



## *Putting the Consumer First*

**Departmental Report Spring 2002**

The Government's Expenditure Plans 2002-03 and 2003-04

This is part of a series of departmental reports which, along with the Main Estimates 2002-03 and the Supplementary Budgetary Information 2002-03 and the document *Public Expenditure: Statistical Analyses 2002-03*, present the Government's expenditure plans for 2002-03 to 2003-04. The plans were published in summary form in the Budget documentation.

The complete series of departmental reports is also available as a set at a discounted price.



**Food Standards Agency  
Departmental Report**

The Government's Expenditure Plans  
2002-03 to 2003-04

Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State  
for Health and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury  
by Command of Her Majesty June 2002

Cm 5404

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# Contents

	Page
Foreword by the Chair of the Food Standards Agency	2
Chair and Deputy Chair	6
The Food Standards Agency Board	7
The Food Standards Agency Chief Executive	13
Chapter 1: Who we are and how we are organised	14
Chapter 2: What we do – our longer term objectives	20
Chapter 3: How we are doing – reporting on performance	30
Chapter 4: Modernising Government – developing the way we work	44
Chapter 5: The year ahead	68
Annex 1: FSA organisation	79
Annex 2: Performance against SDA targets	80
Annex 3: Expert and Strategic Advisory Committees	89
Annex 4: Common core tables	91
Annex 5: Glossary of terms	100

The purpose of this report is to present to Parliament and the public a clear and informative account of the expenditure activities and performance of the Food Standards Agency.

## Foreword by the Chair of the Food Standards Agency

I am pleased to present the Food Standards Agency's annual Departmental Report. This report covers the period 2001-02, and reports the FSA's achievements in the second year since its launch in April 2000.

At the end of our second year, I am pleased to be able to say that the FSA has continued to demonstrate the highest level of commitment to its guiding principles. We have acted openly and encouraged stakeholder involvement in all our policy making. In addition to eight public Board meetings held around the country, we have hosted stakeholder meetings to promote debate on issues of consumer concern and scientific uncertainty. This has included labelling of foods produced from GM technology, the theoretical risk of BSE in sheep, and potential controls to reduce consumer exposure to MAP (*Mycobacterium avium* subsp. *paratuberculosis*) from milk.

In the wake of the outbreak of foot and mouth disease, which began in February 2001, food production generally has been the subject of widespread debate and a Government review. This is an issue which affects us all, and the FSA has played an important part in ensuring that consumers' views in particular were taken into consideration by the Government's Policy Commission on Farming and Food for England. A wealth of consumer research and consultations, including regional seminars (some with low-income groups) and a London debate, together with the views logged by consumers on our Talkfood website were all used to inform our submission to the Commission.

To ensure that all the FSA's policy making is open to as wide a range of consumer interests as possible, and that decisions are based on a full understanding of consumer needs and views, we have taken an additional step of appointing a Consumer Committee. The Committee's membership includes not only individuals appointed following nominations from the main consumer groups but also individuals recruited through open competition.

May 2001 saw the publication of the FSA's Strategic Plan (2001-2006). The Plan outlines the FSA's key priorities over the next five years in the areas of:

- food safety
- public information
- labelling and choice
- nutrition and diet
- food law enforcement

The Strategic Plan sets the benchmarks against which we will be measured, and our success in meeting the targets that have been set will be crucial to building public confidence in the FSA as a credible consumer protection body.

Food safety lies at the heart of the Strategic Plan and the FSA's operations. We have set ourselves a target of reducing foodborne disease by 20%, which we aim to achieve through a wide-ranging package of measures. Highlights of our progress so far include the agreement, in November, of a strategy for the implementation of HACCP in 30% of UK food businesses by April 2004. The FSA's Food Hygiene Campaign, a key measure aimed at reducing foodborne disease, was launched in February. The first phase of this five-year campaign focuses on reducing bacterial contamination of food in catering establishments and will be followed by measures targeted at consumers. In partnership with industry we have also achieved, ahead of schedule, one of our major food safety targets, namely the reduction by more than 50% of the level of salmonella contamination in retail, UK produced, chicken.

The FSA's Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement has laid the groundwork for our plans to help drive up food standards and consumer confidence by improving the consistency and effectiveness of food law enforcement. The Agreement will ensure that the FSA has more information about local authorities which will help us to identify trends, good examples of enforcement work and areas requiring improvement. Local authorities have responded very positively to FSA recommendations for improvements.

The FSA has also worked closely with enforcement bodies to tackle breaches in food safety rules throughout the year. It acted rapidly to protect consumers when baby formula affected by botulism spores and soy sauce contaminated with a genotoxic carcinogen were discovered.

We have also adopted a package of control measures aimed at preventing unfit meat from entering the food chain. We set up a Waste Food Task Force to look at what further measures are required to ensure the appropriate disposal of food waste in the UK, and to reduce the scope for fraud.

The Meat Hygiene Service (an executive agency of the FSA), together with other enforcement bodies, has maintained high levels of vigilance in support of the enforcement of BSE control measures. Although very few breaches in the regulations have been identified, the importance of these measures for human health protection means this area, and particularly checks on imported meat at cutting plants, remains a high priority.

We have made good progress in our commitment to help people achieve long-term improvements in their diet. In consultation with our stakeholders we have agreed a nutrition strategy and appointed a Nutrition Forum. Consumer information provided through our website, aimed at helping people to achieve a healthy diet in practice, has been extended and improved. An interactive site providing expert advice, survey results (such as salt levels in bread) and guidance on how to use label information will all help to promote consumer choice.

The Internet is an increasingly important medium for communicating with our stakeholders, and an important way in which we meet our commitment to be open and accessible. The redesign and launch of our website has therefore been a high priority and by listening closely to what people want we have been able to make the site more user-friendly and provide information that better meets people's needs. Overall these improvements have increased the level of use of the site by more than 50% since its launch in December 2001.

Significant progress on the FSA's action plan on labelling has been made, with all initiatives now underway. An additional review of food assurance schemes has also been initiated in response to the results of our own consumer research, which showed that consumers are confused as to what different logos mean.



Overall, we have continued to build on what was an impressive first year for the Agency. Our second quantitative survey of public attitudes to food and food safety has shown that we have made considerable strides in raising consumer awareness of the Agency and engendering trust in the way we operate and what we say. Ahead of us lie many challenges. Central to these will be building on our relationships with stakeholders, and showing them that they can rely on us always to abide by our core principles in handling issues. We can take heart that in our first two years we have developed a good reputation for putting the consumer first and for our openness and transparency. We are also making steady progress towards our long-term goal of being trusted as the UK's most reliable source of advice and information about food.

**John Krebs**

## The Chair and Deputy Chair

### **Sir John Krebs FRS** – Chair of the Food Standards Agency



Since 1988 Sir John Krebs has held a Royal Society Research Professorship in the Department of Zoology, Oxford University, where he is also a Fellow of Pembroke College. He has also held posts at the University of British Columbia and the University of Wales, Bangor. Sir John is an internationally renowned scientist for his research on the behaviour and ecology of animals.

Between 1994 and 1999, Sir John was Chief Executive of the Natural Environment Research Council. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society, a member of Academia Europaea, Foreign Member of the American Philosophical Society, member of the Max Planck Society, Honorary member of the British Ecological Society and Honorary Foreign Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Among the awards he has received for his scientific work are: Scientific Medal, Zoological Society of London; Frink Medal, Zoological Society of London; Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour Medal; Bicentenary Medal, Linnaean Society of London; Elliot Coues Award, American Ornithologists Union. He has received honorary degrees from the following universities: Birmingham, Cranfield, Exeter, Kent, Plymouth, Sheffield, Stirling, Wales, Warwick.

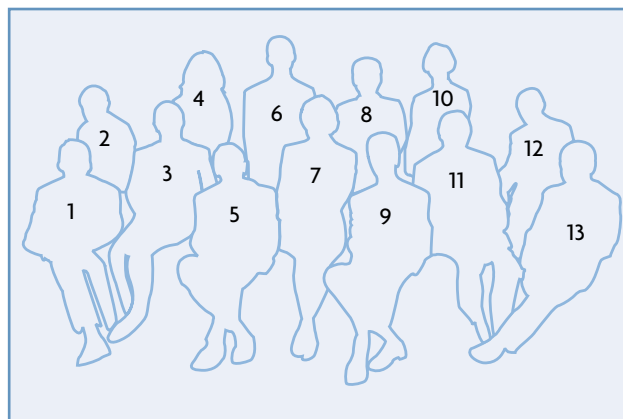
### **Suzi Leather** – Deputy Chair of the Food Standards Agency



Suzi Leather has strong consumer credentials and wide professional experience. Her academic background is in political science and she also has probation and social work qualifications. She has worked in market research, consumer research and university teaching; she has chaired a NHS Trust and was appointed to the Chair of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority in March 2002.

Ms Leather has worked at regional, national and European level on food, health and consumer issues. She has particular interests in regulation and public health. She has been involved in regulation in both the food and water industries. She helped start one of the first bioethics courses in the university sector, and holds honorary lectureships at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and at the University of Exeter. She is a member of the Royal Society's Inquiry into Infectious Diseases of Livestock.

# The Food Standards Agency Board



(Board photographed June 2001)  
1. Robert Rees 2. Michael Gibson  
3. Karol Bailey 4. Prof. Bhupinder Sandhu  
5. Prof. Sir John Arbuthnott  
6. Vernon Sankey 7. Suzi Leather  
8. Baroness Howarth of Breckland  
9. Prof. Sir John Krebs 10. Ann Hemingway  
11. Prof. Jeya Henry 12. Richard Ayre  
13. Michael Walker

**Sir John Arbuthnott** –  
Chair of the  
FSA's Scottish  
Food Advisory  
Committee

**Sir John Arbuthnott** became the Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of Strathclyde in 1991, and stayed in this post until his retirement in December 2000. He was Convenor of the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals from 1994-1996 and served as a Vice-Chairman of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals from 1997-1999. He was also a member of the Dearing Inquiry into Higher Education, including its Scottish Standing Committee (The Garrick Committee) and the working group on the economic role of higher education. Sir John is also the Secretary and Treasurer of the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland.

**Sir John Arbuthnott**  
– continued

Sir John's academic background is in medical microbiology, with special interest in mechanisms of infectious disease. He has held two chairs in microbiology, at Trinity College Dublin (1976-88) and Nottingham (1988-1991), and served on the Richmond Committee that examined the integrity of the whole of the food chain, from farm to fork. In 1997 Sir John was appointed Chair of the Steering Group on the National Review into the Allocation of Health Resources within Scotland, publishing the report *Fair Shares for All* in 1999. He served as a member of the MAFF Veterinary Products Committee and the AFRC Food Research Committee from 1990-1993. Sir John is a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists, the Institute of Biology, the Academy of Medical Sciences and the Royal Society of Edinburgh. He chairs the Executive Committee of the United Kingdom Life Sciences Federation.

**Michael Gibson**

**Michael Gibson** is the Managing Director of a small family meat firm, Macbeth's Butchers, which employs five full-time and three part-time staff. He runs this in conjunction with Edinvale Farms, which consists of 900 acres of farmland and some 600 head of cattle. Michael Gibson is Chairman of the Agricultural Committee of the Scottish Landowners Federation. Since 1996 he has co-ordinated the Federation's handling of BSE and all red meat-related matters. He is currently leading a Scottish initiative on Less Favoured Area support in conjunction with the Macauley Land Use Research Institute. He is also a member of the Highlands & Islands Agricultural Partnership, a newly formed group consisting of local authorities, enterprise companies, producer organisations, and environmental groups advising politicians and civil servants of local issues. In his role as Senior Fieldsman to the Highland Cattle Society, Mr Gibson provides advice to breeders on feeding, marketing, breeding policy and general husbandry as well as formulating Society policy on breed development.

**Ann Hemingway**

**Ann Hemingway** is Chair of the Advisory Committee for Wales. Ann is an experienced businesswoman qualified in Home Economics and Marketing. Her early career experience was in publicity for the milling industry before she moved to British Gas, initially in a marketing role using her home economics background but later taking senior management positions in information technology, personnel and general management of customer service operations. She played a significant role in developing the new direction for British Gas from

privatisation through to demerger, leading the management team responsible for customer service in the first phase of gas competition. She is currently involved in a non-executive role with the strategic development of Driver and Vehicle Operator Services with the DTLR and is a non-executive Board Member with the Strategic Rail Authority.

**Michael Walker** –  
Chair of  
the Agency's  
Food Advisory  
Committee for  
Northern Ireland.

**Michael Walker** is Chair of the Food Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland. As a partner in a private firm of UKAS-accredited consulting chemists, he is the resident Public Analyst for Northern Ireland. The Public Analyst provides an official food control laboratory for local authorities, dealing with, among other things, chemical enforcement services relating to food composition, additives, contaminants, labelling and consumer complaints. He was appointed to the General Consumer Council (Northern Ireland) in February 1999, and is convenor of the Council's combined Food and Consumer Education Groups. He is also a member of the Advisory Board of the all-Ireland implementation body, the Food Safety Promotion Board. His academic background is in chemistry and he is a fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry and a member of the Institute of Food Science and Technology.

**Richard Ayre**

**Richard Ayre** is a consultant in media ethics and broadcast management. He was Deputy Chief Executive of BBC News until 2000 and before that he was the BBC's Controller of Editorial Policy, responsible for the editorial and ethical standards of all BBC programme making. He now advises media organisations in the UK and overseas and trains young journalists, especially in the new democracies of eastern Europe. He is Freedom of Information Adjudicator for the Law Society, and a trustee and international board member of *Article 19*, a charity based in London and Johannesburg which works around the world to encourage freedom of expression and to fight censorship.

**Karol Bailey**

**Karol Bailey** is a small tenant farmer and food producer/retailer, with a farm shop in Knutsford, Cheshire. She has experience of all aspects of food production from initial conception to production preparation, packaging and labelling. She is also a trainer in food hygiene. Her farm shop, which opened in 1991, now offers a range of more than 600 fresh and frozen products. Karol retails all livestock produced on the farm, and is a rare breeds accredited butcher. The farm also has a bakery area for speciality pies, cakes and cooked meats.

Professor  
Jeya Henry

**Professor Jeya Henry** is Professor of Human Nutrition at Oxford Brookes University, and Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition*. In September 2000, he was made a Royal Society Visiting Professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He initially trained as a food technologist and subsequently read human nutrition at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He has worked extensively on topics related to nutrition ranging from the prevention of obesity in school children, the tracking of energy requirements during growth in adolescence, the impact of food composition on appetite and food intake, to the development of nutritionally enhanced foods. His expertise at the interface of food science and nutrition has led him to be seconded to UNICEF to advise on nutrition in India and China. He is a member of the Department for International Development's Crop Post-Harvest Programme, the Committee on Health and Population Research Awards and of the Scientific Advisory Panel of the British Nutrition Foundation. He has published over 95 papers, edited three books, and has lectured extensively on food and nutrition issues around the world. He continues to be actively involved in bridging the scientific links between nutrition, public health and food science.

Baroness Howarth  
of Breckland

**Baroness Howarth of Breckland** (Valerie Howarth) was until July 2001 the Chief Executive of the charity ChildLine, the free national helpline for children in trouble or danger. Under her leadership, ChildLine counselled over one million children and young people since it opened in 1986 and developed from a small London-based project to a UK-wide children's charity. A social worker by background, she worked in the Family Welfare Association, the London Borough of Lambeth, and then Brent where she was Director of Social Services. During this time she served on numerous working parties and chaired several child care service groups. She was the first UK representative of the European Forum for Child Welfare, a founder member and first Chair of the Telephone Helplines Association, founded the King's Cross Homelessness Project and the London Homelessness Forum. She has taken a leading role in changing the law concerning child witnesses and serves on the Department of Health's Quality Protects Steering Group. She has spent more than 10 years in consumer protection and standard setting as a committee member of the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Telephone Information Systems (ICSTIS). She is Vice Chair of the John Grooms Association for Disabled People, Vice Chair of the Faithful Foundation, an organisation providing treatment for child

abusers, and a Trustee of the Seiff Foundation. She chairs the 'Stop It Now' campaign, a partnership organisation involved in child abuse education. In February 2000 she was appointed to the Board of the Food Standards Agency and serves on the Meat Hygiene Advisory Committee. In February 2001 she joined the Board of the National Care Standards Commission. Awarded an OBE in 1999, she became Baroness Howarth of Breckland in the summer of 2001, one of the first of the new commission-appointed peers.

**Robert Rees**

**Robert Rees** is a self-employed chef and restaurateur from Bisley, Gloucestershire. He has a strong catering background. He is currently resident chef for Stroud Farmers' Markets, cooking seasonal and local fresh produce. From 1993 until 2000 he ran a restaurant called The Country Elephant in Painswick. He has also worked at restaurants in Bath, in the Grand Cayman Islands (West Indies) and at Le Gavroche, one of London's most fashionable eating houses. He has had entries in many international restaurant guides, including the Michelin Guide (Gourmande and Red Meal Award); Taste of West Country; the Good Food Guide; the Egon Ronay Guide; the Ackerman Guide; and two AA Rosettes in four consecutive years. Robert is a regular contributor on Central Television and BBC Radio Gloucestershire. He is a part-time employee of Gloucestershire College of Arts and Technology where he is a training adviser, assessor and lecturer in the Hospitality Department. In this role he is involved with Modern Apprenticeships, National Trainee schemes and work-based training. Robert is also a Board member of the Stroud Business Education Partnership, and has worked with Gloucestershire Tourism promoting local foods. Robert does a lot of work with children, and people with various special needs.

**Vernon Sankey**

**Vernon Sankey** is currently a non-executive Director of Pearson plc and Zurich Financial Services AG (Swiss). He is Chairman of Gala Group Holdings plc and the Really Effective Development Company Ltd and Deputy Chairman of Photo-Me International plc and Beltpacker plc. He also serves on the Advisory Boards of a number of companies in the UK and abroad. From 1992 to 1999 he was Chief Executive of Reckitt & Colman plc, having spent 28 years with that company in a number of functions and countries and was also Chairman of Thomson Travel Group plc. Vernon is a former member of the London Stock Exchange's Listed Companies Advisory Committee, a former Board member of the Grocery Manufacturers of America and a former Council member of the UK's Food and Drink Federation.

**Professor  
Bhupinder Sandhu**

**Professor Bhupinder Sandhu** is a Consultant Paediatrician and Gastroenterologist at the Bristol Royal Hospital for Sick Children and the Institute for Child Health, Bristol University, and visiting Professor of Child Health, Gastroenterology and Nutrition at the University of West of England (UWE). She has published extensively in her field and her track record of academic research and teaching at local, national and international level gives her expertise in evaluating statistical data and scientific evidence. She has a commitment to optimising health and nutrition, particularly in children. Bhupinder has worked at a number of teaching hospitals in London and Cambridge including Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children where she was a Research Fellow. She was Secretary of the British Society of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition (1993-96); Secretary of the South West Paediatrician's Society (1991-96); Chairman of the Division of Paediatrics at Bristol Children's Hospital (1991-96), and since 1998 has chaired a research group of the European Society of Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition. Bhupinder is an examiner for Bristol and Birmingham Universities and for the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, where she is a Fellow. She was Chair of the BBC West Regional Advisory Committee (1993-96) and she is a School Governor, Member of the Governing Board of the UWE and a Trustee and Board member of Voluntary Service Overseas (since 1997) and The Old Vic Theatre School, Bristol. She left the Board in February 2002.

**Gurbux Singh**

**Gurbux Singh** is the Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality. He is a former Chief Executive of the London Borough of Haringey, having been appointed to that post in 1989 in the aftermath of the Broadwater Farm riots. From 1983-1985, Mr Singh was District Housing Manager at the Greater London Council where he established and managed a new District Housing Office in Tower Hamlets, serving 11,000 tenants with a staff of 150. He was Senior Housing Officer to the Commission for Racial Equality from 1977 to 1983, reporting to the Chief Executive on a major research programme and working with a range of bodies, including the construction industry, estate agencies and mortgage lenders, to promote good practice. He is a member of the Home Secretary's Race Relations Forum, and of the Steering Group Implementation Action Plan on the Lawrence Inquiry. He resigned from the Board in May 2001.



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# The Food Standards Agency

## Chief Executive

**Geoffrey Podger** – The Chief Executive



**Geoffrey Podger** is a career civil servant who worked for the Department of Health from 1982. Before taking up responsibilities in the food area he was Under-Secretary for Health Promotion. He was head of the combined Joint Food Safety and Standards Group of the Department of Health and MAFF from its inception in 1997. He was appointed as Chief Executive of the Food Standards Agency on 1 April 2000.



### Origin, purpose and core values

- 1.1 The UK FSA was set up under the Food Standards Act 1999 and launched on 1 April 2000. Our main purpose as defined in the legislation is:

**‘to protect public health from risks which may arise in connection with the consumption of food, and otherwise to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food.’**

- 1.2 The legislation followed a succession of highly publicised food safety issues and was intended to help rebuild consumer confidence. At the FSA launch, the Chairman committed us to three core values that continue to govern all that we do. They are to:

- **put the consumer first**
- **be open and accessible**
- **be an independent voice**

### Structure and accountability

- 1.3 The FSA is a non-Ministerial Government department, operating at arm’s length from Ministers, and governed by a Board appointed to act in the public interest. This independence is crucial if we are to succeed in putting the consumer first. The Board is responsible for our overall strategic direction, and for ensuring that our legal obligations are fulfilled. We are a UK-wide body, accountable to the Westminster Parliament and to the devolved administrations through the relevant Health Ministers.
- 1.4 The Board consists of a Chair, Deputy Chair and up to 12 other members. The Chair and Deputy Chair were appointed jointly by the Secretary of State for Health and Health Ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Of other current Board members, eight were appointed by the Secretary of State for Health, two by Scottish Health Ministers, and one each by Ministers in Wales and Northern Ireland. Members of the Board each demonstrate substantial achievement in their chosen field, many with expertise in food matters.

- 1.5 The Chief Executive was appointed by the Secretary of State for Health with the approval of the Head of the Civil Service under normal Civil Service Commission rules. He manages the day-to-day operations of the FSA. HM Treasury has appointed the Chief Executive as Principal Accounting Officer of the Department with overall responsibility for preparing the FSA's accounts and for transmitting them to the Comptroller and Auditor General.
- 1.6 FSA staff are civil servants, accountable through the Chief Executive to the Board. Our headquarters in London comprises three main groups: Food Safety Policy Group, Enforcement and Standards Group, and Corporate Resources Group, together with our Communications and Legal Directorates. Senior posts are shown on the organisation chart at Annex 1. We employ around 560 staff in total in the London office.

#### **About the FSA in Wales**

- 1.7 FSA Wales is based at Southgate House, Cardiff. The FSA is accountable to the National Assembly for Wales through the Assembly's Minister for Health and Social Services. FSA Wales carries out those food safety, food standards and nutrition functions formerly discharged by public health and agriculture staff of the National Assembly, together with the new functions of the FSA. Headed by a Director, FSA Wales has a permanent staff complement of 19, with a further three temporary staff engaged to support the nutrition strategy activities.
- 1.8 The Advisory Committee for Wales, chaired by Ann Hemingway, met in public session on five occasions during the year.

#### **About the FSA in Northern Ireland**

- 1.9 The FSA's operations in Northern Ireland began in April 2000 in the Stormont Estate, Belfast, with the relocation of the NI Executive offices to their present address taking place in July 2000. FSA-NI is responsible for providing advice and draft legislation on issues across the food chain to the Northern Ireland Assembly Minister with responsibility for Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS).

- 1.10 The FSA's role in Northern Ireland is augmented by advice from the Northern Ireland Advisory Committee, set up under the 1999 Act. To date, the Advisory Committee has met 14 times, including three open meetings in Belfast, Londonderry and Enniskillen. Each of these was well attended, reflecting the interest that the NI public has in food-related issues.
- 1.11 FSA-NI continues to liaise closely with the Food Safety Promotion Board (FSPB) and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) in relation to food issues that have an all-island dimension, such as foodborne illness.

#### ***Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)***

- 1.12 The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) performs the functions of the Meat Hygiene Service in Northern Ireland on behalf of FSA-NI. There is a need for high levels of vigilance to ensure compliance with the UK's strict controls on BSE, not least because Northern Ireland is unique in having a land border with another EU country.

#### **About the FSA in Scotland**

- 1.13 Food safety and standards are devolved matters and legislation governing Scotland is determined by the Scottish Parliament. In Scotland the FSA provides advice on proposed legislation to the Minister for Health and Community Care in the Scottish Executive.
- 1.14 FSA Scotland operates within the UK FSA. This ensures consistency of approach while allowing the specific Scottish circumstances to be fully taken into account in the implementation of food safety and standards policy in Scotland.
- 1.15 The FSA is accountable for its actions to both the Scottish and Westminster Parliaments. FSA Scotland is funded by the Scottish Executive and has a staff complement comprising of the Director, two Assistant Directors, and 57 full-time-equivalent posts. The Scotland office is based in Aberdeen.

- 1.16 There is also a statutory Scottish Food Advisory Committee. Chaired by Sir John Arbuthnott, it provides the FSA with independent information and advice on all food safety and standards issues in Scotland. In line with the FSA's principles of openness and transparency, the Committee has the power to publish its advice and makes substantive decisions of the Committee public through its open meetings.
- 1.17 The annual Consumer Attitude Survey last year revealed that awareness of the FSA was highest in Scotland (65% had heard of the FSA). This year awareness had risen to 75% (which remains the highest in the UK).

#### **About the Meat Hygiene Service (MHS)**

- 1.18 The Meat Hygiene Service is an Executive Agency of the FSA operating within Great Britain. (The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development provides a similar service in Northern Ireland.) Its main functions are to provide a meat inspection service to all licensed meat plants, and to ensure that the highest standards required by the law for the hygienic production of meat and for the welfare of animals at slaughter are maintained. The MHS has its own Agency Accounting Officer (the MHS Chief Executive) and publishes its own Annual Report and Accounts.







Key priorities – food safety: foodborne illness

What we want to achieve:

- to reduce the incidence of foodborne disease by 20% by 2006
- to reduce salmonella contamination of UK-produced retail chicken by at least 50% over the next four years

Key priorities – food safety: BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy)

What we want to achieve:

- to ensure the controls are based on the latest scientific knowledge
- to ensure that BSE controls are effectively enforced
- to provide accurate, independent information on BSE issues and the effectiveness of enforcement
- to ensure that imported meat is monitored to check that EU controls have been applied

Key priorities – food safety: chemical safety of food

What we want to achieve:

- to ensure that chemicals present in food do not compromise food safety
- to have proper controls in place and ensure they are properly enforced
- to encourage open debate of the issues amongst stakeholders

Key priorities – food safety: food products and processes, their licensing or approval

What we want to achieve:

- safety assessment processes that protect consumers are robust, and are applied rigorously

2.1 Our job is to protect consumers from health risks, and otherwise to look after their interests, in all matters connected with food. Our sphere of influence ranges across the entire food chain, from pesticides and veterinary medicines, to food safety and hygiene standards in shops, restaurants and takeaways, and the home kitchen. Working with the Meat Hygiene Service (an executive agency of the FSA), local authorities, and with other government departments, it is our task to ensure that regulations on food safety and standards are enforced to protect consumers. We provide guidance to the public on healthy eating and carry out surveys on nutrition and diet to monitor changing eating habits. We advise Ministers on all issues relating to food safety. We negotiate on behalf of the UK in Europe and other international fora, where much of the legal framework and standards for the food market are set.

### Our Service Delivery Agreement and our Strategic Plan for 2001-2006

2.2 In autumn 2000, we published our first Service Delivery Agreement (SDA). The full text can be found at [www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/sda](http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/sda). We report in detail on our progress against the SDA in Chapter 3.

2.3 The aims and targets in that SDA were based on an emerging vision for the FSA before the establishment of the Board. Since then the Board has further developed this vision, and in May 2001 concluded work on the Strategic Plan, setting out the priorities for the FSA for the years 2001-2006.

2.4 The Strategic Plan sets out our key priorities for food safety, public information, labelling and choice, nutrition and diet, and food law enforcement over a five-year period. In it we describe how we will put our core value of openness into practice. We aim to be trusted as the UK's most reliable source of advice and information about food. We want to protect and improve the safety of the food people eat, and to make it possible for people to choose a healthy diet. Over the period covered by our Strategic Plan we aim to:

- safety assessment which is open, transparent and based on the best available science
- publication of assessment criteria and other information to improve consumers' confidence in the procedures
- reductions in the discharges of chemicals and radionuclides at source, or otherwise reduce their potential impact on the food chain

#### Key priorities – public information, labelling and choice

What we want to achieve:

- to promote honest and informative labelling, and encourage and support initiatives to improve the clarity and value of information provided to consumers
- to initiate, develop, negotiate internationally and implement rules on food composition, labelling and advertising which protect the interests of consumers
- to protect consumers by controls on foods which make health claims or which require special treatment for other reasons (such as baby foods)

#### Key priorities – nutrition and diet

What we want to achieve:

- long-term improvements in the diet and nutrition of the UK population
- reduction in inequalities by enabling and encouraging the disadvantaged and vulnerable to improve their diets

#### Key priorities – food law enforcement

What we want to achieve:

- to improve the effectiveness of Local Authority and MHS enforcement
- to ensure proportionate and more consistent enforcement

- reduce foodborne illness by 20% by improving food safety right through the food chain
- help people to improve their dietary health
- promote honest and informative labelling to help consumers
- promote best practice within the food industry
- improve the enforcement of food law
- earn people's trust by what we do and how we do it

2.5 You can find the full text of our Strategic Plan on our website [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk). The 10 key priority areas from our Strategic Plan are set out in this chapter.

### Our specific areas of responsibility

2.6 Our remit is a wide one, and involves food safety across the whole food chain – 'from farm to fork'. We are responsible for protecting public health, providing advice and information, ensuring food law is effective and is enforced, developing policy, and representing the UK on food matters in Europe and other international fora.

2.7 Our activities fall into 10 key themes as set out in our Strategic Plan for 2001 to 2006. Our SDA for the next spending round has been developed to align more closely with these themes. Our restructured SDA, based around the diagram below, will be published later this year.

- to improve transparency of enforcement arrangements for stakeholders
- to promote the wider implementation of risk-based systems for improving safety standards across the food chain

#### Key priorities – consumer confidence

What we want to achieve:

- to deliver a measurable improvement in public confidence in the way food safety and standards are managed across the UK
- to be the UK's most trusted source of food advice and information
- to ensure that issues of public concern are debated openly

#### Key priorities – our role as a Government Department

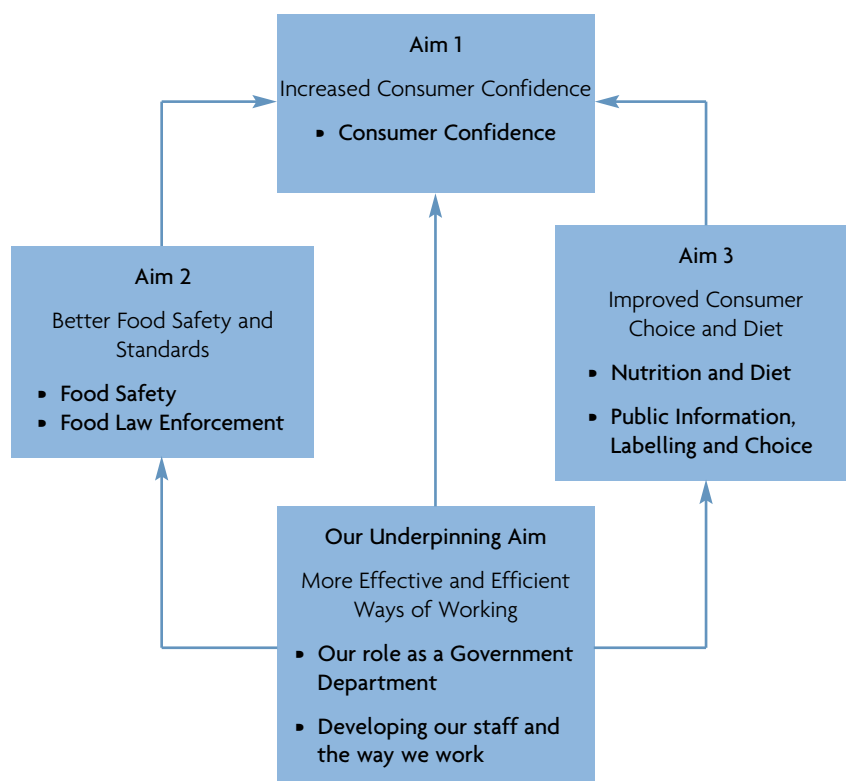
What we want to achieve:

- to advise and inform the UK Government, the devolved administrations and international bodies, so they take decisions which reflect our primary objectives of protecting public health and the interests of consumers

#### Key priorities – developing our staff and the way we work

What we want to achieve:

- to continue to develop open, consultative, evidence-based policy making that better protects consumers
- to ensure that our staff have the expertise, knowledge, and skills and develop the internal culture necessary to deliver our strategy in line with our core values
- to continually review our operations to ensure efficiency and value for money
- to continue learning and developing as an organisation



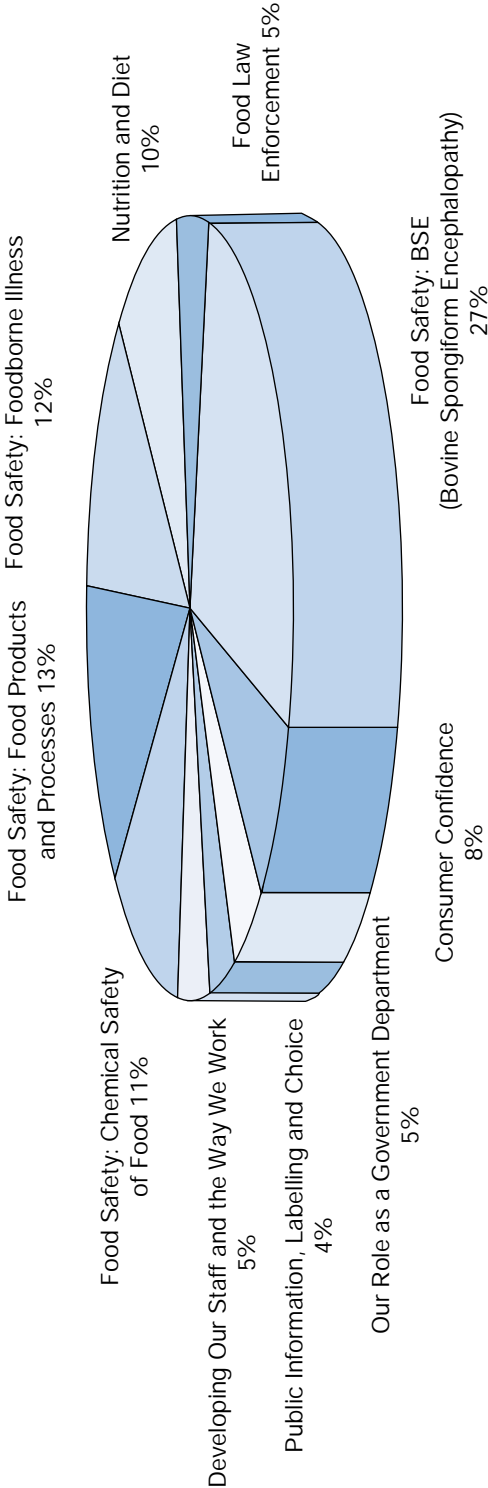
#### Our resources

- 2.8 Our funding is settled through the Government's spending review processes in the same way as for other departments. Our total expenditure in 2001-02 was around £90 million.

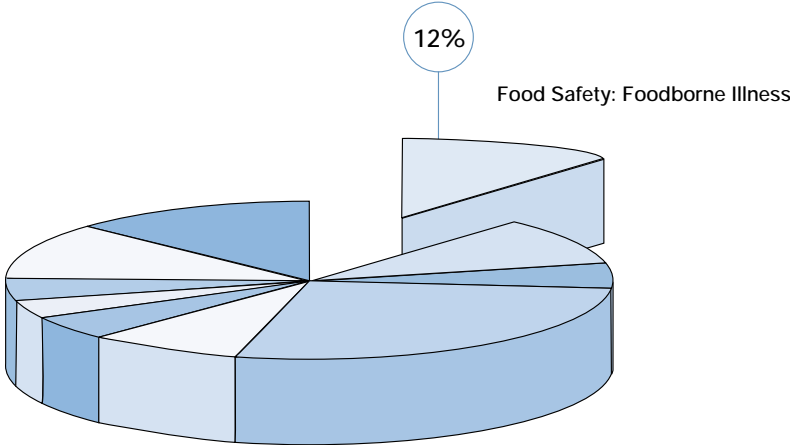
#### Getting more information about us

- 2.9 Our high level organisation chart can be found in Annex 1 to this Report. You can find out more about what we do on our website [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk). The website is updated on a daily basis. A detailed contact list by subject is on our website at: [www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/contactus1/contactusaz/](http://www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/contactus1/contactusaz/)

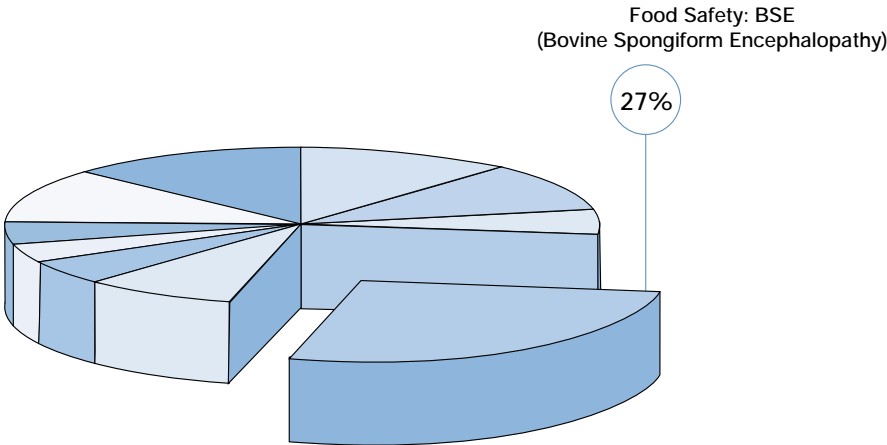
# Distribution of Expenditure



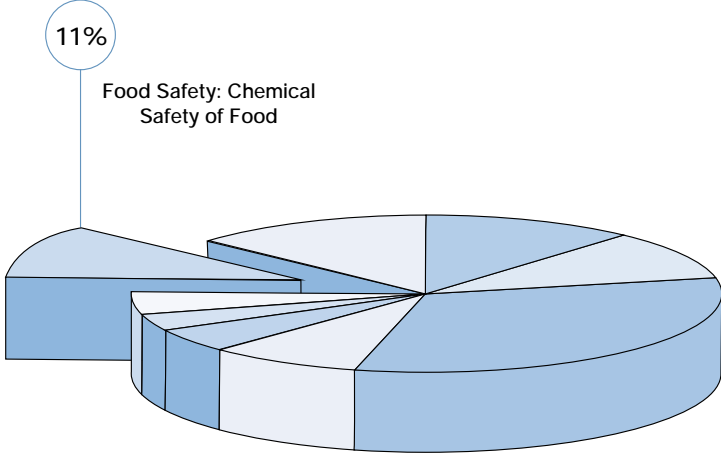
# Foodborne Illness



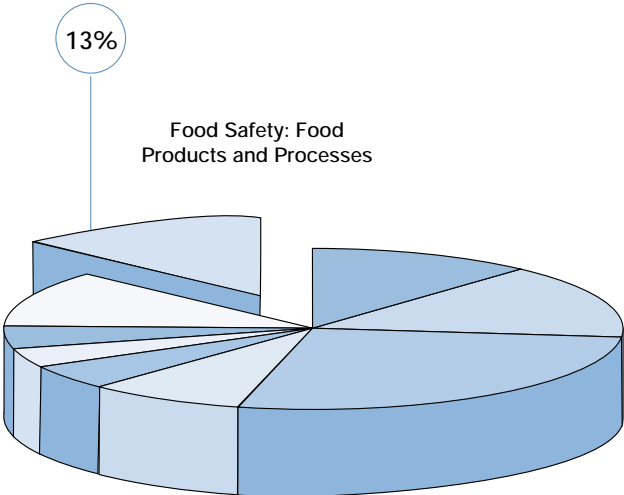
# BSE



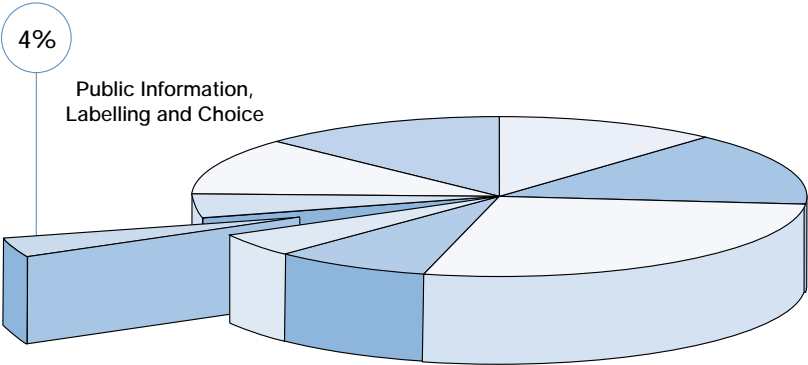
# Chemical Safety of Food



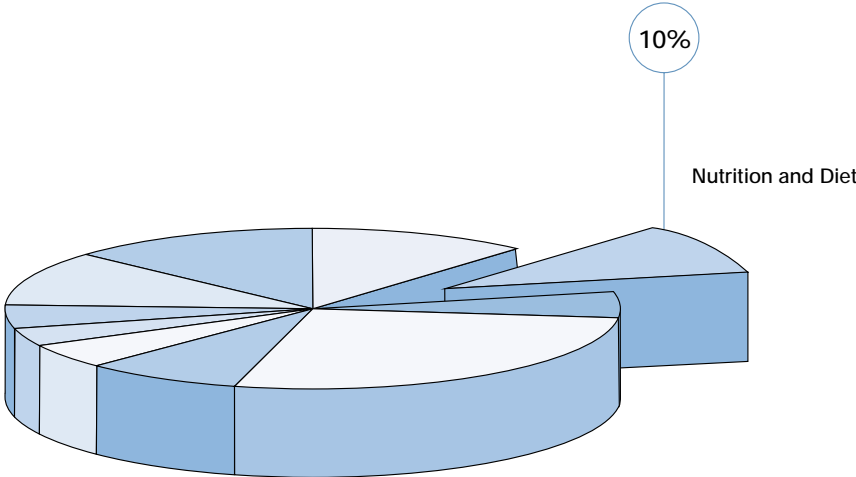
# Food Products and Processes



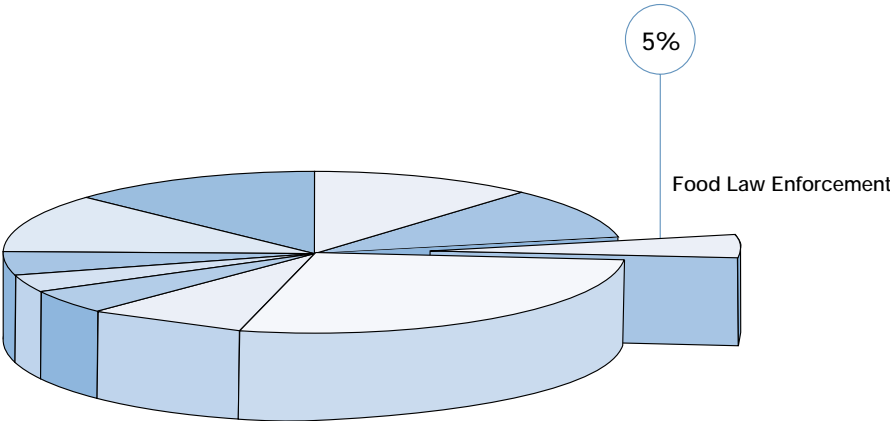
# Public Information, Labelling and Choice



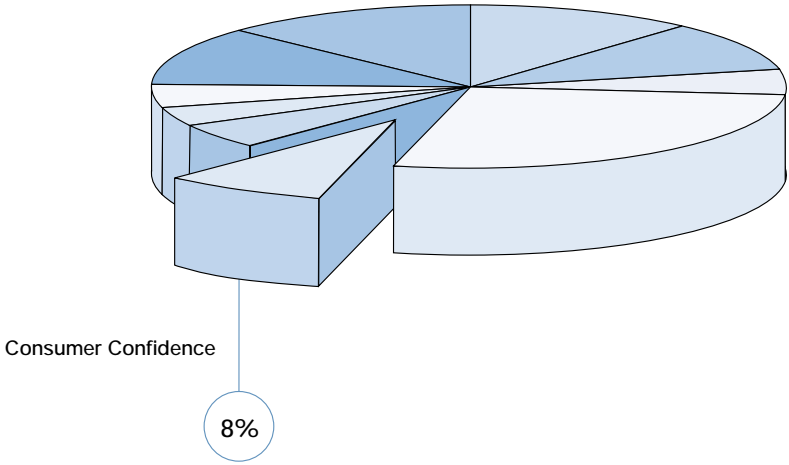
# Nutrition and Diet



# Food Law Enforcement

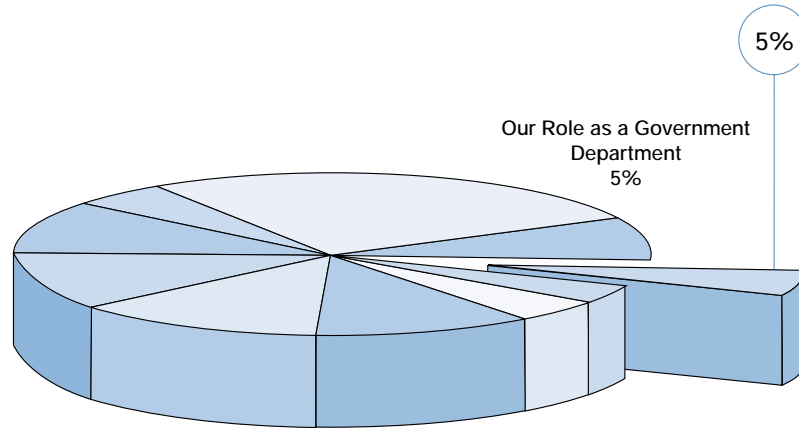


# Consumer Confidence

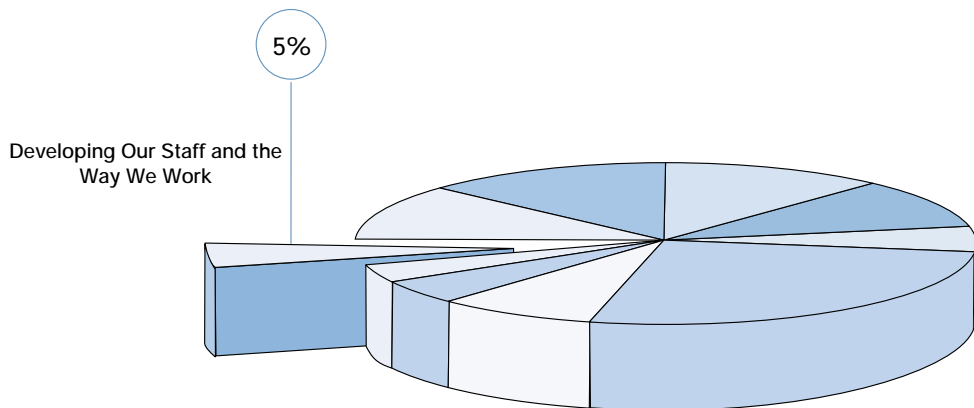




## Our Role as a Government Department



## Developing Our Staff and the Way We Work





#### Food incidents and hazards in 2001-02:

- 506 incidents with the potential to affect food safety were investigated
- 47 Food Hazard Warnings (FHW) were issued
- 1622 Rapid Alert System for Foodstuffs (RASFF) were received
- 62 RASFF were issued
- 26 voluntary restrictions were agreed on on-farm incidents
- 13 letters were issued to Environmental Health Departments

#### Food safety:

- in response to concerns about biotoxin monitoring and testing, and concerns of the shellfish industry in general, a NI Shellfish Industry Forum was set up under the chairmanship of FSA-NI. It has representation from growers, processors, district councils and DARD Scientific Services
- tackling campylobacter is an essential part of our commitment to cut food poisoning by 20% by 2006. Work has already begun with poultry where we aim to develop a strategy for the reduction of campylobacter in chickens and are already working with the industry to address the problem
- we have set up a dedicated HACCP Unit to develop and implement a strategy to ensure the application of HACCP procedures in the food industry. Our strategy for the wider implementation of HACCP was published in November 2001
- we have been involved in an EC initiative to develop a web-based education package aimed at UK teenagers and young adults (14-24 year age group) which was launched on 15 April 2002. The site can be viewed at: [www.good2eat.info](http://www.good2eat.info)
- FSA Wales has made a good start on getting food safety messages across to young people through education. It has helped the Curriculum and Assessment

3.1 This chapter highlights some of our key achievements from the past year. A summary of progress against our targets for 2001-02 as set out in our published SDA can be found in Annex 2.

#### Reporting on performance – main achievements in 2001-02

3.2 We published our Strategic Plan 2001-2006 in May 2001. The Plan outlines our key priorities over the next five years in the areas of:

- food safety
- public information, labelling and choice
- nutrition and diet
- food law enforcement
- consumer confidence
- more effective and efficient ways of working

#### Food safety

3.3 We aim to reduce foodborne disease by 20% by 2006. Our microbiological foodborne disease strategy, which sets out how we will achieve our target, was agreed by the Board in May 2001. It is available on our website, as are six-monthly reports of our progress. Ahead of schedule, we achieved one of our major food safety targets – the reduction by more than 50% in the level of salmonella contamination in retail, UK produced, chicken. Achievement of this target has allowed us to shift the focus of our work in this area to another major cause of foodborne disease – campylobacter.

3.4 In February 2002, we launched our Food Hygiene Campaign. This is a key measure aimed at reducing foodborne disease. This five-year campaign focuses on reducing bacterial contamination of food in catering establishments in its first phase, and will be followed by measures targeted at consumers.

3.5 We consulted on and began implementation of the European Commission Decision requiring mandatory Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP)-based controls in fresh meat and poultry meat plants and micro-testing rules for fresh meat slaughterhouses and cutting plants. Regulations are due to come into force on 7 June 2002 as required by the Decision.

Authority for Wales to produce guidance for the Welsh curriculum, advising on how food-related aspects should be best taught

- FSA Wales also produced food hygiene resource packs in English and Welsh for primary and secondary schools and conducted a number of school-based activities. These included a Wacky Kitchen pantomime and quiz, which toured Wales during the winter months, and a food hygiene poster competition for primary schools, which proved very popular

#### Chemical safety:

- we obtained expert advice from the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) on a range of food chemical safety issues, including major reviews of dioxins; reproductive effects of caffeine; and amnesic shellfish poisoning (ASP) in scallops
- we finalised and published FAC reports on the use of the terms Fresh, Pure and Natural etc. in Food Labelling; the Review of Food Labelling; and the Review of Distance Selling
- we consulted with stakeholders on a range of key food safety issues such as the 'may contain nuts' issue for those with allergy; on Feed Additive Residues in Poultry to engage stakeholders in discussions on issues arising from the Soil Association report *Too hard to swallow – the truth about drugs and poultry*. Consultation on migration of bisphenol A into canned foods was completed
- we implemented emergency Community legislation on imports of products of animal origin from China; on star anise; on peanuts from China; and on nuts and figs from Turkey. We published information showing non-permitted residues in Chinese honey and issued advice to consumers

## In Scotland:

### *E.coli* O157

In July 2000, FSA Scotland joined forces with the Scottish Executive Health Department to launch a task force committed to examining and reporting on practical measures to protect the public from *E.coli* O157 poisoning. In the final report presented to the FSA in July 2001, a number of recommendations were made, including improvements to the labelling and traceability of cheeses, prepackaged salads and vegetables.

FSA Scotland and the Scottish Executive are currently drawing up plans on how best to implement these recommendations.

### Scallops

Following industry complaints over continued closures of scallop fisheries due to high levels of Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning (ASP) toxins, FSA Scotland decided to examine a possible change to the existing testing system for shellfish toxins in scallops.

In 2001 the FSA Scotland took the proposal for a 'tiered approach' – a testing regime that would enable fishermen to market the parts of scallops deemed safe from ASP toxins, while not compromising consumer safety – to Brussels and several months later successfully gained the backing of the EU. The tiered testing approach to king scallops for Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning toxins will soon be enforced throughout the country.

- 3.6 *The Review of BSE Controls*, published in December 2000, identified the theoretical risk of BSE in sheep in the UK. We advised that there was no reason to advise against the consumption of sheep meat. However, we recognised that there was a need to reduce the uncertainty around this issue and to look at whether further, precautionary, public protection measures should be introduced.

- we published the sixth annual report on our monitoring programme for radioactivity in food and the environment. This is a major programme which analyses a range of food and other samples for radioactivity and provides assurance that discharges from nuclear sites do not pose a threat to food safety

#### Nutrition and diet

- at the request of the Minister for Health and Social Services in the National Assembly for Wales, FSA Wales is leading the development of a nutrition strategy for Wales. A steering group representing Government, the NHS, local authority, and consumer interests has been established to oversee this process

#### Labelling and choice

- in July 2001 the European Commission published their proposal on the traceability and labelling of GMOs and derived products and a proposal for the authorisation and labelling of GM food and feed. We held two stakeholder meetings before the Board's consideration of the proposals. We will be holding further stakeholder meetings as negotiations on the proposals progress
- we lead UK negotiations on the EU Regulation on General Food Law Principles which also establishes the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The establishment of EFSA is intended to contribute to greater consumer confidence in the development of food safety legislation at EU level. All UK stakeholders were fully consulted on the Regulation, which has now been adopted

#### Food law enforcement:

- we set the MHS challenging and robust performance targets, paying particular attention to targets aimed at public health protection

### In Wales:

#### Tackling pasteurisation

We recently launched a consultation on whether sales of unpasteurised or raw drinking milk and cream should continue in Wales. Sales are already closely regulated, but the potential risk that unpasteurised milk poses to vulnerable groups has prompted us to investigate whether sales should be allowed to continue unchanged, be subject to improved labelling, or banned.

Compulsory pasteurisation of raw cows' drinking milk and raw cream has been a requirement in Scotland since 1983. The Agency has no plans to hold a consultation in England.

A 1997 consultation covering England and Wales resulted in widespread opposition to a ban from both consumers and producers and a ban was not introduced.

We are keen to find out as much as possible about the views of people in Wales before formulating a policy and making a recommendation to the Welsh Assembly.

- 3.7 To that end, we held a public stakeholder meeting in December 2001. We followed this up by asking a core group of stakeholders to report on BSE in sheep and any recommendations for the introduction of further precautionary measures required. The core group's report is expected to be published for public consultation in May 2002. The report and public responses will then be considered by our Board, who will decide on any necessary action.
- 3.8 Following a Government assessment of possible risks to health from Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) disposal options, and in particular exposure from the diet to dioxins from FMD pyres, we commissioned a monitoring programme for dioxins in foods produced in the vicinity of pyres. Because results from that programme would not be available for several weeks, we issued precautionary advice on 25 May 2001. We suggested that people who consumed whole milk and whole milk products only from animals within 2 kilometres of FMD pyres might wish to decrease their potential exposure to dioxins from this source by varying their diet to include milk and milk products from other sources. The advice was well received.

- we carried out an agreed programme of audits of MHS performance at licensed premises
- we published a report on the audit of MHS performance for 2000-01
- the Meat Hygiene Advisory Committee agreed an Action Plan to improve MHS enforcement in poorly performing plants in December 2001. Implementation of Action Plan within agreed timescales is included in the high-level performance targets set by the FSA Board in March 2002 for the MHS for 2002-03
- MHS checks on imported carcass beef detected 14 breaches in Specified Risk Material (SRM) controls
- following the recent increase in the number of farmers' markets, the Scottish Food Advisory Committee (SFAC) examined food standards at farmers' markets in relation to other retail outlets. A working group scrutinised the views of stallholders, local authority enforcers and consumers. The final report, presented to the FSA at the beginning of the year, highlighted several recommendations and concluded that farmers' markets are 'well-organised and well-managed'
- we provided guidance to local authorities on their enforcement responsibilities in relation to BSE. In particular advice was issued with regard to 'private kills'
- we reviewed the list of countries that are exempt from the OTM rule and the measures to detect illegal sales. Discussions have begun with other Government departments on the best route to secure this objective
- up to the end of 2001, we published the BSE Enforcement Bulletin monthly, giving results of enforcement action. After that date information was posted on our website

3.9 Results from the monitoring programme were published in reports issued on 5 July 2001, 8 August 2001 and 20 September 2001. A final report summarising all results from the programme was published in January 2002. By the time the third report was published, results were available for 120 samples of food and animal feed, and 39 environmental samples. We considered that these available results showed that the pyres had posed no additional risk to health through the food supply. In the light of these results, we concluded that the precautionary advice issued on 25 May was no longer necessary.

### In Northern Ireland:

#### *Salmonella kedougou* in mushrooms

Around April 2001, FSA-NI led in the investigation and control of a food hazard arising from the finding of *Salmonella kedougou* in mushrooms from Northern Ireland. In the interests of protecting the consumer, the FSA issued a press release on the problem at an early stage. Urgent meetings were held with representatives of the mushroom industry. An extensive and complex sampling programme traced the source of the contamination to the peat-based casing material used in mushroom bags to promote fruiting. Casing from more than one company was implicated.

The common source of raw material turned out to be sugar beet lime from the Republic of Ireland. Casing manufacturers in NI and beyond immediately switched to an alternative source. All supplies were microbiologically examined to certify freedom from contamination. In addition, extensive cleaning/disinfection of all casing manufacturers' premises was carried out under the supervision of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).

A Northern Ireland Mushroom Association was formed. One of its first tasks was to develop and adopt a Code of Practice for casing manufacture with which all manufacturers must now comply.

This was a novel and challenging problem brought to a satisfactory conclusion by FSA-NI, with obvious tangible benefits to consumers and the industry.

- we consulted on measures to be taken to prevent the diversion of unfit poultry meat back into the food chain
- on 1 October 2001 the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2001 brought into effect the licensing requirements for butchers' shops throughout Northern Ireland. Comprehensive guidance on the regulations was issued to both the industry and enforcers. To date approximately 502 butchers have been licensed in NI

#### More effective and efficient ways of working:

- we published the report of a review of our research portfolio and research management systems in July 2001. Implementation of the recommendations, including establishing a new independent Advisory Committee on Research, is now in progress
- we set up and supported an independent Review Group to examine our scientific advisory committees. The group's report was published on our website in April 2002

#### Consumer confidence:

- FSA Scotland has developed and implemented a consumer friendly event called 'A Recipe for Success'. The event is specifically designed to attract general members of the public to a location where they can be entertained and educated by a celebrity chef and have the chance to fire questions at a panel of food experts. A Recipe for Success has been taken to three cities in Scotland and the evenings have unanimously been deemed a great success by both the panel and the audience – 94% stated that they would attend a similar event in the future

### Consumer confidence:

#### Key findings from our second consumer attitudes survey

The survey revealed that between 2000 and 2001:

- confidence in the Agency increased from 50% to 58%
- awareness of the FSA increased from 58% to 71%

and that

- 93% of consumers who were surveyed rated the Agency as providing very/fairly reliable information
- 44% of consumers rated the Agency as an organisation they could trust, compared with only 25% in 2000. This increased to 56% among those who had direct contact with the Agency
- 51% rated the Agency as putting the consumer first

3.10 One of our key aims is to ensure that consumers are told about potential risks to health arising from consumption of food. We regularly issue advice on a wide range of products, and publish the advice on our website. Just a few examples from 2001-02 include:

- batches of certain helva (also known as halva) products contaminated with salmonella
- aflatoxin and ochratoxin A (both naturally occurring toxins produced by moulds) contamination in a range of nuts, nut products, and dried vine fruits
- withdrawing from sale fruit gel sweets containing Konjac (now the subject of a Europe-wide ban)
- certain soy sauce products containing high levels of potentially cancer causing chemicals
- dioxins in trace element products used in animal feed
- residues of the veterinary drug chloramphenicol in honey and in Royal Jelly
- products containing the herbal ingredient kava-kava, after the Medicines Control Agency decided to assess its effect on the liver

## Improved consumer choice and diet:

### Nutrition Action Plan

The Board agreed that the FSA should work towards improving the health of the UK population by encouraging and facilitating people's adoption of a healthy, balanced diet. There are four main elements to this strategy:

- securing a sound evidence base for action to promote a healthy diet
- developing appropriate means of informing the general population
- identifying and addressing barriers to changing dietary behaviour
- evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of action taken

The FSA has approved a Nutrition Action Plan to deliver the outcomes required by the strategy. To progress this Action Plan we will work with and aim to influence other organisations. This will include the close joint working arrangements we have been developing with UK Health Departments, other Government Departments (education, agriculture and so on) and local authorities in the diet and nutrition area. It will also include work with the food industry and the scientific community. The Action Plan contains a significant commitment to expenditure on research, surveys and information campaigns. In all this, allowance will be made for differences in the circumstances and priorities across the UK. The priority we have accorded to work across these areas takes account of evidence on the importance of diet in relation to a range of chronic diseases in the population generally, and for some diseases in specific risk categories.

In line with our commitment to 'putting consumers first', we will aim for close consumer stakeholder involvement in all of our work on nutrition. This will be achieved through informal and formal consultation at appropriate stages in the progress of individual initiatives and by making information available across all of the action plan areas through our website. The Nutrition Forum, Scottish Diet and Nutrition Forum and Welsh stakeholder workshops will also play an important role in this area.



### **Public information, labelling and choice**

3.11 We have taken forward our action plan on labelling, which is published on our website. All planned initiatives are now under way. We have started an additional review of food assurance schemes, as the results of our own consumer research show that consumers are confused as to what different logos mean. We also set up a 'Clear Labelling Task Force'. The Task Force includes representatives of industry, consumer groups, enforcers, and the Plain English Campaign. The Task Force has recommended that more of the label should be given over to information required by law, that information should be placed in such a way as to make it easier to find and that colours and typefaces should be chosen to make it easier to read. We are also pressing the case internationally for more country of origin labelling on foods. This is something that requires action internationally, given our European Union and World Trade Organization responsibilities, but we have, in the meantime, issued new guidance aimed at tightening up the interpretation and application of existing rules within the UK. The Task Force report is published on our website.

### **Nutrition and diet**

3.12 We are committed to helping people achieve long-term improvements in their diet. During the year, we agreed a Nutrition Strategic Framework and published it on our website. We have now appointed a Nutrition Forum. The Forum has members representing central and local government, consumer and voluntary bodies, industry, and health interests. We have improved and extended the consumer information provided through our website, which aims to help people achieve a healthy diet in practice. Our interactive site provides expert advice, survey results such as salt levels in bread, and guidance on how to use label information. All this will help to promote consumer choice.

### **Food law enforcement**

3.13 We are determined to help drive up food standards and consumer confidence by improving the consistency and effectiveness of

food law enforcement. We published our Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement, which laid the groundwork for our plans. The Agreement will ensure that the Agency has more information about local authorities which will help us to identify trends, good examples of enforcement work, and areas requiring improvement.

### Food hazards:

#### **Jelly confectionery containing Konjac**

We first warned consumers about these sweets in August 2001 after concerns were raised in the US and Canada that they could pose a fatal choking threat to young children.

Konjac is typically used as a thickener and stabiliser in dessert gels, aspics, frozen desserts, sauces (including salad dressings and mayonnaise) and batters. But it does not dissolve easily and, when used in fruit gel sweets of the kind imported to the European Union, could stay stuck in the throat. Children tend to suck out and effectively 'inhale' these sweets, which comprise a soft, slippery type jelly with a hard, fruit flavoured gum at the centre.

After the concerns were first raised last August, we issued food hazard warnings to local authorities, advising trading standards officers to check shops were taking the sweets off the shelves. Port authorities were also alerted, and the Agency also contacted known importers, distributors and retailers to advise them to withdraw the products from sale.

We began tests assessing the risk, and took further action in December 2001 and March 2002 to ensure that they are not sold in the UK.

A Europe-wide ban on jelly confectionery containing Konjac has now come into force after its inclusion in fruit gel sweets was linked to the deaths of around 18 people across the world.

- 3.14 We also worked closely with enforcement bodies to tackle breaches in food safety rules throughout the year. Some examples of our action in this past year include:
- adopting a package of control measures, approved by the Board in September 2001, aimed at preventing unfit meat from entering the food chain
  - setting up a Waste Food Task Force to look at what further measures are required to ensure the appropriate disposal of food waste in the UK, and to reduce the scope for fraud
  - acting rapidly to protect consumers when baby formula affected by botulism spores, and soy sauce contaminated with a genotoxic carcinogen, were discovered
- 3.15 In the wake of the outbreak of Food and Mouth Disease and the increased concern about imported foods, we carried out a programme of visits in April 2001 to a number of ports, local authorities and import warehouses to assess the effectiveness of current import controls and the scale of illegal imports of food products of animal origin. This information assisted in the development of our policy on food import controls and was fed into wider Whitehall considerations.
- 3.16 A report on food import controls was prepared for the Board. The Board approved the report, which included 10 recommendations aimed at improving co-ordination of enforcement action on imports and the effectiveness of inspection of imported food, at its meeting in October 2001. As part of the process of exploring these proposals further, we have set up a new Imported Food Unit.
- 3.17 We have also worked actively with other government departments in the development of the Government Action Plan on illegal imports, which was published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) at the end of March 2002. The purpose of the plan is to improve the UK's ability to prevent and detect illegal imports of animal and plant products.

- 3.18 We have continued to build on our relationship with port health authorities. We continue to hold discussions with the Association of Port Health Authorities (APHA) about imported food controls generally and to be in regular communication with ports and wider stakeholders about specific imported food issues.

#### Food hazards:

##### **'Farmer Brand' Garlic Flavour Peanuts (in shells)**

Following outbreaks of *Salmonella stanley* in Australia and Canada, associated with consumption of a specific brand of imported peanuts, our food incident team investigated whether the peanuts were on sale in the UK. The peanuts were produced in China, and distributed via Singapore.

Three local authorities were asked to visit local premises, and the bags of peanuts found were tested for salmonella contamination by the Public Health Laboratory Service. Tests confirmed the presence of salmonella in a batch of 'Farmer Brand' Garlic Flavour Peanuts (in shells). Although there were no confirmed cases of salmonella infection following the consumption of peanuts in the UK, because the product was sold as a ready to eat snack it was important to ensure the peanuts were withdrawn from sale to protect public health. We liaised with the UK importer, and subsequently issued a Food Hazard Warning to local food authorities. This requested action by them to visit premises that might have received the product, and ensure the product was withdrawn from sale.

We also notified the European Commission via the rapid alert system for food, so that other Member States could be alerted to the problem, and so that the EC could inform the appropriate authorities in China.

### Consumer confidence

- 3.19 The most effective way in which we can improve consumer confidence is to deliver real improvements in food safety and standards. But the way in which we deliver these improvements is also critical to our success. Openness, accessibility and honesty are embedded in the way we work, as is our consultative approach to policy making.
- 3.20 As part of our commitment to openness, the Board held eight public Board meetings around the country. In addition, the Board hosted several stakeholder meetings to promote debate on issues of consumer concern and scientific uncertainty, including:
- labelling of foods produced from GM technology
  - the theoretical risk of BSE in sheep
  - potential controls to reduce consumer exposure to MAP (*Mycobacterium avium* subsp. *paratuberculosis*) from milk
- 3.21 The redesign of our website was a high priority. The Internet is an increasingly important medium for communicating with our stakeholders. It is also an important way in which we meet our commitment to be open and accessible. We listened closely to what people want, and we believe we made the site more user-friendly, and that it now provides information that better meets people's needs. Our measure of success is that the improvements have increased the level of use of the site by more than 50% since it was launched in December 2001.
- 3.22 We have taken the very important step of appointing a Consumer Committee. Membership includes not only individuals appointed following nominations from the main consumer groups, but also individuals recruited through open competition. The Committee will ensure that:
- all our policy making is open to as wide a range of consumer interests as possible; and
  - our decisions are based on a full understanding of consumer needs and views.

3.23 We played an important part in ensuring that consumers' views in particular were taken into consideration by the Government's Policy Commission on Farming and Food for England. To inform our submission to the Commission we:

- used a variety of consumer research and consultations
- held regional seminars, including some with low-income groups, and a London debate
- used the views logged by consumers on our Talkfood website

3.24 In line with other Government departments, we published our Science and Innovation Strategy. The strategy sets out six main strands which include ensuring we have access to the best scientific information, generate appropriate information through funding research and surveys, and maintain appropriate in-house scientific expertise.

3.25 Our underpinning aim is to develop more effective and efficient ways of working. We are committed to the continuous development of our staff and the way we work. Our progress in pursuit of that aim is set out in detail in Chapter 4.



# Modernising Government – developing the way we work



## Public service

- 4.1 Our employees are our biggest asset. Development of staff, in line with our guiding principles, is a key factor in ensuring we operate in a forward-looking and effective way. In support of this, we are committed to the principles of the Reforming the Civil Service programme. We undertook a second survey of staff's attitudes, using MORI.
- 4.2 We have made significant progress during 2001-02. We designed and developed a comprehensive set of training and development opportunities (packaged as the Development Programme) for all staff and launched it in October 2001. The opportunities now available include:
  - an FSA-specific staff development programme
  - a comprehensive induction programme for all staff
  - an Open Learning Centre of CD-ROM training
  - management, administration, and IT training from Reed Training, run in-house
  - language tuition
- 4.3 The Management Scheme – a development programme for all our managers – is a key component of moving our culture forward in line with our core values of being open and accessible, putting the consumer first and being an independent voice. We developed the scheme with help from the Cabinet Office's Invest to Modernise fund. The scheme consists of a core module with further optional modules. It addresses issues such as our unique governance, working with devolved administrations, and diversity. Our aim is to deliver the management scheme to all our managers by the end of 2003-04: we have already made significant progress towards this target.
- 4.4 Part of the work leading to our Management Scheme was the creation of an FSA-specific competency framework developed in consultation with some 20% of our staff. The new framework is already being used for development and training purposes, and will begin to be used as part of the performance appraisal arrangements for the first time in April 2002.

- 4.5 We have developed a programme of 360 degree feedback for our Senior Civil Service team; this was completed by the end of 2001-02.
- 4.6 An important part of the development process is that of explaining the work of the different parts of the organisation to our staff. We ran a comprehensive seminar programme during 2001-02 and, due to popular demand, this continues.
- 4.7 We are committed to achieving Investors in People accreditation and have established a project to take this forward. Significant planning has taken place and a programme of seminars and publicity began in March 2002. We aim to begin the process of accreditation during 2002.
- 4.8 During 2001, we concluded our first pay agreement with the trade unions following receipt of pay delegation from the Cabinet Office. This two-year agreement (for 2001-02 and 2002-03) followed a review of pay and appraisal arrangements. In line with Reform of the Civil Service requirements, it introduced an FSA-specific pay system and new performance management arrangements.
- 4.9 During the year, we set a number of challenging diversity targets for our staff, developed a diversity action plan and, in addition to training already being delivered, began a comprehensive awareness programme for all managers and staff.

#### **Senior Civil Service staff**

- 4.10 The table below gives the number of Senior Civil Service staff paid in each of the £5,000 bands. Figures exclude those staff in our offices in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland who are on secondment from their Executives.

Number of staff in salary bands	SCS salary bands, £
1	40,000 – 49,999
2	50,000 – 54,999
4	55,000 – 59,999
5	60,000 – 64,999
6	65,000 – 69,999
2	70,000 – 74,999
3	75,000 – 79,999
2	80,000 – 84,999
0	85,000 – 99,999
1	100,000 – 109,999

### Recruitment practice

- 4.11 Our recruitment policy follows the principles of fair and open competition as set out in the Civil Service Commissioners’ Recruitment Code. We advertise external recruitment exercises widely in appropriate publications as well as on our website. We use the permitted exceptions to fill only positions on a casual basis for less than 51 weeks.
- 4.12 Underpinning all recruitment exercises are our equal opportunities policies, which we have agreed with trade unions. We operate a guaranteed interview scheme for disabled applicants. When advertising externally, we encourage applications from under-represented groups. We have sought to raise our profile with people from ethnic minority backgrounds by participating in the Diversity UK careers fair, working with recruitment agents with strong links to ethnic minority communities, and some involvement with ethnic media. During the past year we have recruited 92 people following open competition.
- 4.13 We have a strong commitment to interchange of staff with industry, enforcement bodies, and other external organisations. We have a small number of secondees from local authorities and one from a research establishment providing expertise not available within the organisation. We also have a few people working in the European Union institutions on secondment and

one working in the National Consumers Council. One officer undertook a six month bi-lateral exchange with the Food Safety Authority for Ireland.

4.14 The table below shows the number of staff we have recruited through open competition during the year.

Recruitment into the FSA through open competition 1 April 2001-31 March 2002					
	Male	Female	Ethnic minorities	Disabled	Total
Senior Civil Service	0	1	0	0	1
Posts at former UG6 and below	36	55	23	2	91
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>92</b>

### Health and safety

4.15 We are committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of staff and others working in and visiting all our buildings. Following the move of HQ staff to the new London HQ building at Aviation House, a full programme of workstation assessments was carried out by expert consultants. As part of a continuing programme, staff have now been trained to provide this service in-house. Our health and safety committee, which includes trade union representation, meets on a quarterly basis and, as part of its role, carries out a full building inspection.

### Environment policy and activities

4.16 We are fully committed to conserving energy, water and other resources, reducing waste, and minimising the release of greenhouse gases. A policy document is currently being prepared. The FSA and MHS offices are on a number of sites around the country; each is committed to pursuing environmental practices.

### **Waste**

4.17 We follow an active recycling policy. Through a contract with the waste removal company, HANNAY, 80% of our waste from the HQ (Aviation House) is recycled. We are able to monitor – with written evidence – the waste management for the building and identify areas where improvements can be made.

### **Purchasing**

4.18 Any future policy on procurement will help to minimise the procurement of goods and supplies which are dependent on the use of non-renewable resources or polluting substances. We encourage the purchase of products based on recycled material and produced with due consideration to energy efficiency.

### **Energy**

4.19 Our HQ building is new and all internal and external conditions including temperature, humidity, airflow, CO<sub>2</sub> readings, rain, wind speed and direction are monitored. Internal aspects are controlled by two state of the art systems. A Building Management System (BMS) uses this information and controls the plant with a series of time schedules and optimisers. It also takes into consideration the occupancy of the building. A ‘no people – no heating or cooling’ policy is just one of its many energy saving strategies. A second system controls the lighting, which dims or brightens the building perimeter lighting to suit the demand and external light levels.

### **Effective policy making**

4.20 We published our first *Strategic Plan 2001-2006* in May 2001. The Plan sets out our priorities in its main policy areas – food safety, labelling and choice, nutrition and diet and food law enforcement – and also describes how we will put into practice our core value of openness, describes our democratic accountability and what we are doing to improve the way we work.

4.21 We are firmly committed to the three aims of the modernising government agenda: ensuring that policy making is more joined up and strategic; making sure that consumers are the focus of our work; and by delivering public services that are of high quality and efficient. We are also committed to delivering policy outcomes that matter: we aim to develop our policy making process to ensure we take account of and promote best practice. We have a full range of initiatives on listening to consumers.

4.22 Where relevant, our decisions are founded upon an assessment of the latest scientific knowledge. Risk assessments are usually, though not exclusively, carried out by independent advisory committees. Chapter 3 reports on our performance in more detail, but here are just a few examples of our approach to evidence-based and consultative decision-making during the period of the report:

- Research into new formats for nutrition labelling has found a consumer preference for plain language, such as 'salt' instead of 'sodium'. Further research is planned to test the preferred formats with consumers in 'real life' situations.
- In 2001 we published the results of a survey of 100 soy sauces and related products available on the UK retail market. The results showed that 22% of samples contained high levels of the potentially cancer-causing chemical 3-MCPD, about two-thirds of these also containing the related contaminant 1,3-DCP, which experts advise should not be present at any level in food. The products identified were removed from sale and consumers were advised to avoid them. Leaflets including pictures and details of the affected products were distributed and this information was placed on our website. The presence of 3-MCPD and 1,3-DCP in soy sauce is avoidable. Following the announcement of these and earlier survey results, many manufacturers have altered their production processes. The results of this survey have helped inform the setting of a European limit for 3-MCPD in soy sauce. They also stimulated a considerable international reaction. A number of food control bodies took action and maximum levels were introduced by many importing and producing countries.

- We asked the independent Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) for an opinion on the possible effects of caffeine on pregnancy. Previous (Department of Health) advice to pregnant women was to consume caffeine ‘in moderation’. Based on the COT opinion, we defined ‘in moderation’ as no more than 300 mg per day, giving details of how that 300 mg could be obtained from a combination of coffee, tea, cola and chocolate. Our advice was welcomed by all stakeholders, including health professionals and the coffee industry, who considered it helpful to clarify what could be consumed safely.
- We carried out a thorough review of our research portfolio and research management systems. We are seeking ways to ensure that our expenditure on research is spent wisely and in line with our priorities.
- We have agreed a strategy towards improving the health of the UK population by encouraging and facilitating people’s adoption of a healthy, balanced diet. There are four main elements to this strategy:
  - securing a sound evidence base for action to promote a healthy diet
  - developing appropriate means of informing the general population
  - identifying and addressing barriers to changing dietary behaviour
  - evaluating and monitoring the effectiveness of action taken

4.23 We have approved a Nutrition Action Plan to deliver the outcomes required by the strategy (see Chapter 3 for more details). The Action Plan contains a significant commitment to expenditure on research, surveys and information campaigns. In all this, allowance will be made for differences in the circumstances and priorities across the UK. The priority we have accorded to work across these areas takes account of evidence on the importance of diet in relation to a range of chronic diseases in the population generally, and for some diseases in specific risk categories.

- 4.24 We also want to ensure that we put into practice the lessons identified in the *Report of the BSE Inquiry*. To ensure that we assess our performance in this area, the Board has agreed a framework against which our work can be measured. This will be used both in training our staff and for external assessments of our policy development in specific areas. A copy of the framework is on our website with the papers for our February 2002 Board meeting.
- 4.25 Under the provisions of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RR(A)A), all public authorities are required to promote racial equality and eliminate unlawful discrimination both in their policy and operational functions. In July 2001 we ran two internal workshops on the implications of the Act for our work. In February 2002 we participated in the consultation on the Commission for Racial Equality's (CRE) Codes of Practice on the Act. A small representative cross-FSA Steering Group has been established to facilitate a co-ordinated approach across the organisation and to consider the actions required to ensure that we comply with both the general and specific duties of the Act.
- 4.26 The specific duties of the RR(A)A require us to publish a Race Equality Scheme (RES) and Action Plan by 31 May 2002. The Board agreed a draft RES and Action Plan at their open meeting in March 2002. The Plan includes:
- Improving consultation with ethnic groups by identifying and creating links with 'gateway' organisations, including those organisations on our planned centralised database of stakeholders, as well as developing appropriate staff guidance.
  - Building on our existing knowledge of ethnic minority food issues through profiling different ethnic groups, identifying cultural and religious food issues and auditing our in-house resources including staff knowledge, skills and experience in relation to ethnic minority issues.
  - Developing systems to assess, monitor and evaluate the impact of our policies on ethnic minorities by incorporating this into the existing business planning process and, where relevant, highlighting the impact of specific new policies on ethnic minority groups in Board papers and submissions to Ministers.



- Developing a training programme on race relations, by incorporating this into our Management Development programme.
- Utilising our website to promote our work on race relations in both policy operations and personnel functions, as well as generally publicising our progress in these areas.

### Joined-up Government

4.27 We recognise that, to operate effectively, we must co-operate closely with other Government departments and agencies if we are to achieve our aims. Our relationships with other Government departments are being documented in concordats. Their purpose is to set out agreed arrangements for co-operation in working and exchange of information. They are concerned with issues of principle rather than the detail of day-to-day working relations. They focus on areas of common interest, set down common processes, and identify the main components of an effective working relationship. All our concordats are being published.

4.28 Some concordats have already been agreed and are published on our website. Others are in the final stages of development. A concordat previously agreed with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is under review following the setting-up of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. When all are finalised we will have concordats with the following:

- Department for Education and Skills (DfES)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR)
- Department of Health (DH)
- Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
- Environment Agency (EA)
- Food Safety Promotion Board (FSPB)
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS)
- Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS)

- the National Assembly for Wales
- the Northern Ireland Assembly
- the Scottish Executive

4.29 As a UK body, we advise and work with the devolved administrations as well as the Whitehall departments. We are working closely in developing policies and strategies that meet the particular interests and needs of the populations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. An FSA Board Member is also a member of the cross-border Food Safety Promotion Board (FSPB) in Ireland.

4.30 FSA Scotland has worked closely with various parts of the Scottish Executive. In particular, we have worked with the Scottish Executive Health Department and the Health Education Board for Scotland (HEBS) on diet and nutrition issues. FSAS commissioned research into the barriers to healthy eating in Scotland and the results of this have been shared with the Executive and HEBS so that we can work together to find new ways of improving Scotland's diet.

#### **Regulatory impact assessment and better regulation**

4.31 The principles of proportionate action, consultation, openness and accountability – all written into the Food Standards Act 1999, which established the FSA – are central to the way in which we take our decisions and act. How we give effect to these requirements has been the subject of public consultation on our Statement of General Objectives and Practices and in a range of supporting statements, such as our Code of Practice on Openness.

4.32 While we have made clear our commitment to the principles of better regulation, we are also dedicated to meeting it in a way that does not undermine our main objective of protecting consumers. We put public health first: thus in seeking to remove unnecessary burdens on industry, we will not put public health at risk as a consequence of removing, relaxing or simplifying existing controls. A Regulatory Reform Action Plan with over 260

deregulatory measures to benefit business, charities and the public services was published by the Government on 4 February 2002. The Plan brings together reforms from across departments, including the FSA. We will continue to contribute to the process by examining new proposals and their inclusion in future plans where appropriate.

- 4.33 We have been active in a variety of areas in reviewing regulatory burdens. In June 2001 we published the report of our review of burdens of regulation on small businesses. The review found that while the overall burden of regulation is significant, food regulations themselves do not impose a particularly onerous burden. There were, however, a number of problem areas concerned with how small food businesses keep abreast of legal requirements, with the implementation of HACCP, and with enforcement. We undertook a public consultation on the report, and the responses overall endorsed the findings of the Task Force. The review formed the basis of our contribution to the Regulatory Reform Action Plan.
- 4.34 In the areas of food safety and standards much of the regulatory framework is international – whether for the EU or more widely. Our toxicologists participate as experts in the international scientific committees that conduct safety assessment for chemicals in food, such as working groups of the EU Scientific Committee on Food (SCF), the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) and the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR). This participation allows us to influence decisions taken at a national and international level that pertain to risk assessment for food chemicals and ensures that we are fully informed of relevant discussions. This international framework is important to protect consumers, especially in view of the high proportion of food which is imported. We play a major role in the negotiation of these international regulatory frameworks. For example, we have been pressing in Brussels for a more consistent approach to controls in the areas of general food hygiene. A particular emphasis of the changes envisaged will be the more widespread application of HACCP controls in place of prescriptive and product-specific

requirements in some of the food hygiene Directives. Our scientists ensure that good standards of chemical safety are set at the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants, where the UK delegation is the first to include consumer representation.

4.35 Since 1 April 2001 a total of 14 food safety-related Statutory Instruments and five supporting Regulatory Impact Assessments have been laid before Parliament. We actively promote central guidance on better regulation and regulatory impact assessment to staff. We attend quarterly meetings with representatives of the Cabinet Office Regulatory Impact Unit and six-weekly meetings with the Small Business Service to improve understanding of the Government's better regulatory policy and to keep abreast of the latest policy positions. We have also published draft guidance to assist policy teams in making the most out of their written consultations.

#### **Service standards**

4.36 We have adopted and published (on our website at [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)) targets for our service standards which are in accordance with the Six Standards for Central Government for: answering correspondence, seeing callers, answering telephone calls, publishing contact points, publishing our complaints procedure and consulting users. Our *Annual Report and Accounts 2000-01* (also available on our website) includes our performance results against these service standards.

4.37 Our key targets are to:

- send users a full reply within 20 working days of receiving their letter, fax or e-mail
- if we cannot meet this target, we will let correspondents know and explain why and when they will get a full reply
- see people at our offices within 10 minutes of their appointment
- see people without appointments within 30 minutes of their arrival
- answer telephone enquiries within 30 seconds

- 4.38 We aim to improve our performance over time and in light of our experience. At the end of 2001 we reviewed both our published service standards and mechanisms used to monitor them.
- 4.39 We are committed to do everything reasonably possible to make our services available to everyone, including people with disabilities, ethnic groups, disadvantaged groups and those with particular health needs. We will continue to consult users and potential users regularly about the services we provide and we will report our findings.
- 4.40 We have published our complaints procedure on our website as part of our service standards, and will make available further copies available on request. Our aim is to try to resolve any problem quickly, and explain what we have done and why.

#### Openness

- 4.41 Openness and accessibility are enshrined in our core values. We are publicly committed to doing our business in as open and transparent a way as possible. We are now working in accordance with both our Code of Practice on Openness and Statement of General Objectives and Practices (SGOP). Both documents were published after public consultation in 2000.
- 4.42 Our Code of Practice on Openness spells out how we endeavour to use plain language, communicate in a timely way, explain the reasons for our decisions and advice and publish our targets and achievements against them. The Code details how we will act to meet our core corporate objectives of being open and transparent. It also provides details on how to request information. Our SGOP is an over-arching document that sets out how we intend to pursue corporate goals and the general practices that we intend to adopt in discharging our functions and duties under the Food Standards Act 1999.
- 4.43 The Board continues to hold all its decision-making meetings in public; the venues and agendas are published in advance, and the papers are publicly available (in hard copy and on our website).

Board meetings have also been broadcast on national radio and television. In 2001-02 there have been eight open Board meetings. There have also been seven open meetings of the Scottish Food Advisory Committee, five open meetings of the Advisory Committee for Wales and eight open meetings of the Northern Ireland Advisory Committee.

4.44 Like all other FSA branches, FSA Scotland is greatly committed to openness and consultation. Examples of where we have made efforts to enter into meaningful face-to-face dialogue with stakeholders over the past year include open meetings on GM, algal toxins and labelling. We also make efforts to give consumers direct access to us through 'A Recipe for Success', a consumer roadshow featuring a question and answer session with a panel of food experts.

#### Consultation

4.45 We are required by statute to consult on our activities with those affected by our decisions including, where appropriate, members of the public. We regard consultation with our stakeholders as an essential part of fulfilling our core values.

4.46 We are further developing our internal staff guidance on consultation to improve standards and share best practice across the organisation. We consult as part of our day-to-day business on a wide range of diverse policy issues and subject matters, which include proposals for legislation.

4.47 Examples of topics on which we have consulted over the course of 2001-2002 are:

- measures to prevent the diversion of unfit meat into the food chain
- the migration of bisphenol A from can coatings into food
- the labelling of fish and fish products
- the management of foodborne outbreaks (revised guidance)
- criteria for the use of the terms fresh, pure, natural, etc
- draft guidance on taste trials and human volunteer studies involving novel foods or foods produced by novel processes

- food labelling: ingredient listing and allergens
- food irradiation

### **Involving, listening to, and communicating with consumers and other stakeholders**

- 4.48 Our commitment to openness and consultation also contributes to the effectiveness of our policy making. By being open and transparent we build public trust and understanding, making our advice and public information more effective, and helping to improve the public's confidence in our work. We are open about uncertainties where they exist, and we believe this allows consumers to make informed choices. But an open approach can also improve the quality of policy making and decisions. For example, people who have experience of how policies are put into practice are more likely to be able to spot snags or loopholes in new proposals.
- 4.49 We see this as essential in reporting progress directly to stakeholders, such as consumers and food industry organisations. It also gives us the opportunity to hear at first hand the views of all the parties involved and to answer questions on issues that concern them about food labelling. Consumer participation in these events is essential if we are going to take proper account of their concerns and interests, as we are determined to do.
- 4.50 We use a variety of media to get our message across – leaflets, public meetings, our website and the Internet – depending on our target audience. Stakeholder meetings are used as an integral means of promoting public debate and ensuring that those affected by issues can contribute to development of policy.
- 4.51 In May 2001 we held a workshop of expert stakeholders to discuss ways of preventing *Mycobacterium avium* subsp. *paratuberculosis* (MAP) from entering the food chain in milk. A variety of stakeholders including industrial, farming, consumer, charity, trade organisations, veterinary and government representatives attended. We used the information gained from the workshop to formulate our draft strategy in this area. The

draft strategy was the subject of a public consultation in December 2001 and as a part of this process we held an open meeting in January 2002 to present the strategy and invite comment.

- 4.52 We work closely with stakeholders on issues relating to pesticides and veterinary medicines. For example, in January 2002, we hosted a stakeholder meeting on minimising residues of anti-microbial agents used as feed additives for poultry. Almost 100 people attended from industry, consumer groups and other interests. In February 2002, we held a well attended open meeting of the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) in Norfolk to discuss the draft final report on the effect of mixtures of pesticides and veterinary medicines.
- 4.53 Two GM stakeholder meetings, the first in London and the second in Stirling, were held to complement the written consultation on the European Commission's proposals on genetically modified (GM) novel foods. Over 100 people, representing a broad range of consumer groups, NGOs, trade associations, industry, academics and individuals, attended. These open meetings provided a successful forum to gather a wide range of views, but the aim was not to reach conclusions on the issues at this stage. The views contributed were fed into the Board's consideration of GM labelling, discussed at their September 2001 meeting in Belfast.
- 4.54 We held a stakeholder meeting in March 2002 to discuss folic acid fortification of flour.
- 4.55 We held a meeting of stakeholders (consumers, food organisations, and so on) in June 2001 to advise those present about our work in Northern Ireland, and to obtain feedback from attendees on their views on how FSA-NI was performing. The meeting was deemed to be a success, and another feedback meeting is planned for June 2002.



- 4.56 We have established a regular Food Labelling Forum, which meets every six months. We see this as essential in reporting progress directly to stakeholders, such as consumers and food industry organisations. It also gives us the opportunity to hear at first hand the views of all the parties involved and to answer questions on issues that concern them about food labelling. Consumer participation in these events is essential if we are going to take proper account of their concerns and interests, as we are determined to do.
- 4.57 Another new initiative is the Nutrition Forum, whose purpose is to provide a means to share experiences and co-ordinate efforts and actions for those working towards improvements in diet and nutrition. It brings key stakeholders in nutrition together on a regular basis to allow an exchange of views and information and to facilitate communication between the organisations working in this area. The aim is to encourage co-ordination between stakeholders to maximise effectiveness of actions – and to avoid duplication. The Forum will support an effective, co-ordinated nutrition strategy. The overall purpose is to improve health through improvements in diet and changes in dietary habits.
- 4.58 We are committed to improving our knowledge and understanding of consumer attitudes to food safety and food standards, and to tracking changes in public opinion. We fulfil this commitment by conducting an annual Consumer Attitudes Survey. The results of the first survey (2000), published in February 2001, provided a benchmark; results of the second survey (2001) were published in February 2002.
- 4.59 The second survey was conducted amongst a representative sample of 3120 adults in the UK – 1000 in England, 713 in Wales, 705 in Northern Ireland and 702 in Scotland. Interviews were conducted face to face in the home of respondents, between August and September 2001.

4.60 The key findings were:

- awareness of the FSA is rising rapidly from 58% in 2000 to 71% in 2001
- confidence in the FSA is also rising from 50% in 2000 to 58% in 2001
- meat remains the top consumer concern with 73% of consumers mentioning it spontaneously, increasing slightly from 71% in 2000
- poor standards of hygiene in food outlets remain a key concern for consumers with over half (51% in 2001, up from 42% in 2000) expressing concern about standards in one or more outlets. Mobile food outlets, takeaways and fast food outlets top the list
- 12% of respondents claimed to have suffered from food poisoning in the last year – down slightly from 13% in 2000
- awareness of the five a day message is rising (up to 49% from 43% in 2000), but only 28% of respondents say they actually eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day

4.61 These results give us a clear indication of where we need to focus our resources: food safety, food poisoning, healthy eating and food labelling. Our current work programme reflects those priorities and will continue to reflect consumer concerns.

4.62 The profile of consumer work at the heart of the FSA has been raised by the creation of a new Consumer Branch. The remit of the Branch includes providing an internal consultancy service to ensure that all staff consider the impact of their policies on different groups of consumers (and on disadvantaged groups in particular).

4.63 There are lay or consumer representatives on all specialist committees and expert groups that advise us. To help support these representatives, we have developed an induction pack, held two workshops to discuss issues relating to their role and piloted a training course for them based on the National Consumer Council's 'Stronger Voice' programme.

- 4.64 We have set up a new Consumer Committee to help us identify consumer needs and views. Its membership was announced in January 2002, following a high level of public interest in advertisements placed in the minority and national press. Members have a wide range of expertise and experience relevant to consumers.
- 4.65 We obtain regular feedback from consumer organisations on the work we are doing. Regular meetings are held with the main consumer organisations such as the National Consumer Council, Consumers' Association and Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming. Regular meetings are also held with representatives of consumer organisations to discuss specific policy areas. We are funding an independent quarterly working party to help a range of consumer organisations to develop common policy and so contribute more effectively to our consultations.
- 4.66 We already involve consumer and other public interest groups in consultations on policy issues. However, we are keen to open up the consultation process to reach beyond these groups to establish the range of views held by 'ordinary' consumers. A good example of this was the variety of methods used to inform our response to the Policy Commission on Farming and Food announced in August 2001. These methods included: an interactive website; an opinion poll; focus groups; scenario workshops with low income consumers; a series of regional seminars; and a youth forum.
- 4.67 Close consumer stakeholder involvement will be an aim for us in all of our work on nutrition. This will be achieved through informal and formal consultation at appropriate stages in the progress of individual initiatives and by making information available across all of the Nutrition Action Plan areas through our website. The Nutrition Forum, Scottish Diet and Nutrition Forum, and Welsh stakeholder workshops, will also play an important role in this area.

4.68 A new Codex Consumer Group has been established to help consumer representatives understand current developments in the establishment of standards for the international food trade and to make informed representations on behalf of UK consumers. We have commissioned two major reports, providing a consumer stakeholder view on current issues under discussion within Codex Alimentarius.

#### **Information age government**

4.69 We want to achieve the Government E-Envoy's aims for electronic delivery of Government services. Specifically during the past year we have:

- Launched our new website ([www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)) in December 2001, after recruiting a full-time editor for the site in May. It is specifically designed to be user-friendly and allows much quicker dissemination of information to target audiences. In the first three months after the launch the new site was already getting up to 40,000 page impressions each day, compared to around 170,000 page impressions per month for our original site. The homepage is usually updated at least once daily and new consumer-facing sections on topics such as food labelling and healthy eating are proving very popular. Users can also choose to receive e-mail notification when areas of the site they are interested in change.
- Taken part in Office of Government Commerce's e-Procurement pilot exercise.
- Put in place arrangements for a full Knowledge Audit of our information holdings which will provide us with the information we will need to implement a Electronic Document Management/Electronic Records Management system by the 2004 deadline.
- Developed and went live with a system that allows local authorities to complete and submit quarterly returns to us electronically.
- Continued to make research requirements information and the associated application forms available on our website.
- Made all our consultation exercises available on our website and have provided a facility for the public to send comments to us via e-mail.

- Made Government Secure Intranet access and access to the Internet available from all our desktop PCs via our own GSI gateway.

### Publicity and advertising

- 4.70 We launched our high profile food hygiene campaign on 11 February 2002. This is our first such campaign and is an important part of our remit to cut incidences of foodborne illness by 20% by 2006. We are using television, radio and press advertising. We are looking at a number of different audiences during the duration of the campaign – launching first to catering managers and workers but encompassing local authorities and consumers, but the overall message of the campaign remains the same for everyone – that, together, we can help stamp out food poisoning. The campaign is being closely evaluated.
- 4.71 *Food Standards Agency News* continues to be popular amongst its readership and aims to be current, topical and authoritative.
- 4.72 We completed a major literature rationalisation programme towards the end of 2001. We inherited a vast number of publications from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (now the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), the Department of Health, and the now-defunct Health Education Authority. The rationalisation has allowed us to offer a much better literature service to consumers, and new titles on subjects that concern consumers have been added. All publications are available from our literature order line by telephone (0845 606 0667), Minicom (0845 606 0678), fax (020 8867 3225) or e-mail ([foodstandards@eclogistics.co.uk](mailto:foodstandards@eclogistics.co.uk)).
- 4.73 Our participation at the *BBC Good Food Show* at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham towards the end of 2001 again exceeded expectations. Building on our success in 2000, we continued to communicate food hygiene messages in an amusing and entertaining way. Our spoof celebrity chef show, 'Bad Food Live!', attracted larger audiences than the year before.

### **Appointments**

4.74 The FSA, under the Food Standards Act 1999, is responsible for appointments to a range of expert and strategic advisory committees. We make these appointments following consultation with Health Ministers and their equivalents in the devolved administrations. We are committed to upholding equal opportunities in making our appointments and to applying the guidance laid down by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the Cabinet Office.

### **Advisory Committees at 31 March 2002**

- 4.75 Details of our Advisory Committees can be found in Annex 3, and further information can be found on our website at <http://www.food.gov.uk/science/ouradvisors/>
- 4.76 Information on our Advisory Committees as at 31 March 2001 can be found in the 2001 edition of the Cabinet Office Public Bodies publication (The Stationery Office, ISBN 011 430 1824).







- 5.1 Our Strategic Plan and our Service Delivery Agreement together provide a framework for delivering our longer term aims. Some of our key objectives for the year 2002-03, which will help to deliver our overall aims, are set out below.

### **Better food safety and standards**

#### *Foodborne illness*

- 5.2 Foodborne micro-organisms are a significant cause of illness in the UK. We now have a five-year strategy in place, which is focused on achieving our challenging target of a 20% reduction in the levels of foodborne illness by 2006. The strategy focuses activity on three main areas: controlling pathogens, improving food handling and preparation, and reduction of campylobacter infection.
- 5.3 During 2002-03 specific activity will include:
- implementing the Commission Decision introducing HACCP-based controls in all red meat and poultry plants;
  - developing and beginning to implement a strategy for reducing levels of campylobacter in chicken;
  - developing (with OGDs) the UK policy line on consolidation and simplification of EU food hygiene legislation, and lead negotiations in Brussels;
  - commissioning research and surveillance on hygiene in the home;
  - developing and implementing a strategy to ensure the application of HACCP procedures in the food industry;
  - with the Catering Industry Working Group and other stakeholder groups, producing advice and guidance on HACCP.

#### *BSE*

- 5.4 BSE continues to be an important public health issue and one which remains subject to scientific uncertainty. Controls brought in to protect the public are necessarily precautionary, designed to reduce risk in the light of current knowledge, rather than eliminate it all together. We will continue to ensure effective enforcement of these controls both on home-grown beef and, through equal vigilance in detecting breaches in BSE controls, in imported beef.

5.5 In particular during 2002-03 we will:

- take forward the recommendations of the core stakeholder report on BSE in sheep;
- review the over thirty month rule, which prevents older animals more likely to harbour BSE infectivity from entering the food chain. This major exercise will involve a comprehensive review with experts of current scientific understanding about the disease and the risks posed to the food chain. This will be undertaken together with stakeholders and will require a wide public consultation with interested organisations. The objective will be to ensure that the controls in place properly protect consumers from eating meat from BSE infected animals, and represent a proportionate management response to the level of risk as it is currently understood;
- ensure that EU-required extensions to Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE) testing at abattoirs are successfully incorporated into the MHS control mechanism;
- by December 2002, put in place an enhanced framework for delivering high quality Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) advice on TSE issues.

***Chemical safety of food and licensing and approval of food products and processes***

5.6 We will continue our wide-ranging programmes of work aimed at ensuring that consumers are protected from potentially harmful exposure to chemical contaminants in food, both naturally occurring and 'man-made', and that arrangements for licensing or approving products protect the public health and the interests of consumers.

5.7 Key activities in this area during 2002-03 will include:

- preparing and publishing a report on the public health implications of dietary phytoestrogens, to inform and provide meaningful advice to consumers;
- participation in the World Health Organization (WHO) international review of procedures used in risk assessment of chemicals in food;
- consultation on safe upper levels for vitamins and minerals and publication of report of the Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals;

- publication of major COT report on risk assessment of mixtures of pesticides, taking into account views of stakeholders;
- holding a stakeholder meeting on nut trace contamination and preparation of draft guidelines for industry;
- holding a stakeholder meeting on the minimisation of pesticide residues in food to assist development of our policy (held in April 2002);
- completing practical work in important surveys of acrylamide and mineral hydrocarbons. This should resolve long-standing questions about whether these substances migrate from food contact materials;
- processing an application for national authorisation of a new sweetener combination, 'Twinsweet', and publishing reports on two surveys of sweetener exposure in pre-school children;
- contributing to international scientific bodies on food safety through JECFA/Council of Europe/SCF/SCOOP;
- publishing the research report from the Anaphylaxis Campaign on nut trace contamination, and setting up a focus group on which form of labelling is most meaningful and practical;
- setting up and managing a central information resource on herbal products.

### *Food law enforcement*

5.8 We are responsible for ensuring that UK food laws are fully and effectively enforced to protect public health and consumers' interests. Better enforcement continues to have a particular role across the whole of our remit – in reducing food poisoning, in protecting the public from the effects of BSE and from chemicals in food, and in ensuring that the food consumers buy is what it claims to be.

5.9 During 2002-03 we will:

- co-ordinate and review the operation of the Local Authority Framework Agreement on Food Law Enforcement;
- carry out a programme of focused audits which will concentrate on particular aspects of food law enforcement activity, and publish the final audit reports;

- carry out the second phase of food safety enforcement audits of all 32 Scottish local authorities to drive up standards of consumer protection;
- continue auditing all local authorities in Wales on a rolling programme basis to be completed by March 2005;
- launch the Meat Hygiene Policy Forum, giving consumers, enforcers, retailers and representatives of the meat industry an opportunity to discuss meat hygiene and BSE issues with the officials responsible for policy development and implementation;
- introduce a pilot Food Hygiene Award Scheme for catering businesses in Northern Ireland. FSA-NI considers the promotion of an Award Scheme as an important element in raising current food safety standards, thus supporting food law enforcement. FSA-NI and the Environmental Health Departments within District Councils will jointly administer the Scheme. If the pilot scheme is successful, it may be rolled out across the UK;
- consider the outcome of the hygiene award scheme launched in Wales on 1 March 2002, and consider the need to develop a UK scheme which meets Board requirements;
- complete an extensive programme of training courses for local authority food enforcement officials;
- in conjunction with LACORS, develop and publish inspection protocols and deliver associated training courses, to enhance inspection techniques;
- set high level performance targets for the Meat Hygiene Service for 2003-04, and assess MHS actual performance against targets for 2001-02.

### **Improved consumer choice and diet**

- 5.10 Our nutrition and labelling action plans cover the detail of the work we will undertake in both areas in order to deliver our longer-term aims.
- 5.11 For nutrition, we want to improve consumer knowledge of, and access to, a healthy balanced diet. The action plan sets out how we will do this and also how we will work with the Department of Health to effect targeted movement towards a healthy balanced diet, in particular to deliver their target for increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables.

5.12 Activity planned for 2002-03 will include:

- publishing the 6th edition of McCance and Widdowson's *Composition of Foods*;
- publishing the final report of the Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals on safe levels of intake;
- promoting nutrition messages to young adults by launching a campaign to increase awareness of healthy eating by the target group;
- designing, developing and producing an interactive CD-ROM for secondary school aged pupils which will address balanced diet and related nutrition and health issues;
- with the Local Government Association, developing a 'best practice framework' setting out the shared goals of the FSA and local authorities to improve nutrition in the population;
- with the Food and Drink Federation, agreeing a strategy for the reduction in salt in processed foods;
- making recommendations to the Board regarding fortification of flour with folic acid;
- finalising the nutrition strategy for Wales, which is intended to encourage long-term improvement in diet across the whole population, but particularly in the vulnerable and other priority groups identified;
- continuing to develop a nutrition strategy with the aim of achieving long-term improvements in the diet of the Scottish public. Particular attention will be paid to disadvantaged and vulnerable members of society. We will work closely with the Scottish Executive, HEBS and other Scottish partners.

5.13 Our Labelling Action Plan provides a comprehensive summary of our strategy for promoting honest and informative labelling that will improve the clarity and value of information provided to consumers and so enable them to make informed choices.

5.14 Activity planned for 2002-03 will include:

- issuing new UK guidance notes on country of origin labelling by June 2002
- publishing advice on the use of terms such as 'fresh' by July 2002

- issuing advice on clearer labels by September 2002
- consulting on a draft code of practice on the marketing of food to children by October 2002

### Increased consumer confidence

5.15 We will deliver increased consumer confidence both by what we do and how we do it. Consumer confidence in the regulatory system will be increased by visible improvements in food safety and standards, and by an open and pro-active approach to risk communication. Openness, accessibility and honesty are embedded in the way we work, as is our consultative approach to policy making. We have already achieved high levels of confidence compared to baseline levels, as demonstrated by the results of our annual survey of consumer attitudes. Our aim is to consolidate on these levels of confidence – we will continue to strive to find new and innovative ways of involving all stakeholders in the decisions we make, and to generate open debate on issues of concern to consumers.

5.16 During 2002-03, we will:

- Continue to take forward our Foodborne Disease Strategy, including launching phase 2 of the Food Hygiene Campaign. We will continue to monitor trends in foodborne illness across the UK. We will develop campaign materials, publicity activities and suitable measures to evaluate improvements in food hygiene attitude, knowledge and behaviour.
- Continue to carry out our Annual Consumer Attitudes Survey and conduct monthly tracking of public awareness and confidence.
- Hold a further three meetings of the Consumer Committee. The new Consumer Committee met for the first time in April 2002. Its forward work programme will be one of the first issues for discussion.
- Establish a communications programme on the risk of BSE in sheep and goats, so that communities affected have an opportunity to see messages about potential risk.

- Take delivery of a new mobile education resource in Wales, which will feature several interactive learning zones. This will be widely used at major public events and in school environments, to promote key messages about food safety and healthy eating.
- Continue to work towards improving public confidence in food through a range of initiatives. In Scotland, we will roll out further 'A Recipe for Success' shows. We will exhibit at more public events to take our messages direct to the public.

### **More effective and efficient ways of working**

5.17 We will continue to seek to find ways to improve the way we work to ensure the continued delivery of high quality, efficient and responsive public services. We are particularly keen to continue to develop the skills of our staff to ensure that they are able to give of their best and so help to deliver the challenging objectives we have set ourselves.

5.18 During 2002-03 we plan to:

- publish our Race Equality Scheme, as required by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, by 31 May 2002;
- work towards Investors in People accreditation, with the aim of starting the assessment process by December 2002;
- establish contacts with and links to the newly established European Food Safety Authority once the latter becomes operational towards the end of the year;
- continue to provide central training for all staff through our Development programme, and review and revise that programme where necessary;
- develop a strategy for enhancing and evaluating our internal communications, and implement the proposals by autumn 2002;
- publish our annual diversity report for 2001-02 by September 2002;
- complete the introduction of the new Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme by October 2002;
- finalise our Concordats currently under discussion with other government departments, and discuss further the text of Concordats with DEFRA and DTLR;

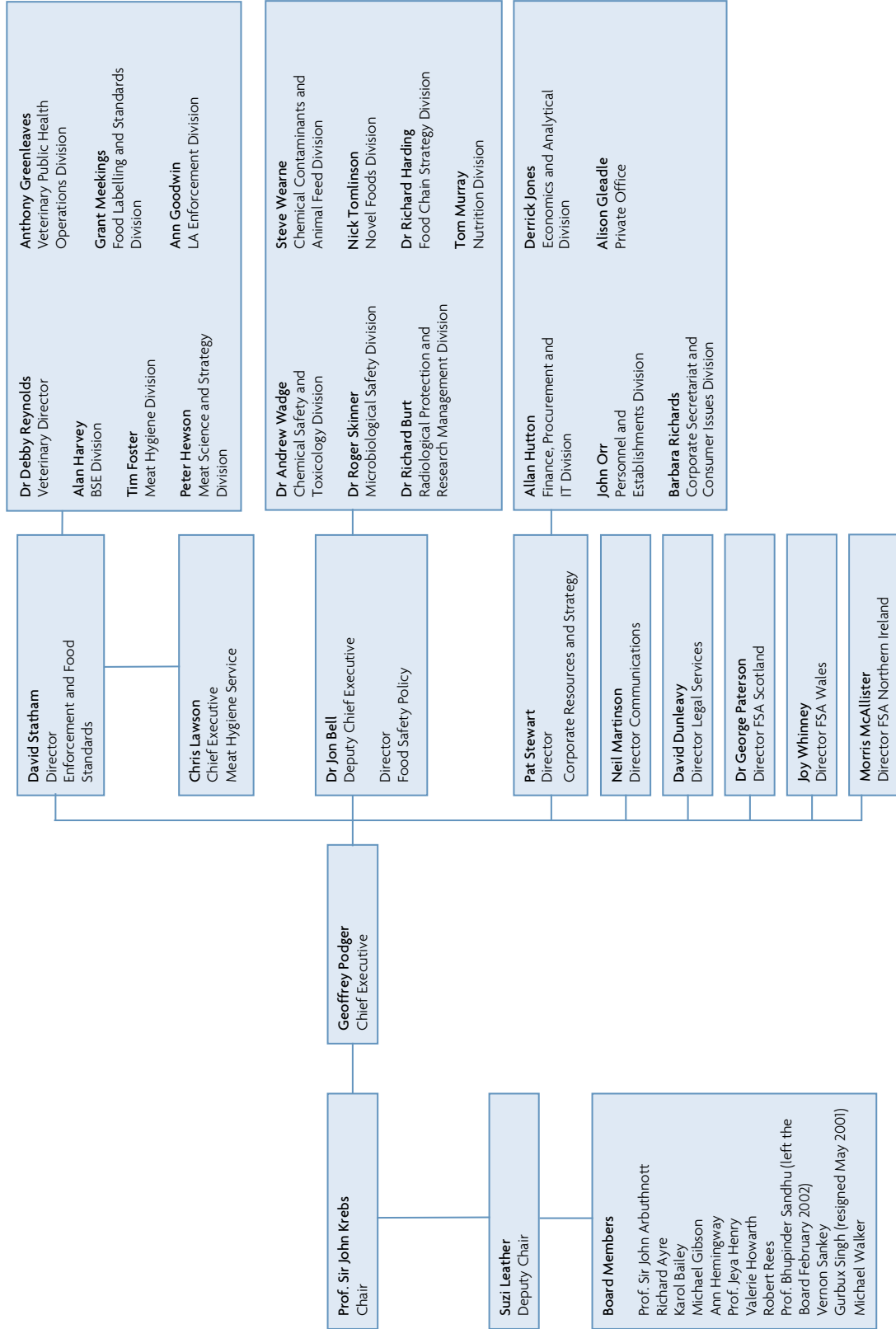
- create and update a complete tracking system for all EU and UK legislation;
- review our Statement of General Objectives and Practices, in light of our experience over the past year;
- take part in the E-procurement pilot, with a view to improving and enhancing our procurement procedures;
- develop a timetable for the implementation of Electronic Records Management and Electronic Document Management.







# Annex 1: FSA Organisation



## Annex 2: Performance against SDA targets – Aim 1

Aim 1	Target during spending review period 2001-04	Progress to date
<p>Measurably improve public confidence in the national food safety and standards arrangements.</p>	<p>In 2000-01 we will establish a baseline, and then set targets over the three years of the Spending Review period which will show an overall improvement in consumer confidence.</p>	<p>The results of our first consumer survey were published in February 2001 and so set the baseline levels of consumer confidence in the national regulatory system for food safety and standards and in the credibility of the FSA.</p> <p>The results of our second survey, published in February 2002, demonstrated our success so far through significant increases in both confidence in and awareness of the FSA. Survey results are available from our website.</p>
<p><b>We will:</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhance our website so that it is truly interactive from 2002, so that members of the public can outline what they would like us to do.</li> </ul>		<p>✓</p> <p>New website launched in December 2001.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop our facilities for providing advice for consumers by piloting new approaches that harness recent developments in e-technology, and publish performance against targets.</li> </ul>		<p>✓</p> <p>Our website has been developed to take advantage of the latest developments in e-technology. It is easy to navigate, has links to other related websites, and includes a 'text only' version aimed at people with limited vision. Our site is also regularly monitored for 'Bobby' compliance. Our measure of success is that the improvements have increased the level of use of the site by more than 50% since it was launched in December 2001.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publish annual reports that are understandable to consumers about the Agency's scientific and surveillance work, and food safety information – ongoing.</li> </ul>		<p>✓</p> <p>Our first Research Programme Annual Report was published in December 2001. In addition, recommendations to improve the presentation of the results of research and surveillance programmes, made by the FSA's independent review of research published in July 2001, are currently being implemented.</p>

*continued*

We will:	Progress to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hold Board meetings in public and hold open discussions with the public in order to listen to their concerns and to act on them.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>Eight public Board meetings held around the country.</p> <p>Several stakeholder meetings to promote debate on issues of consumer concern and scientific uncertainty including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Labelling of foods produced from GM technology</li> <li>▪ The theoretical risk of BSE in sheep</li> <li>▪ Potential controls to reduce consumer exposure to <i>Mycobacterium avium</i> subsp. <i>paratuberculosis</i> from milk.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publish our independent advice to Ministers (and to other appropriate authorities) on matters of substance, so that people will understand and know about what we are saying about food safety.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>The FSA regularly issues advice on a wide range of issues. All advice is published on our website. Examples of advice given during 2001-2002 can be found in Chapter 3.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase the availability of research results, and by April 2001 make reports publicly available.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>All research and surveillance final reports are published and available through the library.</p> <p>During 2002, we intend to introduce a new content area on our website which will give wide-ranging information on all research programmes and projects, including a summary of findings.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a system for post hoc audits of major food incidents, involving relevant stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>An 'incident' branch is being set up. One of their key areas of responsibility will be to develop a system for audit of major food incidents. In addition, we are holding a stakeholder meeting on 5 July 2002 to review the best methods of involving stakeholders in post hoc audits.</p>

We will:	Progress to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Carry out and publish annual consumer surveys of attitudes towards food issues, and towards the FSA.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>Results of our annual consumer attitudes surveys are published on our website.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publish performance information including Hygiene Assessment System (HAS) scores, information on local authority enforcement activity, and audit reports on local authority performance.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>HAS scores are published on our website, and updated monthly. Information on local authority enforcement activity and audit reports are published on our website.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage local authorities to publish local information about hygiene standards in food premises.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>The Local Authority Framework Agreement provides for publicly available local service plans to increase transparency of local enforcement services. Our report on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement Activity in the UK was published in January 2002 and is available on our website.</p>

## Performance against SDA targets – Aim 2

Aim 2	Target during spending review period 2001-04	Progress to date
<p>Reduce foodborne illness by 20% over the next five years, including reducing levels of salmonella in UK produced chickens on retail sale by at least 50% by the end of 2004-05.</p>	<p>Establish a baseline during 2000-01 for monitoring targets. Establish targets to assess progress over the Spending Review period. Target will be set once the baseline survey has been undertaken.</p>	<p>The key measure of performance for this target is the annual number of laboratory reports of the five main foodborne bacteria (salmonella, campylobacter, <i>E.coli</i> O157, listeria and <i>Clostridium perfringens</i>), which provides the most reliable information to monitor trends in levels of foodborne illness and so to assessing progress towards the target.</p> <p>Results of the baseline study, our findings of trends in infectious diseases, and our progress reports to the Board are published on our website.</p>
<p><b>We will:</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop and implement a cost-effective strategy to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness in humans.</li> </ul>		<p>✓</p> <p>The foodborne disease five-year strategy was published in July 2001 and is available on our website along with six-monthly reports on progress.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus activity on reducing incidences of salmonella in UK produced chickens on retail sale by at least 50% in the coming five years.</li> </ul>		<p>✓</p> <p>This target has been achieved. Focus of activity has shifted to another major cause of foodborne disease – campylobacter.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Set new targets for the Meat Hygiene Service.</li> </ul>		<p>✓</p> <p>Targets are set on an annual basis in consultation with key stakeholders including DEFRA, industry, consumer and trade associations and interest groups. Targets and performance information are published in the MHS Annual Report and on our website.</p>

We will:	Progress to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Tackle the food hygiene knowledge gap across the whole population.</li></ul> <p>Note: see also activity on 'protecting consumers' shown in the next table.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>The five-year Food Hygiene Campaign was launched in February 2002.</p> <p>FSA Wales produced food hygiene resource packs in English and Welsh for primary and secondary schools and conducted a number of school-based activities. It has helped the Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales to produce guidance for the Welsh curriculum, advising on how food-related aspects should be best taught.</p>



## Performance against SDA targets – Aim 3

Aim 3	Target during Spending Review period 2001-04	Progress to date
<p>To protect consumers through improved food safety and standards by:</p> <p>a) Improving local authority enforcement;</p> <p>b) Promoting the use of HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points);</p> <p>c) Improving the safety of fresh meat through MHS action to ensure the effective enforcement of hygiene controls.</p>	<p>Six auditors trained by April 2001.</p> <p>In 2001-02 we will audit 10% of local authorities under the new scheme. Thereafter, in light of the first year's results we will make decisions on an expanded programme to cover a larger sample of local authorities, and to undertake audits targeting specific policy issues, for 2002-03, 2003-4 and 2004-05.</p> <p>In Scotland, an Audit Unit within the Agency and agreed local authority audit scheme to be in place by April 2001. A three-year rolling audit programme to start April 2001, with a third of Scottish authorities audited in 2001-02.</p> <p>30% of food premises to have implemented HACCP food safety management systems by the end of the Spending Review period.</p> <p><b>We will improve Hygiene Assessment Scores, and conduct unannounced State Veterinary Service audits in fresh meat establishments.</b></p> <p><b>To set annual targets for the MHS to ensure the application of clean livestock policy, health marking, and strict enforcement of SRM controls. Targets will be agreed by the FSA Board and published by the MHS.</b></p> <p>Implement the agreed recommendations of the Pooley Report which are within the remit of the Food Standards Agency.</p>	<p>Auditors trained and targeted programme of local authority audits established. 10% of local authorities were audited in 2001-2002.</p> <p>In 2002-03 we will undertake specific targeted audits as part of the overall audit programme.</p> <p>Audit results are published and are available on our website.</p> <p>Audit unit established.</p> <p>A third of Scottish authorities were audited in 2001-02.</p> <p>Audit results are published and are available on our website.</p> <p>Strategy for wider implementation of HACCP was published in November 2001, and is available on our website.</p> <p>A local authority survey in 2001-02 confirmed that 20% of premises now have documented HACCP in place.</p> <p>Action Plan to improve MHS enforcement in poorly performing plants agreed by Meat Hygiene Advisory Committee in December 2001. Implementation of Action Plan within agreed timescales included amongst high-level performance targets set by the FSA Board in March 2002 for the MHS for 2002-03.</p> <p>Targets are set on an annual basis in consultation with key stakeholders including DEFRA, industry, consumer and trade associations and interest groups.</p> <p>Targets and performance information are published in the MHS Annual Report and on our website.</p> <p>28 recommendations are within the remit of the FSA. 11 have been completed. 6 require EU approval, and we are working on these. 10 are being acted on, and work on the remaining 1 will be started following the completion of the review of the over thirty month rule.</p>

*continued*

We will:	Progress to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a new Framework Agreement with local authorities by 1 April 2001 to promote high and consistent standards of enforcement throughout the UK.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>Framework Agreement became fully operational from 1 April 2001, and is available on our website.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consult on and implement a strategy for the promotion of HACCP throughout the food chain, so that 30% of food premises have HACCP food safety management systems in place by the end of the Spending Review period.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>Strategy for wider implementation of HACCP was published in November 2001, and is available on our website. A local authority survey in 2001-02 confirmed that 20% of premises now have documented HACCP in place.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Undertake additional research into new techniques for assessing the safety of genetically modified foods.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>A new three-year programme of research commenced in September 2001.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure effective enforcement of animal feed legislation.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>In November 2001 we announced £7.5 million extra funding, to be distributed to local authorities over three years. The new funding will help them devote more resources to carrying out surveillance and checks on animal feed, registering, assessing and checking on-farm mixing, and also checking compliance of imported animal feed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that Specified Risk Material (SRM) controls are fully enforced, and improve ante- and post-mortem inspections.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>MHS targets for 2001-02 included challenging targets relating to the enforcement of SRM controls. The targets were met.</p> <p>Levels of veterinary supervision in full throughput plants is 100%.</p> <p>MHS checks on imported beef detected 14 breaches of SRM controls in 2001-02.</p>

We will:	Progress to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement the agreed recommendations of the Pooley Report in the MHS as a means of securing improved public health and better value for money.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>There were originally 29 recommendations in the Pooley Report for the FSA to take forward, including those relating to Meat Inspection and the work of the Meat Hygiene Service. One of these recommendations was subsequently transferred by agreement to DEFRA. Of the remaining current 28 recommendations for the FSA, 6 require EU approval, and we are working on these, 11 have been completed, 10 are being acted on, and 1 will be addressed when the review of the over thirty month rule is complete.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to re-negotiation of the European Meat Hygiene Directive so as to better protect public health and produce a more efficient enforcement system.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>During 2001-02 we consulted on and began implementation of the EC Decision requiring mandatory HACCP-based controls in fresh meat and poultry meat plants and micro-testing rules for fresh meat slaughterhouses and cutting plants. Regulations are due to come into force on 7 June 2002.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop policy on the nutritional quality of foods and diets and their effect on public health, especially amongst disadvantaged groups.</li> </ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>Our Nutrition Strategic Framework was agreed by the Board in March 2001, and is published on our website. Regular reports to the Board can also be found on our website.</p> <p>We have established a Nutrition Forum, which met first met in March 2002.</p> <p>Improved and extended consumer information is now available via our website.</p>

We will:	Progress to date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Publish consultation document on future labelling policy, in light of responses to the 'Better Labelling' initiative.</li></ul>	<p>✓</p> <p>Action Plan published in September 2000 on our website along with six-monthly progress reports to the Board.</p> <p>Clear Labelling Task Force, which includes representatives from industry, consumer groups, enforcers and the Plain English Campaign, set up in January 2001.</p>

## Annex 3: Expert and strategic Advisory Committees

The following advisory committees were transferred to the FSA by Ministerial Direction under section 5 and schedule 2(7) of the Food Standards Act in June 2000. Under the terms of their transfer, these advisory committees became statutory committees of the FSA:

- Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP)
- Advisory Committee on Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF)
- Food Advisory Committee (FAC)
- Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals (EVM)

Responsibility for the following Tribunal and Panel were also transferred to the FSA on its establishment on 1 April 2000:

- Meat Hygiene Appeals Tribunal for England and Wales (MHAT)
- Beef Assurance Scheme Membership Panel (BAS)

The following advisory committees have been established between 1 April 2001 and 31 March 2002 under Section 5(3) and Schedule 2 of the Food Standards Act:

- Meat Hygiene Advisory Committee (MHAC)\*
- Consumer Committee
- Advisory Committee on Research (ACR)

*\* Comprised of the FSA's Deputy Chair, FSA officials and in addition, from May 2002, external members.*

### FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Following a review, a decision was taken by the Board of the FSA to disband the statutory Food Advisory Committee (FAC) with effect from 31 December 2001. The former functions of the FAC will now be undertaken by convening groups from consumers, enforcement and industry on an ad hoc basis to study specific issues. The Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals, which reported to the FAC but is a separate non-departmental public body, will continue its work until its report, expected in late 2002, is published. At this point the Expert Group will itself be disbanded.

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEES THAT REPORT JOINTLY TO THE FSA AND OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS**

### **Joint FSA/DEFRA Secretariat (FSA Lead)**

- Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs (ACAF)

(ACAF advises not only the FSA and DEFRA, but also Ministers of the Scottish Executive, the National Assembly for Wales, and the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland)

### **Joint FSA/Department of Health Secretariat (FSA lead)**

- Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT)
- Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN)

### **Joint DEFRA/FSA/Department of Health Secretariat (DEFRA lead)**

- Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC)

### **Joint Department of Health/FSA Secretariat (DH lead)**

- Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COC)
- Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COM)

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## Annex 4: Common Core Tables

### Introduction to the format of the tables

Following the introduction of Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB), there have been a number of changes to the core tables in this year's departmental report. RAB provides a more accurate measure of departmental expenditure by matching costs to time, taking account of the full consumption and investment of arms-length bodies such as Non Departmental Public Bodies and public corporations, and measuring the full cost of Government activity, including non-cash expenditure such as depreciation, cost of capital charges, and provisions.

The aim of the tables is to provide a detailed analysis of departmental expenditure plans in resource terms, showing: resource consumption and capital investment; and expenditure in three year Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL) and Annually Managed Expenditure (AME).

Following the decision to introducing resource budgeting in two stages, the major non-cash items – depreciation, cost of capital charges, and provisions – score in AME for the 2000 Spending Review years (2001-02 to 2003-04). Throughout the tables, non-cash expenditure in AME is distinguished from annually managed programme expenditure for the department. In Stage 2 resource budgeting, which is scheduled for the 2002 Spending Review, these items will score in DEL.

The Food Standards Agency was launched on 1 April 2000. Therefore, the scope of the regional tables is restricted to 2000-01 to 2003-04.

## Total Public Spending – Table 1

The first part to Table 1 gives a detailed breakdown of the resource or current spending plans from 2000-01 to 2003-04. The departmental splits by which resources are allocated match those in the Main Resource Estimates.

The second part of Table 1 shows capital expenditure by the same departmental splits as above.



TABLE 1: FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY PUBLIC SPENDING

	2000-01 Outturn £'000	2001-02 Estimated Outturn £'000	2002-03 Plans £'000	2003-04 Plans £'000
<i>Consumption of Resources</i>				
<b>Request for Resources:</b>				
<b>1) Protecting and promoting public health in relation to food</b>				
a) administration, inspections, surveillance, managing research and development, education, publicity and publications	78,510	104,594	99,720	103,220
b) slaughterhouse inspections and controls	3,749	20,871	20,629	19,353
<b>Total FSA Resource Budget</b>	<b>82,259</b>	<b>125,465</b>	<b>120,349</b>	<b>122,573</b>
<i>of which:</i>				
Food Standards Agency departmental expenditure limit (DEL)	81,194	122,154	117,038	119,262
Non-cash items in AME	1,065	3,311	3,311	3,311
<i>of which:</i>				
Depreciation	824	2,004	2,004	2,004
Cost of Capital charges	241	1,307	1,307	1,307
Changes in provisions and other charges				
<b>Capital Spending</b>				
a) administration, inspections, surveillance, managing research and development, education, publicity and publications	6,537	795	322	322
b) slaughterhouse inspections and controls	416	306	315	325
<b>Total Food Standards Agency Capital Budget</b>	<b>6,953</b>	<b>1,101</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>647</b>
<i>of which:</i>				
Food Standards Agency Capital departmental expenditure limit DEL	6,953	1,101	637	647
<b>Total public spending by Food Standards Agency</b>	<b>88,388</b>	<b>124,562</b>	<b>118,982</b>	<b>121,216</b>

(1) Total public spending calculated as the total of the resource budget plus the capital budget, less depreciation

(2) Most non-cash AME items will move into DEL after the 2002 Spending Review

(3) Budgetary Information publication accompanies the Main Estimates.

## Departmental Resource Budget – Table 2

This table set out, in resource terms, a summary of expenditure by departmental split from 2000-01 to 2003-04. It details the split of total resources by Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) and Annually Managed Expenditure (AME), including the new non-cash AME items introduced by Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB).

The DEL and AME figure illustrate total resource expenditure in the Department's budget.

Non-cash expenditure in AME is shown by category – depreciation, cost of capital charge, changes in provisions and other charges.

TABLE 2: FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY RESOURCE BUDGET

	2000-01 Outturn £'000	2001-02 Estimated Outturn £'000	2002-03 Plans £'000	2003-04 Plans £'000
<i>Consumption of Resources</i>				
a) administration, inspections, surveillance, managing research and development, education, publicity and publications	78,510	104,594	99,720	103,220
b) slaughterhouse inspections and controls	3,749	20,871	20,629	19,353
<b>Total Food Standards Agency Resource Budget</b>	<b>82,259</b>	<b>125,465</b>	<b>120,349</b>	<b>122,573</b>
Total Food Standards Agency Resource Budget				
<i>of which:</i>				
<b>DEL:</b>				
a) administration, inspections, surveillance, managing research and development, education, publicity and publications	78,088	102,733	97,859	101,359
b) slaughterhouse inspections and controls	3,106	19,421	19,179	17,903
<b>Total DEL:</b>	<b>81,194</b>	<b>122,154</b>	<b>117,038</b>	<b>119,262</b>
<b>AME:</b>				
Depreciation:				
a) administration, inspections, surveillance, managing research and development, education, publicity and publications	378	1,559	1,559	1,559
b) slaughterhouse inspections and controls	446	445	445	445
<b>Cost of Capital:</b>				
a) administration, inspections, surveillance, managing research and development, education, publicity and publications	44	302	302	302
b) slaughterhouse inspections and controls	197	1,005	1,005	1,005
<b>Total AME:</b>	<b>1,065</b>	<b>3,311</b>	<b>3,311</b>	<b>3,311</b>

## Departmental Capital Budget – Table 3

Table 3 gives a detailed breakdown of the investment or capital spending plans from 2000-01 to 2003-04 by departmental splits.

TABLE 3: FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY CAPITAL BUDGET

	2000-01 Outturn £'000	2001-02 Estimated Outturn £'000	2002-03 Plans £'000	2003-04 Plans £'000
<i>Capital Expenditure by Activity:</i>				
a) administration, inspections, surveillance, managing research and development, education, publicity and publications	6,537	795	332	332
b) slaughterhouse inspections and controls	416	306	315	325
<b>Total Capital Expenditure:</b>	<b>6,953</b>	<b>1,101</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>647</b>

## Capital Employed – Table 4

RAB gives a much clearer picture of the capital assets used by a Department. This is used as the basis for calculating the cost of capital charges paid by Departments to reflect the economic costs of holding the assets. Table 4 sets out Total Capital Employed by the Department within the accounting boundary, and by its sponsored bodies outside the boundary.

TABLE 4: ANALYSIS OF CAPITAL EMPLOYED

	2000-01 Outturn £'000	2001-02 Estimated Outturn £'000	2002-03 Plans £'000	2003-04 Plans £'00
a) administration, inspections, surveillance, managing research and development, education, publicity and publications				
General Fund	15,089	16,190	16,827	17,474
Revaluation Reserve	21	21	21	21
	15,110	16,211	16,848	17,495
b) slaughterhouse inspections and controls				
General Fund	10,870	11,176	11,491	11,816
Revaluation Reserve	16	16	16	16
	10,886	11,192	11,507	11,832
<b>Total Capital Employed</b>	<b>25,996</b>	<b>27,403</b>	<b>28,355</b>	<b>29,327</b>

## Analysis of Administration Costs – Table 5

This table shows analysis of administration costs (formerly known as running costs).

TABLE 5: FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY ADMINISTRATION COSTS

	2000-01 Outturn £'000	2001-02 Estimated Outturn £'000	2002-03 Plans £'000	2003-04 Plans £'000
<b>Gross Admin Costs:</b>				
Pay bill	54,560	63,779	60,572	60,572
Other	43,891	52,745	55,484	55,390
<b>Total Gross Admin Costs</b>	<b>98,451</b>	<b>116,524</b>	<b>116,056</b>	<b>115,962</b>
Income	(69,606)	(63,265)	(63,676)	(63,858)
<b>Total net administration costs</b>	<b>28,845</b>	<b>53,259</b>	<b>52,380</b>	<b>52,104</b>
<i>of which:</i>				
Departmental expenditure limit (DEL)	27,780	49,948	49,069	48,793
Non-cash AME	1,065	3,311	3,311	3,311
<b>Total net administration costs by activity:</b>				
a) administration, inspections, surveillance, managing research and development, education, publicity and publications	25,096	32,388	31,751	32,751
b) slaughterhouse inspections and controls	3,749	20,871	20,629	19,353
<b>Total Administration Costs</b>	<b>28,845</b>	<b>53,259</b>	<b>52,380</b>	<b>52,104</b>
<b>Controls and Limits:</b>				
Administration Costs limits for gross controlled areas	30,729	53,182	52,303	52,027
<b>Total Administration Costs limits for gross controlled areas</b>	<b>30,729</b>	<b>53,182</b>	<b>52,303</b>	<b>52,027</b>

## Staff Numbers – Table 6

These tables show analyses of staff numbers, including Meat Hygiene Service, in terms of Civil Service Full Time Equivalents (CS FTEs).

TABLE 6: FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY STAFFING NUMBERS

	2000-01 Actual	2001-02 Estimated Outturn	2002-03 Plans	2003-04 Plans
CS FTEs	1,891	2,016	2,056	2,056
Overtime	271	287	285	285
Casuals	40	60	19	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,202</b>	<b>2,363</b>	<b>2,360</b>	<b>2,360</b>

## Annex 5: Glossary of Terms

AA	Automobile Association
AFRC	Agriculture and Food Research Council
AG	Aktiengesellschaft (joint stock company)
AME	Annually Managed Expenditure
ASP	Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BMS	Building Management System
BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
COT	Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food
CS FTEs	Civil Service Full Time Equivalents
CSR	Comprehensive Spending Review
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DEL	Departmental Expenditure Limit
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DH	Department of Health
DHSSPS	Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Northern Ireland)
DLTR	Department for Local Government, Transport and the Regions
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EA	Environment Agency
EFSA	European Food Safety Agency
EU	European Union
FAC	Food Advisory Committee
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FSA	Food Standards Agency
FSAI	Food Safety Authority of Ireland
FSA-NI	Food Standards Agency – Northern Ireland



FSPB	Food Safety Promotion Board
GM	Genetically Modified
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GSI	Government Secure Intranet
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point: a documented food safety management system widely regarded as the most effective way of managing and controlling hazards inherent in the food handling and production process. It is a structured approach based on seven principles which may be applied flexibly in food businesses of all sizes to ensure that proportionate risk-based controls are in place and safe food is produced.
HEBS	Health Education Board for Scotland
HQ	Headquarters
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
ICSTIS	Independent Committee for the Supervision of Telephone Information Systems
IiP	Investors in People
IT	Information Technology
JECFA	Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives of the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization
LA	Local Authority
LACORS	Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services
LAELG	Local Authority Enforcement Liaison Group
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (now DEFRA)
MAP	<i>Mycobacterium avium</i> subsp. <i>paratuberculosis</i>
MHAC	Meat Hygiene Advisory Committee
MHPF	Meat Hygiene Policy Forum

MHS	Meat Hygiene Service
NDPB	Non Departmental Public Body
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NI	Northern Ireland
PCs	Personal computers
PHLS	Public Health Laboratory Service
plc	Public limited company
PSA	Public Service Agreement
RAB	Resource Accounting and Budgeting
RES	Race Equality Scheme
RR(A)A	Race Relations (Amendment) Act
SCF	EU Scientific Committee for Food
SCS	Senior Civil Service
SDA	Service Delivery Agreement
SEAC	Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee
SFAC	Scottish Food Advisory Committee
SR	Spending Review
SRM	Specified Risk Material: tissue from cattle, sheep, and goats which is most likely to contain BSE infectivity (e.g., brain, spinal cord). Banned from the food chain.
TSE	Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy
UG	Unified Grade
UK	United Kingdom
UKAS	United Kingdom Accreditation Service
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
UWE	University of West England
WHO	World Health Organization

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