land Reform and Rural Affairs.

3. Food Standards Scotland's Engagement Committee

3.1 A meeting of Food Standards Scotland's Engagement Committee took place on 28 April 2025. The meeting identified a wide range of opportunities to engage with MSPs, with MPs representing Scottish constituencies and with other external stakeholders.

4. Scottish Government Update on Hybrid Working

4.1 On 07 May, the Scottish Government (SG) shared an important update on its evolving hybrid working approach. The update affected core SG staff only, non-ministerial bodies, including FSS, will continue to set their own working arrangements.

4.2 With the SG update in mind, and cognisant that we have our own operational context and diverse working arrangements, a 'People and Place' short life working group was set up. This has representation from all divisions and is inclusive of colleagues across the spectrum of different working patterns and contract types. The first group meeting took place on Tuesday 03 June, chaired by Garry McEwan, Head of Corporate Services and he will report back to EMT/Strategy Forum and the wider organisation after the summer with recommendations and next steps.

4.3 This group will look at hybrid working from the FSS perspective, with a review centred around the existing FSS Hybrid Working Guidance, considering the application and consistency of approach of current policies and processes.

4.4 While there are definite advantages in support of more time physically together, there are challenges in how to implement this well, especially given the geographic spread of teams. The intention is not to rush into any changes and in the meantime, we will continue to work as we currently do.

5. FSS website rebuild project

5.1 As part of the website rebuild, the Communications and Marketing team is working with the Digital Assurance Office (DAO) to assess the project against the Digital Scotland Service Standard (DSSS) criteria. The second assessment was completed in May, and we are pleased to report that this was found to demonstrate a good level of compliance with the standard. The DAO recommendation is that the project should proceed to the Beta stage.

5.2 The project continues to progress well. It is now into the development phase where the staging site is being built. The content reviewed during the KICK phase is being migrated and formatted into the new CMS alongside the sourcing of images. User and accessibility testing is planned for July with penetration and cyber security testing scheduled for August, ahead of the planned go live in September.

6. Fridge Recording Over Set Time (FROST)

6.1 On the 03 June 2025 we published the final report for FROST-our citizen science project which aimed to monitor the temperatures of domestic fridges in homes across Scotland [Research reveals public need to check fridge temperatures to avoid foodborne illness | Food Standards Scotland](#)

6.2 This is the first citizen science project we have commissioned in FSS, and we were successful in subscribing over 350 people across Scotland to take part between August 2023 and May 2024. Participants were asked to store calibrated temperature loggers (provided by FSS), in their fridge for two weeks. These loggers

automatically recorded the temperature of each fridge every 10 minutes; providing a data set that enabled us to calculate its operating temperature, and report back to participants whether their fridges were performing at the recommended range to ensure food safety. Overall, the average fridge temperature in FROST was higher than recommended, with more than half (55%) of fridges monitored having an average temperature between 5 – 11°C. The recommended temperature range for a fridge is 0-5°C, to help slow the growth of food pathogens and food spoilage bacteria. Higher fridge temperatures lead to faster bacterial growth and therefore present a potential food safety risk.

6.3 The findings from this project will be used to address a key evidence gap for risk assessment and will support the targeting of our food safety messaging. A webinar summarising the project, the results and why this is important for food safety, is scheduled for Wednesday 18 June.

7. UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement

7.1 As part of the package of measures announced at the UK-EU Summit on 19 May 2025 two key documents were published. A 'Joint Statement' setting out a new strategic partnership between the UK and EU, and a 'Common Understanding' which sets out areas for further strengthened bilateral cooperation including a commitment to work towards developing a UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement.

7.2 The Commons Understanding states that the territorial extent of an SPS Agreement should extend to the EU and GB, and result in the removal of certification and border controls for the vast majority of GB-EU trade in animals, animal products, plants, and plant products. In terms of its material scope, an SPS Agreement should be based on dynamic alignment with EU rules in the following areas: sanitary, phytosanitary, food safety and general consumer protection rules applicable to the production, distribution and consumption of agrifood products, the regulation of live animals and pesticides, the rules on organics as well as marketing standards applicable to certain sectors or products.

7.3 FSS is currently assessing the implications of a future SPS Agreement for food safety in Scotland. We will continue to work closely with the Scottish Government, Food Standards Agency and other UK Government departments over the coming weeks and months to ensure Scottish interests in relation to food safety and other general consumer protection rules within scope of FSS' policy responsibility are considered as part of any SPS Agreement negotiated with the EU.

8. The Delivery of Official Controls in Local Authority Approved Establishments Audit

8.1 Following completion of the above audit programme, a programme summary [report](#) has now been published on the [Audit and Monitoring](#) page.

9. Export Missions

9.1 The EU live bivalve molluscs (LBM) audit is currently taking place in GB: this comprises of remote technical meetings from 12 to 18 June, and 5 days in Scotland and England visiting LA offices, laboratories and food business establishments. The auditors will visit Argyll & Bute on 19 and 20 June.

9.2 The EU will return in September/October for a fishery products audit and in November for a poultry products audit.

9.3 South Korea plan to visit the UK w/c 8 September. Although there are no current plans to visit Scotland, FSS will provide input into a pre-audit questionnaire (if required) and opening and closing meetings.

10. FSS turned 10

To mark the 10th anniversary of FSS we planned a series of social media video posts that highlighted some of our achievements, for example our [‘Kitchen Crimes’ campaign in 2018](#). We also created a page on our website that gives a little more information about these.

On 30 April we held an event at Pilgrim House for staff to come together to celebrate the milestone anniversary, with around sixty staff attending. The event gave everyone the opportunity to catch up face to face with colleagues they’d not seen for a while, as well as meet some they’d not met before. There was a very competitive game of ‘Human Bingo, where staff had to find colleagues who had certain interests/hobbies, followed by a hot lunch and then a quiz in the afternoon

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