

# Chief Executives Report

## 1. Introduction

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

## 2. Engagements and meetings

2.1 The CEO continues to have regular engagement with a range of stakeholders and organisations.

## 3. Evidence to Scottish Parliament Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

3.1 On 17 February 2026 the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee held an evidence session on Food Standards Scotland and on the National Good Food Nation Plan. The CEO, and Chair, gave evidence to the Committee. The witness panel also included Professor Mary Brennan from the Living Good Food Nation Lab. The evidence session focused on Food Standards Scotland's work, and on the National Good Food Nation Plan. A copy of the evidence session can be accessed in the Official Report:

<https://www.parliament.scot/api/sitecore/CustomMedia/OfficialReport?meetingId=20089>

3.2 A copy of FSS's written evidence to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, along with the Committee clerk's Note can be accessed at: [Note by the Clerk](#)

## 4. Scottish Parliament event

4.1 On 02 December 2025 Food Standards Scotland's held a parliamentary event to mark 10 years of Food Standards Scotland, hosted by Emma Harper MSP. Other speakers included Food Standards Scotland's Chair, Jenni Minto MSP, the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health, and Anna Taylor, The Food Foundation's Executive Director. The event was well attended by stakeholders, including 8 MSPs, and the feedback from attendees has been very positive.

## 5. Ministerial meetings

5.1 The CEO continued to have regular catch-ups meetings with Jenni Minto MSP, the Scottish Government's Minister for Public Health and Women's Health to update her on ongoing FSS activity.

## 6. Revised parliamentary strategy

6.1 The Comms team will be revising the public affairs strategy for engagement with the new Scottish Government, the new Scottish Parliament and with MSPs.

Once approved, it is anticipated that this will include a parliamentary event early in the new parliament, subject to the availability of event space in the Parliament.

## **7. Annual Report and Accounts**

7.1 FSS's Annual Report and Accounts were laid in the Scottish Parliament, and a copy sent to all MSPs, to Conveners of relevant Scottish Parliament committees, to all MPs representing constituencies in Scotland, and to the Chairs of the EFRA and the Scottish Affairs Committee in the House of Commons.

## **8. Engagement with MSPs**

8.1 FSS has continued its cross-party engagement with MSPs, focussing on a wide range of FSS's work. These meetings included food crime meetings with Gordon MacDonald MSP, with Paul Sweeney MSP, Deputy Convener of the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, and with Graham Simpson MSP.

8.2 A meeting with Beatrice Wishart MSP, the Scottish Liberal Democrats' Spokesperson on Connectivity and on Rural Affairs was also held to update her about the work of FSS's Diet and Nutrition Division, and about the work of the Operational Delivery Division.

8.3 Meetings to update MSPs on the DISH Report were held with Brian Whittle MSP, with Emma Harper MSP, and with Paul McLennan MSP.

## **9. Engagement at Westminster**

9.1 The CEO met with the Rt Hon Alistair Carmichael MP, Chair of the House of Commons' Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee on 23 February 2026. The aims of the meeting were to update Alistair Carmichael MP about FSS's work, including FSS's new strategy for 2026 – 2031.

## **10. FSS Strategy for 2021-26**

10.1 The new [strategy](#) was launched at our Board Seminar on 11 February 2026. The launch included communication touch points, including use of a video of our Board Chair.

10.2 The Strategy will be hosted on our new FSS website, making it easier for people to find and read through the different sections. We will also be providing Easy Read and British Sign Language versions.

10.3 Titled, as our vision, "A safe, authentic and healthier food environment that Scotland can trust", we aim to achieve our vision through the delivery of a rigorous system of food and feed safety standards and regulations that ensure policy development, operational delivery, guidance and public communications are transparent and evidence based.

## **11. Publication of a comparison of [national dietary surveys \(Scottish Health Survey 2021 and Dietary Intake in Scotland's children 2024\) with Worldpanel by Numerator household purchase data](#)**

11.1 On 23 January, FSS published a report comparing food and drink intake data from the 2021 Scottish Health Survey (SHeS) and the 2024 Dietary Intake in Scotland's Children (DISH) survey, with retail purchase data from Worldpanel by Numerator.

11.2 The research highlights reported energy and nutrient intakes were consistently lower in the SHeS/ DISH dietary recall data compared with the World panel retail purchase data. Alcohol, biscuits, confectionary and cakes were among the foods that had the largest discrepancy between SHeS/DISH and data from Worldpanel by Numerator for energy, fat, saturated fat, carbohydrates, and total sugars.

11.3 The findings highlight the need for further research and methodological improvements in dietary recall tools, to improve the ability to accurately monitor diets in Scotland.

## **12. Publication of discretionary food briefing paper**

12.1 On 23 January, we published an updated [briefing paper on discretionary foods and drinks](#). Building on the previous 2018 FSS briefing, the paper presents the latest evidence, highlighting the significant impact that discretionary foods have on diet and health in Scotland, their widespread availability in the food environment, and the factors that contribute to their overconsumption.

12.2 FSS continue to advise that reducing intakes of these foods is a key step towards improving the nation's diet. A wide range of measures to transform the food environment and shift consumer behaviour will be essential to achieve this reduction, which in turn would support significant progress towards the Scottish Dietary Goals.

## **13. Publication of Updated NPM**

13.1 On 27 January 2026, the UK Government published the [updated Nutrient Profiling Model \(NPM 2018\)](#). The NPM classifies food and drinks based on their nutritional composition by scoring beneficial and less beneficial nutrients. The previous version, the NPM 2004-2005, underpins regulations restricting the advertising and promotion of high fat, sugar or salt (HFSS) products. The NPM 2018 aligns with current dietary recommendations, particularly on dietary fibre and free sugars, but may face industry resistance due to significant implications for businesses.

13.2 A consultation on its use in regulations which restrict advertising of HFSS foods across the UK, and on restricting promotions of HFSS products in England is expected to be published in spring.

#### 14. Publication of [Nutrition and maternal weight outcomes](#) report

14.1 On 3rd February 2026, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition published their report, Nutrition and maternal weight outcomes, which aimed to review the scientific basis of UK dietary recommendations for women during preconception, pregnancy and up to 24 months after delivery.

14.2 The report emphasised the importance of women beginning pregnancy at a healthy weight, and maintaining a healthy weight between pregnancy as a priority. It also recommended that women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or of childbearing age (14 - 49), particularly those planning a pregnancy or who may become pregnant should follow existing UK dietary guidelines and avoid energy intakes above requirements. For maternal weight gain and postpartum weight loss, SACN recommends eating a healthy balanced diet in line with existing UK recommendations and to exclusively breastfeed for the first six months, continuing into the second year and beyond.

#### 15. Nutrition & Health Claims

15.1 On 29 January the UK Nutrition and Health Claims Committee (UKNHCC) published their scientific opinion on that latest Nutrition and Health Claims application, 006UKNHCC - Green kiwifruit powder and maintenance of normal defecation. According to their published opinion, the UKNHCC concludes that '*A cause-and-effect relationship has not been established between the consumption of green kiwifruit powder and maintenance of normal defecation based on the proposed conditions of use*'. This scientific opinion completes the UKNHCC's scientific risk assessment of a function claim based on a beneficial physiological effect under article 13(5) of Regulation 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims.

15.2 The 30 day public consultation period ended 28 February, following which the Nutrition, Labelling, Composition and Standards policy group (NLCS) will consider the published opinion and advise respective ministers as soon as possible. The UKNHCC published scientific opinion can be found [here](#)

#### 16. Food Supplements

16.1 The authorisation of the mineral substance Magnesium L-threonate monohydrate as a novel form of magnesium intended for use in food supplements required a two stage approach. In January, following a safety assessment under the Novel Food Regulation, the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health signed a ministerial determination to authorise the mineral substance as a novel food. At the same time, in order to allow the substance to be used in the manufacture of food supplements, the Minister agreed to lay the draft Food Supplements (Magnesium L-threonate monohydrate) (Scotland) Regulations 2026 in the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Statutory Instrument (SSI) also sets the purity criteria for the substance.

16.2 On 03 February, the Scottish Parliament's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee debated and agreed to support the instrument. In turn, the Minister has now signed off the final version and the SSI is due to come into force on 05 March, alongside the novel food determination.

## 17. UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement

17.1 As Board members are aware negotiations between the UK and EU to develop a new Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement are currently underway. This follows political agreement at the UK-EU Summit in May last year, set out in the Common Understanding, to work towards establishing a Common SPS Area with territorial scope covering the EU and GB, based on dynamic alignment with EU rules, with limited exceptions. This would remove the need for certificates and border controls on the vast majority of movements of animals, animal products, plants and plant products between GB and EU.

17.2 On 09 March 2026, as part of a broader business readiness announcement, the UK Government published a list of EU legislation in scope of the SPS Agreement that the UK will need to align with in GB. This includes a significant amount of legislation that Food Standards Scotland (FSS) has policy responsibility for in Scotland, including food and feed law, broader nutrition-related areas such as food supplements, fortified foods, food for specific groups, nutrition and health claims, and nutrition labelling, and wider agrifood rules related to food labelling and compositional standards.

17.3 Further information on these UK Government announcements can be found at:

[Businesses urged to take simple steps for smoother trade with the EU - GOV.UK](#)

[UK-EU SPS Agreement - Legislation in scope - GOV.UK](#)

17.4 FSS is currently providing technical support in the negotiations through close working with the Scottish and UK Governments, and the Food Standards Agency (FSA). FSS has also strengthened its internal governance to plan for, and resource, the necessary work that will be needed to implement and operationalise the SPS Agreement in our areas of responsibility, including any legislative changes that may be required. The UK Government is working towards a mid-2027 start date for the new agreement, which is informing our planning assumptions.

17.5 Following the UK Government business readiness announcement, FSS and FSA have also written to trade associations and regulated products applicants advising them to start preparing for dynamic alignment now, and to outline what it will mean for specific applications in light of the prioritisation principles agreed by both the FSS and FSA Boards. Similar letters have been issued to those who already have a GB authorisation advising that an EU authorisation will be required in order to remain on the GB market.

17.6 The Board will be regularly appraised of our work in relation to the SPS Agreement at future open board meetings as appropriate.

## 18. Cobalt(II) compounds as feed additives

18.1 Feed additives are substances, micro-organisms, or preparations (other than feed materials and premixtures) which are intentionally added to feed or water to

perform one or more specific functions. To place feed additives on the GB market, an application must be submitted in accordance with [Regulation \(EC\) 1831/2003](#). Cobalt(II) compounds are nutritional feed additives defined within Regulation (EC) 1831/2003 and Annex I paragraph 3(b) functional group 'compounds of trace elements'. Within Regulation 1831/2003 there are provisions which allow for the urgent authorisation on a provisional basis, where this is deemed necessary to protect animal welfare.

18.2 In 2023, FSS made a recommendation to Scottish Ministers to provisionally authorise four Cobalt(II) compounds. The recommendation was based on the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Scientific Opinions on the safety of Cobalt(II) compounds from 2009 and 2012. These opinions confirmed that Cobalt(II) compounds are safe for animals and do not pose a risk to humans. Subsequently, the Minister agreed to provisionally authorise the four Cobalt(II) compounds in Scotland for three years, until 14 July 2026. The forms of provisional authorisations were set out in the [Feed Additives \(Form of Provisional Authorisations\) \(Cobalt\(II\) Compounds\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2023](#). Following this, Ministers in England and Wales agreed to provisionally authorise for five years, until 14 July 2028. In the EU, these Cobalt(II) compounds have been provisionally authorised until a decision on the substantive authorisation of the additive is taken or until 14 July 2028.

18.3 The substantive application in GB for these Cobalt(II) compounds is not yet complete and there are no alternatives to these feed additives. Therefore, in Scotland, a further two-year provisional authorisation of the Cobalt(II) compounds is considered essential for animal health and welfare, in particular for ruminants grazing in areas with cobalt soil deficiencies.

18.4 Between January - February 2026, FSS consulted on the proposed two-year provisional authorisation for Cobalt(II) compounds. The four main GB feed trade associations and a Scottish farming organisation responded in favour of the two-year provisional authorisation for Cobalt(II) compounds. The consultation and summary of stakeholder responses are available at: [Consultation on the two year provisional authorisation of four Cobalt\(II\) compounds for use in animal nutrition in Scotland - Food Standards Scotland - Citizen Space](#)

18.5 The Minister has now agreed to the further two-year provisional determination of authorisation of the four Cobalt(II) compounds as feed additives, which will come into force in Scotland on the 15 July 2026. This will enable the farming and feed sector to continue to supply, trade and use Cobalt(II) compounds in Scotland until 14 July 2028, and bring Scotland into alignment with the rest of GB and with the EU.

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