

# The future for UK official food and feed laboratories

Official Laboratories undertake analytical testing of food and feed samples, enabling statutory checks on imports for local authorities.

The UK-based analytical test capability has declined in recent years and following the UK exiting the EU, we have lost access to EU Reference Laboratories, which develop analytical methods and undertook knowledge sharing with the UK.

## Objectives in 2021/22

To develop the Official Laboratory Framework, which sets out the FSA's future approach to ensuring the UK has access to the testing capability it requires.

## Progress against objectives

- commissioned an international case study of other countries' sampling and laboratory systems.
- undertaken an internal economic analysis of the options for the future potential laboratory models.
- increased support and funding to National Reference Laboratories following the EU transition period, especially in developing analytical methods.
- engaged with local authorities and laboratories on the current system.
- worked jointly with Food Standards Scotland (FSS) as they reviewed their Official Laboratory system to ensure alignment of our future models.

These insights are being used to develop the framework which will set out the potential future options for the model of the OCL system and it is intended this will be presented to the Board in September 2022 and begin implementation in 2022/23.

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