



UK FOOD SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM (UKFSS) USER UPDATE NEWSLETTER



AUGUST 2011

The FSA remains committed to supporting the development of the UK Food Surveillance System (UKFSS) as the main repository of data on official control sampling undertaken across the UK.

There have been a lot of changes made to the UKFSS project over the past year, a key milestone being the transfer of the system from Health Protection Scotland to the FSA. This new 6 monthly newsletter aims to update our Local Authority and Laboratory partners on progress with uptake of the system throughout the UK and any new developments in software, training, and the UKFSS website. It will also provide an overview of reporting functions including how we are using the database within the FSA to improve our understanding of food safety and standards in the UK.

UKFSS – WHAT'S NEW??

At the end of 2010 we transferred the system onto FSA servers at the end of the HPS contract. We'd like to say a big thanks to HPS for running this project for all those years and developing FSS into the system it is now. Replacing HPS's extensive knowledge of the system and their personalized support service has been challenging, but we are confident that the new arrangements will allow us to make improvements to the current system and ensure it meets the needs of users working across all areas of food law enforcement in the UK.

Bringing the system in house has the benefit of having the system managed by a dedicated FSA IT team who run a range of systems including those used by more than 1000 meat plants across the country. They are experts at maintaining these types of systems and making sure the data gets to those who need it. Please be assured we are on track to make sure this system meets your needs; one of our major aims of this project is that we provide a system that will help to streamline your sampling work, and to save you time and money.

We are constantly refining our support for the system. If you have any feedback-good or bad we would like to hear it-just email standards.support@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk.

HOW DOES THE NEW SERVICE DESK OPERATE?

First Line Support:

Routine queries are initially put through to the central FSA service desk. The team is able to provide prompt assistance with simple queries but will have to direct more technical or operational issues on to other teams:

Business Queries:

- **UKFSS Project Team** (Standards Branch, FSA in London)-Anne Gravett; Michelle Young; Wing Man Chan.
- **FSA Regional Delivery Teams**- Kasia Kazimierczak/Jacqui McElhiney (Scotland); Hannah Evans/Rob Wilkins (Wales); Mervyn Briggs/Susanne Boyd (Northern Ireland)

Data/Application Issues:

- **FSA IT (York)** - Service Delivery/Operations Teams which will deal with website and user account issues.
- **MaLaren West** - (John and Graeme Anderson) for all development and system support matters.
- **Alan Mole and Norman Michie** will continue to support the laboratory side of UKFSS operation including updates and guidance relating to the category tree, determinands tables and outcomes codes.

UKFSS ROLL-OUT

Progress in England and Wales

Progress with the roll-out across England and Wales is gathering apace! There are now over 60 LAs in England using the database routinely for food standards sampling. Rollout to environmental Health offices for microbiological sampling is also starting to develop as the HPA labs come on board. Of the HPA Food, Water and Environment labs, the Leeds and London labs are connected to UKFSS. Bristol lab is coming on board and should be operational from September. HPA will link UKFSS to the Preston and Porton labs as they get a demand from LAs in these areas. The new Starlims system (to be piloted in Jan 2012 in Birmingham) will connect to FSS across all the HPA labs.

The key priorities for rollout in England:

- A timetable to ensure implementation across Environmental Health Offices using the HPA is co-ordinated to match the HPA laboratory rollout.
- Target LAs identified as part of Olympic planning programme. UKFSS will play an important role in the co-ordination of food sampling by the Olympic authorities in the run up to and during the 2012 games. This will be viewed as one of the 'legacies' of the Olympic hosting by London.

- Rollout to Port Health Authorities across the UK. UKFSS will assist Ports with risk assessment and to capture data on imported foods testing by inland LAs.
- Target LAs carrying out animal feed controls. This will provide the FSA with a more co-ordinated, real-time view of feed controls and help to compile the UK's annual feed returns to the EU.
- Rollout to LAs taking part in the National coordinated risk-based food and feed sampling programme 2011-12. This is a priority as submission of results via UKFSS will help LAs submit the data to the FSA, allowing for better co-ordination and assessment of results. It will also provide real-time data that the FSA can use to monitor trends

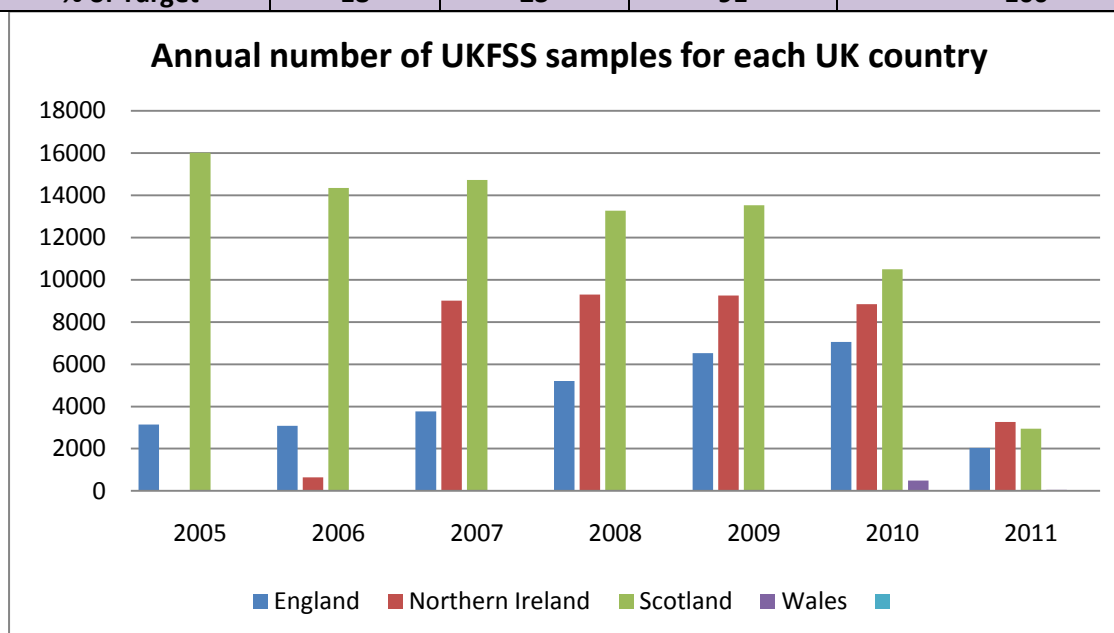
Rollout to Wales continues to progress well, as 5 of the 22 LAs in Wales are now using FSS, with both Welsh public analyst laboratories and one of the three microbiological laboratories now connected to UKFSS.

Progress in Scotland and Northern Ireland

We have continued to have support from 29 out of the 32 Local Authorities in Scotland and all 26 Local Authorities in Northern Ireland. We are extremely grateful for the invaluable input from LA and laboratory users in these countries over the years, which has been key in informing new developments in UKFSS data entry and reporting tools. This year, we would like to continue to encourage the remaining non-participating LAs in Scotland to come on board.

Uptake of UKFSS across the UK-Summary of Progress to Date

	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
LAs	61	5	29	26
PA labs	11	2	4	1
HPA/PH labs	5	4	NA	1
Target (LAs)	354	22	32	26
% of Target	18	23	91	100



FSSNET UPDATES

Version 7.5 now available!

This latest version of FSSNet is a maintenance release aimed at fixing bugs and making existing features work better. For further information about the upgrades included in this version and how to download and install see the link <https://ukfssweb.food.gov.uk/public/FSSNet75/>

Version 8 is due for release in August 2011!

The new features of this latest version are:

- Improved compatibility for animal feed sampling
- Facility to allow sampling officers to download results directly onto the system themselves for simple label checks
- Changes to the postbox which will mean labs don't have to handle all the data fields and will allow a control check for samples not uploading onto UKFSS
- Functionality for recording and collating of HPA survey data including additional fields for recording supplementary information
- Facility to record LA enforcement actions
- Inclusion of measurement of uncertainty to results, where applicable

TRAINING NEWS

Programme for 2011/12

A training plan for England is currently being put together which will cover 6 regional sectors namely; South East England; South West England, London, North West, North East England and the ports. Look out for our training timetable which we hope to circulate soon.

FSA in Scotland and Northern Ireland also plan to provide training during the fourth quarter of 2011/12 for existing and new users (food officers and clerical administrative staff) on use of the latest version of FSSNet.

Please contact your local FSA representatives if you are interested in attending any of our planned training events, or would like to request any new training.

New e-learning package

The Agency has been working to produce an Introduction to UKFSS e-learning tool for publication in September 2011 via <https://ukfssweb.food.gov.uk/>. The aim of this course is to guide LAs through each stage of the process to get FSSNet in operation.

The e-learning package will prove particularly helpful to bring newly appointed officers in food law enforcement up to speed with using FSSNet. The package will also serve as a helpful reminder for

admin staff on general software maintenance routines that need to be followed and how this is done.

Animal Feeds

There are now 32 Local Authorities across the UK which are routinely inputting samples onto UKFSS, which has contributed over 10,000 feed analyses results to the database.

In addition, a project team has been set up to implement UKFSS for all feed sampling undertaken in NI, where there are alternative arrangements for animal feeds. DARD sampling officers have now been trained in the use of FSSNet software, and by 31 April 2011 the first trial samples were submitted to the Public Analysts laboratory. Work is currently ongoing with the Agri-Food Bio Science Institute (AFBI) to get their laboratories linked into the FSS network. It is anticipated that the AFBI laboratories should be fully linked up with UKFSS by end August 2011.

UKFSS USER GROUPS

We have set up a number of user groups involving LAs and laboratory representatives from across the UK to inform future developments and improvements of FSS data entry and reporting tools. Recent and forthcoming meetings planned for these groups in 2011 are listed below. We welcome participation from all LA users, so please let us know if you are interested in attending these meetings (VC and/or TC facilities can be arranged via your nearest FSA office), or inputting any comments/contributions.

- **Reporting User Group** -aims to improve reporting of food sampling data for LAs across the UK. First meeting held on 28th June 2011, and a further meeting is planned for later in the year.
- **Microbiological sampling sub-group**-aims to ensure the system fully meets the needs of legislative requirements and improve the reporting of LA sampling to assess microbiological safety of food. Next meeting is planned for September 2011.
- **Feed user group**-aims to develop and refine the database for feeds sampling. Next meeting planned for 7th September 2011
- **England Users groups**-aims to show users how to integrate use of FSS into LA operations across England. This will be set up as required from July 2011 onwards.
- **Scottish Research Working Group**-aims to analyse Scottish sampling data on UKFSS, produce annual reports and advise on sampling priorities in Scotland. The next meeting is planned for October 2011.
- **The Northern Ireland Strategic Committee on Food Surveillance** look at trends in microbiological and chemical food sampling and analysis and produce an annual report commenting on potential trends.
- **The Northern Ireland User Group** meet 3-4 times per year to consider general operational issues relating to FSS and make recommendations regarding improvement or

enhancements needed in the software. The group also considers issues regarding reporting and access to sample data.

- **UK FSS Strategy Group** co-ordinates the views of the different user groups in this multi-Agency project and include user groups' chairs. The group advises the FSA on the how the system should be developed and advises on the impact of proposed developments. It also co-ordinates all communications relating to the project and considers all training and reporting needs. The Strategy Group reports to the UKFSS programme board. The next meeting is planned for the 5th October 2011.

UKFSS REPORTING FUNCTIONS

How the FSA has been using the database

LA sampling activity makes an important contribution to our intelligence on the quality and safety of foods on sale in the UK, and the UKFSS is an invaluable tool for enabling the FSA to ensure this intelligence is used effectively to inform policy. In the past year alone we have used UKFSS data for the following:

- FVO data request for information on shellfish testing at retail level for contaminants
- A report to support a follow-up FVO mission looking at testing and controls of baby food, infant formula and follow-on formula
- Evaluation of controls relating to additives and food contact materials legislation
- Identification of foods which are associated with contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes*, to inform the future development of our foodborne disease strategy.

LAEMS Reporting

One of the key benefits of UKFSS is that by providing the FSA with access to all LA sampling statistics it allows LAEMS sample data to be collated without the need for additional work by the LA. This means that LAs don't have to think about sample upload once they have entered their results on the FSS, and will not be dependent on their MIS providers to upload sample data into the LAEMS database.

Following a pilot conducted in 2010 to collate the 2009/10 LAEMS sampling returns for Scotland and Northern Ireland, the UKFSS and LAEMS teams within the FSA have been working together to refine the import process to produce the 2010/11 returns for existing users. It is the intention that the FSA will collate all LAEMS sampling returns from UKFSS in the future.

LA Sampling Reports

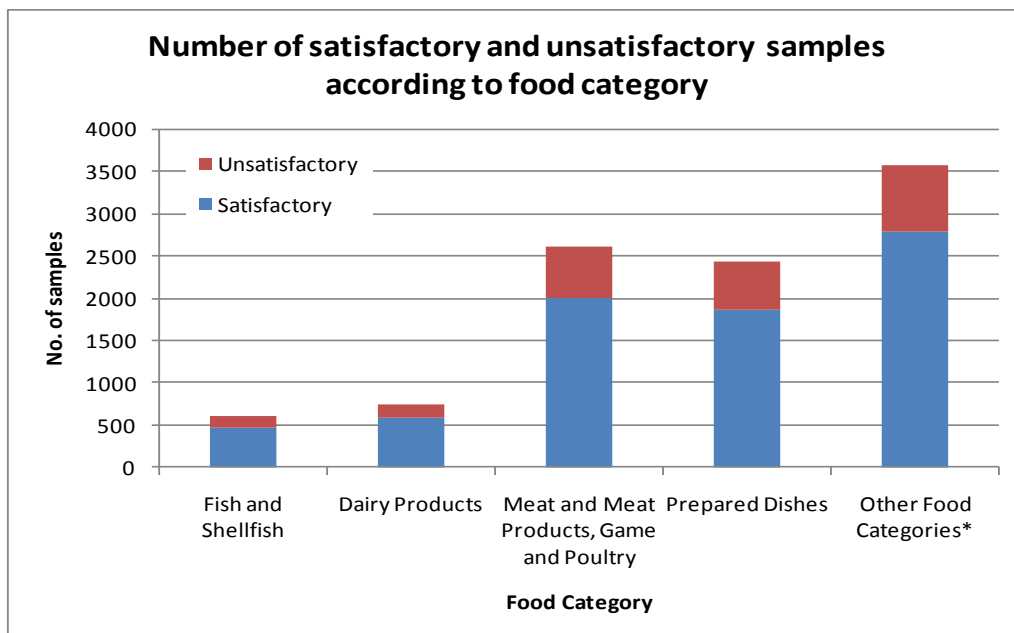
The data sets collated from Scotland and Northern Ireland have been used to inform the development of annual sampling and survey programmes at both national and local levels. Between 2007 and 2010, User Groups in Scotland and Northern Ireland have published annual summary reports which have been proven useful in directing LA sampling programmes and initiatives. These reports can be accessed at: <http://www.food.gov.uk/enforcement/monitoring/fss/>

This year, the UKFSS Research Working Group in Scotland used the database to produce a report of 2010 food sampling data which was distributed to all Scottish councils in time for the development of their 2011/12 sampling programmes. A report of the Northern Ireland data for that year is planned for publication later this year.

We have provided some key highlights from the Scottish dataset below to demonstrate the types of reports that can be produced using UKFSS.

UKFSS Sampling Trends in Scotland (2010)

	Samples taken in 2010	Number of samples giving an <u>overall</u> satisfactory result in 2010	% of Satisfactory Samples
Microbiological	5766	4452	77.2
Chemical	4181	3272	78.3
Total	9947	7724	77.6



Detection of pathogens in the Scottish dataset:

Pathogen	Number of samples tested	Samples failed for unsatisfactory levels of pathogen and types of food affected	Samples failed for borderline levels of pathogen
<i>Salmonella</i>	1110	0	NA
<i>Campylobacter</i>	233	0	NA
<i>E. coli</i> O157	226	0	NA
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i> (enumeration)	3718	12 Unpasteurised cheese Pasteurised cheese Roast ham Crab meat sandwiches	6 Unpasteurised cheese Potted meat Egg mayonnaise Salad
<i>Clostridium perfringens</i>	2985	0	6 Sandwiches Prawn cocktail
<i>Bacillus cereus</i>	252	1 Fresh herbs	3 Coriander Prepared salad Bay leaves
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	4564	15 Cheese Sandwiches/burger Soup Fish products	71 A wide range of ready-to-eat foods including: Ready-Made Meals, Restaurant and Takeaway meals, cheese, ice-cream

Chemical Data:

Type of analysis	Total No. of results	No. unsatisfactory results	% unsatisfactory results	Main types of failure (number of unsatisfactory results)
Constituent	25219	179	0.7	Fat above or below limit/declaration Meat content above or below limit/declaration
Additives	5005	61	1.2	Levels above limit/declaration
Nutritional Component	2735	17	0.6	Sugars above or below limit
Undesirable Substances	6371	27	0.4	Mycotoxins above limit
Substitution	564	52	9.2	Meat identification

Current FSA survey programmes involving use of UKFSS

Four FSA survey programmes are currently underway across the UK which are recording samples on UKFSS. This will help to enhance the information available on the database to identify trends and issues relating to food safety and standards.

1. The national co-ordinated risk based food and feed sampling programme 2011-12

This UK-wide programme has awarded 23 grants for the animal feeds and 52 grants for food sampling programmes in 2011-12. Applications have provided on the undertaking that data will be uploaded onto UKFSS. The areas being covered by this programme include:

- Heavy metals, dioxins, melamine, mycotoxins and Salmonella in animal feed/feed additives
- Mycotoxins in nuts, cereal/bakery products, seeds, apple juice, spices and dried fruits
- Undeclared allergens in pre-packed foods
- *Listeria monocytogenes* in cooked meats
- Microbiological quality of food served raw or undercooked (e.g. steak tartare/sous vide)
- Campylobacter in non-EU chicken
- Salmonella in sprouted seeds

2. Scottish LA sampling Grant 2011-12-Microbiological Quality of Soft and Semi-soft surface ripened cheeses at production, retail and catering

This Scotland-wide programme was prompted by preliminary findings from the national UKFSS dataset in 2009. It aims to provide data which will inform the need for further guidance on the production, storage and handling of these products and will also support the development of work being undertaken through the FSA's foodborne disease strategy on potential risks to vulnerable groups. A further survey is being planned later in the year which will focus on microbiological risks associated with vegetables consumed raw or lightly cooked.

3. Welsh UKFSS sampling grant to facilitate use of the UKFSS system in Local Authorities.

Welsh LAs and food groups were invited to bid for support to facilitate their use of the system and encourage more samples to be taken with the caveat that they must be entered on the UKFSS system. Eleven LAs/food groups were successful in obtaining funding and the works are due to commence over the next few months.

4. Northern Ireland Sampling Grant 2011-2012

An Imported food survey is planned in Northern Ireland to look at 20 samples of meat, fish and dairy produce for levels of non dioxin PCBs. Northern Ireland Food Liaison Group also plans to conduct a survey of composition and labeling of smoothies. Follow up surveys are planned in respect of salt levels in soup and use of Southampton colours. Details of all sampling activity will be recorded on UKFSS database.