Consultation launched on proposed reforms to the regulated products authorisation process

Certain food and feed products called regulated products, which include food additives and flavourings, need to be authorised as safe before they can be sold. To do this this, the FSA and FSS carry out a robust risk analysis process and provide advice to ministers in England, Wales, and Scotland, who decide whether the product can be sold.

The UK inherited the current authorisation process from the EU, and it is clear significant change is needed to modernise the system. This is so we can bring benefits to consumers through a wider choice of safe food, as new, innovative products come to market more quickly.

The joint consultation, launched today, details two proposed changes to the process and follows engagement with stakeholders and endorsement for the proposals from the FSA and FSS Boards.

> The FSA and FSS want to create a modern and streamlined Regulated Products Service that will bring benefits to consumers. We are working hard to improve the current system, although it's clear that more change is needed.
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> The two proposals detailed in the consultation can be delivered quickly to help streamline how the system works. The changes will improve the process to authorise regulated products, helping us to achieve a more efficient service. Food safety or standards will not be reduced in any way.
>
> Rebecca Sudworth, FSA Director of Policy

The FSA and FSS would like to hear interested parties' views on the potential impact, benefits and challenges around the two proposed changes. Views will be considered and will help inform our advice to ministers in England, Scotland and Wales. We expect to provide this advice in the Summer.

The two reforms are as follows:

- **Removing the requirement to renew authorisations:** The removal of the requirement for some products already authorised as safe to go through a reauthorisation process at fixed intervals of every 10 years, regardless of whether evidence on safety changes. Around 22% of the current caseload consists of renewal applications, and this is expected to rise to over 50% by 2027. Without reform, these cases will put considerable strain on the service, focusing resource on products with many years of safe use where, in the majority of cases, we do not anticipate any change in risk. All renewal applications to date have been approved. The FSA/FSS already has powers to monitor new evidence and take required action at any time. We do this through our risk analysis process, following internationally agreed standards. We closely follow the work of other trusted international regulators and use surveillance to monitor food incidents globally.
- **Removing the requirement to lay legislation to authorise regulated products:** This is a change to allow authorisations, following approval by ministers, to come into effect

following publication by the FSA/FSS (likely to be in the form of an official register), rather than setting them out in full in legislation. The current process adds between a three- and six-month delay between an application being approved and authorisation. This change will shorten the administrative period before new, safe products can be sold.

The?consultation is available on the FSA website and responses are required by 5 June 2024.