

### **Eating for Health: Strategic Targets**

- We will work with health departments and other stakeholders to reduce the average salt intake of UK adults from the current 9.5g to 6g per day by end of December 2010, and to reduce the salt intake of children, in line with Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition age-specific recommendations, by the end of December 2010. We will monitor progress to ensure that we remain on course to achieve the target
- We will work with health departments and other stakeholders to reduce the average intake of saturated fat (for everyone from age five upwards) from the current level of 13.4% to below 11% of food energy, by the end of December 2010.
- We will work with health and other departments and stakeholders to develop and implement, by the end of December 2009, a strategy for calorie intakes which contributes to achieving a balance between calorie intake and energy output.
- By the end of December 2008, we will have completed the independent evaluation of the impacts of front of pack labelling on consumer purchasing behaviour and knowledge and begun discussions on future approaches with stakeholders.

The FSA shares responsibility for nutrition with UK health departments. Our aim is to ensure that people have the best available dietary information and nutritional advice to enable them to make informed choices about their diet.

Our work in this area is underpinned by the best available evidence, and all policies are evaluated for effectiveness. Increasingly, the social sciences are being employed alongside nutritional science to help us understand consumer attitudes to diet and health, and influence behaviour. A key activity is monitoring dietary behaviour to identify and characterise problems and assess policy impact.

We work in partnership with others, including other Government departments across the UK (particularly health and education), local authorities, others in the public and the voluntary sectors, consumer organisations, schools, the NHS, and the food industry.

We are responsible on behalf of the UK Government for negotiating harmonised rules across the EU on nutritional issues, including the controls on nutrition and health claims.

Our strategy in this area is aimed at making healthier eating choices easier for all. We do this by influencing products, people and the environment in which consumers make choices about their diets.

- We work with industry groups and others to influence the nutrient content of individual products. This includes reformulation work to reduce levels of salt,

saturated fat and calories. We also establish standards for foods for particular nutritional uses.

- We aim to provide people with information about what constitutes a healthy diet and increase awareness of ways to make healthier choices. Key to this are the FSA's Eatwell website and public health initiatives such as the salt campaign.
- We want to reduce barriers to healthier choices. This includes working with businesses to provide clear front of pack labelling; supporting community initiatives; and supporting health and education departments' work on the marketing of food to children and school food.

#### *What we want to achieve*

A reduction of diet-related diseases by helping consumers achieve and maintain a healthier, balanced diet, by:

- ensuring a sound evidence base to underpin our policies by working with independent experts and commissioning research and surveys as appropriate
- working with health departments and stakeholders to reduce the average UK intakes of salt
- working with health departments and stakeholders to implement a strategy to reduce saturated fat intakes and encourage calorie balance
- working with health departments and the food industry to promote clear accurate nutrition information on labels
- working with stakeholders to promote awareness of balanced diets
- supporting the work of local community, regional and national bodies across the UK, assisting them to deliver effective locally-based food initiatives that address the needs of their community
- supporting the commitments made by health departments to change the way food is promoted to children
- supporting health, education and other relevant departments in establishing and periodically surveying standards for providing healthy meals in public sector institutions<sup>1</sup>, and supporting their work to encourage adoption of the whole school approach to food hygiene, diet, nutrition and food choice.

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<sup>1</sup> Including schools, care homes, hospitals, and prisons

**Healthy Food Code of Good Practice**

1. A single, simple and effective approach to food labelling used by the whole food industry, based on the principles that will be recommended by the FSA in light of the research currently being undertaken. (FSA lead)
2. Smaller portion sizes for energy-dense and salty foods. (FSA lead)
3. Rebalance marketing, promotion, advertising and point of sale placement, so that we reduce the exposure of children to the promotion of foods that are high in fat, salt or sugar, and increase their exposure to the promotion of healthy options. (DH lead)
4. Reductions in the consumption of and levels of saturated fat and sugar in food – in particular the consumption of drinks with added sugar, along the lines of the continuing action on salt. (FSA lead)
5. Increased consumption of healthy foods, particularly fruit and vegetables. (DH and FSA joint lead)
6. All food businesses to work with the FSA, DH and other stakeholders to deliver a single set of key healthy eating messages. (DH and FSA joint lead)
7. Information on the nutritional content of food in a wide range of settings (for example, theme parks, visitor attractions, restaurants, take away foods) to be clear, effective and simple to understand. (FSA lead, new work)

**Nutrition Research Portfolio**

The nutrition research portfolio is organised into 7 programmes or themes:

- N02 Diet and Cardiovascular Health
- N05 Nutrient Status and Function Research
- N08 Dietary Surveys and Nutrients in Food (Research)
- N09 Food Acceptability and Choice
- N10 Dietary Surveys and Nutrients in Food (Surveillance)
- N12 Diet and Colonic Health
- N14 Food Choice Inequalities.

The outputs of these programmes aim to provide robust evidence to:

- Inform and develop dietary recommendations to improve nutritional well being (N02, N05 and N12);
- Provide, through representative surveys, accurate and up to date information on the dietary habits and nutritional status of the UK population and to use the information collected to assess food/nutrient intake and status against recommendations, identify at-risk groups and the need for targeted interventions and track the impact of FSA policies, such as progress toward the target on salt intake (N10);
- Develop and provide best possible tools for dietary surveys (N08);
- Develop and test interventions to bring about dietary improvements in the general population (N09) and in at-risk groups (N14).

Evidence generated is used by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) for setting dietary reference values and in other risk assessments. In addition, the research also informs wider FSA objectives for example, by providing survey data to inform toxicological risk and exposure assessments.

Individual research programmes and projects there within are subject to their own review to ensure quality and consider follow up and dissemination.

**Nutrition research review***Approach*

An independent panel will undertake the review and make recommendations to the FSA. The panel will be chaired by Professor Mike Kelly (Director of Public Health, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) and include as international experts Dr Francesco Branca (WHO), Dr Allison Yates (USDA), Professor Philip Davies (former Deputy Chief Government Social Researcher) and Professor Alan Jackson (SACN); Alan Reilly (Food Safety Authority Ireland) who is experienced in translating science into policy and will also contribute. There will be observers from the FSA and the Department of Health. The General Advisory Committee on Science and SACN will be kept informed through Alan Jackson who will sit on both committees; they and the Social Science Research Committee will also be asked to respond to a consultation as part of the review process.

The anticipated time table and review process are summarised below.

*Process for the review*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
December 08	Meeting of external panel members to agree business case for R&D, review process and questions for consultation.
January – March 08	Public consultation on FSA business case for R&D programme; the views of key stakeholders will be specifically sought including FSA nutrition policy representatives, food and expert advisory committees, other funders, the nutrition science community and nutrition interest NGOs.
April 09	Collation of consultation responses.
May 09	Panel members sent background papers for consideration prior to panel meeting.
May - June 09	Two day panel meeting in London to discuss recommendation to FSA (this will include one day of presentations from external and internal key “witnesses”).
July 09	Recommendation to the FSA.

FSAS’s small research programme will not be included; a separate review will be considered at a later stage.