

3 December 2010

Dear

Review of delivery of official controls on food

Today the Food Standards Agency is hosting a conference jointly with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. The purpose of the conference is to consider how systems for managing and enforcing food hygiene might be transformed to improve food safety and consumer protection.

In my speech at the conference I will be announcing our intention to conduct a review of the delivery of official controls on food in the UK. We will be considering alternative models to explore which approach will offer the best protection for consumers.

The Food Standards Agency is ultimately responsible for the controls on food in the UK; but the controls are currently delivered through a variety of means: by employees of the FSA, by other government departments, by contractors and by local authorities.

This range of approaches to delivery brings complexity. In the current climate of increased financial pressures it is timely to consider how best to secure efficiency, consistency, resilience and sustainability in this fundamental public health protection function. Our goal will be to ensure that the system we have in place is the best route to ensuring food safety for consumers.

The next step will be for the FSA Board to review the evidence on the effectiveness of the current system at its January 2011 open meeting and take a formal decision on proceeding with this review. If they agree we will of course be engaging closely with you and with other stakeholders. The review would need to take full account of the issues raised and views expressed in all four countries of the UK.

Yours sincerely

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