Food Standards Scotland is undertaking regular horizon scanning activities to identify current, emerging and increasing issues and risks in relation to food safety, food standards and food crime. In particular, during the COVID-19 pandemic, FSS has commenced more frequent and focused horizon scanning since April 2020, tackling the current and potential risk that consumers may experience in result of the world-wide food chain disruption.

COVID-19 related Issues
Additionally, the following issues were recorded:

Monitoring/regulatory changes by external parties which could impact on food safety and authenticity
- Hand sanitiser found packaged as food and drink in the US
- Increased use of fogging as COVID disinfect

Changes to Global Food production, supply and distribution
- China refuses imports from Fort Smith and Springfield poultry plants in U.S.
- China accepts Argentinian "covid free" guarantee
- Seafarers need to be recognised as key workers to avert global food supply crisis
- The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has cited a second large meat production company for failing to protect employees from exposure to the coronavirus.

Changes to Scottish Food production, supply and distribution
- Two Millers of Speyside (Grantown On Spey), Greencore, Banham Poultry (Norfolk site), Tesco distribution centre (West Lothian) workers tested positive for COVID-19
- High number of chickens to be culled after COVID disruptions in poultry plants
- Industry leaders have called for food sector workers to be prioritised for COVID-19 testing
- Drinks suppliers faced with can shortages as sales soar
- Upmarket loose leaf tea near or after Best Before End disposed off by businesses
- Tesco clearing stocks of panic-bought flour
- Negative impact on the UK venison market

Changes in Consumer Preferences & Purchasing behaviours
- Fermented vegetables becomes popular top 6 ways to boost your immune system to tackle COVID-19

UK import Emerging Issues
During September the following issues were identified through FSS’s horizon scanning and from the FSA's Risk Likelihood Dashboard as emerging or increasing in reported frequency and may require additional attention:

1. Salmonella in chilled and frozen poultry from Poland
2. Pesticide residue in lemon from Chile
3. Improper production in bean from Taiwan
4. Undeclared allergen in cereal product from South Korea
5. Poisonous chemical in cinnamon from India
6. Unauthorised ingredient in cereal product from Taiwan
7. Pesticide residue in tomato from Colombia
8. Poisonous chemical in bread from China
9. Egg allergen in animal feed from Netherlands
10. Fatty acid in bakery product from Ukraine
11. Listeria in Chicken from France
12. Salmonella in black pepper from Brazil
13. Fraudulent certification on imported peanuts and smoked fish from Ghana

Issued 1st October 2020
Food Standards Agency's Risk Likelihood Dashboard

FSS has started to use the Food Standards Agency Risk Likelihood Dashboard as another source of information in our horizon scanning activities. Data presented in this newsletter in relation to UK imports risk is informed by this dashboard.

The Risk Likelihood Dashboard contains data relating to imported food and feed taken from a variety of data sources. This dashboard has been developed by the FSA to create a platform to enable more efficient and effective collation and sharing of relevant data for stakeholders involved in protecting public health in relation to imported food and feed. The dashboard has been developed for use in any EU Exit political scenario. The dashboard aims to improve business as usual activities, enabling efficient access to collated open source data and also providing increased access to closed data sources (such as TRACES) to Competent Authorities and other Government Agencies.

The dashboard is comprised of data from open sources and other sources whereby the information is not in the public domain. The FSA is the owner and developer of the dashboard and therefore it is classed as government data and therefore must be handled and protected appropriately. The majority of data in the dashboard contains datasets comprised of country of origin and type of product. There is some limited personal data contained in the analysis of the importers section of the dashboard which covers lists of businesses that have changed the port of entry on failing previous sampling checks and a separate list of businesses that have repeatedly failed sampling checks. These lists are not in the public domain and may contain sole traders. The names of sole traders are classed as personal data under the GDPR.

FSA is now opening the access to the dashboards to all Scottish LAs and to date 3 Scottish LAs have signed up. Individual LAs will have to nominate a single point of contact and submit a form with names and email addresses of all officers they wish to have access to the platform. Please contact Kasia Kazimierczak (Kasia.Kazimierczak@fss.scot) to receive a user sign-up form.