

# FSA Analytics Unit Update (January 2022) Paper 8.7

## Analytics Team Update:

- **New Deputy Director of SERD (Science Evidence and Research Directorate):** Michelle Patel has taken the role of acting Deputy Director for 6 months, Joanna Disson will be acting head of social science during this time.
- **Fellowships:**
  - The Analytics Unit is looking for [a new Research Fellow with advanced statistical analysis skills to support with the delivery of the FSA's flagship Food and You 2 survey](#). Further information about this opportunity is available on the FSA website. Applications close on 28th January 2022.
  - A new FSA research fellow, Dr Bethan Mead, is researching *consumer and stakeholder perception and acceptance of urban grown food and alternative proteins to inform safe adoption and best practice*. The fellowship is part of the Transforming the UK Food System for Healthy People and a Healthy Environment (TUKFS), a UK government and UKRI initiative that aims to bring together interdisciplinary research, policymakers, business and civil society to deliver change across our food system.

## Project updates

- **[Food and You 2:](#)** We will be publishing findings from Wave 3 on 26 January. This Wave included new questions on online platforms and healthy eating in Northern Ireland (healthy eating questions will be published in a separate Northern Ireland report). Fieldwork for Wave 4, which included new questions on sustainable diets and meat alternatives, has now completed and will be reporting in Summer 2022. We will be publishing the first trend report (looking at trends between Waves 1-4) after Wave

- **Kitchen Life 2:** The pilot study, with 2 domestic and 2 commercial kitchens, was completed in July 21. The aim of the pilot was to test the logistical elements of the research, including recruitment and video camera set-up. The pilot also gave the opportunity to trial the analysis approach and devise a framework for analysing mainstage fieldwork. Wave 1 (with 10 domestic and 10 commercial kitchens) is complete, including filming, analysis, follow-up surveys and interviews now complete and the dashboard containing Wave 1 data for households provided to the FSA. Commercial data to shortly follow. Recruitment has commenced for Wave 2. Three more waves will take place before summer 2022 when the final report is due.
- **The Wider Consumer Interests Programme:** We are expanding the scope of our evidence gathering to include wider interests of consumers in relation to food, giving perspective into wider food policy and provides evidence on some of the big challenges in the food system such as diet and nutrition, sustainability of food, food insecurity, provision, and choice. Update on the ongoing projects within this programme of work include:
  - To support strategy development, we are conducting Consumers Interests to Food project; a multi-method research project with consumers to explore and articulate their concerns, needs and wider interests, in the food system, including around safety, health, sustainability, including food waste, and welfare. This will help us evidence the values and concerns of the people and communities that we serve. One output of this work will be a more holistic segmentation of consumer attitudes and values to inform policy and communications. The project is now in field and due to report April 2022.
  - Our Communications message testing research is underway and will deliver by end of March 2022. The findings from this research will allow us to develop a framework that can be used to respond to a variety of communication activities e.g. campaigns, consultations, crisis response etc. As part of this project we will also develop tools to allow us to test these messages rapidly, consenting evidence based comms message testing before messages go live.
  - We are exploring the feasibility of a Community Panel to allow more routine deliberative and participative engagement to provide insight on consumer views on policy developments and decisions.
- **Food Hypersensitivity programme (FHS):** The first wave of our Food Sensitive study which looks at what factors influence quality of life in FHS consumers (those with allergies, intolerance and coeliac disease) has been published. Wave 2 is now in field. We have run interviews with consumers and businesses on their views of precautionary allergen labelling (PAL) and

run a co creation workshop with consumers to gain ideas on possible changes they would like to see. We have also just launched a new study on what information FHS consumers would like when eating out and what information businesses currently provide.

- **Achieving Business Compliance (ABC) Programme:** Evaluation of the Food Standards Pilots (designed to support local authorities in England, Northern Ireland and Wales to target resources more effectively, provide better assurance and more agility to LAs, and to help them evidence that they meet their statutory obligations) is on-going. Work is commencing on which aspects of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme are most valued by consumers, food businesses and local authorities, so any changes made by the ABC programme do not compromise consumer trust in the Scheme. Work is also commencing to understand consumers' perceived risks of purchasing food online, and their attitudes towards risk. In addition, we are preparing research on "Best Practice Regulatory Change" which will include reaching out to our international partners.
- **Operations Transformation Programme:** We recently conducted qualitative consumer research on the "Future Delivery Model" (FDM) for FSA official controls. It found that consumers have limited awareness of how food is regulated but are reassured by the thoroughness of current official controls. They are keen to see the FSA presence to remain the same in non-compliant businesses; more unannounced inspections; businesses held to account; independent training programmes for inspectors; human supervision of new technology; transparent information for consumers and trialling of the FDM before it is fully rolled out. These findings will be used to shape the ongoing development of the FDM and ensure that it meets consumer expectations.
- **Behavioural Change:** The FSA has an ambition to develop an ongoing programme of work on behavioural insights, and recently accelerated resource to build the case. Building on a series of evidence reviews we have developed a programme of work taking us up to the end of this financial year. In July we received financial approval to commission a number of behavioural trials and design work and since then have set up the following projects:
  - a trial to encourage sustainable diets shift through free samples in work place canteens;
  - a trial testing the effects of pro-active allergen communication in Food Business Operators on consumer experiences and choices;

- a trial testing whether behavioural interventions can improve handwashing in Food Business Operators;
- a trial to test the relative impacts of overt or covert product ordering intervention on sustainable consumer choices during online food shopping
- the design of a trial to test an intervention to improving adherence to use-by-dates amongst vulnerable groups.

Following engagement with the **Assurance** working group we have ensured all trials have an independent peer reviewer who reviews both trial protocol and trial outputs. All trials are also required to have ethical approval via a university ethics board and to publish trial protocols in advance of field work. We are also building the **capability** of the FSA team to commission and manage these trials and have procured NatCen Social Research to delivery training in late-February. We have complemented this by setting up a weekly slot where team members can share learning on behavioural science, whether through a relevant published article or training attended.

Looking **forwards** we are keen to continue our trials work with plans to take the use by dates trial design into the field for example, and collaborate with OGDs with similar interests (e.g. work with Defra on an eco-labelling trial). We are also keen to broaden our behavioural science toolset and are considering how we can maximise our role as a convenor in the evidence system (e.g. through meta-analysis, evidence mapping, synthesis products) and how to bring the latest evidence to bear on FSA policy and programmes (e.g. through expert presentations).

- **Citizen science:** Successful applications to the FSA/UKRI joint funding call [Citizen Science for Food Standards Challenges](#) were announced in November. Six projects have been funded addressing topics across our areas of research interest, such as the prevalence of AMR, assessment of allergen risks and consumer perceptions of gene editing, further details in the FSA news story: [FSA and UKRI join forces with the public to explore food safety | Food Standards Agency](#). The social science team is co-ordinating this programme of work, with each project having a designated lead in the appropriate part of SERD. As part of our role in the GSR (Government Social Research) innovative methods group, we are planning a 'Citizen Science' event next year, providing learning and networking opportunities, and showcasing the 6 UKRI/FSA projects alongside other examples of how this method has been used by GSR members.

- **Cost of Food Crime (CoFC) Phase 2:** Phase 2 of this work is now underway. A Cost of Food Crime (CoFC) model is now being developed into a functioning model and database that will allow the FSA to capture a range of impacts that food crime has on the UK economy.
- **Estimating The Financial Cost To Individual Sufferers With Food Hypersensitivity:** This study is now being finalised, with preparations being made to publish the final report. This study used a price differential approach, comparing the cost of food for a food hypersensitivity (FHS) group versus a non-FHS group, to understand the additional financial burden faced by people suffering with FHS. A programme of evidence collection activities was carried out, which involved a rapid evidence assessment, consultation with sufferers with FHS, household surveys, and development of a cost differential model.
- **Food Hypersensitivity Willingness To Pay Project:** This project contributes to the FSA's assessment of the scale of the economic costs imposed on society by food hypersensitivities (FHS), with specific focus on the monetary valuation of the pain and suffering imposed on FHS sufferers. The economic value of removing the symptoms and limitations of FHS were identified using a Discrete Choice Experiment (DCE) in which people made choices between their current situation and temporary removal of their condition – for varying durations and at varying cost. Willingness to Pay values were estimated separately for Adults' regarding their own FHS; and Parents' regarding their children's FHS. These Willingness to Pay (WTP) values for the three FHS conditions (food allergy, food intolerance and Coeliac disease) have been designed to be incorporated into the FSA's Cost of Illness model.
- **Chemical Contaminants and Toxins (CCT) Cost of Illness (COI) Model:** The FSA is working in collaboration with the University of Exeter through a Research Fellowship to develop a Cost of Illness (COI) framework for chemical contaminants and toxins (CCT) in relation to food safety. A scoping and evidence review is being conducted with a view to gathering the best available evidence taken from academic and clinical studies on methodologies used both internationally and in the UK for estimating the economic and human health impacts of CCT in food. It is envisaged that this would be used to help develop a COI framework that could eventually be used to produce cost per case estimates related to CCT.
- **Survey of Infectious Intestinal Disease (IID) during COVID-19.** Large decreases in confirmed laboratory reports foodborne pathways were seen after the start of COVID-19 and it was unclear whether these were genuine

decreases or due to increased underreporting due to less people seeking medical care. The FSA therefore commissioned three waves of an IID survey at different lockdown points during COVID-19 (Sep 20, Nov 20 and Jan 21). Two surveys were planned as comparisons assuming things were getting back to normal as a comparison. One of these was run in Sep 21. However, due to the increase in COVID-19 cases due to the Omicron variant the Feb 22 wave may be put back. To counteract this an additional Adults only survey was quickly set up in Dec 21. As well as estimating underreporting and true levels of IID, the surveys will be used to see if any insights can be provided as to the impact of the various non pharmaceutical interventions on IID.

- **Evaluation strategy:** As a condition of our Spending Review 2021 settlement from HM Treasury we will publish an evaluation strategy outlining FSA's approach to identifying and prioritising areas for evaluation activity. In addition, we will provide HM Treasury and the Evaluation Task Force (Cabinet Office) with an assessment of how much evidence we have to support FSA's major policy areas/programmes, using the Nesta Standards of Evidence. At a minimum, these will include our two major change programmes: Achieving Business Compliance and Operations Transformation. Delivery will be during 2022, dates are to be confirmed with Treasury.

## Published research (June 2021 - January 2022)

### June:

- [Survey of consumers practices with respect to coated frozen chicken products](#). Online survey collecting data on frozen chicken products.
- [Emerging Technologies that will impact on the UK food system](#). A rapid evidence assessment of the emerging technologies considered most likely to have an impact on the UK food system and food safety over the coming decade.

### July:

- [Food and You 2: Wave 2 Key Findings](#). Biannual official statistic survey with consumers (16 years old and over) living in private households in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Wave 1 modules include: Food we can trust; Concerns about food; Food security; Food shopping; and Eating at home (food safety).
- [Consumer perceptions of genome edited food](#): Mixed methods research to understand consumer perceptions of genome edited food and its potential

future labelling (deliberative dialogues, online community, survey).

- [The COVID-19 consumer research](#): Mixed methods to monitor the experience and behaviours of consumers when it comes to key food risks during the pandemic.

## **August:**

- [AMR consumer research report](#). Findings from online omnibus surveys run with a nationally representative UK sample in 2016, 2019 and July 2021. The survey explores consumer awareness and understanding of AMR, with the three timepoints allowing change over time to be identified.
- [Qualitative research into the consumption of food with expired 'use by' dates](#). Findings from a rapid evidence review and primary qualitative research with thirty participants from England, Wales and Northern Ireland. During the primary research, participants took part in two depth interviews and an app-based diary between the 22nd March and the 4th April 2021 designed to explore the reasons why they consume food past the UBD.

## **September:**

- [FSA Consumer segmentation](#): Consumer segmentation is a way of grouping consumers based on common characteristics. The FSA categorises people based on their attitudes to food and their reported hygiene and food safety behaviours.
- [FSA consumer research exploring communications on food safety messaging](#): Research to understand current behavioural drivers and attitudes towards communicating food safety messages and how they vary by audiences.

## **October:**

- [Food Sensitive Study \(Quality of Life\) Wave 1 Report](#): Survey findings exploring the impact of food hypersensitivity on quality of life.
- [Consumer Handwashing Research: Handwashing in a Pandemic](#): Mixed methods research providing an overview of consumer handwashing behaviour during the pandemic.

## **November:**

- [Healthy and Sustainable Diets: Consumer Poll](#): Consumer poll in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to understand consumer behaviours and attitudes in relation to healthy and sustainable diets.
- [Food and You 2: Wales Wave 1-2 Key Findings](#) and [Food and You 2: Northern Ireland Waves 1-2 Key findings](#): Country specific reports outlining key findings from waves 1-2 of Food and You 2.
- [Consumer insights report](#): Findings from various tracking surveys to understand consumer's behaviours and attitudes about food insecurity, food availability, concern, and confidence in the food supply chain. This publication pulls together the findings from these surveys, including recent data from our [COVID-19 consumer tracker](#), and from our newly established 'Consumer Insights tracking survey' (established in November 2021) to provide the latest findings on these topics.
- [Prioritising Foodborne Disease with Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis](#): This study outlines the methodology and results of a multi-criteria decision analysis (MCDA) used to rank thirteen foodborne pathogens in order of their detrimental effect on UK society.

## **December:**

- [Food Hygiene Rating Scheme \(FHRS\)](#) – Food and You 2: Wave 2: Secondary report focusing on FHRS questions asked in Wave 2.

## **January:**

- [Survey of consumer perceptions of alternative, or novel, sources of protein](#): findings from a national representative online survey to understand consumer awareness and perceptions of alternative, or novel, sources of protein.

## **Upcoming Publications**

- Food and You 2, Wave 3 (26 Jan, 2022)
- Trends in twitter conversations about food during 2019-2020 (TBC Feb, 22)