

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FSA SCOTLAND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Director of FSA Scotland will report on the activities of the FSA in Scotland for fiscal year 2008/09

Board Action Required

2. The Board is asked to:

- **note** the progress of the FSA in Scotland during 2008/09; and
- **endorse** the ongoing projects in Scotland

FSA SCOTLAND

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Issue

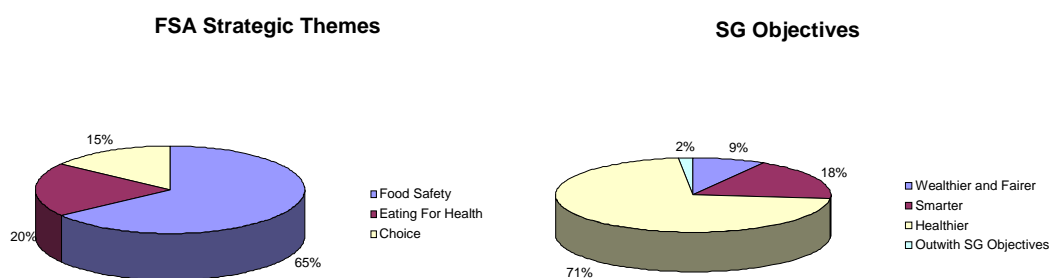
1. This paper reports progress in Scotland against the 2008/09 Business Plan and outlines some of the opportunities and challenges facing the Agency in Scotland in 2009/10 and beyond.
2. This has been a busy, challenging but, overall, productive year. It is the first one following the new Scottish Government's (SG) decisions on its Strategic Spending Review (2008-2011) where the Agency achieved the following favourable outcome:

2008/09 : £10.6M;

2009/10 : £11.0M;

2010/11 : £11.4M

3. The notional allocation of this year's programme budget (£6.2M), both in relation to the Agency's strategic themes and with respect to the SG's strategic objectives is as follows:



Progress against 2008/09 Business Plan

4. With respect to our Business Plan, all objectives scheduled to be delivered this year are on track. Significant effort has been invested during the year to improve our budget profiling and monitoring of spend, such that at year-end, we are forecasting an underspend of approximately 1%.

5. We have, in concert with the Agency as a whole, devoted more time and effort in monitoring key HR statistics, such as overtime and absenteeism which will allow us to better manage our total resources. The Staff Survey was generally very positive with respect to staff motivation, empowerment and learning and development opportunities but did identify issues around internal communication and leadership which are being actioned both locally and corporately.
6. In terms of “deliverables”, I would highlight the following key achievements:

Food Safety

Foodborne Disease/Food Incidents

7. This year has been encouraging in terms of reducing foodborne disease and controlling food-related incidents. As the chart shows, after an increasing trend in previous years, provisional data for 2008 on foodborne illness from the four main foodborne pathogens appears to be showing a slight downward trend from 2007.

Laboratory-confirmed cases of gastro-intestinal and foodborne infection in Scotland for years 2006-2008 (Health Protection Scotland)

	2006	2007	2008 (provisional)*	% decrease 2007 to 2008
<i>Campylobacter</i> sp.	4865	5197	4998	4
<i>Salmonella</i> sp.	1029	1030	1021	1
<i>E. coli</i> O157	243	243	241	1
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	17	23	15	35

8. Consistent with the rest of the UK, *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* are still the two main organisms causing foodborne disease. For food-related incidents relating purely to Scotland, these a) have been infrequent and b) been primarily in the area of shellfish toxins where, for the ten contaminated consignments, effective action was taken to stop them before reaching the final consumer.
9. More generally for shellfish toxins, there have been 54 closures (vs. 44 last year) with the increase being mainly due to DSP (diarrhetic shellfish poison) contamination. Consistent with the Agency’s overall Incident Prevention Strategy, we convened a shellfish industry/enforcement officers workshop in February 2009 to examine how we could reduce the number of incidents of this type. In this respect, the requirement that all new shellfish harvesting areas are subject to a sanitary survey prior to classification should assist. To date 34% of the 156 classified shellfish production areas in Scotland have been surveyed.

Regulation and Enforcement

10. Working with our partners within SG, we have completed the work to assess for approval, all premises that were licensed under previous meat hygiene legislation. We are making good progress and are on track to assess both catering butchers and game handling establishments that require approval by the Agency for the first time.
11. For food and feed enforcement on-farm, much of the year has been devoted to formalising arrangements and developing information systems. As planned, Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate (SGRPID), is now carrying out food hygiene inspections while undertaking their cross-compliance duties. In addition, LAs plans for on-farm food and feed hygiene inspections include joint inspection wherever practicable. To ensure co-ordination of food and feed inspections, we have developed and rolled out an online database that provides a single repository for both SGRPID and LAs to record on-farm inspections. The *Scottish Primary Production Official Controls System* will permit the Agency, SGRPID and Local Authorities to plan integrated on-farm inspections in line with the SG's priority to reduce the number of individual inspections.

Gathering the Evidence

12. Three projects investigating the sources and epidemiology of *Campylobacter* infection in Scotland are concluding. The results will feed in to the Agency's future research and intervention strategies aimed at reducing *Campylobacter* in the food chain.
13. In addition, we have continued to provide support to UK-wide research/surveillance on the prevalence of norovirus in oysters; levels of persistent environmental contaminants in fish; and the development of methods for identifying sorbitol-fermenting *E. coli* O157 in clinical, food and veterinary samples.
14. As part of the Agency's overall programme to control biotoxin contamination of shellfish, we have continued to work closely with HQ colleagues on the development of alternative analytical methods. We have further refined our statistical modelling methods used to develop risk-based sampling programmes required by the EU regulations and are investigating the use of molecular methods to improve the detection of toxic phytoplankton species.
15. Lastly, we are now, through the work of the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee (SFELC), beginning to fully utilise the UK Food Surveillance System to monitor trends and emerging issues from food sampling undertaken by

Scottish LAs. Analysis of the data so far has given no indication of any major public health concerns, but it is proving to be useful in helping us to identify priority areas for future research/surveillance.

Audit of Local Authority Enforcement

16. The second audit cycle of LA Enforcement was completed for all 32 LAs in June 2008. It built on the first cycle by focussing more intensively on their weaknesses/shortcomings. A summary report of all 32 audits is available on the Agency's website. With minor exceptions, most of the Scottish LAs are providing a food/feed official control service that meets the Standard in the Framework Agreement. The main exception is that the majority received a non-conformity with respect to their enforcement of establishments subject to or approved under Regulation (EC) 853/2004 i.e. businesses approved for intra-community trade. A series of focussed audits of selected LAs, bolstered by "reality checks" at various establishments, are now being carried out to better assess the approval process.

Consumer education/ Raising standards

17. The two-year Food Hygiene Information Scheme ("Scores on the Doors") pilot in five LAs was completed in November 2008. Following the Board's decision to continue, at least for the foreseeable future, with the 2-tier scheme in Scotland, work is progressing, via SFELC, to roll it out across Scotland.

18. Over 500 businesses have now achieved the Eat Safe Award (an increase of 106 over the year). This voluntary award for achievement beyond compliance complements the FHIS and, looking ahead, should provide opportunities for joint promotion of both.

19. In terms of our work with Schools on food safety/hygiene, 08/09 has again been a very successful year with our Elementary Food Hygiene course for Secondary Schools attracting 12,411 participants (vs. 9817 last year) and our Primary Schools calendar competition attracting well over 2000 entries.

Eating for Health

20. We have continued to take forward UK-wide Agency initiatives such as the review of salt targets, reformulation, the saturated fat campaign and NDNS through funding support and proactive engagement with the Scottish Government, industry and other key stakeholders such as Health Professionals and LAs. We have used key Scottish industry and consumer events such as Recipe for Success and the Royal Highland Show (where our stand was given a prestigious "Celebration in Business" award) to convey food safety and "healthy eating" messages.

21. Consistent with the outcome of the Strategic Spending Review, much of our work in this area is in support of and in partnership with the SG's "Healthier Scotland" objective. In the catering area we have supported SG's Healthy Living Award through membership of its steering group and the Expert Group developing the higher level ('Gold') award. We have continued to input nutrition advice for the development of SG policies designed to improve nutritional standards and promote healthier food choices in the public sector. This work has been extended to the provision of food and drinks to hospitals through membership on the Working Group developing National Catering and Nutrition Specifications with its further extension soon to residential schools, the elderly and the local authority sector.
22. For schools, following on from our groundbreaking work in development of nutritional requirements for food and drink in schools within "Hungry for Success", we have supported the Expert Group for the Schools (Health Promotion & Nutrition) Act 2007. We have taken the lead in setting up a "Teachers Panel", the remit of which is to advise on the suitability of new diet, nutrition and food safety resources for use in schools and which are consistent with the Agency's Food Competencies and the new Scottish Curriculum for Excellence.
23. As part of the dietary surveillance programme, undertaken following the Review of the Scottish Diet Action Plan, our published survey on measuring sugar intakes in Scottish children while showing that the sugar target in the Scottish Dietary Targets had not been met, did provide valuable data to the SG on fat intakes, BMI, dental health and physical activity.
24. We have provided significant support to the development of SG's "Take on Life" social marketing campaign through membership on its Strategic Steering Group and through the provision of the nutritional advice and expertise necessary to develop the campaign and its key messages. This included media activities, verifying recipes and joint branding of the Agency's saturated fat campaign poster with the SG's "Healthier Saltire Heart" to maximise Scottish consumer recognition relative to health.
25. In our own right, we have continued to take the pulse of Scottish consumers on their attitudes to food (including barriers to a healthy diet) through our Citizens' Forums on Food (in Glasgow and Inverness) and our targeted consumer engagement events with disadvantaged young consumers (in Peterhead, Glasgow and Dundee) – which resulted in our consumer engagement team winning the Agency's 'Communication Award'.

How we deliver

26. We could not achieve what we have without working collaboratively with others – whether with the Scottish Government, Local Authorities, the Agri Food Industry or Consumer groups. This has been particularly so this year in relation to the supportive but critically important contribution we made initially to the development of the Scottish Government’s National Food Policy which was announced in June and, subsequently, to the work of its five “action streams”:
- i. Supporting the sustainable economic growth of the food and drink industry (from £7.5 B to £10 B over the next decade);
 - ii. Supporting consumers and work with the food and drink industry to support healthier and more environmentally sustainable food and drink choices;
 - iii. Celebrating and enhancing Scotland’s reputation as a “Land of Food and Drink”;
 - iv. “Walking the talk” – Getting Government to lead the way (e.g. on procurement) and;
 - v. Affordability, access and security in relation to food.
27. With the exception of the first one, we have been actively involved in all the others, providing policy and scientific advice and support to them. The Agency’s work on salt reduction was presented to Workstream 2 as an exemplar of partnership working.
28. Conversely, I would like to acknowledge the support from SG officials in providing Scottish-specific economic data for the draft Regulatory Impact Assessment for the consultation package on “Charging for Meat Hygiene Controls” where Scottish Ministers have indicated that they expect to see a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the proposals across the entire agri-food sector.
29. We also played a key role in supporting SG colleagues with food safety/hygiene advice that was a key element in convincing Russia to re-open its market to Scottish (and UK) fish and fish products.
30. This year has also seen a significant extension in “reach” of our highly successful Hygiene Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Primary Schools (HHEAPS) initiative with the Scottish Football Association taking it forward through their member clubs; Scottish Rugby rolling it out through their Community development officers and the Scottish Tennis Association about to come on board. We now estimate the “reach” to be in the order of 24,000 children in 800 schools in 30 of the 32 Scottish LAs. This is another excellent example of partnership working not only with the above organisations but also involving the Scotland-wide network of Active School Co-ordinators –something which was

recognised by the Agency with the bestowing of the Partnership Working Award to the HHEAPS team this year.

31. Another good example of partnership working is through the joint funding from the SG and ourselves that, last September, led to the acquisition of the Scottish Cooking Bus with programme delivery through Focus on Food. Since then, the bus has visited 16 schools/communities, trained 200 teachers and taught 1800 pupils about safe and healthy cooking.
32. 'How we deliver' also covers "better regulation" and, here, we have continued to build a positive engagement with the SG Regulatory Review Group which, encouragingly, has indicated a lack of any significant complaint about the Agency from industry. Specifically, we have been praised for our simplification initiative which allows for a faster sampling turnaround so that closed shellfish beds may be reopened as soon as it is safe to do so.
33. Finally, in November 2008, we signed a Statement of Intent with the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland. It provides a framework for creating joint strategic objectives on food regulation and food-related health matters for the overall improvement of Scotland's health in relation to 'food'.

Opportunities/Challenges for the future

34. Looking ahead, the most important challenge for the Agency in Scotland will be in continuing to "add value" within Scotland through, specifically, contributing effectively to the achievement of the Government's stated purpose of "achieving sustainable economic growth" and, more generally, in showing our sensitivity, willingness and adaptability to take "Scottish circumstances" into account in delivering the Agency's "business" in Scotland.
35. Specifically, I would identify the following challenges:
 - aligning our activities to support the SG's Strategic Objectives, in particular the "Healthier Scotland" one;
 - effectively supporting and delivering on any Agency commitments that emanate from the outcomes of the five National Food and Drink Policy "action streams";
 - ensuring Scottish stakeholders (in the broadest sense), feel included in the development of the Agency's new Strategic Plan and see themselves in it;

- effectively supporting and delivering on any Agency-specific targets in SG's policy document, "Healthy Eating, Active Living: An Action Plan to improve Diet, Increase Physical Activity and Tackle Obesity";
- taking forward the Agency's policy objective for increased cost recovery for meat hygiene controls alongside the Scottish Government's overarching aim of sustained economic growth, particularly of the rural economy and, specifically, its evolving policy objectives with respect to cost-sharing for animal health and welfare;
- assessing any Scottish-specific implications arising from the publication of the Public Inquiry into the South Wales E. coli outbreak (the "Pennington Review")
- responding to the challenge of the economic downturn and what is likely to be a difficult Strategic Spending Review (2011-2014) process.

36. The importance of demonstrating that the Agency does "add value" within the Scottish context will take on increased significance subsequent to the Scottish Government's commitment to consult on independence for Scotland, which is likely to happen in 2010, in advance of the 2011 Scottish Parliament elections.

37. With each challenge, there lies a corresponding opportunity, and for the new Director and the team in Aberdeen, I am confident that challenges will be turned into opportunities and that under his leadership, the Agency in Scotland will continue to "punch above its weight", not only in terms of its impact on food safety and healthy eating in Scotland, but also in its contribution to the One Agency.

Board Action Required

38. The Board is asked to:

- **note** the progress of the FSA in Scotland during 2008/09; and
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