

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL FEEDINGSTUFFS

61st Meeting of ACAF on 8 May 2013

Information Paper

Update on the Feed Review Implementation Programme

**Feed Review: Implementation
Operations Group
Food Standards Agency
April 2013**

Feed Review Implementation Programme

1. The FSA Board agreed at its November 2012 meeting that an implementation programme would be developed to deliver improvements to current local authority delivery of official controls for animal feed. The programme provided an update of recent progress to the FSA Board at its April 2013 meeting (see Annex).
2. In October 2012, Members received an inter-sessional paper for comment on the delivery of feed controls; in addition, Members received an update letter in December 2012 on the delivery of animal feed controls. At its 16 January 2013 meeting, the Committee received a further update, where it was agreed that this subject would remain on future agendas until work relating to the review had been completed.

Recent Progress

3. The Implementation Programme has five key workstreams:
 - Local authority (LA): informal consultation through four workshops with local authority officers involved with feed in England took place during February 2103 to explore how the FSA and local authorities can work closer together to improve the current system. Initial feedback indicates that local authority delivery of feed controls would be improved through regional co-ordination and port co-ordination. Discussions and workshops are planned in Wales and Scotland for later this year;
 - Earned recognition: looking at industry schemes which promote compliance, the role for primary authorities in setting standards for assurance programmes, and how the FSA recognises consistently compliant businesses. The approach for assessing assurance scheme standards with legislative requirements has been agreed. Standards will be categorised as Fully Met, Partially Met or Not Met. Where a standard is found to be only partially met a brief outline as to why this decision was made will be recorded. The aim is to ensure the standards for schemes, potentially including, Red Tractor¹, AIC², GAFTA³ and BEIC⁴ will be mapped by the end of May 2013. The establishment of criteria for the approach to recognition of assurance schemes is also in hand. Information regarding the impact of earned recognition, and the association between assurance schemes and compliance, is planned;

¹ The Red Tractor is a food assurance scheme which covers production standards developed by experts on safety, hygiene, animal welfare and the environment amongst other things.

² Agricultural Industries Confederation

³ The Grain and Feed Trade Association

⁴ British Egg Industry Council

- Revision of the Feed Law Code of Practice (Great Britain): A draft is planned to be released for public consultation in July 2013. An initial draft has been shared with internal stakeholders and the re-draft will be circulated wider in May 2013;
 - Exploring how improved collaborative working with other government departments can bring further intelligence to the FSA. This work is already underway; and
 - Data and information management improvements to data and intelligence sharing will improve the quality and quantity of local authority annual feed returns. The aim is to improve the integrity of the premises database and reduce the administrative workload.
4. Some improvements such as earned recognition, regional co-ordination and streamlining of FSA grants to local authorities will be implemented during 2013; others will be introduced as planned by April 2014. The programme is currently on schedule.

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FEED REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

Report by John Barnes, Programme Senior Responsible Owner

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1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 All recommendations and work-streams agreed at the November Board meeting are currently being taken forward, working closely with relevant feed industry groups, OGDs and Local Authorities (LAs). Consultation is taking place with LAs to further improve local authority delivery arrangements through better regional and national coordination, targeted training and support, and a greater focus of UK controls at ports. All recommendations are on target to be delivered as planned by April 2014.

- 1.2 The Board is asked to:

Note the work conducted thus far and timescale for the work being taken forward.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Board has discussed this issue previously in March 2012 (**FSA 12/03/04**) when it requested a review of feed controls was taken forward as a priority outside of the wider Review of Official Control Delivery (RDOC); and in November 2012 (**FSA 12/11/04**) where it agreed all recommendations of the Feed Review Report and requested an interim update on progress of the actions to be provided to the April Board.

3. STRATEGIC AIMS

- 3.1 The Feed Review Implementation Programme addresses key strategic outcomes in the refreshed FSA Strategic Plan to 2015: food produced or sold in the UK is safe to eat; imported food is safe to eat; business compliance is effectively supported because it delivers consumer protection and is focused on effective, risk-based and proportionate regulation and enforcement.

4. EVIDENCE

- 4.1 Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) and FSA audits in 2009 and 2011 found the systems for delivering feed controls in GB weak. More recent audits by the FVO in 2011 and 2012 acknowledged improvements had been made but concerns remained regarding LA resourcing, targeting and the consistency of controls. The FSA Board at their November 2012 meeting agreed all recommendations made in the Feed Review, and additionally asked the team to consider in consultation with LAs more effective LA delivery models; make greater use of industry own checks to target LA delivery; address future training needs; and improve controls at ports. Actions to be delivered

by April 2014 are:

- Consultation with local authorities to further improve the current delivery arrangements to ensure risk based feed controls are better coordinated and prioritised, with more focus of controls at ports.
- Greater recognition of industry own checks and intelligence from farm and feed assurance schemes to help target LA controls;
- Working with other government departments (OGDs) involved in feed controls to share information and more effectively prioritise interventions to reduce duplication and costs where possible;
- Improving the coordination of the national surveillance and sampling programmes;
- Ensuring local authorities and other stakeholders are equipped with appropriate technical knowledge and information, and updating the Feed Law Code of Practice to take forward agreed changes.

5. DISCUSSION

Following the November Board a programme of work has been taken forward to coordinate current feed policy and delivery activity with the agreed key improvement work-streams. An update on progress is:

5.1 Local Authority delivery work-stream

Consultation with LAs – this is being taken forward through The Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO Ltd), Association of Port Health Authorities (APHA), Chartered Institute of Environment Health (CIEH) and Association of Public Analysts (APA). Four regional LA workshops in England have been held to identify ways to improve local authority delivery. These workshops have been attended by over 100 LA officers with responsibility for feed controls at both LAs and ports.

The workshops and the ongoing liaison with LA representative bodies have identified potential to improve coverage and consistency, as well as the targeting of local resources and expertise by more regional and national coordination through existing LA regional networks and the National Trading Standard Board. Current regional bodies such as TSSE (Trading Standards South-East) and similar bodies in the other regions and devolved countries are also seen by LAs as a more efficient mechanism through which to administer FSA feed grants to LAs. The full report from ACTSO is due by the end of April. A similar workshop is planned for Wales in late April/May. To bring about early improvements and to respond to the feedback from the recent workshops, existing regional groups and APHA will be used to assist target and administer the 2013-14 feed grants.

Feed Imports: Feedback from LAs including those with official responsibilities at ports agree the need for greater targeting of controls at

ports and to review the role and competency of officers at ports to allow more timely and efficient checks. APHA is working with the FSA and ACTSO to deliver the necessary changes.

5.2 Earned Recognition – use of industry intelligence work-stream

This work-stream is linked to the wider Agency's review of earned recognition, ensuring consistency across the Agency. Work is taking place with industry bodies, LAs and OGDs to develop a protocol on the way industry own checks in relation to their feed controls can be factored into LA inspection and sampling programmes. This work stream is focusing on:

- Use of relevant Primary Authority Inspection Plans and arrangements to ensure consistent and targeted delivery and improve operator standards;
- Ensuring the risk assessment process within the revised Feed Law Code of Practice allows LAs to take sufficient account of Feed Business Operators (FeBOs) with a good history of compliance;
- Greater recognition of industry assurance schemes where they effectively map against legislative requirements and include robust governance to assure independence of checks and protocols to deal with risks. Arrangements for active ongoing monitoring are key to including the use of independent third party audits of FeBO members.

It is anticipated that guidance on the greater use of Earned Recognition will be operational by the end of 2013.

5.3 Data and Information Management work-stream

Initial feedback from LAs shows there is agreement with the need for more effective information and data management. This work-stream includes work with:

- OGDs and LAs, to verify the accuracy of the FSA's registered premises in terms of numbers and activities undertaken;
- LAs, to establish what data and information is required from LAs and how it can efficiently be obtained, and develop an effective process for grant-funding and FSA oversight;
- Industry, to agree an effective process for FSA and LAs to receive intelligence from assurance schemes to inform their intervention programmes and targeting;
- OGDs, to identify effective sharing and use of information.

5.4 Other Government Departments (OGD) work-stream

Consultation with OGDs - A workshop with OGDs was held on March 7th to identify opportunities for further collaborative working and to identify how improvements to LA delivery can benefit both the FSA and other departments. A working group with FSA, VMD, AHVLA, RPA, Border Agency, DARD, and LAs is being established to take forward actions. This includes exploring shared regulatory models/monitoring across OGDs as part of ER.

The Northern Irish model was identified by the Board as one worth exploring to establish whether there is good practice which can be taken into the GB model. Meetings have taken place with DARD officials in this context and they have agreed to provide ongoing help and support.

5.5 National Surveillance and sampling plan

Having an effective surveillance and sampling plan is recognised as a key priority. From discussions with LA bodies it is clear that better regional and national coordination and a greater focus on feed controls at ports, offers opportunities to improve surveillance across GB as well as the targeting of local resources and expertise. Improvements to data and information management will also help deliver better controls.

5.6 Review of the feed law code of practice (COP) work-stream

The feed law COP and practice guidance is being revised to incorporate all the agreed improvements from the programme. It will be the mechanism through which formal consultation across GB on the changes will take place. We are planning to consult on proposals July 2013 and a revised COP being published by end December 2013.

5.7 Programme-wide activity

FVO visit: Programme members visited the FVO in January to provide an update on the outcome of the review, communicate the continued priority being given to UK Feed controls, and the intention to build on the improvements noted during the FVO 2011 audit. No objections were raised by the FVO in relation to the proposed changes outlined in paragraph 5.1 – 5.6 above.

Communications: A communications plan has been developed detailing how the programme communicates across the team, with existing (Business As Usual) feed activity and externally.

6. IMPACT

- 6.1 This programme of work requires sustained and effective input from delivery partners, other government departments and feed businesses all of which have shown commitment, engagement and involvement to date.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Informal and regular consultation has taken place with internal stakeholders and with: local authorities (workshops and meeting attendance); OGDs (meetings and a workshop); and industry (meetings). Formal consultation will take place in July through the Code of Practice formal public consultation. This will capture all planned improvements.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The main risk to this programme is that LA resource decreases even further and LAs become more reliant on FSA funding for all their feed control work. By engaging at a head of service level and through regional coordination we are working to help mitigate this risk.
- 8.2 Concerns raised by the recent horse meat incident may result in a lack of confidence, both with consumers and across government in the role industry controls could play in helping to target regulator checks.

9. DEVOLUTION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The programme takes full account of the differing delivery models which exist across the UK. This approach allows us to fulfil the FSA's obligations as a UK CCA whilst recognising the diversity of the delivery landscape.

10. CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

- 10.1 Consumer engagement will be undertaken as part of the public consultation. This is mapped in the communications plan.

11. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 Consultation with all stakeholders continues to further improve local authority delivery arrangements through better regional and national coordination, targeted training and support, and a greater focus of UK controls at ports. The programme is on target to deliver as planned by April 2014. Some improvements may be implemented earlier (grant funding changes, earned recognition developments).

- The Board is asked to:
- 11.2 **Note** the work conducted thus far and timescale for the work being taken forward.