29 April 2009 **AGENDA ITEM 5**

BRIEFING ON OUTCOMES OF THE GO-SCIENCE REVIEW

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Executive Summary

The independent review of the FSA's science by the government's Chief Scientific Adviser has now been completed. The report was published on 16 April and the Agency has 3 months to respond. The report commends the Agency's use of science and the tone is set by the following statement from The Government's Chief Scientific Adviser and Head of GO-Science, Professor John Beddington:

"This review indicates that the FSA is using science and scientific advice in an extremely impressive way. In many respects the agency is ahead of the field, particularly in its use of openness and transparency in the way scientific advice is developed and presented.

The report also makes a number of recommendations that build on existing strengths and work already underway within the Agency and the independent scientific advisory committees

The Committee is invited to:

Consider and comment on the report and the presentation by Alisdair Wotherspoon of the Chief Scientists Team so that views can be built into the draft FSA response to be considered by the Board at its meeting on .14 July 2009.

CHIEF SCIENTIST TEAM

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Independent Science Review of the Food Standards Agency

Issue

1. This paper briefs the Committee on the outcome of the Science Review of the Agency by Government Office for Science (GO-Sc).

Background

2. The Agency is the latest of 7 departments to be reviewed by the team of the Government's Chief Scientist. It began in January 2008 and has gathered evidence from a broad range of sources including interviews with staff and key stakeholders and a formal written consultation of all stakeholders. This evidence, including 3 case studies and 13 peer reviews of projects, has been considered by an independent steering panel of eminent scientists chaired by the Government's Chief Scientist. The report of the review was published on 16 April. Hard copies will be provided to Committee members, in addition members may wish to follow the attached link to the DIUS website that provides the report and accompanying press release. The Agency now has 3 months to respond formally.

3. The Committee will wish to note that the Review gives a positive endorsement of the Agency's processes in using and communicating science as a fundamental part of our business. Many examples of good practice are highlighted against the 10 key criteria of the Science Review. The report also makes a number of recommendations that build on existing strengths and work already underway within the Agency and the independent scientific advisory committees. The following draft statement from the Government's Chief Scientist captures the positive tone of the report:

> ***As an evidence based organisation making extensive use of scientists, the Agency in many resects is already operating to the high standards looked for in the Science Reviews. The Review findings indicate that the FSA's approach to the use of science has generally been impressive. It is important that this is maintained and enhanced going forward.***

Next Steps

- Agency has 3 months to respond;
- CST will draft an Agency response following consultation with colleagues, GACS and SWANI FACs and EMB;
- The Board will consider the Draft Response on 14 July as part of the open session when the Agency's Chief Scientist and Professor Colin Blakemore, Chair of the General Advisory Committee on Science present their annual science reports;
- Agency publishes its response after the July Board meeting;
- The FSA will take forward the recommendations of the review as part of the Chief Scientist's continuing commitment to strengthening the Agency's science. This will be focussed by the development of the Agency's new Science and Evidence Strategy alongside the new Strategic Plan for 2010-2015; and through the work of the independent General Advisory Committee on Science.
- Agency's progress to be reviewed by GO-Sc after 9 months.

Alisdair Wotherspoon
Chief Scientist Team