

Surveillance Sampling Programme - Introduction

Project Aim

To carry out targeted surveillance sampling on food products across England and Wales to help identify emerging food safety risks and increase the FSA's intelligence on the food system.

Background

The aim of the FSA is to protect the public health from risks which may arise in connection with the consumption of food both in terms of how it is produced and supplied while making sure that "food is safe and what it says it is".

During Covid-19 the FSA undertook a surveillance sampling programme targeting food products across England and Wales to help identify emerging food safety risks and increase the FSA's intelligence on the food system. Building on the success of this programme a similar surveillance sampling programme was carried out in 2021-2022.

Using current intelligence including the pressures and issues in the global food chain and a co-ordinated approach with the 5 Official Laboratories in England and Wales a surveillance sampling programme was developed to enable the FSA to achieve the main objectives of protecting public health through identifying emerging food risks, providing assurance that food is what it says it is and taking appropriate action on non-compliant samples.

Official Food and Feed Laboratories (OLs)

The FSA are the Central Competent Authority responsible for designating food and feed official laboratories in the England, Wales and Northern Ireland according to the Multi-Annual National Control Plan ([footnote 1](#)), as required by the retained Official Feed and Food Control Regulations 2017/625 ([footnote 2](#)). The FSA has the responsibility for ensuring the United Kingdom has sufficient laboratory capacity and capability to deliver official controls on feed and food safety and standards in order to protect public health. Official Laboratories (OLs) are not owned or operated by the FSA.

There are currently 5 Public Analyst OLs in England and Wales:

- Hampshire Scientific Service
- Kent Scientific Services
- Lancashire County Scientific Services
- Minton Treharne and Davies Ltd
- Public Analyst Scientific Services

All OLs are accredited to ISO17025 by The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) and employ suitably qualified staff including Public Analysts, Agricultural Analysts and Food Examiners for enforcement purposes.

1. [Multi-Annual National Control Plan for the United Kingdom April 2019 to March 2023](#)
2. [Official Feed and Food Control Regulations 2017/625](#)