

Paper 9.2 FSA Analytics Unit Update (July 2022)

Summary

This paper is for information and provides an update on key activity and outputs from the Analytics Unit.

Analytics Team Update:

- Michelle Patel will continue the role of acting **Deputy Director of Science Evidence and Research Directorate** (SERD) until the end of September. Joanna Disson will remain acting **Head of Social Science** during this time.
- Willem Roelofs will be starting in early August as **Head of the Analytics Unit**. Willem is currently Head of Northern Ireland Evidence & Analysis at Defra.
- **Research fellows:** The Analytics Unit is appointing a new Research Fellow with advanced statistical analysis skills to support with the delivery of the FSA's flagship Food and You 2 survey. The fellow will be embedded within the Analytics Unit full time for a period of two years, starting in August/September 2022, with supervisory support from the University of Warwick.

Project updates

- **[Food and You 2:](#)** Findings from Wave 3 were published in January. A new annex was added to the Wave 3 Technical Report documenting methodological changes between survey waves. Fieldwork for Wave 4, which included new questions on sustainable diets and meat alternatives, is complete, and will report in summer 2022. We will also be publishing the first trend report (looking at trends between Waves 1-4) after Wave 4. Wave 5 fieldwork is underway and due to report in early 2023.
- We are in the process of retendering for Food and You 2. Once we have awarded the new contract we will review and update *The Food and You: Origin and Underpinnings* paper to ensure any key changes are documented,

as per action 8.1 from the last ACSS meeting.

- **Kitchen Life 2:** Waves 1 - 3 of fieldwork are complete, with 35 households and 22 food businesses being filmed and analysed so far. Wave 4 filming is complete, and follow-up surveys and interviews are underway. Wave 5 will take place in Autumn 2022, with a focus on meat-eating households and takeaways to boost representation.
 - We are extending the scope of the study to conduct some follow-up research on sustainability behaviours, and have commissioned two masters students to conduct secondary analysis on cleaning and handwashing behaviours. The final report and handbook of behavioural interventions is due Autumn/Winter 2022.
 - We have extended the deadline for applications for the PhD with Leeds University Business School which will explore the “say-do” gap by looking at KL2 data alongside F&Y2 and other FSA survey data.
- **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 provide 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 have published the reports and data on The UK Public’s interests, needs and concerns around food research; 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. Key outputs published include a UK report, Wales report and Northern Ireland report, along with a Stories report that represents views and experiences of people as ‘case studies’ to see how issues are experienced, particularly voices of people who are typically less heard by policymakers. One output of this work that has not been published is a holistic segmentation of consumer attitudes and values to inform policy and communications.
- Our Communications message testing research is complete and will be published in the Summer. 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 further understand which tools will allow us to test these messages in the most appropriate way, consenting evidence

based comms message testing before messages go live.

- We recently published [A rapid evidence assessment of UK citizen and industry understandings of sustainability](#), to inform the ongoing development of research under the third pillar of the FSA, exploring what ‘sustainable’ means to consumers and industry when it comes to food and diet.
- We have explored 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, and will be discussing this in August to agree next steps.
- Following the recent steer from the Board in June to expand our work exploring household food insecurity (HHFI), the team are developing proposals for HHFI projects to be carried out under the WCI programme (see paper 9.8).
- **Consumer insights tracker:** The latest Consumer insights tracker report was published in June, summarising key findings from December 2021 to March 2022. The consumer insights tracker has funding confirmed until December 2022 and will continue to report on a monthly cycle across Government. Between now and December 2022, the social science team will review the tracker to assess it’s need, scope and funding.
- **Operations Transformation Programme:** We are currently conducting two research projects to support OTP. Firstly, we've commissioned Ipsos to run a series of 14 online focus groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to capture views of consumers and understand the appetite for and impact of potential divergence from inherited EU regulation within the new model for Official Controls under the Future Delivery Model (FDM). Secondly, we are conducting a survey and in-depth interviews with Food Business Operators across the meat, wine and dairy sectors to understand their views of the FSA and Official Controls which includes questions around their understanding and awareness of the OTP. Findings from both projects will be available by September 2022.
- **Behavioural Change:** We are continuing our programme of work on behavioural insights including publishing final reports on our recent suite of behavioural trials, in academic journals, as well as on the FSA website, and engaging in proactive dissemination of findings. In addition to this we have developed a bid with Cross-Government partners[\[1\]](#) to the HMT Evaluation Accelerator Fund to deliver a three year programme of randomised control trials of interventions in the food system to encourage and enable healthier and more sustainable diets for all, to be delivered by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

- **Citizen science:** The 6 [FSA/UKRI funded citizen science projects](#) are progressing to schedule. The social science team continues to co-ordinate this programme of work (with each project having a designated lead in the appropriate part of SERD). On the 20th October the FSA and UKRI are hosting a joint event entitled 'Citizen Science for Policy and Practise' to showcase the range of citizen science applications, and provide development and networking opportunities for those with an interest in the approach. This will be an open event ran by the UKRI events team. Further details to follow.
- **Cost of Food Crime (CoFC) Phase 2:** Significant progress is being made in developing the CoFC model, which is currently being refined and improved as more reported food crime cases are captured and drawn into model. The inclusion of geography, cost bearers and food/crime types as ways of filtering the data is also being explored, which will allow the FSA to capture a range of impacts that food crime has on the UK society and the economy.
- **Estimating The Financial Cost To Individual Sufferers With Food Hypersensitivity:** 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. This study has just been completed, with ongoing preparations being made to publish the final report.
- **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. This project is now being finalised, with a view to publishing a final report alongside *Estimating The Financial Cost To Individual Sufferers With Food Hypersensitivity* report.

- **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. The project is in its initial phase, which will look to develop a scoping and evidence review of 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.

- **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 six waves of an IID survey at different lockdowns points during COVID-19. The first four included both Adults and Children surveys (Sep 20, Nov 20, Jan 21 and Sep 21). An adults only survey was quickly set up in Dec 21 to be run before the full impact of the Omicron variant took hold. Due to time pressures in setting the survey up quickly it was not possible to run a Children survey at the same time. As the variant was less impactful than first feared, a children only survey was then run in Feb/Mar 22. The contractor is now working on a report covering all 6 waves and FSA analysts are producing supplementary analysis on the association of IID with different behaviours.

- **Evaluation Action Plan:** As a condition of our Spending Review 2021 settlement from HM Treasury we have committed to publishing an Evaluation Action Plan 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. A draft version of the evaluation action plan has been created; plans for evaluation of Achieving Business Compliance and Operations Transformation have been provided to Treasury, who have provided comments and positive feedback on our proposed approach. The Evaluation Action Plan is scheduled to be finalised this month (July).

- **Food Standards report:** Colleagues across the Analytics Unit have contributed to an in-depth review of food standards in the UK - ["Our Food: An annual review of food standards across the UK"](#). It was laid across all four UK Parliaments/Assemblies and subsequently published on the 27th June. The report, due to be published annually, reviews data and evidence to address

how food standards are changing over time. It contributes to our ongoing commitment to transparency and ensures parliamentarians, trading partners and consumers, at home and abroad, remain aware of the changes and challenges to our food system. The report is made up of five main chapters, each focusing on a different aspect of the UK's food system:

- The nation's plate – a review of our eating habits and purchasing behaviours, including the factors that influence them.
- Going global – this chapter reviews the reported safety of our imported food over recent years. The chapter also considers how we uphold wider production standards as the UK enters into new trading partnerships.
- Safe and sound – this chapter looks at food incidents over the reporting period and explores the different factors influencing them. It also describes the latest trends in food crime and what is shaping our response to it.
- Informing consumers – implications for food information after EU Exit, including the steps taken to provide business continuity after the transition period, domestic policy changes to inform and protect consumers, and future developments for improving food labelling transparency.
- Keeping it clean – This chapter assesses hygiene standards across different types of food and feed establishments. It charts the latest available data on legal compliance, in addition to how food businesses are performing according to the two food hygiene rating systems. It also looks at what steps are being taken to restore and strengthen inspection systems in future following the pandemic.

Published Research (January 2022 - July 2022)

January:

- [Survey of consumer perceptions of alternative, or novel, sources of protein](#): An online survey to understand consumer awareness and perceptions of alternative, or novel, sources of protein.
- [Food and You 2 - Wave 3](#): Key findings from wave 3 of Food and You 2 survey which measures self-reported consumer knowledge, attitudes and behaviours related to food safety and other food issues amongst adults.

February:

- [Kitchen Life 2: Literature review](#): This literature review was commissioned to inform the scope of the Kitchen Life 2 project.
- [COVID-19 tracker survey report](#): Our latest COVID-19 tracker covers household food insecurity, food purchasing behaviours, food habits at home, nutrition behaviours, food safety and hygiene in the home and consumers' food concerns over 19 waves of data (April 2020 – October 2021).

March:

- [Trends in Twitter conversations about food during 2019-20](#): This report gives a high-level summary of social media analysis divided by key categories to build our understanding of the views and concerns of the public when it comes to food. The analysis includes deep dive analyses on key category macro trends and key findings from audience analysis.
- [Eating Well Choosing Better Tracking Survey - Wave 7](#): This report monitors consumer understanding and knowledge of recommended daily calorie intake, use of traffic light labels, attitudes towards reformulation and calorie information and awareness of campaign communications delivered by the FSA in Northern Ireland.
- [A rapid review of the acceptability and impact of approaches to reduce the salt, fat and sugar content of people's diets on consumers and industry](#): A rapid review of the acceptability and impact of approaches to reduce the salt, fat and sugar content of people's diets on consumers and industry.
- [Rapid evidence review of the Psychology of Food choice](#): A rapid review of the evidence of psychology of food choice, consolidating current knowledge and direction of development of research in relation to the psychology of food choice. Insight into situational, social, emotional and psychological roles of food and how variation among them influence buying and eating decisions.
- [A rapid review of the evidence on the factors underpinning the purchasing and consumption of meat and dairy products](#): Literature review of the evidence on barriers and facilitators to reduction of meat and dairy consumption among the general public.
- [Psychologies of Food Choice: Public views and experiences around meat and dairy consumption](#): Qualitative remote ethnography research to explore public views and experiences around meat and dairy consumption and key drivers of dietary approach.

June:

- [Consumer insights tracker report](#): Key findings from December 2021 to March 2022.
- [The UK Public's interests, needs and concerns around food](#): Qualitative and quantitative research explored UK consumer views and priorities in relation to our responsibilities around food hygiene and safety.
- [Our Food 2021: An annual review of food standards across the UK](#): An in-depth review of food standards in the UK, exploring different aspects of the food system.
- [A rapid evidence assessment of UK citizen and industry understandings of sustainability](#): An REA exploring what 'sustainable' means to consumers and industry when it comes to food and diet.

Upcoming Publications

- Handwashing tracker (August, 2022)
- The impact of climate change on consumer food behaviours: Identification of potential trends and impacts (July, 2022)

[\[1\]](#) Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), Department for Education (DfE), Food Standards Agency (FSA),

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)