



Corporate Plan

07/08



FOOD
STANDARDS
AGENCY
SCOTLAND
Buidheann
Inbhe-Bidhe
an Alba



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George M Paterson, Director

Foreword



This Corporate Plan sets out how we will be focusing our efforts over the next year and beyond in terms of our four strategic plan principles: Food Safety; Eating for Health; Choice and How we Deliver.

The last 12 months have seen food remain a key item on the Scottish agenda in the political, public and private sectors.

2006 will remain a landmark year for a number of reasons in that it heralded the culmination of the most radical overhaul of European legislation relating to food hygiene in the last 30 years - the introduction of the new consolidated European food hygiene regulations in January 2006.

The impact has been felt across the food chain, from caterers who are now required to have specific types of food safety management systems in place to farmers who are now subject to on-farm hygiene inspections.

We continue to ensure the consumer is right at the forefront of absolutely everything that we do. With that in mind we were pleased to note that our latest consumer attitudes survey showed that knowledge of the Agency in Scotland has never been higher – 81% in 2006, from 65% when we started in 2000.

Through this survey, you have told us that you are more concerned about healthy eating than environmental issues, pensions or educational standards – with many of you specifically concerned about the amount of salt, fat and sugar in your food.

I am also pleased to say that the survey showed we are seen as being one of the most reliable sources of information on food safety and so-called “food scares” as well as healthy eating – and, as a consumer-focused organisation, that’s exactly what we want to be hearing.

But these statistics only tell part of the story. The team here in Aberdeen has a wide range of responsibilities crossing the entire food chain, from food labelling to hygiene and meat plant approvals to surveillance and research.

The following section highlights a few of the many achievements we are proud of, but there is no room for complacency. As society constantly evolves, so must we. Hopefully this Corporate Plan will reflect that, specifically it sets out how we will be focusing our efforts over the coming years.

With the new political landscape in Scotland it is important that we continue to ensure everything is geared towards our vision “Safe Food and Healthy Eating for All”.

George M Paterson

Director

Food Standards Agency Scotland

Key achievements over the last year include:

one:

Food Safety

- Working with partners such as local authorities and industry to ensure appropriate and proportionate implementation of the new consolidated hygiene regulations. Last year saw the completion of funded local authority projects to support around 13,300 caterers and retailers across Scotland, principally using the Cook**Safe** manual, which remains available for businesses to buy.
- The continued success of the Eat Safe Award Scheme with well over 300 businesses now participating.
- Rolling out the meat plants approval programme.
- Increasing knowledge and industry awareness of food safety issues relating to scallops by providing training to businesses.
- Delivering messages and influencing positive behaviour in relation to hygiene, healthy eating and fitness with schools, using football coaches from Aberdeen Football Club. The second phase of this initiative involved working with Active Schools Co-ordinators to reach an even greater number of children.

two:

Eating for Health

- Launching the third phase of the salt campaign which included a series of Scottish roadshows in shopping centres in Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh as well as our high profile TV advertising.
- Producing a report on "A review of food consumption and nutrient intakes from National Surveys in Scotland: Comparisons to the Scottish Dietary Targets" to support the independent review of the Scottish Diet Action Plan chaired by Professor Tim Lang.
- Working closely with the food industry on issues such as promoting front-of-pack signpost labelling.
- Working closely with partners across the Scottish Executive to develop nutritional standards for the School (Health Promotion and Nutrition) Act (Scotland).

three:

Choice

- The launch of the pilot Food Hygiene Information Scheme which aims to give consumers in the five Scottish pilot areas clear information about the hygiene standards in the outlets where they choose to buy and eat food.
- Holding events and pilots to consider the best way to engage with all consumers.

four:

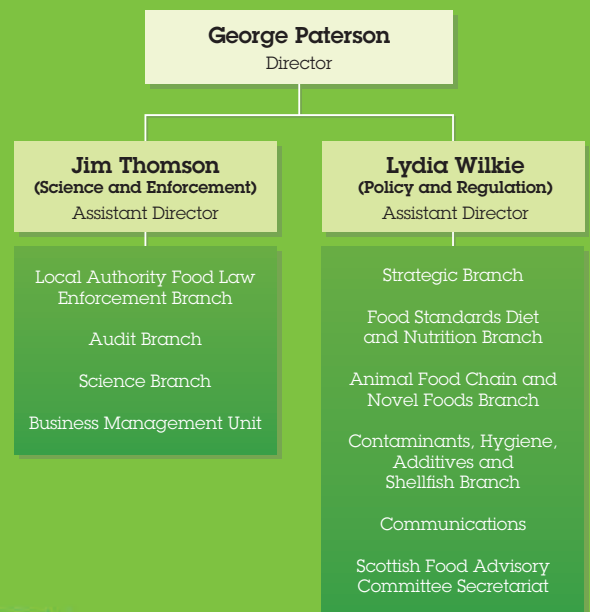
How we Deliver

- Implementing the ongoing audit programme of the 32 Scottish local authorities.
- Co-ordinating training for the new on-farm hygiene inspections.
- Implementing new official controls for shellfish harvesting and placing product on the market.





The Food Standards Agency Scotland is headed by our Director, George Paterson, with two Assistant Directors who lead a staff with a wide range of policy, science and enforcement expertise.





1. Safe Food and Healthy Eating for All in Scotland

The Food Standards Agency was launched in April 2000 as a non-Ministerial UK government department charged with protecting the interests of consumers in relation to food.

Everything the Agency does, through our offices in Aberdeen, Belfast, Cardiff and London, is aligned to our core values of putting the consumer first; being open and accessible, being an independent voice and working at all times towards our vision of "Safe Food and Healthy Eating for All."

Diet and nutrition, food safety and standards are devolved matters and the Agency in Scotland advises Ministers through the Scottish Executive Minister for Public Health.

The Scottish arm of the Agency - the Food Standards Agency Scotland - is based in Aberdeen, with 79 staff and a budget of over £10 million annually.

Our sphere of influence ranges across the entire food chain covering issues such as diet, nutrition and food standards, as well as food and feed hygiene and safety.

As a non-Ministerial government department we put the interests of the consumer first, and can openly publish our views and advice to ministers.

This Corporate Plan looks at how we're working, over the next year and beyond, to meet specific objectives related to our four strategic aims: Food Safety; Eating for Health; Choice and How we Deliver.

Working in collaboration and consultation with local authorities, businesses, non-Governmental organisations such as the Scottish Consumer Council and Which?, as well as other Government departments, we ensure that regulations and standards are enforced to protect consumers.

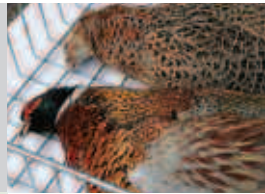
Agency officials in Scotland are accountable, through our UK Chief Executive, to the Food Standards Agency Board.

The Food Standards Agency Board sets the strategic direction of the Agency and members have a wide range of backgrounds, including specialist expertise in food matters.

In addition, our Scottish Food Advisory Committee is appointed by Scottish Ministers to provide independent advice to the Agency from a Scottish perspective. In line with the Agency's principles of openness and transparency, the Committee has the power to publish its recommendations and develops its substantive advice through its open meetings.

The Scottish Food Advisory Committee Chair, Professor Graeme Millar CBE and Deputy Chair Professor William Reilly, also sit on the Food Standards Agency's UK Board.

Further information about who to contact on specific issues can be found on <http://www.food.gov.uk/scotland>



2. Food Safety

Our aim is to ensure food safety across the entire food chain – “from farm to fork” – this includes primary producers, the food industry, retailers and caterers as well as consumers. The prime responsibility for ensuring the safety of food and animal feed rests with the businesses that produce, transport, store and sell it.

Across the UK we have helped to reduce foodborne disease by 19% since 2000, this represents a considerable improvement and our Food Hygiene Campaign is working towards securing further reductions.

In Scotland, as with the rest of the UK, we work closely with partners such as the 32 local authorities, local health boards, consumer organisations and, of course, industry, to help protect the public and ensure fair, consistent and effective enforcement. We also directly enforce controls in meat plants through the Meat Hygiene Service, an executive agency of the Food Standards Agency.





Key work includes:

OBJECTIVE: To reduce the risks to consumers from contaminated food.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Work with food enforcers and the industry in Scotland to prevent contamination incidents and to ensure appropriate action if they do occur.
2. Commission and manage research and surveillance on contaminants in the food chain, make informed policy decisions and implement domestic regulations on contaminants in food.

This includes:

- Managing a collaborative project on the potential transfer of radioactivity to food from seaweed grazed by sheep or used as a soil conditioner.
 - Implementing legislation in Scotland on contaminants in food.
 - In association with the Scottish Executive's Portfolio for Rural Affairs and Environment, considering de-restriction of farms covered by the post-Chernobyl Food and Environment Protection Act (FEPA) order according to results from monitoring.
3. Input into UK policy and the implementation of Scottish legislation on chemical contaminants.

OBJECTIVE: To deliver proportionate Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE) controls based on the latest scientific knowledge.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Ensure that Scottish circumstances are appropriately taken into account in UK-wide policy development covering effective, enforceable and proportionate controls in the UK and Scotland.

This includes:

- Ensuring Scottish stakeholders are fully engaged in the Agency's work to review official controls on the removal of Specified Risk Material (SRM) in slaughterhouses.
 - Consulting with Scottish stakeholders on amendments to the TSE regulations to reflect legislative changes at a European level.
 - Keeping stakeholders informed about all TSE matters that are relevant to food safety.
2. Work with the meat industry to maintain constructive working relationships.



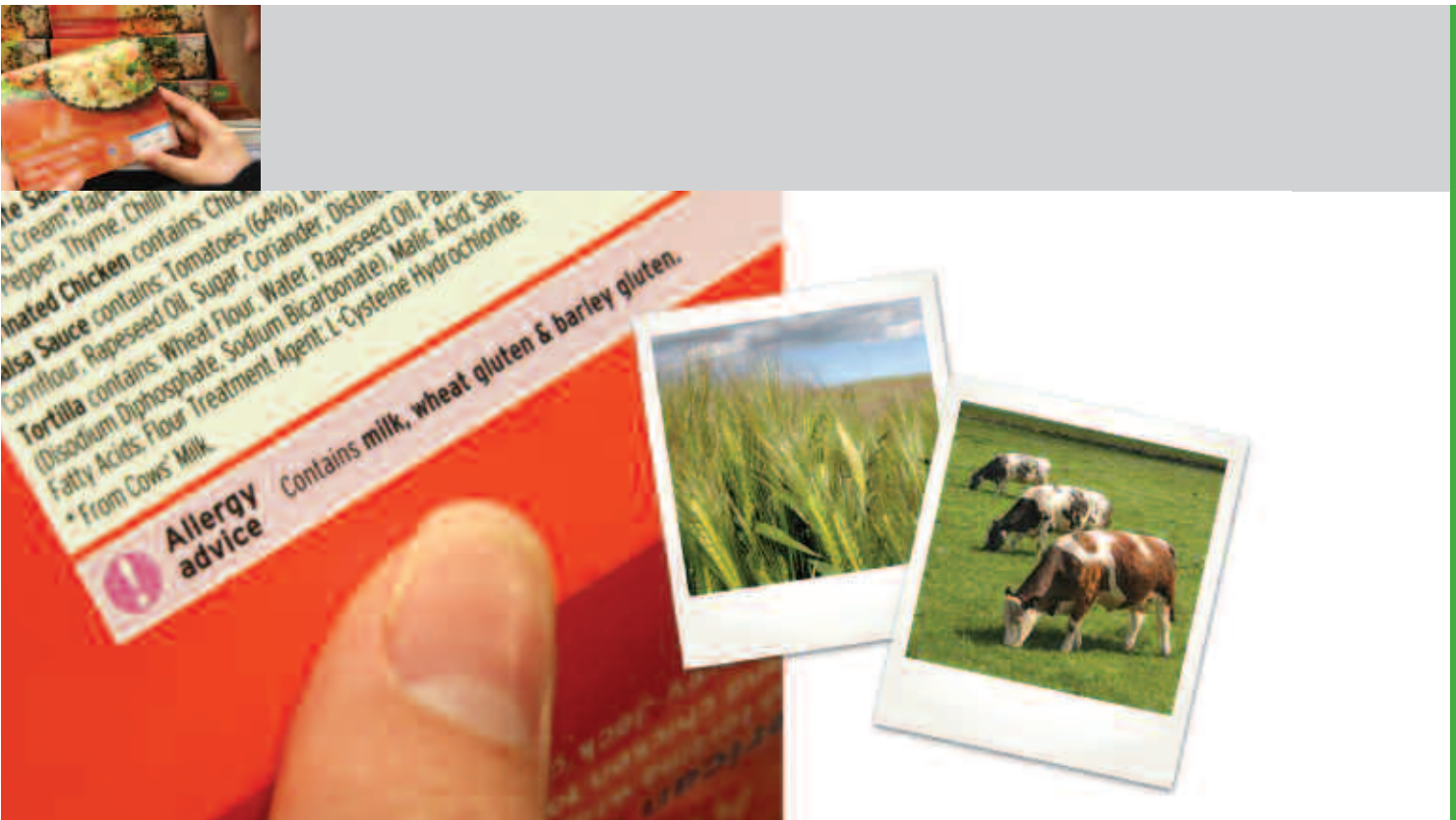
OBJECTIVE: Reduce foodborne illness further.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Ensure the ongoing implementation of an enforcement regime covering food safety. Activities include:
 - Producing guidance and training for egg producers for the new egg enforcement regime.
 - Completing the programme of meat plant approvals for previously licensed plants, and progressing approvals for wild game handling establishments and catering butchers requiring approval for the first time.
2. Provide guidance for caterers and divers using “small quantities” exemptions in scallop handling and shucking practices and facilitating the implementation of a database to enable sharing of scallop testing information across the industry.
3. Implement local food hygiene initiatives in Scotland to deliver the messages of the Food Hygiene Campaign.

These include:

- Assessing the extent of demand for accredited food hygiene training for secondary school pupils, with the aim of offering long-term funding to schools. The goal is to give young people important skills and knowledge in food hygiene which they can apply at home and potentially at work.
 - Rolling out the Food Hygiene, Healthy Eating and Fitness project which was launched in February 2006 and is designed to make children more aware of the benefits of food hygiene, healthy eating and keeping fit. This year the project will be extended to more areas in Scotland through the Scottish Football Association and the Scottish Rugby Union to reach around 10,000 primary school children.
4. Work in partnership with local authorities, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and other agencies to carry out a survey designed to inform the classification process of shellfish harvesting areas by developing environmental models.
 5. Procure and manage research and surveillance to inform policy decisions in Scotland, including investigations into the sources of *Campylobacter* infection in Scotland, and research to support the Scottish shellfish monitoring programmes.



OBJECTIVE: By the end of 2010, we will build and maintain the trust of stakeholders in our handling of food safety issues.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Work to ensure that trust among our stakeholders is maintained at a high level. Activities include: holding stakeholder meetings; maintaining close contact with stakeholders on issues including consultations and responding in an appropriate and timely manner to inquiries or requests.
2. Continue to adhere to our underpinning values of acting in an open, proportionate and transparent manner, based on scientific evidence.

OBJECTIVE: To develop appropriate policies and standards to ensure safety and choice for food allergic and food intolerant consumers.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Lead Scottish input into UK-wide work on allergen labelling, guidance and raising awareness.
2. Work with Scottish local authorities to ensure there is an infrastructure for providing advice to caterers and retailers to enable them to respond effectively to consumers' needs in relation to allergies or intolerances. The project aims to ensure that practical advice is available, and actively promoted, to caterers and retailers. It also aims to help local authorities support food businesses to raise awareness and implement appropriate procedures to ensure the provision of safe food for consumers with allergies.



The Food Standards Agency Scotland shares responsibility for diet and nutrition with the Scottish Executive's Portfolio for Health and Wellbeing.

Our aim is to make sure people have the best available dietary information and nutritional advice to help them make informed choices about what they eat.

Diet-related disease affects people's health in many ways. For example, increased salt is associated with high blood pressure and heart disease. It is estimated that over 10,000 people died from Coronary Heart Disease in Scotland in 2005¹.

Scotland also has an unenviable obesity record. Around 60% of the adult population in Scotland is overweight or obese. It is estimated that the cost to the NHS of obesity and its consequences in Scotland for year ending March 2002 was £171 million per year².

Therefore:

By the end of December 2008 we aim to:

- Work with partners in Scotland to help develop and implement a strategy for calorie intakes which helps achieve a balance between calorie intake and energy output.
- Complete the evaluation of the impact of front of pack labelling on consumer purchasing behaviour and knowledge and look towards future approaches.

By the end of December 2010 we aim to:

- Reduce the average salt intake of adults from 9.5g a day to 6g a day.
- Reduce the salt intake of children in line with Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition age-specific recommendations.
- Reduce the average intake of saturated fat (for everyone age five and upwards) from 13.4% to below 11% of food energy.

¹ REF: ISD Scotland

² REF: Scottish Public Health Observatory

3. Eating for Health

Key work includes:

OBJECTIVE: To enable consumers to choose a healthier diet.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Take forward our UK-wide strategic plan targets in Scotland to change people's diets through reformulation, knowledge and cooking skills – working in partnership with consumers, industry and other Government and non-Government partners.

Activities include:

- Maintaining and developing strategic links with other Government departments, agencies and stakeholders, which will help deliver targets such as improving access to healthy food and providing information on the balanced diet.
 - Leading delivery in Scotland of the Food Standards Agency's UK Strategic Plan targets on the reduction of salt, saturated fat, fat, sugar and signposting in manufactured products.
 - Support work with the Scottish healthy living retail catering award by contributing to a catering strategy.
2. Work towards improving access to a healthy diet in Scotland, including publishing findings of the Food Standards Agency Scotland Food Access Project in summer 2007. This project monitors the difference in food and nutrient intakes consumed by different social groups in varying areas of Scotland and, in a related project, examining diet quality and patterns.

OBJECTIVE: To help reduce diet-related diseases.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Carry out surveillance of the Scottish diet to identify potential diet-related health risks to the population. This includes identifying and developing survey methodologies best suited to our requirements. In addition, we will commission a project on the selenium content of locally produced Scottish foods – this will help inform the Scottish Executive Portfolio for Rural Affairs and Environment's local food and sustainability policies.
2. Review the recommendations in the Scottish Diet Action Plan report and commission new projects as required to assess the best way of working with stakeholders to address public health issues raised in the report, including commissioning new projects as appropriate.
3. Lead Scottish input into UK work on improving folate intakes in women of child-bearing age – this includes working closely with partners such as the Scottish Executive's Portfolio for Health and Wellbeing and NHS Health Scotland.





OBJECTIVE: To encourage clear accurate nutrition information on labels.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Ensure the views of Scottish stakeholders are fully considered in the development of UK policy, and that any required statutory actions completed in a timely manner in Scotland.

OBJECTIVE: We will support health and other relevant departments in establishing and periodically surveying standards for providing healthy meals in public sector institutions, including schools, care homes, hospitals and in prisons and to support their work to encourage adoption of the whole school approach to food hygiene, diet and nutrition and food choice.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Continue to be a key partner in the development of nutritional regulations for the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) Act (Scotland). This includes preparation of Foods in Scottish Schools guidance which will interpret the mandatory nutritional standards and give advice on other foods not covered by the standards to improve school food provision and to ensure consistent healthy eating messages across the whole school day.
2. Ensure we provide the Scottish Executive's Portfolio for Education and Lifelong Learning with policy support and input in developing the food and health section of the "Curriculum of Excellence".
3. Work with the Scottish Executive's Portfolio for Education and Lifelong Learning and Portfolio for Health and Wellbeing to evaluate the "What's Cooking?" pilot and produce a final guide for schools and community groups designed to help them set up and run cooking clubs in Scotland.
4. Work closely with relevant partners to take forward improvement in the nutritional content of prison and hospital food.



4. Choice

The cornerstone of how the Food Standards Agency operates is its commitment to giving consumers accurate, independent, proportionate and science-based information to help them make informed choices.

Key work includes:

OBJECTIVE: To enable consumers to make informed choices.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Continue to ensure information produced by the Food Standards Agency Scotland to help consumers make informed choices is independent, accurate, clear, evidence-based and proportionate.
2. Work with partners to maintain, develop and evaluate the Food Hygiene Information Scheme pilot. The scheme is designed to provide clear information about hygiene compliance at food premises. The pilot aims to improve informed consumer choice, maintenance of consumer confidence and encourage compliance among businesses through greater transparency.
3. Continue to run and promote the Eat Safe Award Scheme, which is designed to promote excellence in food hygiene, and communicate changes to the scheme effectively to stakeholders such as local authorities and award holders, as well as the general public.
4. Continue to follow our strategy to reach as many consumers as possible in Scotland; this strategy includes setting up two citizens' forums in Scotland and setting up "listening pilots" in various communities.
5. Establish links to the Scottish public sector reform agenda and community planning initiatives and continue to build constructive relationships with a range of networks and communities to share ideas and help develop consumer engagement.



5. How we Deliver

The Food Standards Agency Scotland should be economic, efficient and effective in the discharge of our responsibilities as a non-Ministerial Government department and an independent regulator.

We are committed in Scotland to:

- Delivering through partnership
- Delivering through consultation
- Delivering sustainably

Key work includes:

OBJECTIVE: To be an effective and proportionate regulator, intervening to protect consumers and their interests where the market is not effective and where the benefits justify action.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Implement European Community standards and controls into Scottish legislation in a timely, appropriate and proportionate manner.
2. Implement changes to the local authority enforcement regime aimed at improving effectiveness, efficiency and consistency of regulation.
3. Work with local authorities to identify where consistent standards should be set, particularly in their internal processes, to ensure consistent, fit-for-purpose food law enforcement.
4. Implement the primary production enforcement regime and roll out the on-farm inspection regime throughout 2007 and 2008.
5. Provide scientific advice, including commissioning research and surveillance, as necessary, to ensure Food Standards Agency Scotland policies and practices are evidence-based.
6. Continue to develop environmental 'sanitary surveys' of classified shellfish harvesting areas to better inform the classification process. This work will also help provide an evidence basis for future sampling plans.
7. Enshrine sustainability in policy development in Scotland.
8. Monitor the performance of local authority food law enforcement services under the framework agreement. This includes carrying out core audits of local authorities; conducting six-month follow-ups; developing and evaluating a programme for the audit of enforcement activities relating to primary production and developing a local authority audit strategy beyond 2008.



OBJECTIVE: To deliver effective action on risks to public health and consumers' other interests in relation to food through better working with our partners in the enforcement and business communities in the voluntary sector.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Continue to respond to food incidents in a timely and proportionate manner – this includes disseminating information via the media and other organisations.
2. Continue to classify and list shellfish harvesting areas according to the degree of E.Coli contamination in flesh samples, as directed under European law.
3. Continue to review the effectiveness of our incident and emergency response procedures; specifically by participating in emergency exercises and implementing lessons learnt; reviewing and modifying incident protocols and the emergency procedures.

OBJECTIVE: To be the most trusted source of advice on food safety and information about food and nutrition.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Continue to provide authoritative advice and information in response to relevant inquiries within the 20 working-day standard.
2. Maintain awareness of the scientific evidence base and commission research to ensure that advice continues to be based on the most robust and up-to-date science.
3. Continue to provide advice and briefing for Scottish Ministers.
4. Continue to work closely with the Scottish media to provide accurate, proportionate information within print or broadcast deadlines that is relevant to consumers and other stakeholders.
5. Continue to roll out our annual events plan to raise awareness of the Agency and our activities among consumers; this includes exhibiting at major events such as the Royal Highland Show and the BBC Good Food Show Scotland in 2007, as well as continuing to develop our increasingly successful Recipe for Success roadshows.
6. Develop our Gaelic plan under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005.



OBJECTIVE: To ensure that the Food Standards Agency meets its various statutory obligations and fulfils its role as part of a UK Government Department, being economic, efficient and effective in doing so.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Ensure we operate to the required standards of corporate governance, with particular emphasis on financial management.
2. Ensure the Agency's Better Regulation agenda meets the requirements of Scottish Ministers.
3. Review policies following implementation to ensure they meet high standards of effectiveness and efficiency.
4. Help to develop and implement a charging policy for official controls on meat, in line with EU law and in accordance with the Food Standards Agency Board's direction.

OBJECTIVE: We will continue to be an open and evidence-based organisation using our independent voice to deliver consumer protection.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Continue to provide support to our Scottish Food Advisory Committee ensuring it meets its obligations and objectives which include holding six open meetings a year in keeping with the Agency's policy of open-ness and transparency.
2. Continue to consult widely with appropriate stakeholders on areas of policy development.

OBJECTIVE: We will seek to be a good employer, making the best use of our diverse talent. We will deliver a safe, secure, compliant and sustainable working environment for all Food Standards Agency colleagues, contractors and visitors.

The Food Standards Agency Scotland will:

1. Ensure that all new and existing staff acquire and retain the necessary skills and knowledge to perform effectively and have personal objectives in place linking their day-to-day work with the overall Food Standards Agency Strategic Plan.
2. Raise awareness of the Agency's diversity strategy among our staff and exemplify the values we promote.

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