

THE FSA SIMPLIFICATION PLAN AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS REDUCTION PROGRAMME

1. The statutory objective of the Food Standards Agency is to protect public health and consumers' other interests in relation to food. We develop regulations or alternative approaches, and the means by which these are enforced and championed, in order to deliver this protection. However, we are aware of the burdens that regulation and enforcement place on others. Our experience and that of others indicates that it is possible, across a range of areas, to reduce both administrative and policy burdens, without compromising the outcomes for public health protection. Burden reduction also provides the potential to make compliance with regulation easier to achieve and to demonstrate, and offers the prospect of improved compliance and more effective consumer protection.
2. We have been developing and delivering initiatives that reduce regulatory burdens for several years – from the Specialist Cheesemakers' Initiative, to Safer Food, Better Business, to the replacement of the Over Thirty Month rule with BSE testing for cattle. The first of these two papers pulls together our current and planned activities on reducing burdens into the Agency's first simplification plan. The second paper focuses specifically on reduction of the burdens we place on businesses and others to provide information to Government or to third parties – more usually called "administrative burdens". This is a specific focus of current cross-Government activity.
3. The papers ask the Board to consider, and approve for publication, the Agency's first simplification plan, which has been the subject of extensive stakeholder engagement, including across Government. They also ask the Board to discuss and approve a target for reduction of administrative burdens by the Agency, and an action plan for delivery of the target.

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