
MINUTES OF THE FSA BOARD MEETING HELD ON 3 JUNE 2015 AT AVIATION HOUSE, LONDON FROM 09:00-11:45

Present:

Tim Bennett, Chair; Henrietta Campbell; Jim Smart; Heather Peck; Ram Gidoomal; Paul Wiles; Roland Salmon; Jeff Halliwell

Officials attending:

Catherine Brown, FSA Chief Executive
Jason Feeney, FSA Chief Operating Officer
Steve Wearne, FSA Director of Policy
Professor Guy Poppy, FSA Chief Scientific Adviser
Liz Olney, FSA Head of Operations Assurance
John Lawrence, FSA Operations Head Veterinarian
Rebecca Merritt, FSA Head of Private Office

Also in attendance:

Peter Jinman, Chair of the Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded all Board members to declare any relevant conflicts of interest before discussions.

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2015 (FSA 15/06/01)

2. The Minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the 25 March meeting.

ACTIONS ARISING (FSA 15/06/02)

3. The list of Actions Arising was accepted without comment.

CHAIR'S REPORT

4. The Chair advised that he had not undertaken as many political engagements since the last Board meeting on account of the General Election, but he had recently met with George Eustice MP, Defra Minister of State for Farming, Food and the Marine Environment.
5. The list of engagements the Chair had undertaken since the last Board meeting had been published on the website. He drew attention to the visit he and the Chief Executive had made to the Fareshare distribution centre in Deptford. The Board would be undertaking a visit to Fareshare in October. The Chair said it was important to be aware of food waste and how our policies could impact it.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT (FSA 15/06/03)

6. Catherine Brown thanked Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter for his presentation aimed at helping our understanding of the issues surrounding communicating risk and scientific uncertainty to the public and policy makers. As mentioned in their report to the Board, WFAC had enjoyed being able to video link in to see it, as had colleagues in Northern Ireland and from Food Standards Scotland. Catherine thanked Professor Guy Poppy, the FSA's Chief Scientific Adviser, for organising the presentation.
7. Catherine thanked the team of FSA officials who, after two years, had this month completed the first phase of technical level discussions on the content of the Official Controls proposal in the EU and also thanked the team in FSA Northern Ireland who had so far successfully taken the FHRS Bill through the very intensive legislative process.
8. Regarding the Campylobacter Campaign, the Board gave credit to those retailers mentioned in the report as having published updates on their progress in tackling Campylobacter. This should serve as further encouragement to those retailers not yet doing so to follow their example and publish details of the impact of their campylobacter reduction work.
9. A Board member said that the results of the retail survey showed that there was a 16.9% difference between the best performing retailer and the worst performing retailer; this equated to 500-1200 fewer cases of Campylobacteriosis per year. If Asda were performing as well as Tesco, we could see between 520-1300 fewer cases a year which would then be reflected in the vital statistics. It was important therefore to continue to encourage progress among the retailers.
10. Catherine said that it was critical for public health that industry as a whole met the targets they had agreed with us; in terms of the retail survey results cumulative over the year even the best performers in the survey were not meeting the target so everyone had to do more.
11. In response to questions from the Board, Catherine said that industry was sharing best practice in tackling Campylobacter and not all the practices were capital intensive, for example increasing management focus, optimising current machinery, adopting control procedures or training staff.
12. Steve Wearne said we expected industry to understand their supply chain and to share information widely and publicly. The ACT Board had had its second meeting and the third was scheduled for June. This was a forum to bring together retailers and processors and build understanding of interventions and to enable

comparisons, for example, no thinning to improve biosecurity on farms versus managed depopulation.

13. He said members of the ACT Board were extremely active and displayed a good degree of co-operation; they were all willing to share insights on their own supply chains and tweak interventions to make a greater impact in reducing the levels of *Campylobacter* found on poultry on retail shelves. The Board would receive a substantial paper on progress in tackling *Campylobacter* at its July meeting and the Chair of the ACT Board, Richard MacDonald, had been invited to attend.
14. The Chair said in addition to setting targets with retailers, our communications work with consumers, such as the Chicken Challenge launched during Food Safety Week, was important in contributing to improved public health.
15. Catherine confirmed for the Board that as it was part of the FSA Strategy to help inform and empower consumers, we regularly tested and tracked consumers' attitudes. We put a lot of investment in Food Safety Week so we did track the outcomes and while it was too early to track this year's, we had data from 2014 which we would include in the July Board paper on consumer engagement.
16. With regards to lessons learned from Exercise Prometheus, Jason Feeney confirmed for the Board that this would be brought to the Board in September.
17. And in answer to a question on the early impacts of the Food Crime Unit Jason said that in the recent DNP campaign we were benefiting from improved international links, resulting in being able to shut down access to one of the US based websites responsible for the sales of DNP.
18. Catherine agreed with the Board that a key part of the Regulatory Strategy was to have an impact on those who had not yet offended and so extending publicity of the increasing levels of fines being handed out by the courts for food related offences, for example through this report and on social media, was important.
19. A Board member asked if, due to new leadership in FSAI and post Prometheus it would be timely to revisit the Incident Management Plan with our colleagues across the border. Catherine agreed that following the meeting she and Maria Jennings, FSA Director Northern Ireland, had had with the new Chief Executive of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI), she was positive about the possibilities for greater intelligence sharing and collaborative working, including in the important areas of incident prevention and management.
20. The Chair concluded by mentioning that he and the Chief Executive had meetings scheduled in with their counterparts in Food Standards Scotland.

UPDATE ON NEW AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS IN FSA APPROVED MEAT ESTABLISHMENTS WITHIN THE UK (FSA 15/06/04)

21. The Chair welcomed Liz Olney to the table and invited Jason Feeney to present the paper.
22. Jason said the new audit arrangements had been agreed by the Board in July 2014 and were launched in August 2014. The new audit arrangements had been developed with the following objectives in mind:
 - To drive up food business operator (FBO) compliance.
 - To ensure the new audit system was understandable, fair and effective - ensuring confidence (both internal and external) in the accuracy and consistency of audit assessments.
 - To extend audit frequencies where high standards were achieved.
 - Audit activity to be independent from routine operations, including matters of audit selection, procedures, frequency, timing, and report content.
23. This paper was to provide an update to the Board on the new audit system following its implementation and to outline planned improvements. Jason said the early feedback on the new system from FSA staff, FBOs and auditors had been positive.
24. Liz said in developing our new arrangements we had researched and taken the best from audit systems world-wide. One of the significant changes had been the separation and specialisation of audit from routine official controls and inspections. Under the old system, we had around 300 official veterinarians carrying out audit and routine official controls. We now had a dedicated team of veterinary auditors for England and Wales forming part of the Operations Assurance Division, so separate from Field Operations.
25. It had taken until January 2015 to bring the Veterinary Assurance team up to its full complement of 22, owing to the need to complete an external recruitment exercise to fully establish the team.
26. With these resource constraints, our early focus had been on premises on two or three month audit frequencies under the old system. Our original intention had been to audit all meat plants in England, Wales and Northern Ireland under the new arrangements by April 2015, but we had had to revise this plan and now expected to complete the transition by August 2015.
27. Once all meat plants had been audited under the new system, we would be able to assess if the new system was delivering the right outcomes and driving the desired behaviour. With just under half of meat plants still to be audited, and

having focused on plants with historic issues or risks, the proportion of businesses in each audit rating was not yet representative of all businesses.

28. In response to questions from the Board, Liz said that one month was the maximum amount of time within which a follow up partial audit would be carried out on establishments which had received an Urgent Improvement Necessary outcome from their full audit; the timing of follow up partial audits would be tailored according to the nature of the non-compliance.
29. Liz said when the Board had considered compliance in the meat industry at its meeting in September 2013 both Board members and industry representatives had shared a common view that action needed to be taken, and quickly, against those businesses that were non-compliant.
30. Under the new audit system it was now clearer to see non-compliances which made it easier for FBOs to respond, or for the FSA to take action. As well as updating our intervention protocol, we had also been looking at our handling strategy and enforcement tools that we used where there was evidence of serious deficiencies or repeated problems.
31. We had recently stopped a business operating as the FBO was unable to provide adequate guarantees to address serious deficiencies.
32. A Board member noted the low number of appeals under the new system. Liz said that there had not been many appeals under the old system either, but the addition of an independent route for appeal under the new system was an improvement that had been made at the request of FBOs.
33. The Board noted the success of third party apps which used data the FSA published on audit findings and asked if there was more that could be done to publicise this data to empower consumers to make informed choices about food.
34. Catherine said we supported third party apps which made the FSA's data accessible and useful to consumers, such as the "Where's this from" app. We were keen to share our data, particularly for this and research purposes, and the FSA had a regular presence at Hackathons where software developers expressed interest in using the FSA's good quality data; this was in keeping with the FSA's Science, Evidence and Information Strategy and the FSA's Strategic commitment to consumer empowerment.
35. The Board noted that the examination of carcasses by government officials was an extremely outdated method of carrying out official regulatory controls and were

interested in innovative approaches to improve standards being pursued with appropriate investments by the meat industry.

36. Steve said the current approach to inspection and enforcement in red and white meat slaughterhouses was due to EU legislation but that did not excuse the outdated methods remaining in use. The microbiological threats to human health found on carcasses could not be detected by sight testing and new technologies were available to do this.
37. The FSA had been working with other like-minded EU member states for a number of years to address these issues and an upcoming review of the package of EU legislation on food hygiene would allow us to work with industry to explore introducing technologies for microbiological testing of meat and modernising controls and approaches.
38. The Chair agreed that the Board was keen to see improvements in methods of meat inspection and that he would urge the meat industry to catch up with the rest of the food industry in terms of delivery systems which brought improvements for consumers when he addressed the British Meat Processors Association (BMPA) the following day.
39. Catherine agreed with the Board that the approach to meat inspection at the EU level needed to move to being evidence-based and that investment by FBOs in modern methods of quality management and assurance did not have to wait for changes to EU legislation.
40. In response to a question from a Board member, Liz said at the moment we undertook separate audits for meat intended for European markets, and meat we exported to third countries such as the USA or China. With the launch of the new audit system, we would be looking at the opportunity to consolidate third country (non-EU) export audits, with standard audits.
41. In answer to a question, Steve said consumers could be assured that meat imports to the UK from other EU member states underwent documentary checks as well as physical checks and testing and only came from establishments authorised to import to the UK by the Food and Veterinary Office of the EU.
42. Liz confirmed that imports to the UK from countries outside the EU also had to meet standards and requirements we set for them.
43. The Chair of WFAC reported back on their comments on the paper, outlined in his usual letter to the Chair in advance of the Board.

44. In response Liz said it was too early to identify commonly recurring issues in non-compliance but with the completion of the transition process and the resultant bigger bank of data, it would be easier to identify patterns and share this information; she agreed to report on a country specific basis going forward; and agreed that accreditation of the auditors would be given further consideration following completion of the transition process and the upcoming FSA internal audit of the new meat audit system.
45. The Chair of NIFAC reported that the Committee had noted that the new meat audit system was dependent on highly skilled professional staff working in challenging environments and this required particular focus in terms of HR approach. .
46. Catherine welcomed this observation and said one of the five planks of the FSA's Strategic Plan was to create an environment in which our people were highly capable and effectively supported. The new audit system had been driven by the need to improve compliance but the changes had also allowed the creation of career paths for our veterinary staff. Liz advised we were also working across Government with Defra and APHA to build capability and excellence in veterinary public health.
47. The Chair noted the suggestion by a Board member to hold a roundtable discussion with industry on modernising meat inspection and would consider timing and focus of such an event.
48. The Chair concluded by thanking Liz and her team for all their hard work and stating that the Board accepted the recommendations in the paper. He noted that once the transition process had been completed, there would be good quality data available on the how the new system was working but it was reassuring that early feedback from FBOs was positive.

UPDATE ON ANIMAL WELFARE (FSA 15/06/05)

49. The Chair invited John Lawrence to join Liz Olney at the table, and welcomed Peter Jinman, Chair of the Farm Animal Welfare Committee (FAWC), to the meeting.
50. The Chair said this was a timely Board discussion on animal welfare given that FAWC had published its Opinion on CCTV in slaughterhouses in February and invited Jason Feeney to introduce the Board paper.
51. Jason said animal welfare was important to the FSA, FBOs and consumers, and there was no place for animal welfare abuses. Responsibility for animal welfare

was with FBOs and it was the role of the FSA to ensure they lived up to that responsibility.

52. The FSA was continuing its investigations into the two recent Animal Aid videos of apparent cruelty to animals. When the investigations were completed, FSA legal colleagues would refer to the Crown Prosecution Service. The Agency was undertaking a meticulous investigation of the videos to support appropriate legal action.
53. The FSA had undertaken the following actions to reiterate that animal welfare was everyone's responsibility:
 - Re-emphasised our Zero Tolerance approach to animal welfare abuses
 - Publicised our Whistle-blower hotline to FSA staff and FBO staff
 - Initiated a poster campaign in slaughterhouses
 - Published articles in in-house magazines
 - Worked closely with our contractors
 - Tightened our guidance; and
 - Undertaken a programme of Unannounced Inspections (UI)
54. The programme of UI was mobilised in the space of 2-3 weeks and conducted over a period of 5-6 weeks; the results of which were the focus of the Board paper. However, Jason said it was important that the Board were aware of all the rapid and robust actions the Agency had taken including the closure of one FBO because the business was unable to provide adequate guarantees to address serious deficiencies in animal welfare and hygiene practices.
55. Liz said the UI had been a departure from our approach with previous animal welfare surveys as they were undertaken by independent inspectors rather than the plants' Official Veterinarians (OV) in order to have a fresh pair of eyes look at the FBOs and the FSA teams.
56. 306 inspections took place during February and March. UI were not possible at that stage for 5 remote island plants in Scotland, and 6 businesses in England were not operational at the time of the programme. Business operator standards in 267 businesses were considered good; and 38 businesses needed improvement. One business required urgent improvement and in that case the FBO had been very responsive and taken immediate action to eliminate animal welfare risks.
57. We found commonly occurring areas for business operator improvement - in relation to use of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs); verification; documentation and monitoring; and appointment of Animal Welfare Officers in England. Where the visits identified areas for improvement, they had already

been identified by OVs in most premises, and were being actively pursued under enforcement programmes.

58. In terms of FSA effectiveness, improvements were identified for 12 of the FSA official veterinarians / teams. Drawing on feedback from the inspections, the areas commonly requiring improvement by FSA teams were in relation to better records on slaughterers and licenced duties; the need for increased physical checks and better recording of those checks; and clarity on slaughterer and animal handlers licensing requirements.
59. Liz said in the next few months we would be strengthening our animal welfare monitoring, recording and reporting, and undertaking additional research on consumers' views on transparency regarding animal welfare, including consumer choices and their impacts.
60. Peter Jinman thanked the Board for inviting him to attend the discussion. He explained that FAWC was an expert committee which advised Defra and the Devolved Administrations in Scotland and Wales on the welfare of farmed animals. In relation to the killing of farm animals, the Welfare Killing Committee also advised Northern Ireland.
61. Peter said the Opinion paper on CCTV in slaughterhouses had come at the request of the Welsh Government. FAWC had looked at the evidence it had been able to find but had noted that, while much data was published, it was not always converted into evidence or papers which could be referenced by others.
62. FAWC had concluded that CCTV in slaughterhouses was a good idea but it was not a silver bullet. CCTV was useful but only if: it was used properly and in the right place; staff were trained on how to use it; and footage was shared.
63. Peter said by the time non-compliances were being investigated through the legal system, it was too late for CCTV to be of help in preventing animal welfare abuses as animal suffering had already occurred, however CCTV could be of help in educating and assisting FBOs in order to avoid breaches occurring.
64. A Board member noted that industry *must* make CCTV footage available to the FSA.
65. John Lawrence said the FSA adopted a partnership approach to how and when CCTV was available and used to the benefit of animal welfare in plants. The FSA had no legal basis to make CCTV compulsory but where CCTV already existed, which covered the vast majority of animals slaughtered, and the FSA had a partnership in place with the FBO, then this generally worked well.

66. If an offence took place, and the FBO was willing to make the footage available, the FSA could use the footage as evidence as part of enforcement action. The FSA encouraged a written agreement to cover access to CCTV footage. If an offence took place and the FBO did not share the footage, the FSA may have to go to court to get a Court Order to seize it and, during the time that took, many things could happen to the footage.
67. Catherine said the legal position of the FSA vis-à-vis CCTV was reminiscent of the FSA's position with regards to Campylobacter; the FSA had no legal basis to enforce industry to tackle Campy but had set an expectation on industry to show responsibility throughout its supply chain.
68. CCTV was not an expensive technology so all establishments should have it and share the footage and it would be appropriate for the FSA to exert maximum moral pressure on industry to do so. At a practical level, the FSA should consider the lack of CCTV in an establishment when assessing the risk of non-compliance, and the level of controls that may be required in response.
69. As he had previously highlighted, Peter Jinman said there was also a positive side to CCTV in that it could be used to educate; behaviour could be recorded and then watched back in order to learn how to do things better. Furthermore modern stunning techniques e.g. those using a controlled atmosphere dictated the use of CCTV. In looking beyond what technology exists now to what technology was coming, there were opportunities for different ways of deploying cameras.
70. The Board welcomed the Board paper and all the constructive action taken by the FSA in light of the disgusting behaviour seen in the Animal Aid videos. The Board were concerned that the behaviour had been able to reach such appalling levels and wanted the FSA to do everything it could to prevent reoccurrences of such behaviour.
71. A Board member noted that the recently publicised statement by the FSA stated that "Every time animal welfare is compromised and an animal is suffering, enforcement action *should* be taken", and said it should read instead that enforcement action *will* be taken.
72. A Board member said he appreciated that CCTV was less effective in slaughterhouses as a deterrent when staff have become habituated to a certain level of unacceptable behaviour, however he was of the opinion that CCTV footage was of use when cases came to court as evidence for removing those from the industry who tolerated animal welfare abuses.

73. He said while CCTV itself was not expensive, analysing CCTV footage was a slow, laborious and expensive process which raised questions around its cost effectiveness. The real issue was the culture of the plant because if the abuse was not acceptable, there would be no need for CCTV.
74. The Board member said that some would argue that the FSA had failed as we only saw the abuse thanks to others. He suggested that we need to consider the possibility that FSA staff may become habituated to unacceptable behaviour by spending too long in the one place, the one culture; therefore the rotation of staff may prove to be more cost effective than CCTV in addressing cultural issues.
75. Another Board member recognised that because we were dealing with human behaviour there would always be problems. He thought slaughter men should be assessed for being fit to operate more thoroughly and more frequently than every three years when their licence needed to be renewed. FBOs would then have to keep records of these assessments which the FSA would audit thereby minimising the risk of unacceptable behaviour occurring.
76. John Lawrence reminded the Board that it was the responsibility of the FBOs to ensure the welfare of the animals they were slaughtering and it was the FSA's role to make sure they discharged their responsibilities by communicating with them and dealing harshly with them when they failed.
77. There had been a move to reinforce the team culture approach to animal welfare amongst FSA teams and to share best practice across the FSA. The new meat audit system would be helpful as it looked at animal welfare and brought a fresh pair of eyes to situations.
78. Catherine said the use of independent staff to conduct the UI programme was a step in the right direction. Staff rotation could be looked at further but she did not think it would be more cost effective than CCTV. She also brought out the passion of frontline staff in safeguarding animal welfare and pointed out that what staff required was a strong sense of support in addressing poor practice, as their motivation to do so is exceptionally strong. .
79. John agreed with her that FSA staff were passionately committed to delivering the assurances consumers wanted on animal welfare by being actively involved in sharing best practice to prevent abuses. Catherine said that commitment would be demonstrated at Board level by having more regular reporting on animal welfare.
80. The Board noted that Council Regulation (EC) 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing, which came into force across Europe on 1 January

2013, had been implemented in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland but not yet in England. The Board asked about the impact on enforcement of the Regulation not yet being implemented in England.

81. John said regardless of the delay in implementing Welfare at the Time of Killing (WATOK) in England, and the legislative framework in place, the FSA's position of zero tolerance to animal welfare was absolute. We would use whatever legislative tools were available to ensure this. The majority of FBOs wanted the same high standards and would work with the FSA to resolve any problems.
82. In the minority of cases where enforcement action was necessary, there was no doubt the implementation of WATOK in England would be useful; for example it would allow the FSA to serve Welfare Improvement Notices to require an operation to be amended or even to stop an FBO operating. At the moment we were able to issue FBOs with verbal or written warnings but if the FBO did not co-operate, the next stage would be prosecution, meanwhile allowing the FBO to continue operating and potential of suffering of the animals to continue.
83. John said most aspects of the EU Regulation applied immediately and FBOs should be implementing them directly, such as appointing an Animal Welfare Officer and adopting Standard Operating Procedures; however the FSA currently did not have the power to enforce FBOs to fulfil their obligations. WATOK would give this power of enforcement.
84. A joint communication had been issued by industry representatives, Defra and the FSA to make these particular requirements in relation to EU requirements clear, particularly on Animal Welfare officers and Standing Operating Procedures, ahead of domestic legislation being brought in England.
85. The EU legislation requires a slaughterman's licence to be converted into certificates of competence. There are "grandfather rights" for slaughtermen with more than three years' experience. However, these rights are only an option until 8 December 2015. WATOK was required to issue the Certificates of Competence. With the delay in implementing WATOK, there would be practical issues about the available time to complete this process, and if WATOK was not implemented at all by 8 December 2015, there was a question as to the legality of slaughter men operating after this date without the appropriate certification.
86. The Chair thanked John for a good explanation. The Chair said he had met with the Defra Minister, George Eustice, who had been very supportive and had said the enforcement framework for welfare was one of his key areas of focus, which the Board welcomed.

87. The Board supported the additional research on consumers' views on transparency regarding animal welfare, including consumer choices and their impacts and suggested the following questions be considered: does the consumer want to be empowered in animal welfare; if so, what information do they want to receive in order to be empowered; and how do they want to receive it?
88. Jason agreed to look at whether the FSA whistleblowing policy needed to be refreshed.

ACTION: Chief Operating Officer

89. The Chair concluded by saying that the Board appreciated that our staff were doing tough jobs in difficult environments and that they had the full support of the Board in dealing robustly with the minority of FBOs that did not comply with acceptable standards of animal welfare.
90. The Chair thanked Peter Jinman for attending and for his informed contribution to the discussion on the use of CCTV in slaughterhouses. The Chair confirmed that the Board accepted all the recommendations in the Board paper.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (FSA 15/06/06)

91. The Chair invited Paul Wiles, Chair of the FSA Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), to present the paper.
92. Paul said this paper reported back to the Board on how the Committee had discharged its duties on behalf of the Board during 2014/15. In June 2014 the separate Audit and Risk Committees had been wound up and the Board had agreed Terms of Reference for the combined Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC).
93. ARAC had signed off the 2013/14 FSA Annual Report and Accounts in June 2014 and during the year Paul had reported back on each ARAC meeting to the Board. As Chair, Paul had had sight of all finalised internal audit reports issued and the Committee had considered a number of key audit reports along with the NAO Audit Report.
94. The NAO Audit Report stated that the FSA's internal audit system had been working; in addition the NAO's recommendations had been put in place and the time it took for them to come into effect had been monitored. Paul concluded that over the year the FSA's controls and governance had improved.
95. In response to a question from the Board, Paul said the internal audit programme was set on the basis of a review of the key risk areas facing the FSA. There was

also a rolling programme of topics to be considered and the Head of Internal Audit made suggestions, as did Committee members.

96. A Board member asked if bringing the Audit and Risk Committees together had meant that risk was not receiving the time and energy from the Committee it deserved, or if the merger had enabled risk to inform the audit programme.
97. Paul replied that the Committee had discussed its attention to risk at its meeting the previous day. The Committee could see the benefit of having integrated risk and audit into the one Committee as processes were now much smoother. The Committee also felt that risk was getting the attention it deserved but there was room for improvement over 2015/16.
98. The Board had rightly discussed strategic risk during 2014/15 and the Board should again take that responsibility, and be allowed sufficient time to do it, during 2015/16. ARAC would look at the FSA Corporate Risk Register at every meeting to monitor movement of risks.
99. The Chair thanked Paul for his useful update on the work of ARAC one year on.

FSA AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE – ORAL REPORT

100. The Chair invited Paul Wiles, Chair of the FSA Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), to present his oral report to the Board.
101. Paul said at the ARAC meeting the previous day the Committee had mainly discussed the 2014/15 FSA Annual Report and Accounts, and the NAO Report. The Committee had also agreed the Internal Audit Programme for the coming year.
102. Paul reported that during 2014/15 the FSA had operated within all the different limits set by each of the 4 countries of the UK, and the accounts had been settled to enable the transfer to Food Standards Scotland.
103. The NAO had audited the FSA accounts for each of the 4 countries and the consolidated accounts, and deemed that FSA internal audit controls were working. The Committee had also met separately with the FSA Head of Internal Audit and the NAO and both meetings had reassured the Committee that no undue influence had been exerted.
104. Paul therefore recommended that the Board accept the 2014/15 FSA Annual Report and Accounts. The Chair confirmed that the Board gave its agreement

105. Paul thanked Martin Brewer and his team for their extremely smooth handling of the Accounts, and for their effective answering of all of the NAO's queries.

106. The Chair thanked Paul for his report.

**REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE BOARD AND BUSINESS
COMMITTEE AND REVISED STANDING ORDERS (FSA 15/06/07)**

107. The Chair presented this paper. He said that, in line with the other Committees of the Board, the Terms of Reference for the Business Committee needed to be reviewed annually.

108. With the establishment of Food Standards Scotland (FSS) on 1 April 2015, the Terms of Reference for the Board also required updating to reflect the change in Board governance. The Chair had therefore taken this opportunity to update the Standing Orders as well.

109. There were no comments from Board members on the paper and the Chair concluded that the Board accepted all the changes as outlined in the paper.

**REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRS OF THE FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEES (INFO
15/06/01–02)**

110. Henrietta, Campbell, Chair of NIFAC, had nothing to add to the report. She said that given the recent meeting NIFAC had had with the Food Safety Consultative Council (FSCC), an advisory body to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, it was good to hear from Catherine that similar talks were taking place at Executive level.

111. Roland Salmon, Chair of WFAC, said the Committee were grateful to the FSA's Chief Scientific Adviser's team for the opportunity to see some of the recent presentation from Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter which had been organised as part of the FSA's series of Science Forum talks.

112. Roland also said he was pleased that the Director in Wales had been able to update the Committee on progress on developing a new model for the delivery of official feed controls in Wales.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

113. The Chair advised that there was no other business and closed the Board meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

114. The next meeting of the FSA Board would take place on Wednesday 15 July 2015 in Aviation House, London.

**MINUTES OF THE FSA BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 JUNE
2015 IN AVIATION HOUSE, LONDON FROM 12.35 – 13.35**

Present:

Tim Bennett, Chair
Rod Ainsworth, Director of Legal and Regulatory Strategy
Catherine Brown, Chief Executive
Lynne Bywater, Director of Human Resources
Henrietta Campbell
Jason Feeney, Chief Operating Officer
Ram Gidoomal
Jeff Halliwell
Chris Hitchen, Director of Finance and Strategic Planning
Stephen Humphreys, Director of Communications
Maria Jennings, Director FSA Northern Ireland
Professor Guy Poppy, Chief Scientific Adviser
Heather Peck
Nina Purcell, Director FSA Wales
Roland Salmon
Jim Smart
Paul Wiles

Apologies:

Steve Wearne, Director of Policy

In attendance:

Richard McLean, Head of Planning, Performance and Change
Rebecca Merritt, Head of Private Office
Liz Olney, Head of Operations Assurance

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave apologies on behalf of Steve Wearne, FSA Director of Policy.

**MINUTES OF BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2015
(FSA 15/06/08)**

2. There were no amendments to the minutes and these were accepted as an accurate record of the 25 March Business Committee meeting.

ACTIONS ARISING (FSA 15/06/09)

3. The Chair noted that the three actions from the March meeting had all been addressed within the Resource and Performance Update in front of the Committee today.

RESOURCE AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE – JUNE 2015 (FSA 15/06/10)

4. The Chair invited Chris Hitchen and Richard McLean to introduce the paper.
5. Chris said this was the final update under the FSA Strategy period up to 2015. It was also the last report to include reference to Scotland, now that Food Standards Scotland had come into being. As we moved into the period of the new FSA Strategy for 2015-2020, we would build Performance Indicators into the Update to monitor delivery of the Strategic Plan.
6. Richard drew the Committee's attention to slide 2 and the inclusion in the Report of: new data on Foodborne Diseases; Q4 data for FHRS including the percentage of FBOs receiving a 3 star and a 5 star rating; and data on Value for Money indicators such as Estates, ICT and Sustainability.
7. The Board noted the increase in hospital admissions due to food intolerances on slide 7 and asked about our approach to this as it impacted on the choices consumers made about what to eat.
8. Catherine said we could not be sure of the reasons for the increase though better awareness and diagnosis of food intolerances would contribute to it. She said historically the FSA had not given the same weight to this area as it had acute food borne disease, but our work on Quality Adjusted Life Years would help us to identify where we needed to prioritise our resources.
9. Professor Guy Poppy said the onset of food allergies and intolerances in adults partly explained the increase in numbers, and that they affected over 1 million people in the UK which was more than foodborne pathogens.
10. The Board queried the appropriateness of giving *E.coli* O157 green status on slide 3 and Catherine explained that this was because the number of cases was below the target the Board had set at the beginning of the Strategic period in 2009.
11. The Board asked whether *E.coli* O157 should be included in the Strategic Plan. Catherine said the evidence base had shown that *E.coli* O157 had significantly less impact on public health than *Campylobacter* and *listeria*. Nevertheless, we did not underestimate the impact of *E.coli* O157 on public health and we would continue to gather evidence and report to the Board on it.

12. The Chair reminded the Board that just because *E.coli* O157 was not explicitly referenced in the Strategic Plan, which had been published that day, did not mean that it was not an important work area for the Agency, and work would continue on monitoring it. He said the Strategic Plan was a living document which would be reviewed as necessary as more evidence was collected.
13. Professor Poppy said he would give further consideration to the point raised by the Board about whether we were using the data on foodborne diseases in slide 3 to look at short term variations, or longer term trends in the population.
14. Regarding slide 14 on Human Resources, Lynne Bywater clarified that the 8.8% diversity target for disabled employed staff was set by the Civil Service. There were no targets set by the Civil Service for Learning and Development activities and the FSA had set its own target of five L&D activities, rather than days, per year.
15. The Board noted that the Agency was meeting all the Government targets on Sustainability and asked whether we should set our targets lower than those set by Government. Catherine said it would be a better use of our resources to concentrate on delivering sustainability through our policies and regulatory practice.
16. On the Value for Money indicator of Estates, Catherine explained that we had adopted a hot-desking policy so that there was no longer a 1:1 ratio of employees to desks. Maria Jennings explained that we had initiated a three year programme called Our Ways of Working to enable our employees to be the best they could be by providing them with the tools they needed so they could choose to work where and when they wanted. The Board would be kept updated on this work.
17. In relation to slide 9, the FSA Change Portfolio, a Board member asked about the trajectory of the Amber/Red status on the IT transformation programme. Nina Purcell said we had adopted a more robust approach to the Change Portfolio and the IT programme had been going through a rigorous stock take. She had confidence that it would be brought back on track.
18. Chris agreed that the approach to the Portfolio was now more honest about milestones and we might see more Amber/Red programmes going forward. He was also confident that the Project Manager would bring the IT programme back on track.
19. In response to a question about the Future Delivery Models Programme, Nina said we were initially going to focus on Local Authorities and Official Controls, however we were now widening the scope and taking a more holistic approach. Nina said

she would share the Scoping document for the Future Delivery Models programme with the Board.

Action: Nina Purcell

20. It was agreed that it would be useful for the Board to have a roundtable discussion with industry stakeholders including non-executive directors.
21. The Board asked that a line or two of commentary on each of the areas on slide 11 (Analysis of Official Controls and Science, Research and LA Support FSA UK) be incorporated into the next Update.

Action: Richard McLean

22. In conclusion the Chair said the Business Committee had noted the contents of the Update.

PERFORMANCE UPDATE ON OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY (FSA 15/06/11)

23. The Chair invited Jason Feeney and Liz Olney to present this paper.
24. Jason said this was the last Operational Activity update to include reference to Scotland, now that Food Standards Scotland had come into being; and that the next Operational Activity update would be consolidated within the Resource and Performance Update.
25. Liz said this update did not include information about meat audits as the Board had had a substantial paper on meat audits at its Board meeting earlier that day. Liz drew attention particularly to:
 - Initial data on animal feed controls in England for 2014/15.
 - Our latest work to improve effectiveness of shellfish controls.
 - Findings from local authority audits in each country.
26. Liz said that in future, as reporting would be provided through the FSA Resource and Performance Update, we planned to bring better information on what was topical in operations and on operational activities we had not previously shared with the Board.
27. Jason agreed to take an action to ensure that when we receive suspect imports, we inform the trade attaché at the relevant country's Embassy.

Action: Jason Feeney

28. In answer to a question on STEC testing to meet US requirements Liz agreed that once the laboratories were accredited and the information was available this would be made available for scientific review as it could potentially be a useful additional evidence source.
29. In conclusion the Chair said the Business Committee had noted the contents of the Update.

**FSA INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
UPDATE (FSA 15/06/12)**

30. The Chair invited Rod Ainsworth and Chris Hitchen to present this paper.
31. Rod said Information Management was an important part of the FSA change programme and supported by IT. It was crucial to get it right in order for the Agency to thrive and so optimising Information Management was at the heart of the FSA's Strategy for 2015-2020.
32. Two programmes of work had been set up to address the need for change in these areas: the IT Transformation Programme, and ISIP (Information Management Strategy Implementation Programme).
33. ISIP was a 2-3 year programme but we were already making some early wins: we had developed a tool to enable Local Authorities (LAs) to better use the data collected by the UKFSS (UK Food Surveillance System); we had improved reporting from the LAEMS (Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System) data; and we were developing a visualisation tool to show on a map of the world data on imports, port of entry and country of origin which would help with our horizon scanning work.
34. Rod said we were taking realistic steps to be able to demonstrate a good track record of success before becoming more ambitious; when we had more tangible results we would bring these to the Board's attention.
35. Chris said the Information Strategy drove technological solutions, for example the requirement for staff to be able to access information remotely and the increased use of social media.
36. Rod agreed with the Chair that good Information Management meant not collecting information that added no value to our work, and instead of collecting data simply because we always had collected it, identifying other Government departments that already collected it; for example we were working with HMRC to gain access to the customs import data they collected.

37. It was agreed that future work on information and IT systems would require more quantification of intended benefits. Ram asked about metrics relating to social media use, which will be touched on in the consumer engagement paper in July and be developed further in later performance reporting.
38. Rod said that in modernising our Information Management software, by introducing a system called Wisdom and putting caps on email accounts, we had had to adopt a carrot and stick approach to facilitate the behaviour change required by staff. Nevertheless, Rod had been impressed by the enthusiasm shown by staff to the new systems.
39. Catherine commended Rod's leadership in this area and said once staff had seen first-hand the benefits to how they worked from using the new systems, they had been quick to champion them.
40. In relation to Paul's query on the lack of a cross-Government protocol on the sharing of data, Richard McLean confirmed that in March the Cabinet Office had appointed a Chief Data Officer.
41. Catherine said our approach to open data was reflected in our internal cultural change where everything on Wisdom was available to all unless there was a good reason not to share it. This approach extended externally as we had lots of data which we could share since it may be of use to others.
42. In conclusion the Chair said the Business Committee had noted the contents of the paper.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

43. There was no other business and the Chair closed the Business Committee meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

44. The next meeting of the Business Committee would take place on Wednesday 9 September 2015 in Aviation House, London.