

Our Biodiversity Report 2018-2021

April 2021

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# Introductory information about FSS

## Please describe your organisation’s role and purpose, including any particular environmental responsibilities

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) is defined in law as a ‘competent authority’ and an ‘enforcement authority’ to implement and monitor Scottish and EU food and feed regulations, and our purpose is defined in the [Food (Scotland) Act 2015](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/1/pdfs/asp_20150001_en.pdf).

FSS will:

* help protect the public from risks to health which may arise through the consumption of food
* advise on how what we eat will promote good health

To deliver this, we have the following specific functions:

* develop and help others develop policies on food and animal feed
* advise the Scottish Government, other authorities and the public on food and animal feed
* keep the Scottish public and users of animal feed advised to help them make informed decisions about food and feed stuffs
* monitor the performance of food enforcement authorities

FSS ensure that Scottish Ministers’ policy is fed into European Union policy making on the regulation of food and animal feed.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) provide corporate leadership across FSS and support the Chief Executive in ensuring effective governance of FSS.

SMT is responsible for:

* developing strategic aims and objectives (a Corporate Plan) to deliver FSS Strategy as agreed by the Board.
* setting a culture which establishes consistency of aim, unity of effort, and mutual trust, empowering and motivating staff throughout the organisation.
* ensuring that FSS has the capability and capacity it needs by instituting and regularly reviewing succession planning and organisational learning and development needs

SMT also oversee and lead specific areas of the business, which are operated under the charge of subject specialists in areas which include:

* Food Safety and Standards
* LA Delivery and Incidents
* Operational Delivery
* Strategic Engagement
* Audit and Assurance
* Nutrition, Science and Policy

Key environmental impacts are influenced by FSS’ organisational responsibility covering the whole of Scotland, including the islands, where a physical presence is required. This results in a large amount of travel, with the associated emissions. Along with travel, the upkeep of the main office is another factor to report on our environmental performance in relation to emission of CO2.

Although FSS has no direct statutory responsibilities in relation to biodiversity, there remains the requirement to report on it. Along with this, FSS has been involved in some areas relating to biodiversity and climate change through partnership working.

# Actions to protect biodiversity and connect people with nature

## Please describe and explain any actions that your organisation has undertaken alone or as part of a partnership to benefit biodiversity directly, to tackle the main drivers of biodiversity loss, or to achieve wider outcomes for nature and people

FSS has promoted initiatives aimed at increasing staff awareness on climate change and environmental issues.

Activities and steps taken have included;

* An environmental team (e-team) was formed to enable staff interested in environmental issues to develop initiatives and assist with employee engagement. This team meets quarterly with involvement from representatives at Marine Lab.
* Training from Scottish Government on Green Champions package was completed by members of the e-team. Some Green Champions resources have also been used to influence and focus initiatives and awareness raising.
* FSS has hosted a talk from WWF on food waste and its environmental effects. This focused on the responsibilities of us all on the value of food and the impact waste has on the environment, not purely from waste packaging and leftover food which need to be disposed of, but also on the atmospheric emissions sustained across all steps required in producing the food. This included an awareness session on how different types of food can be rated in terms of their emissions profile.
* A lunch ’n’ learn was hosted with the waste contractor responsible for managing waste at Head Office. The event included information for attendees on recycling and waste management and how ‘general’ waste was no longer seen or treated in this manner with every effort made to reduce the waste to landfill as far as is practical. All Head Office waste is now diverted from landfill and is used towards developing electricity in an energy from waste plant.
* The e-team organised beach cleans in Aberdeen. Over the course of the reporting term, one has been held every year. Another beach clean had to be cancelled this year because of coronavirus restrictions.
* A series of environmental tips and guides has been provided to all staff. Topics included sustainable eating, low carbon travelling and recycling tips and best practice along with information about reducing single use plastic. A SharePoint site has been created to allow staff access, share and discuss environmental information.
* Climate week has featured annually and has included environmental information and quiz competitions.
  + 2018 featured a quiz run across the course of the working week.
  + 2019 saw a series of events facilitated, aimed at awareness raising and increasing staff’s involvement on the subject of tackling climate change. Each day of the week saw a question posed on environmental topics and this was communicated alongside the daily subject matter for the day. Daily features included Sustainable Eating, Low Carbon Journeys, SG Targets and FSS, Waste Management and Scottish Government’s (SG) Climate Challenge Fund. A volunteering day was also organised where a clean-up of a local park was performed by FSS staff in conjunction with Aberdeen City Council.
  + 2020 also featured a quiz along with a competition on eco projects that staff had undertaken at home, whether it be upcycling, recycling or any activities relating to energy use or biodiversity. Information was shared on home working and energy use in a bid to raise awareness on how to reduce both the bills and emissions at a time when more are working from home. Staff were asked and given links to information based how different our impact would be if we were all Green Champions.
* FSS replaced a diesel pool car fleet with electric pool cars in a bid to lower emissions experienced with travel for work. FSS further engaged with the landlord at Head Office to install electric vehicle chargers on site. In a bid to increase uptake, individual lessons were held for staff to increase their confidence in using these cars. While staff have been trained on using these new cars, lessons have also been hosted for staff, to help teach ways to use less fuel when driving their own cars.
* Earth Hour has been promoted annually.
* As part of the development of the e-team and also in a bid to raise awareness across other staff members, a visit to a local waste recycling facility was organised. The facility visited is one which is recognised as an exemplar when implementing recycling and reducing waste to landfill. The tour helped display modern waste management practices where the processes involved are more complex than simply transporting to landfill. Waste segregation on an industrial level was shown along with the technology involved to ensure safety and environmental performance are optimised.
* Head Office is now supplied with electricity which has renewable energy generation as a primary source. FSS tasked the landlord representative with procuring electricity from suppliers where renewable sources are used as a primary concern, allowing for a reasoned cost/benefit analysis. As a result, the electricity used by the FSS Head Office is supplied by means where there is as little use of fossil fuels, energy from waste or other virgin material as possible.

# Mainstreaming biodiversity

## Please outline any steps your organisation has taken to incorporate biodiversity measures into its wider policies, plans or strategies. This should include decision-making structures and staff and organisational roles and responsibilities.

FSS environmental policy began as an Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) policy but has since been changed to reflect the environment as a sole consideration. This is reviewed annually and forms part of the HSE Management System.

The Carbon Management Plan (CMP) has been in operation since it was approved by the Chief Executive. This plan covers 2017-2022 and considers the baseline emissions and performance factors across FSS and what can be done to improve on these at a 2.5% year on year targeted level. A recent report presented to the FSS Audit and Risk committee detailed how this target has been achieved.

FSS environmental team works in collaboration with the team at Marine Lab. This has helped the exchange of information and develop initiatives while also helping to share experiences, successes and challenges towards increasing environmental awareness.

# Workforce development

## Workforce skills and training

E-team members have undertaken the Green Champion Training, provided by Scottish Government, in a bid to help their understanding on the environment and how it relates to their work.

FSS promotes volunteering days and staff are encouraged to take part in local initiatives where this has been achieved through the e-team.

FSS also has achieved Gold status in the Healthy Working Lives scheme and a number of activities this team promote include step challenges, outdoor activities and others targeted at improving health and reducing reliance on motorised transport.

# Research and monitoring

## Describe any research activities that your organisation has undertaken that may be relevant to biodiversity or nature

FSS contributed to the development of the research on Diet and Food Safety that sits under Sustainable Food Systems and Supply within the Draft Strategy for Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Research.

FSS supports Zero Waste Scotland in delivering government food waste reduction targets and ensuring our work to ensure food safety and improve the Scottish diet takes account of environmental considerations including carbon footprint and a wider policy on food waste.

FSS has also contributed to the Scottish Government Climate Change adaptation programme with input to the Health Effects section under the headings of Promoting Food Safety and the Strategy for Reducing Food Borne Illness. FSS also contributed to the Food Quality and Safety section, providing details on food risk assessments, horizon scanning on food intelligence sources along with research and surveillance relating to food substitution.

## What follow-up actions or monitoring have you undertaken to assess the impacts of the actions you have taken? How have you measured this?

FSS reports to the Audit and Risk Committee detailing performance towards achieving the targets laid out in the Carbon Management Plan.

This has been assessed though data taken from the Climate Change Report. Since 2016, there have been a number of iterations of the reporting template and these changes have focused on the conversion factors used across the emissions measured. Additional factors are now measured on the emissions calculator and this can skew the data where comparison between years is required. To allow for an accurate reflection, as well as reporting on the most recent data sets, last year saw the submission of the report comparing old data, calculated against that year’s conversion factors in order to show the historic performance. This has improved the understanding over the changes that have been put in place and their relative impact.

# Biodiversity highlights and challenges

## Describe your organisation’s main achievements for biodiversity over the reporting period and what you are most proud of (this can include processes, plans, projects, partnerships, events and actions).

## Looking ahead, what do you think will be the main challenges over the next three years?

The CMP is due for revision in Q4 of this reporting year. Going forward, the plan will focus on removing some of the barriers relating to the engagement experienced. The first version related solely to the organisation as a whole, although technically informative, was perhaps not as focussed as it could have been and the revision will address that. The revision will also include individual impacts and highlight what differences we can make. While a large amount of mitigation is already in place and it was relatively straightforward to achieve targets initially, the year on year increase will provide challenges.



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