

# Secretariate Update Aug to Oct 22

## Secretariat Update

### ACSS membership

In September 2022 we said farewell to Susan Michie as our ACSS Chair and welcomed Julie Hill (previously Deputy Chair) into the role. Julie Barnett will take on the Deputy Chair role.

Following a successful induction event on the 10<sup>th</sup> October, we have welcomed 3 new members to the ACSS:

- **Dr Naomi Maynard** is the Good Food Programme Director at Feeding Liverpool, leading Liverpool's food alliance and Good Food Plan.
- **Professor Fiona Gillison** is a Professor of Health Psychology and Deputy Director of the Centre for Motivation and Health Behaviour Change at the University of Bath.
- **Dr Charlotte Hardman** is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology and co-director of the Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Food Systems (CESFS) at the University of Liverpool.

The [members page](#) of the ACSS website has now been updated to reflect these changes. All 3 of our new members have joined the assurance working group. Additionally, Fiona has joined the KL2 group and Naomi has joined the WCI group.

### Secretariat resourcing

In September 2022, Carol Scott joined the SAC Admin Hub team. Carol will be the admin support for both the ACSS and Science Council, and will take over previous secretariat responsibilities such as managing the finances and expenses process and maintaining the website.

### Induction

On the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022, we held an induction event for our new ACSS members. The day included a personal welcome from Robin May (FSA's Chief

Scientific Advisor), an introduction to SERD and the ACSS, as well as an overview of each of the working groups and support functions provided by the secretariat and Admin Hub. The day was successful in giving our new members a warm welcome and sparked incredibly interesting discussions in the topics of food safety, insecurity, sustainability, and behaviour change. Thank you to those members who took part in the event.

## **Working Group Updates**

- **Assurance:** The group continues to support the Gateway process and has completed work on the QAT (quality assurance toolkit). This is now being rolled out within social science and will be published on the ACSS website in due course.
- **Kitchen Life 2:** The group continues to support the innovative, cross-cutting, and multi-disciplinary research project. Some members are attending a behavioural interventions workshop later this month, which aims to develop effective, relevant, and realistic hypothesis for intervention utilising the behavioural insights captured during the study. Following this, the working group will have an input into a handbook of interventions.
- **Wider Consumer Interests:** The group are currently conducting an external review on the Consumer Insight Tracker review to support the commission of the tracker for the new year while continuing to guide the Wider Consumer Interests research programme.
- **Economic support working group:** Members have consulted with the FSA Chief Economist on the programme of economic projects planned for this FY and reviewed monthly updates of significant work. The group meet quarterly to review the economic portfolio and discuss monthly updates.
- **Climate Change and Consumer Behaviour:** After fulfilling its initial aims, the group is paused whilst strategic need is considered.

## **SAC Review**

The self-assessment stage has been completed and results published [here](#). The external reviewers for the deep review (that both the ACSS and Science Council are subject to as both were created since the last review cycle) have been appointed and will be announced w/c 14<sup>th</sup> November. Outcomes of the deep review are expected to be published in June 2023.

## **SSEG collaboration**

The ACSS chair and secretariat team have been liaising with the social science subgroup of DEFRA's Science Committee. The Social Science Expert Group (SSEG) are meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November and the ACSS chair and secretariat team will attend to outline the aims of the ACSS and explore options for collaborative working.

### **Upcoming ACSS Events**

- 15<sup>th</sup> November: Assurance Gateway session
- 22<sup>nd</sup> November: KL2 Behavioural Interventions Workshop
- 23<sup>rd</sup> November: Defra SSEG Plenary meeting
- 8<sup>th</sup> December: Assurance Gateway session
- 23<sup>rd</sup> January: Assurance QA Toolkit review meeting
- 24<sup>th</sup> January: Economics working group meeting
- 2<sup>nd</sup> February: 10<sup>th</sup> ACSS Plenary Meeting

## **Social Science Update**

- **All-island Food Poverty Network conference in Belfast:** In September, we presented findings drawn from Food and You 2: Wave 4 and the [UK Public's Interests, Needs and Concerns around food](#) research on levels of food insecurity and the challenges people are facing in relation to food affordability.
- **Consumer views on Precision breeding:** Our survey of [consumer views on precision bred foods](#) was published last month, and found that knowledge of precision bred (PB) food was low. When asked if they had heard of PB, and before a definition was provided, only 8% of participants said they had heard of it and knew what it was. Once a definition of PB foods had been provided to respondents, there was a soft level of support for PB products being on sale in the UK with 50% of participants saying yes PB products should be for sale. We are currently conducting qualitative deliberative forums to understand the reason behind views on PB and views of the FSA's proposed regulatory framework.
- **Food and You 2:** [Results from Wave 4](#) of our flagship Food and You 2 survey were published in August 2022. In Wave 4 we continued to monitor

consumers' concerns about food, food security, and trust in food and the FSA. We also introduced new questions on sustainable food shopping and eating behaviour, perceptions of meat alternatives and awareness of GM and GE food. This report presents findings from wave 4 only; a separate report presenting trends between 2020 and 2022 will be published in the new year.

- **Food Sensitive study wave 2:** The second wave of our survey with food hypersensitive consumers which looks at factors that impact on quality of life has been published. Like wave 1 more severe conditions and having to check information frequently impacted negatively on quality of life. While feeling comfortable asking for information and confidence in information had a positive impact [Food Sensitive Study: Wave Two Survey | Food Standards Agency](#).
- **Consumer Insights tracker:** We recently published our latest findings from the [consumer insights tracker](#) which monitors key trends on consumer behaviour and attitudes in relation to food insecurity, food availability, consumer concerns in relation to food, confidence in the food supply chain and confidence in the Food Standards Agency (FSA) as a regulator. The latest data shows an overall increase in measures of food insecurity. Going forwards, we will be publishing this data monthly. The tracker is currently undergoing a review, supported by the wider consumer interests working group. Utilising stakeholder interviews, the review will provide actionable insights to the FSA on the purpose, aims, scope, content, outputs and methodology of the consumer insights tracker. These insights will also help the FSA to appoint a suitable contractor for the project going forwards.
- **Kitchen Life 2:** The pilot study, with 2 domestic and 2 commercial kitchens, was completed in July 2021. The literature review, which was used to inform the scope of the research, has been published on the [FSA website](#). Fieldwork for the final wave (wave 5) is almost complete; filming has finished and only a few interviews remain. The FSA is awaiting an updated dashboard that contains all waves of fieldwork. Secondary analysis into food waste behaviours has just begun, and a workshop has been scheduled in November to explore behavioural interventions using the findings from the main study

and from the secondary analysis. All research is on track to complete by the end of the financial year. The FSA have just appointed a PhD student with Leeds University Business School, to deliver analysis on the FSA's observational Kitchen Life 2 study and flagship surveys exploring the 'say-do-gap'.

- **Citizen Science:** The 6 projects funded by the joint FSA/UKRI funding call are progressing well and due to report by the end of the FY. The programme of work is being coordinated by the social science team with each project allocated an FSA lead in an appropriate part of the FSA Science Directorate. On the 20<sup>th</sup> October, FSA partnered with UKRI and the Institute for Community Studies, to host an event exploring [Citizen Science in Policy and Practice](#). There was high interest and attendance, with guest speakers such as NASA's citizen science lead, [Dr Marc Kuchner](#), and [Professor Tim Spector](#), cofounder of the ZOE health project.
- **Wider Consumer Interests:** We are working with Hannah Lambie-Mumford and Rachel Loopstra to undertake a stakeholder and evidence mapping exercise on household food insecurity, to identify the available evidence and gaps in the evidence base in this space. We will collate data from and connect with other government departments, academic and other wider civil society organisations, and this will inform our approach to future collaborations and research priorities around household food insecurity. We are planning to host a workshop in early 2023, although the scope and invite list will be determined in mid-December once we have identified emerging gaps.
- **Recent publications:**
  - [Food and You 2 Wave 4](#) (Aug 22)
  - [Handwashing Tracker](#) (Aug 22)
  - [Survey of public attitudes towards precision breeding](#) (Sept 22)
  - [Food Sensitive Study: Wave Two Survey](#) (Sept 22)
  - [Evaluation Action Plan](#) (Sept 22)
  - [Consumer Insights Tracker](#) (Oct 22)

- [Qualitative research to explore consumer attitudes to food sold online](#) (Oct 22)

- **Upcoming Publications:**

- Consumer Insights Tracker (Nov 22)
- Optimising evidence (Nov 22)
- Food and You 2 Wave 4: FHRS secondary report (Nov 22)
- Food and You 2 Wave 4: Northern Ireland secondary report (Nov 22)
- Online Supermarket behavioural trial (Nov 22)
- Allergen communication behavioural trial (Nov 22)
- Hand hygiene behavioural trial (Nov 22)
- Exploring food behaviours in the UK student population (Jan 23)
- Veganuary report and sustainable diets trial (Jan 23)
- Food and You 2 – Wave 5 (Feb 23 TBC)

## Other News

- **New Areas of Research Interest (ARIs):** The FSA's Areas of Research Interest (ARI) are research questions we want to address to promote and protect public health by ensuring that UK consumers are well informed and have sustainable access to foods which are safe, traceable, and properly labelled. Our [2022 ARIs have been updated](#) to align with the FSA Strategy 2022-2027, and have new elements around 'food that is healthier and more sustainable,' alongside the established pillars of 'food is safe' and 'food is what it says it is'. Several new key interests to note include:
  - Our exit from the EU and push for wider international trade has further highlighted how we need to understand the role of trade and international differences in production systems and food standards.
  - An emerging research interest concerns the impact of Household food insecurity and other disparities on the consumer and food system.

Following the new 'third pillar' of the FSA's strategy, another key research interest is surrounding the necessary transition to more healthy and sustainable diets, and the impact on the UK food system, including food security, safety and standards.