

Report from the Chair of the Business Committee

INFO 24/09/02 - Report from Tim Riley

Report of 9 September 2024 Business Committee Meeting

The Business Committee met via Teams on 9 September and noted a new interest declared by Committee Member Hayley Campbell-Gibbons as future Chief Executive of the Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers. The role would commence in November but, as the appointment had now been made, it was noted as an interest in relation to relevant discussions. The Committee considered the following:

Chief Executive's (CE's) Report to the Business Committee (FSA BC 24-09-03)

Katie Pettifer's first report to the Business Committee as interim CE included new cases of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) relating to a cheese producer, the FSA's return for the Spending Review, and the significant impact on some staff of the public disorder that happened over the summer.

Discussion of the report raised other matters including:

- an update on the contract tender for the delivery of official controls;
- labelling for unpasteurised cheeses;
- assurances over certain types of slaughter;
- FSA finances;
- estates and the future of office space; and
- The National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) and Crown Court delays.

It was noted that the process to assess bids for the delivery of official controls was commercially sensitive and the final business case was still going through the Government clearance process. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee would receive an update on the process to date but would not be briefed on the likely outcome at this stage.

Business Committee Performance Report for Q1 2024/25 (FSA BC 24-09-04)

Ruth Nolan introduced the Performance Report, giving an overview of its content, noting coverage of some of the topics in papers for the upcoming Board meeting.

The Committee discussed the following key topics from the report:

Science

The Committee heard about the development of metrics to measure the impact of FSA science and the development of a new platform for the publication of FSA research as well as an update on sampling and compliance.

There was a question raised over how the metric could capture the impact of FSA Science that was not used directly through the FSA's publications, for example peer reviewed manuscripts, and whether the use of citation index information could better represent the true impact including that created through co-funded projects.

Local Authority Performance

It was highlighted that this was an area that the Board would be discussing in depth at their upcoming meeting. There was an update from Rebecca Kirk covering the numbers of full-time equivalents in trading standards and risks associated with lower priority businesses.

The Committee raised concern about the figures for establishments that had received written warnings, noting the range of issues that these warnings could be highlighting. There were also questions about the standards against which the Red, Amber, Green (RAG) ratings in the report were determined, and the backlog of unrated businesses.

Operational Delivery

The Committee heard an update from Junior Johnson covering meat, wine and dairy audits; the response from the service delivery partner in relation to the temporary registration of vets; capturing NFCU data including seizure volumes and impact measures.

There was a discussion that covered prosecutions and the approach to future legislation in relation to PACE powers for the NFCU.

People

There was an update from Ruth Nolan covering workforce diversity; declaration rates on protected characteristics (including socio-economic background); actions being taken where FSA diversity appeared lower than the civil service average; and the Westminster headcount.

Intelligence-Led Working and Rollout of the new Food Standards Delivery Model (FSA 24-09-05)

Rebecca Kirk gave an update on the rollout of the Food Standards Delivery model; the way in which the FSA uses intelligence; oversight from the FSA's Business Delivery Group (BDG); and the intention to continue to focus on the rollout in England and Northern Ireland.

There was a discussion around the publication of the national Food Standards Priorities Paper published on 24 May, noting that it had been shared with Board Members but was not brought for discussion at a Board meeting as the decisions around it were operational in nature.

Other topics raised in discussion included food authenticity; the inclusion of food supplements; the outcomes of a six-month trial of the new food standards model in Wales; and the relative familiarity of Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) compared to Trading Standards Officers with using an intelligence led approach, in relation to EHO's delivering the new food standards work and being competent to do so.

Precision Breeding (FSA 24-09-06)

The Board received an update on Precision Breeding. Publication of the paper is subject to any future decision from the Government on Precision Breeding.

ANNEX A

Business Committee Papers – 9 September 2024

- [FSA BC 24/09/01 - Minutes of 10 June 2024 Business Committee Meeting](#)
- [FSA BC 24/09/02 - FSA BC 24/09/01 - Actions Arising – Business Committee](#)
- [FSA BC 24/09/03 - Chief Executive's Report to the Business Committee](#)
- [FSA BC 24/09/04 - Business Committee Performance Report for Q1 2024/2](#)
- [FSA BC 24/09/05 - Intelligence-Led Working and Rollout of the new Food Standards Delivery Model](#)