

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 Corporate Plan sets out the key activities that we will undertake to March 2019 to help us move towards this vision, and we will monitor our progress against it to determine how we are achieving for consumers in Scotland.

Key Enablers

The activities outlined in this Corporate Plan represent an ambitious and challenging programme of work. To be successful, we will need to be the best organisation we can be, 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 Corporate 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. We will develop a system of governance to enable transparency in how we deal with uncertainty in the evidence, and how we weigh evidence and balance risks and benefits to both consumers and stakeholders in how we make decisions.

Openness and Engagement – having transparency at the heart of our culture, will underpin our strategic approach to **communication**. FSS will build on the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) 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, such as our key delivery partners in local authorities 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 admissions¹. 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 FSA, to reduce the risks to consumers in Scotland.

Reducing foodborne illness from Campylobacter is a priority for FSS. Current evidence suggests that between 55-75% of all reported cases of Campylobacter infection in Scotland are associated with the a chicken source², and that a significant proportion of fresh chicken on retail sale in the UK is contaminated with the pathogen³. 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

¹: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/food-safety-standards/foodborne-illness>

² <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/food-safety-standards/foodborne-illness/campylobacter>

³ <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/news/campylobacter-results-2014-2015>

(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 expenditure. They reflect the prescriptive nature of legislative requirements which apply to these sectors to ensure that public health is protected. 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 monitor and review local authority performance through audits which improve public health by ensuring that delivery of official controls is targeted, consistent, effective, and sustainable for the future.

We will also help ensure that consumers have the information they need to feel confident in storing, handling and cooking food safely and understand 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 horizon scanning and collaborative working with a wide range of partners, we must ensure a focus on incident prevention. Food and feed incidents have the capacity to affect directly 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 microbiological, chemical and radiological contaminants throughout the Scottish food chain:

- Generating programmes to reduce the risks of Campylobacter in Scottish-produced chicken, and monitoring the impact on the profile of Campylobacter infection in Scotland, supporting the Food Standards Agency's Campylobacter reduction 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 foodborne transmission of this pathogen;
- Influencing research and surveillance programmes to improve understanding of the key sources and transmission routes for microbiological, chemical and radiological contaminants in the food chain to ensure risk assessment is underpinned by robust evidence and informs the development of targeted intervention strategies which improve public health outcomes in Scotland;
- Supporting Scottish businesses in reducing the risks of contamination throughout the food chain, through the development of practical guidance and food safety management tools;
- Working with others, including through the Scottish Health Protection Network, to find collaborative solutions for addressing the key sources and transmission pathways which expose the population to contaminant risks.

Empower consumers with the information and knowledge they need to make safe food choices, and undertake safer food practices, helping them to protect themselves against foodborne illness:

- Use segmentation to identify and 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 a range of channels to ensure that consumers have access to clear advice on 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:

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

Ensure that FSS is equipped to manage and respond effectively to food incidents that could affect food safety, through regularly exercising with partners and reviewing incident response capacity and effectiveness.

Seek to mitigate the effects of food and feed incidents through dissemination of 'lessons learned' and discussion with industry and enforcing authorities.

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:

Food offered for sale should be of the nature, substance and quality expected by the purchaser. 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. 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 were 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 Group⁴ 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.

⁴ <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0042/00426914.pdf>

In creating FSS, the Scottish Parliament was clear that in light of the horsemeat incident, it wanted to align more closely 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 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 clearly have a key role 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. As consumers are an important resource in detecting food fraud, we must establish capacity for two-way dialogue, including through digital channels, to allow consumers to alert us to concerns around food authenticity.

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, and undertake activity to raise awareness and confidence.
- 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 which includes a horizon scanning capability, and employs data collected by FSS, local authorities, industry and others to identify emerging risks and 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 Scotland for food authenticity testing.
- Working with partners across Scotland, influencing research and development aimed at improving methods for identifying food authenticity and developing associated guidance for local authorities and food businesses.
- Working with Scottish Government and other public bodies to improve access to shared data, by linking with the Scottish Government's digital strategy and open database management programme.

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

Provide clarity for consumers by working with Scottish Government and others to review current arrangements for food labelling and to ensure that consumers' interests in food information are protected.

Through a mix of engagement, communication and marketing activities, help and encourage consumers to understand and use food information, especially labels, to empower them in making confident, informed decisions about food purchase, storage and handling:

- Encourage consumers to make more informed food choices through how they use information on food labels;
- Raise awareness with consumers to alert FSS, local authorities and others 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.

OUTCOME 3 – CONSUMERS HAVE HEALTHIER DIETS

What this means:

Dietary choices of the Scottish population change towards meeting the recommended dietary balance and the Scottish Dietary Goals (SDGs).

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 is 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 Europe⁵. Almost two thirds of adults in Scotland are either overweight or obese, and progress in meeting the Scottish Dietary Goals (SDGs) is poor⁶.

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 cost of obesity to Scottish society 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.

In light of advice from FSS, the SDGs have been revised to take account of the independent Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) recommendations in relation to carbohydrates and health. Scottish Government published the revised goals in March 2016. <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Scottish-Dietary-Goals-2423.aspx>

⁵ <http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/Obesity-Update-2014.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/monitoring-progress-towards-scottish-dietary-goals-2001-2012-report-2>

Recognising that greater action is needed - by industry and government, as well as by communities and individuals - FSS has published a wide ranging package of measures for improving the diet in Scotland which includes exploring regulated, legislative or fiscal measures that may be appropriate, particularly where previous or existing voluntary arrangements have been unsuccessful. We will build on our existing partnerships with local authorities, which as well as working with food businesses in their areas, can play a key role in influencing the food environment.

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 giving us 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 both local and central 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, our holistic approach must also maintain focus on other aspects of dietary health. This includes focussing on 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:

Establish and maintain FSS as an authoritative and up to date, 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, including the use of new tools for dietary surveillance.

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 advice to Scottish Government and public bodies to support their review of relevant policies to take account of revised SDGs.

Implement measures agreed by the FSS Board in January 2016⁷ to bring about changes to the food environment⁸ and support consumer behaviour changes that will be required to make positive progress towards the SDGs.

This will include engaging across a wide spectrum of interests to help build consensus and support to address the current situation in Scotland, and working with partners, including the food and drink industry to:

- Develop specific measures to minimise consumption of 'discretionary' foods and drinks⁹ (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, if necessary, develop recommendations for fiscal or regulatory measures where effective industry-led solutions cannot be established;

⁷ <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/sites/default/files/Board%20meeting%20-%202016%20January%2020%20-%20Diet%20and%20Nutrition%20Proposals%20for%20setting%20the%20direction%20for%20the%20Scottish%20Diet%20160104.pdf>

⁸ including physical, socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects of environment that influence patterns of food consumption

⁹ 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

- With local authorities and businesses, explore options aimed at improving the food and drink environment.

Lead the development of a set of dietary guidelines for Scotland aimed at providing a common script for consistent dietary messaging and 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.

Work with partners to address the issues of affordability and acceptability of a healthy diet.

Identify the most effective means of influencing public opinion in favour of action on diet.

Motivate and support consumers in choosing healthier diets through social marketing campaigns aimed at dietary health improvement, and use communications activity to position FSS at the heart of diet and nutrition in Scotland.

Work with other government departments, stakeholders and consumers to advise Scottish Ministers on the issues associated with the implementation of mandatory fortification of bread and flour folic acid, including potential health benefits and regulatory impacts, to improve health outcomes for mothers and new-borns.

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 and dissuasive 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, measured in economic terms. 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. Whilst the overwhelming majority of produce is compliant, FSS's key priority is protecting consumers' interests, and in our regulatory capacity, FSS has a key role to play in ensuring that Scotland's strong international 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 and other enforcement bodies where appropriate 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 enforcement 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.

Working with local authorities, 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 these programmes so that they are proportionate and do not place undue 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.

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 in how they manage risks, 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 adopting incentives and disincentives that reward and promote best practice and sustained compliance by food businesses;
- Work with delivery partners to develop a sustainable model for delivery of official controls, including review of mechanisms for registration and approval of businesses and consideration of sustainable funding mechanisms.

Design and pilot a revised food law code of practice risk scoring matrix with local authorities and businesses, to underpin effective food law 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 other delivery partners, and following consultation with consumers and industry, review the current Food Hygiene Information Scheme to re-focus the key aim, to incentivise business compliance through influencing consumer choices.

Develop a scheme that is well understood and used by consumers and that influences consumer purchase behaviour, aligned with the approach to achieving compliance set out in the Regulatory Strategy - acting as a disincentive to non-compliance and rewarding sustainably compliant businesses.

With key delivery partners, develop an implementation plan, including promotion of the new scheme to assist in maximising its use.

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 it 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 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. Therefore we need consumers to trust us in how we do this, acting independently 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:

Establish FSS as a visible, recognisable and trusted brand, by delivering a communications and marketing strategy that engages, informs and supports consumers, including the 'seldom heard', and assures them we are working on their behalf.

Use research and insight to help us better understand consumers and how we can most effectively drive change for their benefit in relation to food. Establish a baseline and monitor knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in relation to food safety and healthy eating over time.

Position FSS as the authoritative, consistent voice in Scotland in relation to food by providing expert spokespeople and comment to the media, and leveraging relevant online and offline communications channels.

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.

Ensure that consumers and stakeholders are engaged and consulted with at the earliest possible stage in policy development and take an inclusive approach to co-creating policy and communications. Through collaborative working, 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 and develop, in collaboration with others, the most effective means of educating and positively influencing pupil's choices and behaviours in relation to food safety and healthy eating, ensuring this work links to the Curriculum for Excellence.

We will be timely, transparent and proactive in publishing information, and will regularly review our published guidance on how information about us can be accessed, to ensure that information about us is as transparent and accessible to consumers and other stakeholders as possible.

We will hold Board meetings in public, recording policy recommendations, our decisions and the reasons for them in the Board minutes and making them publicly available.

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 prioritising preventative action 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, fulfilling the accountabilities and requirements set out in the Framework Document, and review this Code on an annual basis. This will include:

- Hold no less than four meetings of the Board 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 how we deliver our competent authority function in relation to food and feed law.
- Maintain 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.

Ensure compliance with the statutory requirements placed upon Scottish public bodies, including those relating to biodiversity, British Sign Language, climate change, complaints handling, data protection, equality, ethical standards, freedom of information, public appointments, public services reform, and regulatory reform.

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

Develop a people strategy for FSS, linked to the Scottish Government's People Strategy, 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.

Support this with effective internal communications across FSS, including both field, remote and office-based staff, to ensure that staff are well informed and engaged in two-way dialogue, regardless of working pattern or location.

Develop a science and evidence strategy for FSS to underpin how we identify and prioritise our evidence needs to support our strategic priorities.

Develop a system of governance to enable transparency in how FSS deal with uncertainty in evidence, and how we weigh evidence and balance risks and benefits to both consumers and other stakeholders in how we make decisions.

Ensure that official controls are delivered in ways that are proportionate and cost-effective, and review the approach to charging for official controls.

Develop and embed a digital 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.

Our Resources

Table 1 - Strategic Plan Outcomes - summary of allocation of budget for 16/17 (£)

	Staff	Admin	Programme	Capital	Income	Total by outcome	% of budget
Food is safe	3,890,763	825,910	6,352,227	100,000	(3,471,219)	7,697,681	50%
Food is authentic	974,182	488,717	268,425	0	(7,173)	1,724,151	11%
Consumers choose a healthier diet	701,771	447,869	955,251	0	0	2,104,891	14%
Responsible food businesses flourish	788,101	481,933	77,925	0	(7,173)	1,340,785	9%
FSS is a trusted organisation	926,982	511,510	353,925	0	(34,685)	1,757,731	11%
FSS is efficient and effective	248,866	426,276	0	0	-	675,142	4%
Total	7,530,665	3,182,214	8,007,753	100,000	(3,520,252)	15,300,381	

Table 2 - 2016-17 Resource Allocation By Team – Full Year Budget (£000)

	STAFF	ADMINISTRATION	PROGRAMME	CAPITAL	INCOME	
Board and Senior Management Team	821	133	0	0	0	
Communications and Marketing	489	42	1,238	0	0	
Corporate Services	673	2,425	0	0	0	
Regulatory Policy	673	36	17	0	0	
Food Protection Science and Surveillance	482	18	916	0	0	
Nutrition Science and Policy	276	9	497	0	0	
Science Strategy and Information Analysis	74	8	0	0	0	
Operational Delivery	2,763	314	4,910	100	-3,441	
Veterinary Management	208	58	0	0	-34	
Enforcement Delivery	463	42	310	0	0	
Scottish Food Crime and Incidents Unit	302	52	120	0	0	
Audit (Local Authorities and FBOs)	306	45	0	0	-45	
	15,300	7,530	3,182	8,008	100	-3,520