

**MINUTES OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S CONSUMER STAKEHOLDER FORUM,
Sixth Meeting – 15 May 2006**

CHAIR: JOHN HARWOOD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

INTRODUCTION

1. John Harwood welcomed members to the sixth meeting of the Consumer Stakeholder Forum and gave an outline of the reasons why the forum was taking place.
2. John Harwood introduced himself and outlined the procedure for appointing the new Chief Executive. The permanent Chief Executive recruitment process is being handled by our appointed Search and Selection Company, kmc International
3. The post was advertised in the Sunday Times at the end of February and closed at the end of March since when the selection panel has met with kmc to discuss the applications through the usual longlisting and shortlisting process. Final interviews are scheduled for week beginning 26 June 2006, with the aim of the successful candidate taking up post in the autumn, subject of course to the usual notice period and ministerial clearance (DH and appropriate ministers in the devolved administrations)
4. The panel is made up of the FSA Chair, Deputy Chair, senior official from Department of Health and a Civil Service Commissioner who chairs the panel and ensures the process is in line with the requirements for fair and open competition for appointments to the senior civil service.
5. Separate forums would be held for industry (Monday, 26 June) and enforcement (Monday, 12 June) stakeholders and the minutes of all the fora meetings would be available on the Agency's website.
6. A member raised an amendment to the minutes that was raised after the publication of the minutes. John Harwood said he was happy to include these amendments and note them in the minutes for this meeting. The amendment concerns the following paragraphs which should now read:
 12. *An attendee asked about labelling of unpasturised milk and unpasturised cheese and commented that consumers should be aware of what they were purchasing. The member further commented that it seemed anomalous that the FSA was contesting, in a current consultation exercise, the European Commission's view that raw milk cheese must be labelled up to and including retail level. The FSA was arguing that voluntary labelling was sufficient, whereas a number of consumer organisations argued that compulsory labelling was essential.*
 13. *Another attendee noted that food labels were packed with information and advice that potentially helped consumers make healthier and safer choices.*
 22. *An attendee welcomed the opportunity to comment on sustainable development and said how encouraging it was to see on the Forum's agenda. A question was raised regarding existing policies and whether they would be revisited in the light of this Plan. The meeting agreed that a*

system needed to be developed so that, as existing policies were updated and/or reviewed, they would incorporate sustainable development. This accords with Jon Bell's commitment, as noted in the 4th meeting on 19 May, paragraph 3 "Jon Bell explained that sustainability would be taken into account as current policies were reviewed".

23. *A further question on the Agency's catering arrangements was raised. The Agency's catering arrangements should be leading the way across Government and some stakeholders stated that this was not the case.*

In reference to the point made in Paragraph 22 of the minutes of the 5th meeting John Harwood emphasised that, Assessments will be applied to all new policies and existing polices as they come up to review or revision. It is our intention to apply the assessments to new policies and existing policies as and when they are reviewed e.g. in the light of new evidence.

7. The member also raised a correction to the minutes of the 4th meeting. Paragraph 26 should refer to advice to eat two portions of fish a week, not three as stated.

Action Point – Revised minutes for the 5th and 4th meetings will be published on the Agency website to accommodate these points.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Salt Update

8. Rosemary Hignett from the Agency's Nutrition Division updated stakeholders on the continuing work on salt reduction. The Agency published its voluntary salt reduction targets for 85 different categories of processed foods, which contribute most of the salt in consumers' diets, on 21 March 2006. She stressed that these targets had been the result of tough negotiations.
9. The targets have been set at levels that are challenging but represent a realistic rate of reduction, and will make a real impact on consumers' intakes. The Agency is currently developing a self-reporting framework, which will enable us to monitor industry progress against the targets.
10. Monitoring data to assess sodium intakes will be available later this year and will indicate how much progress has been made so far.
11. The Agency will also be reviewing the targets in 2008, at which time, it will consider what more needs to be done to ensure that progress continues to be made towards achieving the 6g maximum recommended salt intake.
12. FSA is now in the early stages of developing phase 3 of its consumer education campaign on salt, which will be launched in March/April of 2007. The Agency will be working closely with a wide range of stakeholders to do this.
13. Some further media activity is planned during 2006, to ensure that the messages from phase 2 of the campaign remain in consumers' minds.
14. A member asked how much work had been done to assess the impact of the 'seriously eroded' targets on the 6g day by 2010 target. Rosemary Hignett explained that it is very hard to make a mathematical assessment as the model is very complex. Although this model was originally used, a new

assessment would involve prohibitive recalculations. There are 85 categories, each with a huge range of products.

15. A member asked how the targets will make an impact, and how the Agency intends to measure it. Rosemary Hignett said that as the targets are lower than levels in the market this will have a beneficial impact on intakes. There will be independent product monitoring, and the Agency will use the results of urinary monitoring data to assess intakes. These will be representative of the UK population, and results are expected in the summer.
16. A member asked what plans are there to address the issue of back of pack declaration of salt as well as sodium so that consumers can act to reduce their salt consumption. Rosemary Hignett explained that the most effective route to giving this information was with front of pack labelling, as this gives clear information on salt content.
17. A member asked what would be done if the urine samples showed that there had been no progress. Rosemary Hignett explained that the urine analyses would be taken into account in the 2008 review. A member commented that that would be over a year between receiving the results and any resulting action which seemed inappropriate.
18. A member asked what can be done about salt levels in foodstuffs sourced from outside the UK, as these are significant. Rosemary Hignett explained that the Agency was working hard with EU Member States and the European Commission to encourage wider work with businesses. There had been encouraging responses from the commission and from other member states. Pat Stewart noted that salt was on the agenda for the forthcoming meeting of EFSA.
19. John Harwood encouraged stakeholders to continue to voice their concerns. He said that the Agency would make the analytical data available once it had been received.

Signposting

20. Rosemary Hignett updated stakeholders on the continuing work on Signposting. At its meeting on 9 March the Agency's Board agreed to recommend a voluntary front of pack signpost labelling approach be based on the following four core principles; provision of information for fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt; use of red, amber, green colour coding to indicate at a glance whether the level of individual nutrients is high, medium and low; information on the level of each nutrient present in a portion of the product; and use of nutritional criteria developed by the Agency.
21. This core principles approach provides consistency without discouraging businesses from tailoring their labelling to fit their customers needs.
22. Sainsbury's and Waitrose are already using the Agency's recommended approach and Asda is expected to start applying it to its products from the summer. A number of other retailers are also considering applying the signpost labelling recommendations to their products.

23. The Agency is working with stakeholders to promote the recommended approach and working with adopters of the approach to develop a consumer advice strategy to communicate agreed core messages.
24. The Agency has begun the process of taking forward work to explore how to independently assess the impact of its recommended approach to front of pack signpost labelling, and other front of pack key nutrient schemes that are in use in the marketplace on consumer behaviour. A meeting was held on 8 May at which the objectives of the research, the type of research and the mechanism for managing the research were agreed. The next step will be to agree who and how the independence of the work can be assured. Once this has been agreed the specifications for the research contract and selection criteria will be drawn up and the tendering process will begin.
25. The independent work will encompass the main signpost labelling schemes in the market, and it is hoped it can be carried out in such a way that it will encourage universal buy in to the results.
26. A member expressed concern that the increase in the per portion salt criteria was not in line with the Agency's own advice on the level of salt that constitutes a lot of salt and that this increase was not in the interest of the consumer which the FSA is there to protect but in the interest of industry. In addition to this fact, a member highlighted that the per portion criteria for all other nutrients (fats, saturates and total sugars) accounts for 30% whereas salt accounts for 40%. Rosemary Hignett explained that there had been very difficult decisions to make. In order to keep industry on board progress has had to be made in small steps. The levels will be reviewed in 2008.
27. A member raised a concern that the consumer will be confused because of the discrepancy between the Agency's advice and the criteria that has been set for marking salt per portion as high red. Rosemary Hignett agreed to circulate the consumer messaging, which had just gone 'live' on the website, to the stakeholders

Action Point – Secretariat to distribute consumer messaging to Stakeholders.

28. A member asked if the research would include focus group research. Rosemary Hignett said that the research would probably consist of sales data and observational consumer research.
29. A member asked what information was on the Agency website to inform people who buy processed food. Rosemary Hignett explained that there is comprehensive information on the FSA website, but not everyone will look at the website. It was also appropriate to target at risk groups as had been done, in partnership with NGOs, for salt Phase 2 messaging. The member noted that caterers especially needed targeting.
30. A member noted the relationship between the FSA's nutrient profiling scheme and the Ofcom consultation on food advertising to children. Rosemary Hignett explained that the Agency board has discussed the Agency's response to Ofcom. Nutrient profiling and age of children to whom the proposed new rules should apply are both important issues and are likely to feature in the Agency's response. John Harwood explained that the response will be published soon.

31. A member raised a concern that on signposting there is a significant lobby from the food industry, and asked what the Agency was doing to get the food industry onboard. Rosemary Hignett said that there was continuous dialogue. Using the four principles, and the independent consumer research, there is confidence that the work on the impact of the labelling can be a learning exercise and industry can be fully engaged. John Harwood said that many important organisations are already signed up. He added that stakeholders will be able to see the consumer research.
32. A member asked what the Agency response to the EU mandatory labelling consultation. Rosemary explained that the response has not been agreed yet, but the likely focus was on front of pack labelling.

Food Fraud Task Force

33. Julie Monk of Head of Enforcement Division gave an update on the Food Fraud Task Force. Following the announcement in the February Board Meeting, a Food Fraud Task Force is being established to consider and report on all issues which are likely to significantly impact on food fraud. The Task Force will be chaired by Dr Philip Barlow, former associate professor of food science at the National University of Singapore and will be limited to about 14 members drawn from various industry and consumer bodies from those organisations suggested in the April Board paper.
34. Responsibility for providing the Secretariat for this Task Force is with the Meat Fraud and Diversity Branch within the Enforcement Division. Following an initial meeting with Dr Barlow in April, the Secretariat is currently identifying appropriate contacts from the proposed organisations. A further meeting between the Secretariat and Dr Barlow is scheduled for 16 May at which the membership is likely to be confirmed.
35. The first meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for 6 June and will be held in the New Connaught Rooms near to the Agency's headquarters. It is expected that between 10 to 12 all day meetings of the FFTF will be required during its 18-month duration, with further sub-groups meetings, considering more specific issues, to be held on an ad-hoc basis.
36. The task force is happy to take papers from interested groups.

Folic Acid Fortification

37. Alison Tedstone, Head of Nutritional Science Branch, updated the stakeholders on the current Agency work on folic acid. At its open meeting in April 2006, the Board discussed the draft SACN report on folate and disease prevention. The report recommends the mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid, to reduce the number of pregnancies affected by Neural Tube Defects (NTD) such as Spina Bifida.
38. The Board agreed to hold a public consultation later in the year on risk management options for increasing folate status in women of childbearing age (including the mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid; encouraging the voluntary fortification of a range of foods; and renewed campaigns to promote supplement use among women planning a pregnancy).

39. The Agency is currently undertaking a programme of research to gather consumers' views on the issue, and on the risk management options.
40. Following the consultation exercise and consumer research, the Board will discuss the issue again, before making a recommendation to Health Ministers.
41. A member asked if there is any comparable data from abroad where countries have added folic acid to bread. Alison Tedstone confirmed that there is data from Canada, Chile and USA which shows reduced rates of neural tube defects. 50% of UK births are unplanned and this makes supplement promotion difficult, and no nation has successfully achieved it.
42. A member applauded the Agency for holding the consultation. Another member expressed a concern that there were too many additives in food already and that many people would share the concern of not wanting to eat something if it is not necessary. John Harwood urged stakeholders to respond to the consultation, as the point of the consultation is to try and find a balance between such different views.
43. A member asked how the consumer research would be carried out. Alison Tedstone explained that there would be 4 deliberative workshops carried out in pairs across the UK. At first the groups would be given a small amount of knowledge, then they be given specific knowledge on folic acid in bread. Finally the groups would reconvene for a second meeting. Alison Tedstone commented that it is not decided yet where and how the results will be published.

Atypical Scrapie and Sheep BSE

44. Irene Hill of TSE Division outlined the position of the Agency on Atypical Scrapie. SEAC (the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee) has recently advised that tests can now distinguish between 'classical scrapie', atypical scrapie and experimental BSE in sheep and that it may be more appropriate to consider atypical scrapie as a distinct TSE of small ruminants (sheep and goats).
45. SEAC also advised that 'there is no evidence to date that atypical scrapie can infect humans, although a theoretical risk cannot be excluded'. Atypical scrapie is relatively widespread in sheep flocks in Europe including the UK. There are still a great many unknowns about atypical scrapie including the potential implications, if any, for human health.
46. The Board is due to consider this issue at its open meeting in June 2006 taking the results of the discussions with industry and consumers into account.
47. Irene Hill of TSE Division updated the meeting on the issue BSE in sheep. This item is on the agenda to inform consumer stakeholders about a piece of consumer research the Agency has commissioned in relation to TSE diseases in sheep, the main focus of which is atypical scrapie.
48. The primary objectives of the research are threefold: i) to explore how consumers feel about the potential risk to human health from atypical scrapie,

once it has been explained to them; ii) to gauge how consumers think the risk should be managed, and who should take responsibility for doing this; iii) to gauge understanding of and response to the FSA's advice and information on atypical scrapie and BSE.

49. Nine groups are to be assembled from across GB, covering different population groups (age, income etc) and including ethnic groups that are known to consume higher than average levels of mutton or goat meat, two of which will comprise members of Sheila McKechnie award groups.
50. BSE in sheep is an issue which the Agency has kept in the public eye since its inception, starting with the Agency's Review of BSE controls which reported in December 2000.
51. It is possible that BSE may be present in the UK sheep flock, but masked by scrapie, another related disease of sheep which is not known to be associated with any disease in humans. However, it is assumed that, if BSE were present in sheep, it would pose a risk to human health. But, despite a significant effort to look for BSE in UK sheep, it has not to date been found.
52. A member asked whether the same controls on the parts of the sheep that can enter the food supply should be applied as are applied to cows. Irene Hill replied that such controls are already in place. Pat Stewart added that we don't know if atypical scrapie has been around longer than normal scrapie as it has such a long incubation period.
53. Another member asked how large a flock is, if it is number of sheep or a geographic unit. Irene Hill responded that it referred to a group of animals on the same farm and was of variable size. She also pointed out that if there was BSE in one flock, this would be a very small proportion of the 66,000 flocks in Great Britain.

Agency Enforcement Strategy

54. Julie Monk updated the meeting on the Agency Enforcement Strategy. The vision statement was set out in April, and is now out to consultation. Views from the stakeholders are welcomed. The aim is to maximise industry and business compliance.
55. The Agency is joining up with other regulars across government to harmonise aims. Previously inspections have driven the process. Now other methods are under consideration such as "scores on the doors." Where information is provided to the public as an alternative to visits this can be effective in raising standards.
56. The Agency is producing a strategy and an Action Plan.
57. A member asked if there were specific issues where stakeholders could reply to the consultation, as this would help in producing a response. Pat Stewart said that the areas were in "Helping businesses to Comply" and "Consumer Information."
58. Another member raised a concern that local authorities might only respond if there is a consumer complaint about a business. Julie Monk explained that they wanted to make sure that the vision is right for government. John

Harwood questioned whether internally enforcement was the right word to use, as the aim of the strategy is compliance, and that the best motivator for compliance is within the supply chain.

59. Another member noted that everyone is a consumer, that all businesses should follow the law although there are some black sheep. Another member said that they would make a contribution to the vision. They feel that there are gaps in the food inspections that don't cover food allergies. They are providing some training in these issues to Local Authorities.
60. Another member asked what incentives were being provided to firms. John Harwood said a range of incentives including scores on the doors, and awards. Pat Stewart also added that there is a public consultation on penalties underway. Details will be circulated to stakeholders.

Action Point – Secretariat to issue details of the penalties consultation to Stakeholders

REGULATION SIMPLIFICATION PLAN

61. Phillip Clarke, Head of the Regulation and Consultation Branch outlined the progress on the Agency's Regulation Simplification Plan. The Plan follows on from the recommendations made in the Hampton report, if regulation is simpler it will drive up compliance. A draft plan was published in January. It is currently with Cabinet Office, and will come back to the board in July, or possibly later.
62. There have been attempts to cost the impact of the plan. The Agency promises to respond within 60 days to any suggestions. The move to reduce administrative burden is a cross governmental exercise, and there is an expectation that in the next Budget the Chancellor will ask Government to reduce the burden of regulations, plus there is a move to reduce burden from EU regulations by 25%.
63. There is also a question of over implementation in legislation in some areas. Phillip Clarke will be writing formally to stakeholders to gather views.
64. A member reiterated a concern that, while no-one was in favour of regulatory complexity for its own sake, "simplification" was too often a euphemism for de-regulation and/or under-implementation of legislation. In addition, present levels of regulation were satisfactory in many areas and simplification was not necessary. The member offered to restate that for the consultation. Another member noted particular concern about moves at an EU level.

SPECIFIC ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS

65. Delegates were asked to let the Agency know of any specific issues they wanted to discuss. Some of the issues raised in advance, on the issues of salt targets, folic acid, labelling, signposting and EU labelling had already been raised in the update.

Sustainable Development Action Plan

66. A member requested an update on the Sustainable Development Action Plan, discussed at the last meeting and how the Action Plan looks in the light of the Sustainable Consumption Roundtable's report, and what sustainable development objectives and targets being considered in the 2006/2007 business planning round?"
67. Alison Spalding of Standards & Sustainability Branch updated the meeting. The Action Plan has been published following the consultation, although the Agency sees it as a living document rather than a final version. The Agency therefore welcomes any further comments. The Action Plan is the first of a series of annual plans. There will be an end of year report on this plan before publishing the next. All divisions have been asked to take account of Sustainable Development in business planning and to have specific targets. Examples include implementing an environmental management system or creating a sustainable development culture. Workshops to raise awareness have been held and the sustainable development assessment is starting to be used.
68. A member made a point that the Sustainable Consumption Roundtable had made recommendations that the Agency should integrate consumer advice on nutrition and sustainability, especially with regards to oily fish consumption and the amount of meat and animal products in the diet. Alison Spalding explained that this had not been included in the Action Plan, the Roundtable recommendations having only just been published. The Agency will be considering the recommendation. It was noted that the remit of sustainable food consumption within Government lies with Defra and that there are limitations on the Agency as its remit is set out in statute. There would also be significant technical challenges in deciding the relative sustainability of different foods.
69. A member suggested that the Agency should consider the catering it provides, as food is the 4th largest contributor to climate change, and noted that the Agency lagged behind many other public sector bodies in this area. Another member said that current FSA recommendations to the public to increase fish consumption completely ignore the problems around the sustainability of fish stocks, and that recommending eating MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) labelled fish would be one easy change to make . They also noted that bottled water was wasteful, and using jugged tap water was another simple way of changing FSA policy to incorporate sustainable development. Alison Spalding explained that the caterers were on contract, and that the opportunity to address this would come when the contract was up for re-negotiation. John Harwood commented that if stakeholders sent ideas to the Agency we would look at them. However the catering contract and statutory powers of the Agency made some areas problematic.
70. A member commented that responsibility on some issues was held at EU/supernational level. Another member commented that issues start at grass roots level. Another member commented that clear advice to consumers on foods that are sustainable would be very helpful.
71. Another member asked when the catering contract would be up for renewal. They added that Jon Bell had promised to revisit Agency advice on fish on its website. John Harwood said that these two points would be followed up.

Action Point – Date of catering contract renewal to be distributed to Stakeholders, along with notification of outcome of revision of fish advice on the website.

Avian Flu

72. A member asked for an update on Avian Flu. John Harwood said that preliminary results of highly pathogenic H5 avian flu in a dead swan found at Cellardyke in Scotland on 5 April were reported at the last Board Meeting. Further tests on the virus have shown that it is very similar to strains of H5N1 from Siberia and Northern Europe. Defra has formed a working hypothesis that the dead swan originated outside Great Britain
73. These were subsequently confirmed as H5N1 on 6 April and as a result Wild Bird Protection and Surveillance Zones of 3 and 10km respectively were established by Defra within which biosecurity measures and movement controls on birds and poultry products were applied. An additional 2500 square km 'Fife Wild Bird Risk Area' was also established in which farmers were required to house poultry.
74. No further H5N1 cases have been found and following epidemiological assessment and satisfactory veterinary inspections on all premises in the two zones the controls have been lifted.
75. Preliminary findings of avian influenza virus, likely to be H7 on a broiler breeder farm near Dereham in Norfolk, owned by Banhams Poultry. On Friday 28 May this was confirmed as low pathogenicity H7N3 which was isolated both from poultry
76. A member asked what the Agency was communicating to consumers about Avian Flu. John Harwood explained that 206 humans had contracted the disease and 114 had died. All had contracted the disease from close proximity to poultry. Food cooked enough to kill off food borne viruses will be safe. Pat Stewart added that our advice was on our website.

Aspartame

77. A member requested an FSA opinion on the safety of Aspartame following the results of the 7 year research study in Italy. She noted that two of the points raised by scientists to discredit the research were that the methodology was incorrect as the trials had lasted more than the accepted 2 years - the rats had been monitored until they died, and that scientists could not understand how aspartame could be harmful. The member also observed that according to some sources the US FDA had refused to approve aspartame for at least 8 years - some say as long as 16 years. She also mentioned that dietary research done on APM consumers showed that the average daily intake in the general population ranged from 2 to 3 mg/Kg bodyweight and was even more for children and pregnant women. Representing a woman's organisation the member felt it important to mention that the Italian research findings had reported that female rats in the research had shown a significant increase in lymphomas and leukaemias whilst the male rats were less affected. This raises the question as to whether women and girls are more susceptible to adverse reactions from APM than men and boys.

78. John Harwood explained that the Agency has requested a review from the Committee on Carcinogenicity. He added that the results would see whether there was any cause for concern.
79. Another member asked if Aspartame would be appropriate to add to the agenda of the next stakeholder meeting. The meeting agreed it was. The Anaphylaxis Campaign is carrying out some research on Aspartame and will report in November.

Action Point – Aspartame to be added to the agenda of the next meeting

SIX MONTH FORWARD LOOK

80. John Harwood outlined some of the work the Agency would be taking forward over the next months. An update is attached as an Annex. Several items were raised by members.
81. A member said that next week was Vegetarian Week, and that the Vegetarian society had been working with the Agency campaign on the staff menu for the week.
82. British Heart Foundation will be running Food for Thought campaign this autumn.
83. The Soil Association will be running Organic week in the second week of September, including work in schools.
84. Sustain is running a campaign in response to the Ofcom consultation on food advertising to children.
85. National Consumer Council will be responding to the Ofcom consultation, running a campaign on Greening Supermarkets, Rating Retailers (3rd Year), producing a food access toolkit for the TSI conference on 23 June, and launching a social mobility team late this year.
86. Cancer UK is working with Weight Concern to produce “top 10 weight tips” and providing some nutrient cards for sandwiches.
87. The Anaphylaxis campaign is producing a Safe Food database, this will be hosted on their website. They are also undertaking school nurse training.

AOB

88. A member raised an issue on behalf of HUSH (Haemolytic Uraemic Syndrome Help, The UK E.coli Support Group) whose representative was unable to attend. HUSH had written to the Agency asking for details of requests made by a US burger chain to re-examine the minimum time taken to cook a burger. This was made a subgroup committee and outside the public domain. HUSH made a formal request under the Freedom of Information Act, which was subsequently turned down because it involves sensitive commercial information. The member asked if this was consistent with putting the consumer first. John Harwood said that this would be looked into and the result circulated.

Action Point – Agency will circulate outcome of the HUSH Freedom of information request.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

89. The seventh meeting of the Consumer Stakeholder Forum would take place on Monday, 20 November from 12.30pm to 3.30pm in Aviation House.

**CONSUMER BRANCH
May 2006**

CONSUMER STAKEHOLDER
FORUM

GROUND FLOOR CONFERENCE SUITE
15 May 2006

DELEGATE LIST

Anne Macalpine-Leny	Anaphylaxis Campaign
Judy Abel	British Medical Association
Olena Bakero	British Heart Foundation
Sarah Woolnough	Cancer Research UK
Joanna Butten	Consensus Action on Salt and Health
Fausta Cerezo	Consensus Action on Salt and Health
Susan Payne	Foodaware
Masood Khawaja	Halal Food Authority
Stella Nicholas	National Consumer Federation
Patience Purdy	National Council of Women of Great Britain
Jill Pitt	National Consumer Council
Sandra Smart	Nutrition Society
Gerladine Quinn	Safefood
Emma Noble	Soil Association
Jeanette Longfield	Sustain
Chris Olivant	Vegetarian Society
Miranda Watson	Which?

FSA STAFF

Jon Harwood	-	Chief Executive
Pat Stewart	-	Director Corporate Resources
Gill Fine	-	Director Consumer Choice and Dietary Health
Rosemary Hignett	-	Head of Nutrition Division
Julie Monk	-	Head of Enforcement Division
Irene Hill	-	TSE Division
Shaheen Zar	-	Head of Meat Fraud and Diversity Branch
Phillip Clarke	-	Strategy and Regulation
Alison Tedstone	-	Head of Nutritional Science Branch
Alison Spalding	-	Standards & Sustainability Branch
Frances Cleaver	-	Chemical Safety Division
Jaz Bangar	-	Head of Consumer Branch
Stewart Horne	-	Consumer Branch

CONSUMER STAKEHOLDER FORUM

AGENCY SIX MONTH FORWARD LOOK

Development of FSA voluntary best practice allergen labelling (May Contain) guidance - Food Allergy Branch

- There is a commitment in the Strategic Plan to publish guidance on the appropriate and proportionate use of label statements to warn allergic consumers of the risk of contamination with nuts, seeds and other allergens by 2006. Recent European Directives have introduced statutory labelling requirements for the deliberate use of 12 listed allergens. This legislation does not apply to accidental contamination and the FSA agreed to produce guidance on how to manage food allergens within the factory setting and to issue advice on when it would be appropriate to include a warning about cross-contamination on the label.
- Following the public consultation exercise at the end of 2005 the guidance has been re-drafted, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders (manufacturers, retailers, consumer groups and enforcement bodies), to take account of the comments received. The guidance is on target for publication this summer.

Development of FSA voluntary best practice guidance for the provision of allergen information for non-prepacked foods - Food Allergy Branch

- General food labelling legislation (Directive 2000/13/EC) does not apply to foods sold non-prepacked (foods sold pre-packed for direct sale, and foods sold loose, including in catering establishments). Foods sold in these ways do not by law have to display an ingredients list and it is therefore difficult for food allergic consumers to determine if such foods contain any ingredients to which they are allergic. Further, clinical evidence suggests that foods sold non-prepacked may pose a greater risk to food allergic consumers than pre-packed foods, in terms of the number of fatal and near fatal allergic reactions that occur. There is therefore a need to address the provision of allergen information with foods sold non-prepacked.
- Following a series of stakeholder meetings, the Agency organised a small drafting group containing relevant stakeholders, including consumer groups to take forward the development of the guidance. The aim of the guidance is twofold:
 - to make establishments selling or providing non-prepacked food to consumers aware of the potential problems associated with food allergy and intolerance and the importance of giving accurate information;
 - to provide them with practical advice on dealing with food allergy related queries from customers .
- Specifically, the guidance will outline practical steps to help businesses look at communication with customers and also within the business between those

providing and those selling the food. It will also provide advice on effective training of staff and on accessing ingredient information. It will also set out worked examples for different types of foods which are typically sold non-prepacked.

- The Agency aims to consult on the draft guidance during the summer (2006) and produce final guidance by March 2007.

Barbecue/Summer Eating TV advertisement – Meat Safety Division

The Agency will be re-screening its barbecue/Summer Eating TV advertisement ('Sausages') on World Cup weekends in June and July 2006 as part of the Agency's national Food Hygiene Campaign. The advert had previously been screened in 2002.

The advert will be shown between 5pm Friday and 5pm Sunday on weekends throughout the whole period of the World Cup (9-11 June; 16-18 June; 23-25 June; 30 June - 2 July; 7-9 July). An associated information leaflet will be available and updated information on barbecuing and summer eating featured on the Agency's website.

This Summer Eating campaign is aimed at consumers of all ages. The timing of the Campaign coincides with the seasonal period when the number of laboratory-reported cases of *Campylobacter*-related foodborne illness is highest. *Campylobacter* causes the largest number of cases of foodborne disease in the UK, and preventing cross-contamination is a key measure in the control of *Campylobacter* infection.