

Food Standards Agency appoints new Chief Scientific Adviser

Professor May, who takes up his role in July, is Professor of Infectious Disease at the University of Birmingham, where he is currently Director of the Institute of Microbiology and Infection.

A Wolfson Royal Society Research Merit Fellow and Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology, Professor May specialises in research into human infectious diseases, with a particular focus on how pathogens sustain themselves within host organisms.

Speaking about the appointment, Emily Miles, Chief Executive of the Food Standards Agency said:

“Science is at the heart of the FSA’s work to protect public health and for people to have food they can trust. I am absolutely delighted to welcome Robin May to the FSA. He will bring deep scientific knowledge and excellent strategic skills to ensure our priorities in food safety and standards are informed by the best science available.”

Professor May added:

“I am deeply honoured to have been selected as the next Chief Scientific Adviser at the Food Standards Agency. Safe, trustworthy food is central to our lives, and I strongly believe that decisions around food policy need to be informed by the best and most robust scientific data available. I am very much looking forward to working closely with colleagues both within FSA and across government, the research community and the food industry, to play my part in providing transparent, reliable scientific advice to help ensure the safety and integrity of food for all of us.”

Professor May will take over from Professor Guy Poppy, who has been the FSA’s Chief Scientific Adviser since 2014. Professor Poppy is moving to take up a new role with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), as Programme Director for the Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) on Transforming UK Food Systems for healthy people and a healthy environment.

The FSA’s Board ensures all decisions taken by the Agency consider scientific advice and the interests of consumers. Chair Heather Hancock said:

“I am delighted that Prof Robin May is joining the FSA as our Chief Scientific Adviser. This is a crucially important role in advising the Board. Robin’s brings invaluable expertise and insight to our mission to protect public health, ensuring people have safe and trustworthy food. We look forward to working with him.”

The role of the FSA’s Chief Scientific Adviser

The CSA is responsible for:

- the integrity of processes used to source scientific evidence and ensure expert scientific advice is available to the agency
- representing the agency in the community of departmental Chief Scientific Advisers and the wider scientific community
- championing science within the agency through developing its scientists' expertise.

The CSA also has overall responsibility for all analytical disciplines from which the agency draws advice, including natural and physical sciences, social science, economics, operational research and statistics.