

Chair's foreword

Professor Susan Jebb, Chair of the Food Standards Agency foreword.

England

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I welcome this Annual Report and Accounts and am pleased to see the progress being made against the objectives previously agreed by the FSA Board. While acknowledging the work that was ongoing through the year to manage the impact of COVID-19 and EU Exit,

it has been good to see a growing emphasis on recovery from the pandemic and adaptation to the expanded role for the FSA post EU Exit. Ongoing work in areas ranging from food hypersensitivity to regulatory reform, and further investment in science and research are all to be welcomed.

While we have done well to meet the challenges of the last year, global events are continuing to impact on the food system and put pressure on resources at home.

Despite signs of recovery during this reporting period, local authorities are still struggling and will continue to face constraints which could impact on local food teams. Likewise, we remain concerned that without full import controls the less confident we can be about preventing food incidents occurring.

Towards the end of this reporting year, the FSA published its new strategy which sets out our direction of travel for the next five years. Food systems are continually evolving and have been forced to change as a consequence of external events, including the pandemic and now the war in Ukraine. Businesses are thinking differently about supply chains and consumer attitudes and behaviours in relation to food are also changing. Against this backdrop, the new strategy recommits the FSA to our core mission of Food You Can Trust and sets out how we will deliver on three key objectives: food is safe; food is what it says it is; and a new objective – to play our part, alongside other partners in government, industry and civil society, in transforming the food system to ensure food is healthier and more sustainable.

The food we eat is contributing to obesity and other avoidable ill-health, while climate change is leading us to ask urgent questions about how we can produce food in a way that is kinder to the planet. We are concerned that rising food prices and wider increases in the cost of living mean a healthier and more sustainable diet could become even more unattainable for many people.

The FSA's delivery against the new strategy and our corporate objectives will be scrutinised by the FSA Board and captured in future annual reports. I would like to commend everyone at the FSA for their efforts through the year to uphold food standards and maintain consumer confidence in our food. In addition to doing the day job exceptionally well, the FSA must continue to be agile and responsive to events in a fast-changing world. I look forward to working with FSA colleagues and our external partners to meet these challenges.

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Chair, Food Standards Agency