

FOOD STANDARDS SCOTLAND – OUR STRATEGY TO 2021

Our Purpose

- 1.1 FSS’s purpose is defined in the Food (Scotland) Act 2015¹.
- 1.2 The 2015 Act gives FSS three *objectives*:
 - to protect the public from risks to health which may arise in connection with the consumption of food;
 - to improve the extent to which members of the public have diets which are conducive to good health; and
 - to protect the other interests of consumers in relation to food;
- 1.3 In setting out our purpose, the Act provides FSS with the legitimacy to carry out activities to help achieve these objectives, and in doing so, to protect consumers and help them to have better health.
- 1.4 The Act also identifies a number of *general functions* for FSS, summarised below:
 - a. to develop and help others develop policies on food and animal feed;
 - b. to advise the Scottish Government, other authorities and the public on food and animal feed;
 - c. to keep the Scottish public and users of animal feed advised to help them make informed decisions about food and feed stuffs; and
 - d. to monitor the performance of food enforcement authorities.
- 1.5 And FSS is defined in law as a ‘competent authority’ and an ‘enforcement authority’ to implement and monitor Scottish and EU food and feed regulations. This gives us a role as a *regulator* in relation to food and feed law.

Our Vision

- 2.1 It is clear from the statutory objectives in the Act that consumers – the public – should be at the heart of everything we do, and therefore FSS should put consumers first and foremost. Putting consumers first is the value that must be at the heart of FSS’s vision: ***to create a food and drink environment in Scotland that benefits, protects and is trusted by consumers.***

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/1/contents/enacted>

The Food Landscape

- 3.1 Describing the food landscape is helpful in contextualising how we should translate our purpose into strategic priorities to 2021.
- 3.2 It is widely predicted that many different things are expected to affect the supply of food to the UK, including Scotland, over the next 25 years or more, but is difficult to predict the pace and nature of these changes.
- 3.3 It is recognised that pressures on production systems and supply chains at home and elsewhere may have impacts on consumers. These pressures may be environmental, for example in relation to the availability of land, water and energy for growing and producing food, they may be demographic, such as increasing demand for food from a growing population or they may be economic, where market forces or the wider economic environment may encourage unscrupulous operators in food supply chains to cut corners. Whilst it is the responsibility of all food businesses in Scotland to produce and sell safe food, FSS has a role in ensuring that they meet these responsibilities, and to ensure that effective action is taken if they do not.
- 3.4 Political and structural factors are important context – nearly all food and feed law now originates from the European Union, so ensuring that FSS is well placed to reflect Scottish perspectives into developing EU policy at the earliest possible stage will be key to achieving some of our objectives. Locally, FSS is highly dependent on our partners in Scotland's 32 local authorities who are responsible for carrying out much of the 'on the ground' delivery of food and feed law, including compliance and enforcement work. The future sustainability of these services, provided by skilled and competent teams and individuals, is key to our activities in protecting consumers, in an environment where resources to support these services are reducing.
- 3.5 FSS's primary concerns are protecting public health in relation to food safety and diet, and the other interests of consumers in relation to food, for example ensuring that consumers can have confidence that the food they buy is authentic and accurately labelled with information that they can understand and trust. In working to achieve these goals and putting the consumer interest first, we also have a responsibility to ensure that food businesses are treated fairly, that our regulatory functions are proportionate and do not add undue burden to industry. To underpin this we will develop a regulatory strategy which transparently outlines our approach to regulatory decision making and targets interventions in a way that effectively identify and dissuade non-compliance, while providing incentives and rewards for compliance.

Wider Food Policy in Scotland

- 4.1 The food and drink sector is a significant part of Scotland's economy. Employing some 350,000 people in Scotland, there are ambitions to grow the industry to £16.5 billion by 2017². In 2014, that Scottish food exports surpassed £1.1 billion for the

² <http://www.scotlandfoodanddrink.org/about-us.aspx>

first time, with total food and drink exports valued at £5.1 billion³. These figures, from official HMRC export statistics for 2014⁴, show that food exports grew by 3.5 per cent on 2013. The food and drink sector therefore makes a significant contribution to the Scottish economy and has an important role to play in meeting the Scottish Government's purpose *to focus Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth*⁵.

- 4.2 The importance of the food and drink sector to Scotland is widely recognised. Recipe for Success⁶, Scotland's first national food and drink policy, published in 2009, focused primarily on economic growth of the sector. In 2014, the Scottish Government launched the next phase of its public dialogue on food and drink through its discussion paper 'Becoming a Good Food Nation'⁷. This recognises that whilst considerable progress continues to be made, particularly in terms of economic growth, substantial challenges remain. These include areas where FSS can make an important contribution, for example in relation to diet and health, awareness about food and food culture. The aspirations of Good Food Nation recognise the need for a cross-policy approach, and FSS is ideally placed to contribute to some of these wider ambitions.

Food and Health

- 5.1 Scotland faces considerable challenges in relation to food and health. We know that poor diets are one of the most significant causes of ill health in Scotland and are a major factor in overweight and obesity. Poor diet contributes to Scotland having one of the highest prevalence rates of overweight and obesity in Europe⁸. Almost two thirds of adults in Scotland are either overweight or obese, and progress in meeting the Scottish Dietary Goals is negligible⁹. Health outcomes related to poor diet are well known – overweight and obesity contributes to higher risk of heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes and some cancers. The Scottish Government's Obesity Routemap published in 2010¹⁰ estimates that the direct NHS Scotland costs of obesity will almost double by 2030, and if current trends continue, we can expect 40% of the Scottish population to be obese by that date. The cost of obesity to Scottish society is currently estimated to be at least £1 billion per year, and may be as high as £4.5 billion per year, if wider economic costs are taken into account.
- 5.2 Health outcomes related to diet are not just those to which overweight and obesity can contribute. Diets that are too high in salt can have harmful health outcomes – hypertension and stroke - and we know there can be health impacts – neural tube defects - in babies born to women with low folate status before and in the early stages of pregnancy.
- 5.3 Whilst the lack of progress towards meeting the SDGs is apparent amongst households in both the least and most deprived areas of Scotland, we know that

³ <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/New-record-for-Scottish-food-exports-1933.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/Statistics/EUOverseasTrade/Pages/EuOTS.aspx>

⁵ <http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/purpose>

⁶ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2009/06/25133322/0>

⁷ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/06/1195>

⁸ <http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/Obesity-Update-2014.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/monitoring-progress-towards-scottish-dietary-goals-2001-2012-report-2>

¹⁰ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/02/17140721/0>

households in the most deprived areas consume significantly less fruit and vegetables, oil-rich fish and fibre, and consume more added sugars than households in the least deprived areas. We must ensure that our work contributes to narrowing and not widening any inequality gaps, and to help guide us, we should undertake health equality impact assessments when developing policy.

- 5.4 We know that the affordability of food is important to many consumers, and we know from recent surveys¹¹ that some consumers feel that cost is a barrier to eating more healthily. FSS does not have the direct drivers to influence the cost of food, but could help consumers find ways to eat an affordable, healthy diet.
- 5.5 In addition to health problems related to poor diet, disease, considerable numbers of consumers in Scotland suffer from food poisoning every year. Data derived from the FSA's second Infectious Intestinal Disease Study^{12,13} (IID2) suggests that there are an estimated 43,000 cases of foodborne illness in Scotland each year, of which 23,000 are thought to be caused by *Campylobacter*. And Scotland knows at first hand the devastating impact that foodborne illness can have – the *E. coli* O157 outbreak in Wishaw in 1996 claimed 21 lives¹⁴.
- 5.6 So, whilst Scotland's food and drink sector continues to flourish and makes a very important contribution to the Scottish economy, there remain significant challenges around food, diet and public health. FSS's efforts must be focussed on addressing these and other challenges related to the consumer interest, ensuring that consumers' health and wellbeing is protected, and that they can have confidence in the authenticity of food they buy – so to do this, we must put the consumer first.

Putting the Consumer First

- 6.1 To put the consumer at the heart of what we do, we need to understand what matters to consumers in relation to food. Consumers have told us that trust is at the heart of what we do, so we need to earn and keep that trust. A 2015 survey shows that FSS is fortunate in inheriting from the Food Standards Agency in Scotland (FSAS) a strong level of trust from consumers in Scotland¹⁵ - we need to build on that and make it even stronger, so that consumers trust FSS to put them first.
- 6.2 We have existing knowledge about consumers attitudes and behaviours in relation to food through work previously undertaken by the FSA, and as FSS, we will expand and develop this understanding, with a clear focus on what matters to consumers in Scotland, now and in the future.

¹¹ <http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/scotland-executive-summary-food-and-you-2014.pdf>

¹² <https://www.food.gov.uk/science/research/foodborneillness/b14programme/b14projlist/b18021>

¹³ https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/IID2%20extension%20report%20-%20FINAL%2025%20March%202014_0.pdf

¹⁴ The Pennington Group (1997) 'Report on the Circumstances Leading to the 1996 Outbreak of Infection with *E.coli* O157 in Central Scotland: The Implications for Food Safety and the Lessons to be Learned' Edinburgh: The Stationery Office

¹⁵ <http://www.food.gov.uk/science/research/ssres/publictrackingsurvey/biannual-public-attitudes-tracker-survey-may-2015>

- 6.3 So, being clear about our **Purpose**, and setting that in the context of the challenges that Scotland faces in a rapidly changing food landscape, we can define what our priorities are to deliver our **Vision - to create a food and drink environment in Scotland that benefits, protects and is trusted by consumers**

Our Strategic Priorities

- 7.1 To deliver our Vision - *to create a food and drink environment in Scotland that benefits, protects and is trusted by consumers* - we propose the following six strategic outcomes:

1. *Food is safe*
2. *Food is authentic*
3. *Consumers have healthier diets*
4. *Responsible food businesses flourish*
5. *FSS is a trusted organisation*
6. *FSS is efficient and effective*

- 7.2 Our Corporate Plan defines what these outcomes mean, and sets out the work that we will undertake during the first three years of this Strategy to help us towards our Vision. So the Corporate Plan sets out what we will do, but we must also be clear about how we will do this – the values and principles that will underpin our work. The links between these elements are illustrated in Figure 1 below.



Our Values

8.1 The values against which we will judge everything we do are:

- **Public service** - having people at the heart of what we do, putting consumers first;
- **Authority** – being a credible, consistent and trusted voice of authority on food matters in Scotland, basing our decisions upon sound science and evidence;
- **Openness** – being open and transparent in our dealings with the public, stakeholders and partners;
- **Independence** - at arm's length from Ministers, but aligned with the Government's Purpose; and
- **Partnership** – collaborating with others to achieve the best outcome for the public.

Our Principles

8.2 The principles that govern our actions are:

- Public health and consumer protection in relation to food will be at the heart of our work.*
- FSS engages consumers and stakeholders in determining and delivering its priorities, and listens to what matters to consumers in relation to food.*
- Our work contributes to narrowing inequalities in Scotland.*
- In working to deliver its strategic outcomes FSS takes decisions based on evidence.*
- FSS will seek to work collaboratively with other bodies in Scotland, the UK and beyond when this can realise greater consumer benefit than working alone.*
- FSS values its independence alongside Government, whilst recognising its role in contributing to wider outcomes.*
- FSS fulfils its regulatory obligations in Scotland, and in relation to EU food and feed law.*
- Food and feed businesses and other stakeholders that engage with FSS are treated fairly and with respect.*
- Those who introduce risks take responsibility for managing them.*
- FSS's decisions and actions should support compliant businesses, and be effective at dealing with non-compliant ones.*
- FSS is clear that compliance is good for consumers and good for business - protection of public health is compatible with business and economic growth.*

- Question 1:** Do you agree with the *Values* proposed for FSS?
- Question 2:** Do you agree with the *Principles* outlined?
- Question 3:** Do you think that the *Values* and *Principles* will help us to protect consumers' interests?
- Question 4:** Are there any other additional *Values* or *Principles* that we should consider?

We would welcome any other comments on the Values and Principles.

Our Contribution to the Scottish Government's Purpose

- 9.1 FSS is not part of the Scottish Government but as a public body, is part of the wider Scottish Administration, so our activities should contribute to the Scottish Government's Purpose:

'To focus Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable growth.'

- 9.2 The Scottish Government's National Performance Framework is founded upon an outcomes based approach that FSS is well-placed to contribute to. This will also help to ensure we are aligned with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015¹⁶ - making sure that our functions have regard to the National Outcomes, and put people in Scotland at the heart of what we do.
- 9.3 The National Performance Framework contains 16 National Outcomes which describe what the Scottish Government wants to achieve, articulating the Purpose more fully. They help to sharpen the focus of government and bodies such as FSS, enabling the priorities to be clearly understood and provide a clear structure for delivery. The Scottish Government recognises that by organisations collaborating and working in partnership to achieve these outcomes together, we will collectively make Scotland a better place to live and a more prosperous and successful country.
- 9.4 The National Outcomes (see Table 1) that are most relevant to our purpose and remit are:
- We live longer, healthier lives
 - We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
 - Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
 - We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people
 - We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe

¹⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/contents/enacted>

- We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

9.5 FSS's activities throughout the period of the Strategy must also reflect what Scottish Government seeks to achieve in transforming public services. This work, responding to the Christie Commission's recommendations¹⁷ seeks to reform public services through: a decisive shift towards **prevention**; greater integration at a local level driven by better **partnership**; **workforce** development; and a sharper, more transparent focus on **performance**. These link closely to the values and principles outlined above that underpin how we will deliver our Strategy.

Delivering Our Strategy

10.1 We have set out in this Strategy the vision that we want to achieve - *to create a food and drink environment in Scotland that benefits, protects and is trusted by consumers*. We have identified the strategic outcomes that we believe are key to us achieving this vision, and our values and principles that will underpin we will work. Our draft Strategic Plan for 2016-19 sets our more detail of what we will do in that period to move us towards that vision, and how we will monitor our progress.

¹⁷<http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/352649/0118638.pdf>

Table 1 – Mapping FSS Outcomes to Scottish Government’s National Outcomes

National Outcome \ FSS Outcome	<i>Food is safe</i>	<i>Food is authentic</i>	<i>Consumers have healthier diets</i>	<i>Responsible food businesses flourish</i>	<i>FSS is a trusted organisation</i>	<i>FSS is efficient and effective</i>
<i>We live longer, healthier lives</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
<i>Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓
<i>We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<i>We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production</i>				✓	✓	✓
<i>Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people’s needs.</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓



Food Standards Scotland

Corporate Plan

April 2016 – March 2019

The primary concern of Food Standards Scotland (FSS) is consumer protection – that food is safe to eat, ensuring consumers know what they are eating and improving diet.

The objectives of FSS as set out in the Food (Scotland) 2015 Act are to:

- Protect the public from risks to health which may arise in connection with the consumption of food
- Improve the extent to which members of the public have diets which are conducive to good health
- Protect the other interests of consumers in relation to food

FSS's Strategy to 2021 sets out our vision - to create ***a food and drink environment in Scotland that benefits, protects and is trusted by consumers.***

This Strategic Plan sets out the key activities that we will undertake to March 2019 to help us move towards this vision, and how we will determine how we are achieving for consumers in Scotland.

Question 5: Outcome 2 - *Please see page 17 below*

Question 6: Outcome 4 - *Please see page 23 below.*

Question 7: We would value any other comments you have on the *Strategic Outcomes* in the context of our *Purpose* and *Vision*

Question 8: We have described some of the key activities that we will undertake to 2019 to support delivery of FSS's Strategy. Are these the types of activities you expect FSS to do, to deliver our *Purpose* and achieve our *Vision*?

Question 9: Do our Strategy and Corporate Plan make clear that we are putting consumers first?

Question 10: We would welcome any other comments on our Strategy and Corporate Plan.

Key Enablers

The activities outlined in this Plan represent an ambitious and challenging programme of work. To be successful, we will need to ‘punch above our weight’ and build effective and meaningful partnerships with others, where this will help us deliver more for consumers in Scotland.

Outlined below are ‘key enablers’ that will be needed to support us in how we deliver our Strategic Plan.

Our Approach to Evidence – developing a **science and evidence strategy** for FSS that supports our evidence requirements. This will direct how we identify and prioritise our evidence needs, enabling us to manage risks to public health effectively, and ensuring that these support our strategic priorities, and how we work with others on science and evidence.

Openness and Engagement – a strategic approach to **communication**. FSS will build on the FSA’s approach to openness and will align with the Scottish Government’s ambitions to focus more on engaging and empowering communities and people.

How we Regulate – we will undertake a fundamental review of how we fulfill our **role as a regulator**. This will allow us to take a strategic view on how our regulatory role can deliver the best outcomes for consumers whilst supporting responsible businesses.

Partnership and Collaboration – we will achieve more benefits for consumers when we develop **meaningful and effective partnerships**. We will build on the collaborative relationships we already have with a large number of other organisations, and seek to develop new partnerships where these will bring greater benefits for consumers.

People and Skills – the most valuable asset of our organisation is our people, so **investing in their development** is essential to maximise our collective effectiveness. We need to have the right people with the right skills in the right place to deliver the outcomes we seek for the people of Scotland.

OUTCOME 1 – FOOD IS SAFE

What this means:

- *Food placed on the market is compliant with food safety legislation.*
- *Wherever appropriate, food is supplied with accurate instructions to ensure safe storage and handling.*
- *Consumers understand the risks and how to protect themselves and those for whom they prepare food from foodborne illness.*

Why this matters:

As our statutory purpose makes clear, food safety and public health protection is at the heart of what FSS does. In Scotland, it is estimated that there are approximately 43,000 cases of foodborne infectious intestinal disease (IID) annually, leading to 5,800 GP visits and 500 hospital admissions¹⁸. There are a number of foodborne pathogens that can cause human illness, and we will work collaboratively with others, including through the Scottish Health Protection Network and with the Food Standards Agency (FSA), to reduce the risks to consumers in Scotland.

Reducing foodborne illness from *Campylobacter* is a priority for FSS. We know that around three quarters of fresh chickens sold by major retailers in the UK are contaminated with *Campylobacter*¹⁹, and we have evidence that between 60-80% of all reported cases of *Campylobacter* infection in Scotland are associated with a chicken source²⁰. Whilst *Campylobacter* is a primary focus, we will also work on the other causes of foodborne IID, and we will take a targeted approach to prevent the transmission of pathogens through the food chain to reduce the impact of foodborne illness, and thus help people in Scotland lead healthier lives.

The Scottish food chain can also be affected by chemical contaminants deriving from environmental pollution, processing by-products or adulteration. We will work in collaboration with others, including FSA and across Scottish Government and its agencies (e.g. SEPA) to monitor contaminants at all stages of the food chain and take action where necessary. We will also advise consumers on current and emerging contaminant risks and how to avoid them.

FSS delivers a programme of official controls in meat premises that we are required to approve under food law, and also in shellfish production and harvesting areas across Scotland. These programmes are required by law for public health protection and are resource intensive, accounting for a significant proportion of FSS's annual

¹⁸: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/food-safety-standards/foodborne-illness>

¹⁹ <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/news/campylobacter-results-2014-2015>

²⁰ <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/food-safety-standards/foodborne-illness/campylobacter>

expenditure. They reflect the scale of the meat and shellfish industries in Scotland and their importance not just in Scotland but through exports to other parts of the UK, the European Union and beyond. We will review the delivery of these official control programmes, ensuring that protecting public health remains our key objective.

Work described in relation to Outcome 4 sets out that in our capacity as a national regulator, we will develop our future regulatory strategy to ensure that our regulatory approach protects consumers, recognises compliant food businesses and deals effectively with those businesses that do not take their responsibilities as seriously as they should. We will continue working collaboratively with local authorities who deliver official controls at many thousands of food businesses across Scotland, and we will regularly monitor and review local authority performance through ongoing audits which improve public health by ensuring that delivery of official controls is targeted, consistent and effective, and sustainable for the future.

We will also help ensure that consumers understand the importance of their own responsibilities for storing, handling and preparing food safely and what they should do to protect themselves and others for whom they prepare food.

Responding effectively to food and feed incidents is an essential part of our business, as this helps to retain public confidence in the food supply and is key to public health protection. We deal with around 150-200 incidents each year in Scotland that could affect the food and feed chain. Preventing incidents will always be preferable to responding to them once they have occurred, so through collaborative working with a wide range of partners, we must ensure a focus on incident prevention. Food and feed incidents have the capacity to directly affect consumers through microbiological, chemical or physical contamination of the food chain, so ensuring that we have an effective capacity in responding to incidents that do occur, and testing this through regular exercises will be an essential part of our role in protecting public health.

What we'll do:

Develop a Foodborne Illness Strategy for Scotland, focussing on the key pathways for the transmission of infectious intestinal disease (IID) throughout the Scottish food chain:

- Working with others, including through the Scottish Health Protection Network, to find collaborative solutions for reducing the risks of IID across all of the potential transmission pathways;
- Developing programmes to reduce the risks of Campylobacter in Scottish-produced chicken, and monitor the impact on the profile of Campylobacter infection in Scotland, supporting the Food Standards Agency's Campylobacter programme;
- Understanding the role of the food chain in Shigatoxin producing *E. coli* (STEC) infection in Scotland and taking action to control STEC risks in food, leading on the delivery of relevant recommendations in the Scottish Government's Action Plan for reducing the transmission of this pathogen;
- Monitoring chemical and radiological contaminants in the food chain, commissioning research to understand potential risks and assessment of these risks in order to inform and protect Scottish consumers;
- Supporting Scottish businesses in reducing the risks of contamination throughout the food chain, through the development of practical guidance and food safety management tools.

Empower consumers with the knowledge they need to make safe food choices, and undertake safer food practices – ensuring they understand and can meet their responsibilities:

- Use segmentation to gain understanding of key target audiences' and vulnerable groups' practices in relation to food safety, in order to more effectively target messaging and encourage action where it is needed.
- Build on existing messaging and consumer engagement through different channels to ensure that consumers have access to clear advice to safe storage, handling and preparation of food.

Through engagement and consultation, construct, implement and then review performance of an improved model for delivery of animal feed official controls in Scotland, including through third party assurance, that is effective in protecting feed and food safety.

Carry out a comprehensive policy and delivery review of the FSS shellfish official controls, including small scale and local supply chains, working in partnership with others including Marine Scotland:

- Ensure proportionate and targeted interventions to protect public health and maintain consumer confidence thereby promoting sustainable growth.
- Review and modify as required, such that resources match policy and delivery priorities.
-

Ensure that delivery of effective programmes of official controls to verify that food businesses are meeting their responsibilities to deliver safe food. Monitor the performance of local authorities by delivering an effective audit and assurance programme to assess their delivery of official controls.

Through collaboration with local authorities and food businesses and application of learning and experience, develop preventative strategies to help reduce food incidents. When incidents do occur, ensure that FSS is equipped to manage and respond effectively to food incidents that could affect food safety, through regularly exercising and reviewing its incident response capacity and effectiveness.

OUTCOME 2 – FOOD IS AUTHENTIC

What this means:

Food is of the nature, substance and quality as described by the supplier.

Consumers have confidence that food information is accurate and clear:

- **Nature** - *the foodstuff is from the specified plant, animal and geographical location described on the label.*
- **Substance** - *the composite ingredients of the product are as described and at the appropriate quantities according to legal standards.*
- **Quality** - *the food meets the requirements of any quality marketing standard which has been applied or that the product's specific qualities have not deteriorated.*

Why this matters

Trust is a key part of our vision for the future, so consumers need to have confidence that the food they buy and eat is what they expect it to be. In the broadest sense, the term 'food standards' includes food labelling, food composition, food authenticity and the nutritional quality of food. Food offered for sale should be of the nature, substance and quality expected by the purchaser, and FSS has a role in ensuring that consumers have advice and guidance to inform food choices, such that they can trust the authenticity of the food they buy.

The horsemeat incident of 2013 showed clearly how consumer confidence and trust was undermined when they were misled about the nature of their food. The Scottish Government responded robustly to that incident, and the report from the Scudamore Expert Advisory Group²¹ highlighted the importance of providing clearer information to consumers about the composition of their food and where it comes from. In responding to that report, the Scottish Government and the FSA acknowledged that the incident highlighted a number of issues to be addressed to restore consumer confidence. These ranged from the need to develop a better understanding of the supply chain, improved surveillance, the capacity to investigate and deal with food fraud and improved communications and consumer engagement.

In creating Food Standards Scotland, the Scottish Government was clear that in light of the horsemeat incident, it wanted to more closely align food information powers and sanctions with existing food safety equivalents, and delivering this is a strategic priority for us. So whilst recognising that food safety is a strategic priority in public health protection, we will also prioritise work to protect consumers' interests that food is what it says it is, and to ensure that consumers can have confidence in making food choices. Our future regulatory strategy (see Outcome 4) is also highly relevant

²¹ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0042/00426914.pdf>

here - ensuring that our regulatory approach protects consumers' interests in food authenticity, recognises food businesses who do the right things for consumers, and deals effectively with those businesses that do not take their responsibilities as seriously as they should.

As with food safety, consumers also have responsibilities in making food choices, so we will carry out activities to help consumers understand what food labels mean, and what they should expect food businesses to tell them about the food they buy. And as consumers are an important resource in detecting food fraud, so must to establish capacity for two-way dialogue, including through digital channels, to allow consumers to alert us to concerns around food authenticity.

Question 6: Outcome 2 – *Food is authentic*. Is it clear what we mean by this?

Or would it be clearer to describe this as:

- *Food is accurately described; or*
- *Consumers know what they are eating.*

Please comment on your preferred wording for Outcome 2. Please explain your preference.

What we'll do:

Fully implement the recommendations of the Scudamore Expert Advisory Group, including:

Ensuring Scotland has capability and resilience to tackle food crime by:

- establishing an effective Scottish Food Crime and Incidents Unit (SFCIU) through a phased approach.
- Working with the FSA, contributing to the development of a UK-wide Food Crime Strategic Assessment, which SFCIU will use to establish priorities on which to focus with partners to mitigate risks and threats faced by consumers in Scotland in relation to food crime.
- Developing partnership working arrangements with key stakeholders and effective information sharing frameworks that enable appropriate responses to food crime in terms of prevention, investigation, disruption and enforcement.
- providing improved methods by which consumers or those working within the food and drink sector can report or provide information in relation to food fraud.
- Improving the quality and volume of actionable intelligence gathered by the SFCIU and its partners in relation to food crime.
- Developing mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of preventative measures.

Developing a robust evidence base on the authenticity of the Scottish food chain by:

- Designing a new food surveillance strategy for Scotland, employing data collected by FSS, LAs and industry to assess the safety and authenticity of foods produced and sold in Scotland.
- Developing information management systems capable of turning information into actionable intelligence.
- Working with others to ensure there is adequate laboratory provision in for Scotland for food authenticity testing.
- Commissioning research aimed at improving methods for identifying food authenticity and developing associated guidance for LAs and food businesses.

Develop proposals and design an implementation strategy to align the priority of food information official controls more closely with food safety equivalents.

Working with Scottish Government, review current arrangements across government for food labelling responsibilities to ensure that consumers' interests in food information are protected.

Through a mix of engagement, communication and marketing activities, help consumers to understand food information, especially labels, and help empower them in making confident, informed choices:

- Encourage consumers to make full use of information on food labels to improve their purchasing decisions.
- Raise awareness with consumers to alert FSS to suspicions or concerns around food authenticity e.g. counterfeit products
- Provide clear and timely information to consumers in the event of a food fraud incident
- Work with industry and Scottish Government to produce a joint good practice code with industry on transparent provenance labelling claims.

OUTCOME 3 – CONSUMERS HAVE HEALTHIER DIETS

What this means:

Dietary choices of the Scottish population change towards meeting the recommended dietary balance, as illustrated by the eatwell plate.

Why this matters

By widening the remit of FSS and providing a specific statutory objective in relation to diet, the Scottish Parliament has set out its ambitions for change, and we will work closely with others to help drive this change.

The Scottish Government is also committed to ensuring that people in Scotland live longer, healthier lives. Good nutrition is an important element of this, and by taking a holistic approach to diet and providing population-wide advice on diet and healthy eating, FSS has an important role in contributing to this national outcome. We know however, that poor diets are one of the most significant causes of ill health in Scotland and are a major factor in overweight and obesity. Making an impact on the dietary contribution to overweight and obesity should be a priority for FSS. Scotland is positioned near the top of the league tables for obesity among OECD countries, and has one of the highest prevalence rates of overweight and obesity in Europe²². Almost two thirds of adults in Scotland are either overweight or obese, and progress in meeting the Scottish Dietary Goals (SDGs) is poor²³.

We know that diet varies with deprivation. Poor diets exist across the whole population, but the most deprived tend to have the poorest diets, containing more sugar and less fruit, vegetables and fibre. Health outcomes related to poor diet are well known – poor diets contribute to overweight and obesity, which in turn contribute to higher risk of heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes and some cancers. The Scottish Government's Obesity Routemap²⁴ estimates that the direct NHS Scotland costs of obesity will almost double by 2030. The cost of obesity to Scottish society is currently estimated to be at least £1 billion per year, and may be as high as £4.5 billion per year, if wider economic costs are taken into account. So improving the Scottish diet could have a significant impact on improving the lives of individuals, families and communities, and on reducing the burden of disease on society in Scotland.

Scottish Ministers have accepted advice from FSS on changes to some of the SDGs to reflect the advice from the independent Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) in relation to carbohydrates and health. Recognising that greater action is needed - by industry and government, as well as by communities and individuals - FSS agreed to consider a wide array of measures, that would include exploring progression from voluntary to regulated/legislative or fiscal measures that may be

²² <http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/Obesity-Update-2014.pdf>

²³ <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/monitoring-progress-towards-scottish-dietary-goals-2001-2012-report-2>

²⁴ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/02/17140721/0>

appropriate, particularly where previous or existing voluntary arrangements have been unsuccessful.

This is a long-standing and complex problem, and one that will take time, commitment and effort across a wide spectrum to find and deliver solutions. By widening the remit of FSS and providing a specific statutory objective in relation to diet, the Scottish Parliament has set out its ambitions for change. Improving the health of the Scottish population by reducing the impact of preventable diet related diseases will require consumers to change what they do, but this alone will not deliver the improvement that is needed. We know that many people find it difficult to make the long-term changes that will reduce the likelihood of health risks associated with poor diet. And whilst there is much that individuals can do for themselves, rebalancing the diet must be a shared responsibility – shared between individuals, communities, the food and drink industry and Government. Behaviour change alone will not deliver the scale of change we seek, and that there are things that the food and drink industry can and should do to help people eat healthier diets, so we will work across this spectrum to encourage, influence and enable people to make choices to help them live longer, healthier lives.

Whilst the dietary contribution to reducing overweight and obesity is a priority, we want to take a holistic approach, and must also maintain focus on other aspects of dietary health – including the continued need to reduce population-level salt intake to reduce risks of hypertension and stroke, and pressing for action – preferably across the UK – on folic acid fortification of bread and flour, to reduce the number of pregnancies affected by neural tube defects and improve health outcomes, particularly in more deprived socio-economic groups.

What we'll do:

Create an authoritative, primary source of evidence-based diet and nutrition advice about diets conducive to good health, to support the Scottish Dietary Goals.

Monitor and report progress towards meeting the Scottish Dietary Goals, using new tools for dietary surveillance – incorporate 'Intake 24' into Scottish Health Survey.

Through partnership working, develop and implement plans to provide strategic co-ordination of Scottish Government-funded diet and nutrition research and surveillance, to help ensure the effective use and application of resources in Scotland.

Provide support to Scottish Government and public bodies to review and amend policies to take account of revised SDGs.

Identify and press for implementation of measures to bring about changes to the food environment²⁵ and support consumer behaviour changes that will be required to make positive progress towards the SDGs. This will include working with partners, including the food and drink industry to:

- Develop specific measures to minimise consumption of 'discretionary foods and drinks'²⁶ (including sugar sweetened beverages), through adjustments to the marketing, promotion and formulation of these products in ways aimed at rebalancing the diet towards a lower sugar and less calorie dense diet.
- Review the extent to which dietary improvement can be achieved through voluntary mechanisms and develop recommendations for future actions.
- Explore options for non-voluntary measures that may be available to regulate aspects of the food environment, where there is evidence that other approaches will not be or have not been effective.
- Explore options aimed at improving the food and drink environment with local authorities and businesses.

Lead the development of a set of dietary guidelines for Scotland aimed at widening the scope of consumer advice from the current focus on nutrients to include a more holistic approach to food consumption, food environment and potentially wider environmental considerations.

Support people and communities through campaigns aimed at dietary health improvement.

Preferably across the UK, work with Government, stakeholders and consumers to secure agreement to the mandatory fortification of bread with folic acid to improve health outcomes for mothers and new-borns.

²⁵ including physical, socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects of environment that influence patterns of food consumption

²⁶ Discretionary foods and drinks are high in calories and, low in nutritional value, and which aren't required for health and - includes confectionery, cakes, biscuits, pastries, savoury snacks and sugary drinks

OUTCOME 4 – RESPONSIBLE FOOD BUSINESSES FLOURISH

What this means:

Food businesses that operate responsibly and do things that benefit consumers' interests benefit from risk-based and proportionate regulation that enables them to flourish, whilst effective action is taken with those businesses who do not step up to their responsibilities to consumers.

Why this matters

FSS's primary concern is consumer protection – that food is safe to eat, ensuring consumers know what they are eating and improving nutrition. A thriving, compliant food and drink industry is good for consumers as well as being good for business.

The Scottish Government's first food and drink policy - A Recipe for Success – was indeed successful. Between 2008 and 2012, Scotland's food and drink manufacturing turnover growth increased by 20.8 per cent. Scottish food exports in 2014 were worth £1.1 billion – up 57 per cent from 2007. And across the food business spectrum there was an increase of approximately 25% food businesses between 2008 and 2014. Ambitions remain high – there is a priority to increase Scotland's food and drink sector turnover to £16.5 billion by 2017, with the strategy for growth being focussed on market opportunities around premium, provenance, health and environmental sustainability. And an Export Strategy Plan was launched in 2014 that involves a £4.5 million investment over five years.

The food and drink sector in Scotland is clearly thriving economically and Scottish produce has a strong reputation both at home and abroad. In our regulatory capacity, FSS has a key role to play in ensuring that strong reputation continues to be well founded, and that consumers, no matter where they live, can buy, eat and drink Scottish products in the confidence that they are safe and authentic. A key priority for FSS is developing a future regulatory strategy that is clear about how we deliver our regulatory functions and how we gain assurance about the performance of food businesses, how businesses are acting to protect consumers and what those businesses should expect from us. Our regulatory strategy will contribute to a number of our wider strategic outcomes, so is an important and early priority.

It is the legal responsibility of all food businesses to produce food that is safe and accurately described, and take appropriate actions to manage risks. As Competent Authority for food law, we have responsibility to deliver a range of official controls in food and feed businesses. The majority of these official controls are delivered by local authorities on our behalf and we work closely with local authorities to ensure that businesses meet these responsibilities, and take effective action when they fail to do so. FSS provides detailed Codes of Practice and formal guidance to help local authorities deliver this function and to ensure that enforcement is as consistent and fair as possible. We must do this in ways that are sustainable for future delivery of consumer protection.

We will carry out a comprehensive review of the Food Law Code of Practice to align this with our regulatory strategy. As part of this we will design, pilot and implement a revised risk rating matrix to ensure that food businesses are assessed consistently against legal requirements according to risk. We will ensure that the design acknowledges and rewards consistent and sustained compliance and tackles non-compliant businesses effectively

In addition to the work of local authorities, our own official control programmes in the meat and shellfish industries, together with work we carry out on behalf of other Government Departments, helps improve business compliance. We will review the programmes so that they are proportionate and do not place disproportionate burdens either on the industries we regulate or on taxpayers.

We will continue to produce guidance for food businesses to assist them in driving up compliance with food law. We will provide support and advice to food businesses to help them comply with their legal requirements. And we will help consumers understand how businesses are performing, and how they can use information about compliance to make informed choices about where they buy and eat food.

And as well as seeking sustained compliance by businesses in relation to food law that protects consumers, there are also links to our activities in Outcome 3 about consumers choosing healthier diets. We are clear that industry has a role in helping people in Scotland to have better diets, and we will recognise those businesses to who take steps to help consumers to make healthier food choices.

Question 7: Outcome 4 – *Responsible food businesses flourish.*

Consumers felt this didn't fully capture their wider interests in food businesses, beyond compliance with food law.

Would this be better expressed as:

- *Food business flourish when they do the right things for consumers*

Please comment on your preferred wording for Outcome 4. Please explain your preference.

What we'll do:

Develop a regulatory strategy for FSS that prioritises protecting consumers, enables responsible businesses to flourish, and deals effectively with businesses that do not meet their responsibilities. Underpin the regulatory strategy with a programme of work to deliver the desired outcomes including:

- Developing and implementing a robust, transparent regulatory decision making process;
- Develop a compliance framework that applies across the range of official controls;
- Understanding the diversity in food businesses, and target interventions accordingly, including consideration of the different ways in which FSS can gain assurance about the performance of food businesses;
- Reviewing the powers and sanctions available in food law to ensure they are capable of detecting non-compliance and dissuading fraudulent activity;
- Identifying and adopt incentives that reward and promote best practice and sustained compliance by food businesses.

Design and pilot a revised food law code of practice risk scoring matrix with local authorities and businesses, to underpin effective food safety enforcement, with appropriate use of interventions and incentives to drive business compliance upwards.

Work with other organisations to reduce unnecessary or disproportionate regulatory burdens across the supply chains, including through the use of other forms of assurance, and to enhance risk-based approaches to compliance, in line with the requirements of the Strategic Code of Practise for Scottish Regulators.

In collaboration with local authorities and consultation with consumers and industry, review the current Food Hygiene Information Scheme to re-focus the key aim, to incentivise business compliance and influence consumer choices. Implement the findings of that review to improve the scheme and use campaigning to raise awareness and increased participation amongst consumers

Support Scottish food and drink exports through expert assistance with visits by third countries, and providing advice on compliance requirements to businesses.

OUTCOME 5 – FSS IS A TRUSTED ORGANISATION

What this means:

Consumers in Scotland are aware of FSS and trust us to put them first in relation to food safety, food standards and healthy eating.

FSS understands the other interests of consumers in relation to food, and leverages influence where appropriate to benefit the interests of consumers.

Why this matters

This matters fundamentally to us, as FSS's stated vision is to create ***a food and drink environment in Scotland that benefits, protects and is trusted by consumers***. We know that earning and keeping consumers' trust is central to our success. To earn that trust, we need to do the right things, and do things right, and we must be visible and accessible to consumers and to stakeholders. We've already said that our primary concern is consumer protection - that food is safe to eat, ensuring consumers know what they are eating and improving nutrition. So we need consumers to trust us in how we do this on their behalf. We need to build our reputation with people in Scotland, ensuring people know who we are, and that we earn their trust through being a consistent and authoritative voice on food issues. This will also involve taking a leadership role in correcting misinformation about food safety, food standards and healthy eating.

We also know that there are other issues that affect and concern consumers in relation to food, and we have a statutory objective to 'protect the other interests of consumers in relation to food'. To earn and keep the trust of consumers, we need to understand what these other interests are, and be clear where we can exert influence either directly or through others for the benefit of consumers. This will require us to engage with and involve people and partners in our work, building on our previous approach within FSA, and to take forward an approach that focuses our activities on achieving real and lasting benefits for people, and to ensure that we are looking ahead and horizon scanning for matters that could affect consumers interests.

It can be relatively easy for organisations like ours to engage with consumers who are already interested and engaged in our issues, but we must ensure that our work reaches and benefits all consumers. Our Strategy makes clear that we must contribute to reducing the inequalities that exist in Scottish society, so our work must reach across society, and we must identify where we can have the biggest impact on reducing inequalities, for example, by focussing our interventions on tackling food fraud where there is potentially greater economic detriment to consumers. We will ensure all our relevant policies, plans and decisions are assessed using the Scottish Health Inequalities Impact Assessment process to help ensure that our impacts on people and population groups are positive.

We also need to earn the trust of those that we regulate, and the activities described in relation to Outcome 4 in particular will be a major part of this.

What we'll do:

Use engagement and insight to help us understand consumers and how we can most effectively drive change for their benefit in relation to food.

Carry out programmes of engagement with consumers and with stakeholders, through sector-appropriate activities, e.g. outreach to consumers through public and community events.

Ensure that consumers and stakeholders are engaged at the earliest possible stage in policy development, and that they can engage meaningfully with FSS through different channels, e.g. social media, online, face to face, and formal consultation opportunities.

We will be transparent in publishing information, in line with our Publication Scheme. Ensure our publication scheme, user engagement strategy and articulations of our aims and objectives are as transparent and accessible to consumers as possible

Establish FSS as a visible, recognisable and trusted brand, by delivering a communications and marketing strategy based on insight, that is co-created and targeted to key audiences based on a segmentation strategy, that engages and empowers consumers, and assures them that we are working on their behalf.

Work with consumers to identify their other interests in relation to food, and assess where and how we can best influence these for consumers' benefit.

Through collaborative working e.g. with Community Planning Partnerships, Scottish Government, NHS Health Scotland and the Food Commission, support and encourage community based approaches to consumer protection and health improvement in relation to food to help achieve the vision of Scotland as a *Good Food Nation*.

Review our work within the education sector that seeks to educate and positively influence children and young people's choices and behaviours on food safety and healthy eating.

Promote work by the SFCIU and partners that demonstrates our commitment and future successes in addressing food fraud to protect consumers' interests.

OUTCOME 6 – FSS IS EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE

What this means:

We are an organisation of well-motivated and appropriately skilled people committed to carrying out all our duties in a responsible way. Our resources are focussed on doing the right things, and doing them in ways that are most effective for achieving our objectives.

Why this matters

FSS is a new organisation, and must demonstrate that it has built a recognised identity, and we must earn respect in how we deliver for consumers. We must operate effectively and efficiently as a non-Ministerial office, in line with our published Code of Governance.

We must make a meaningful contribution to transforming public services, and making effective use of public resources in line with the expectations placed upon all public bodies in Scotland. How we deliver our work should contribute to the key themes of the Scottish Budget, which for 2016-17 are: supporting inclusive growth and protecting and reforming public services. Our contribution to protecting and reforming public services should focus on delivering the Christie Commission approach, particularly in relation to prevention and improving outcomes for individuals.

In delivering regulatory services directly, these must cost no more than is necessary, and there should be transparency for businesses in how our services are charged for. We must be efficient – using our resources wisely by making sure that they are aligned with our agreed strategic priorities, and stepping up to account for how we have used our resources and what this has delivered, through developing a performance monitoring programme that tells us and others how we are delivering. And we will encourage scrutiny and audit of our own performance.

We must comply with relevant statutory responsibilities, for example, in how we access, store, manage, share and disclose information, including personal information and material that is commercially confidential or otherwise sensitive.

To be established, efficient and effective, it is essential to have a motivated, engaged and suitably skilled workforce, so investment in developing people, succession planning and talent management will be key to ensuring we are well-placed for the numerous challenges ahead.

What we'll do:

Ensure compliance with FSS's Code of Governance, and review this Code on an annual basis. This will include:

- Hold no less than four meetings of the Board in annually, with reports to the Board from the Audit and Risk Committee on an appropriate frequency.
- Provide assurance to Scottish Ministers and the European Union on our competent authority function in relation to food and feed law.
- Formalise an internal control system, with appropriate levels of audit and assurance, that applies to financial and other related procedures in accordance with the Scottish Public Finance Manual (SPFM); and provide budget monitoring information to the Scottish Government.
- Make efficiency savings by improving delivery through a better value for money service.
- Lay an Annual Report of FSS's activities before the Scottish Parliament.

To appropriate timescales, review Memoranda of Understanding with other organisations, including the FSA, and consider where any new agreements may be necessary.

Develop a people strategy for FSS, encompassing recruitment, retention and development of people, with related learning activities to support staff and organisational development to ensure that the FSS workforce is recognised as skilled, capable and motivated.

Deliver official controls in a way that is proportionate and cost-effective, and review our approach to charging for official controls.

Develop and embed an information and IT strategy, including developing our digital capability in line with wider expectations of the public sector in Scotland, to support improved and more efficient ways of working.