

# **Paper 10.6 FSA Analytics Unit Update (February 2023)**

## **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 for Analysis and Insight, until the end of March. She will lead three teams who together form the Analysis Unit:
- Joanna Disson is acting Head of Social Science.
- Willem Roelofs joined in August as Head of Analytics, comprising Operational Research, Economics and Statistics teams.
- Greg Wasinsky leads the Strategic Insights team.
- Whilst AU is comprised of different analytical professions, we are always seeking to develop a more interdisciplinary approach to our work to maximise capacity, capability and impact. For example, we will be training social researchers in how to better support economists in their delivery of Impact Assessments.
- As we move to more holistic Analysis and Insight function, we are keen for the ACSS to also increasingly support FSA analysis as a whole. We welcome the views of ACSS on this.

- Additionally, we are currently drafting a Capability Plan for FSA Science which identifies 3 key issues and associated actions we can take towards: (1) creating capacity to respond to increased and urgent demand for science with limited resource; (2) deepening and broadening our access to evidence and maximise the use of external capability and (3) building the impact and value of FSA Science.
- A key challenge for the next financial year is how we ensure we continue to deliver good quality evidence that meets the needs of the FSA, with reduced budget and with increased pressure on staff to support delivery of priority work e.g.: Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill and the Target Border Operating Model for import controls.
- The review of the FSA social science function against the Government Social Research code is near to completion (draft report due end of January). As an addendum to the Civil Service Code, the GSR Code sets out specific principles to guide the work and behaviour of government social researchers. Adherence to the Code ensures high quality social research and analysis for government that is rigorous, relevant and valued.

## **Project updates**

- Precision breeding (PB): Findings from the second phase of the consumer research have now been delivered by Ipsos and are being reviewed by the FSA. We expect to publish the final report in early 2023. To date, the core findings are that awareness of PB is low and there are a range of concerns about potential benefits and disbenefits expressed, with key benefits cited around sustainability and climate change, and key concerns around the unknown long-term impact on human health and the environment. While there are a range of views many consumers feel that, providing they are carefully regulated, PB organisms' potential benefits may outweigh the risks. To maintain trust, consumers in the workshops wanted strict regulation, through testing, and transparency on decision making, funding and which foods are PB.

- [Food and You 2](#): Findings from Wave 4 were published in August 2022. This included findings from new questions added to capture views on sustainable diets and meat alternatives.
- Wave 5 fieldwork is complete, and the report will be published in early 2023. We will also be publishing the first trend report (looking at trends between Waves 1-4) after Wave 5. Wave 6 fieldwork is underway and due to report in summer 2023.
- The retendering process has now been completed and Ipsos UK have been awarded the new contract to deliver Waves 7-14 of Food and You 2.
- Daniel Mensah joined the Analytics Unit in September as a Statistical Research Fellow supporting the delivery of the FSA's flagship Food and You 2. Daniel will be embedded within the Analytics Unit full time for a period of two years, with supervisory support from the University of Warwick.
- Kitchen Life 2: All 5 waves of fieldwork are now complete; with a total of 31 food businesses and 30 households taking part in the research. With data collection complete, we have now moved into the analysis and reporting stages of the project.
- The project recently won the award for Innovative Methods at the Analysis in Government Awards. Professor Sir Ian Diamond [announced](#) the winner on the 19th January. This success makes the project eligible to win the People's Choice award, this is decided by open vote, which can be cast [here](#). Additionally, the project team was shortlisted (in November 2022), for the Best Use of Data and Technology Award at the Civil Service awards.
- In November 2022, the FSA project team led a behavioural interventions workshop in collaboration with Basis Social, where a range of experts gathered to explore the findings from the KL2 project and identify 'problem' and 'target' behaviours for the development of hypotheses for behavioural

interventions. Attendees included FSA stakeholders, Basis Social, members of the ACSS KL2 working group and a range of academics and NGOs with specialist expertise in risk perception, food safety, behaviour change and food waste practices (for example, WRAP, Hubbub and representatives from Leeds University and Cardiff Met University).

- Our current plans for reporting include a range of outputs for different stakeholder needs. This will include raw data and user guides, behavioural interventions handbook, tailored reports for our risk assessment and policy colleagues and a visual presentation of the key findings. First drafts of the key reports are expected from the contractor by the end of January 2023. All outputs will be finalised before the end of the financial year (March 2023). We will also be working with Dr Gulbanu Kaptan from Leeds University Business school to develop academic publications. We will be working with our communications team to develop a tailored communication and dissemination plan for this project.
- In October 2022, the PhD studentship with Leeds University Business school official began. Over 3.5 years, the studentship will primarily focus on the 'say-do' gap by exploring the differences between observed data from Kitchen Life 2 and self-reported data from other FSA data sources (particularly Food and You 2).
- 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:
- Our Communications message testing research is complete and will be published in the first quarter on 2023. 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.

- School Food Standards (SFS): The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Department for Education (DfE) have launched a joint project to design and test a new approach for local authorities in England in assuring and supporting compliance with the SFS will launch as a pilot in September 2022. The School Food Standards (SFS) are designed to help children and young people in schools in England to eat a nutritious diet and develop healthy eating habits. They are mandatory for all maintained schools, with school governing boards responsible for ensuring the standards are met. The pilot will test whether it is possible for Food Safety Officers (FSOs) to ask questions and make observations related to the SFS to identify possible non-compliance, flagging this with the appropriate teams within local authorities (LAs) to instigate intervention or support.
- One of the steers from the Board in June 22 was to expand our work exploring household food insecurity (HHFI). As part of the Programme, we are working with University of Sheffield and Liverpool University to undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise, in order to identify the available evidence (and gaps in the evidence base) on household food insecurity. The Review is led by ACSS member Hannah Lambie-Mumford and Rachel Loopstra (University of Liverpool). This piece of work will give the FSA an up to date understanding of the household food insecurity data and evidence held by external stakeholders (government, academia and civil society) to help inform FSA's approach to future collaborations and research priorities. It will also help to inform FSA's understanding of the field and their potential contribution to it (how/why it is relevant to their remit and what their potential contribution could be).
- Consumer Insights Tracker: The Consumer Insights Tracker is now being published every month, using a bulletin-style reporting. Bulletins dating back to April 2022 are [available on our website](#). In September 2022, FSA Social Science project team requested support from the WCI Working Group to carry out an independent review of the Consumer Insights Tracker. Professor Spencer Henson is leading the review, which will provide a recommendations report to the FSA leads in February/March 2023. The review will seek stakeholder views using interviews, and provide recommendations on the purpose, aims, scope, content, outputs, and methodology of the Consumer Insights tracker. Interim findings from the review indicate that the tracker is

highly valued and used by FSA stakeholders. We will recommission the contract for the Consumer Insights tracker in due course and will be seeking support from the WCI ACSS Working Group when drafting the Invitation to Tender (ITT) and when evaluating suppliers.

- Optimising evidence: We recently published a [set of guiding principles](#) for researchers and research commissioners on how to effectively generate and translate evidence to food policymakers and practitioners. The principles, which were developed by the University of York in partnership with the University of Hertfordshire, were informed by an evidence review as well as interviews and workshops with food policymakers in local and national government, and practitioners working in a range of organisations. We are exploring how to embed these principles into our work across the Science and Evidence Directorate within FSA.
- Behavioural Insight: We are continuing our programme of work on behavioural insight including finalising the reporting of our behavioural trials. The trials will be published in academic journals, as well as on the FSA website. We are also engaging in proactive dissemination of findings through presenting at conferences and to other government departments. In addition, we are actively involved in the Evaluation Accelerator Fund (EAF) Food System Trials. This is 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. It is being delivered by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and funded by a number of government departments. The contract has recently been awarded to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, with the Universities of Hertfordshire, Liverpool, Birmingham, Warwick, LSHTM, and Nesta. The next step is to work with the contractor and other government departments to identify the trials that will be run.
- Citizen science: The 6 [FSA/UKRI funded citizen science projects](#) are progressing to schedule, and hope to publish a package of reports in spring 2023. On the 20th October the FSA and UKRI hosted a joint event entitled 'Citizen Science for Policy and Practise' showcasing the range of citizen science applications, and providing development and networking opportunities for those with an interest in the approach. The event was a success with over 200 attendees.

- Food fraud prevention: Research to learn from strategies aiming to prevent crime, particularly food fraud, in other countries and organisations, in order to provide recommendations for the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU). A literature review and expert interviews, both domestic and international, are underway for delivery in Spring 2023.
- Cost of Food Crime (CoFC) Phase 2: This research builds on the conceptual framework developed in Phase 1 – The Cost of Food Crime report, by constructing a prototype functioning model and database that will allow the FSA to test the feasibility of being able to capture the full range of impacts that food crime has on the UK economy.
- The Economic and Societal Burden impact of living with a Food Hypersensitivity (FHS) in the UK: Two research reports commissioned by the FSA which helps understand what it is like for people living with a Food Hypersensitivity has now been published. The first study - Estimating the Financial Costs to Individuals with a Food Hypersensitivity (FHS) - looked at the additional financial burden faced by people with FHS. The research is the first study of its kind in the UK, and specifically focused on costs associated with grocery shopping, eating out, time off work and the time invested in researching labels, meal preparation etc. The second study - Impacts of Food Hypersensitivities on Quality of Life (QoL) in the UK and Willingness to Pay (WTP) to remove those impacts – led by the University of Manchester, complements the first study by going beyond the scope of the financial costs research and valuing the intangible -- the quality-of-life impacts affecting people living with FHS. The research essentially involves getting individuals living with a food allergy, coeliac disease or food intolerance, to put a monetary value on how much they are willing to pay to live without the inconvenience, anxiety and pain caused by their conditions.
- Economic and Social Impacts of Chemical Contaminants and Toxins in relation to food: The FSA continues to work with the University of Exeter through a Research Fellowship 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 Chemical Contaminants and Toxins 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 surveys were also designed to check how the different behaviours seen during COVID-19 impact IID. The final report is due in a few weeks. FSA analysts are producing supplementary analysis on the association of IID with different behaviours. This has been delayed slightly due to staff turnover and other priorities. We currently intend to publish both reports at the same time.

## **Published Research (August 2022 - Jan 2023):**

- [Food and You 2 Wave 4](#) (Aug 22): Between October 2021 and January 2022, 5,796 adults across England, Wales and Northern Ireland took part in Wave 4 of Food and You 2. Topics covered included concerns about food, food security, eating out and takeaways, eating at home and food shopping: sustainability and environmental impact.
- [Handwashing Tracker](#) (Aug 22): Between April 2020 and January 2022, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) commissioned a quarterly survey on consumer handwashing. This report summaries the latest findings from the tracker survey, providing commentary on key changes between the first and final waves of the quarterly handwashing tracker (April 2020 to January 2022).
- [Survey of public attitudes towards precision breeding](#) (Sept 22)
- A survey of over 4,000 consumers in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland covering awareness and views on precision breeding.
- [Food Sensitive Study: Wave Two Survey](#) (Sept 22)



- [Evaluation Action Plan](#) (Sept 22) To meet a requirement of Spending Review 2021, the FSA developed and published an Evaluation Action Plan. This document describes the FSA's vision and overarching goals for evaluations, our approach to identifying and prioritising areas for evaluation activity and our use of evaluation results.
- [Consumer Insights Tracker](#) (monthly updates published dating back to April 2022): The Consumer Insights tracker is a monthly survey run by Ipsos UK. The tracker monitors 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 FSA. This data is now published monthly.
- [Qualitative research to explore consumer attitudes to food sold online](#) (Oct 22): Qualitative research to understand consumer attitudes towards purchasing food online, including the perceived risks of doing so. The research captured attitudes on purchasing from social media platforms, online aggregators, food sharing apps and online from food businesses (typically those who also have a physical premises).
- [Food and You 2 Wave 4: Food Hygiene Rating Scheme \(FHRS\) secondary report](#) (Nov 22): This report presents findings relating to the FHRS from Wave 4 of the Food and You 2 survey.
- [Food and You 2 Wave 4: Northern Ireland secondary report](#) (Dec 22): This report presents Northern Ireland specific findings from wave 3 and 4 of the Food and You 2 survey.
- [Promoting healthy and sustainable diets: How to effectively generate and translate evidence](#) (Dec 22): A set of eight guiding principles for increasing evidence adoption into policy and practice, informed by a rapid evidence review and interviews, co-creative workshops and interviews with food policymakers and practitioners.
- [Impacts of Food Hypersensitivities \(FHS\) on Quality of Life in the UK and Willingness to Pay \(WTP\) to remove those impacts](#) (Dec 22): The research

elicits willingness to pay (WTP) values from individuals living with a food allergy, coeliac disease or food intolerance, to put a monetary value on how much they are willing to pay to remove their FHS.

- [Estimating financial cost to individuals with a food hypersensitivity](#) (Dec 22): the study quantifies and monetises the financial burden imposed on households with FHS through the day-to-day management of the physical risks associated with food allergies, food intolerance and coeliac disease.
- [Exploring food behaviours in the UK student population](#) (Jan 23): Mixed methods research to explore food safety behaviours and levels of food insecurity amongst UK higher education students.

## **Upcoming Publications:**

- Consumer Insights Tracker (monthly publications)
- Veganuary report and sustainable diets trial (Feb 23)
- Consumer perceptions of precision breeding (Feb 23)
- Online Supermarket behavioural trial (Feb 23)
- Allergen communication behavioural trial (Feb 23)
- Hand hygiene behavioural trial (Feb 23)
- Food and You 2 – Wave 5 (Feb 23 TBC)
- Survey of Infectious Intestinal Disease (IID) during COVID-19 (Mar 23 TBC)
- Kitchen Life 2 (Spring 2023 TBC)

- Cost of Food Crime Phase 2 (Spring 2023 TBC)