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## Agriculture in Aberdeenshire

### Challenges for the Future



# Content

- **Food Standards Agency in Scotland**
- **Agriculture in Aberdeenshire – looking to the future**
- **Food Safety**



# Food Standards Agency

- FSA – UK-wide non Ministerial government department operating in a devolved area
- In Scotland, FSA is accountable to the Scottish Parliament via Health Ministers. Rural Affairs Ministers also take a close interest in much of the work of FSA
- FSA in Scotland is funded from the Scottish budget



# Food Standards Agency - constitution

- Independent Board, discusses policy in public
- Board has a Chair and currently 12 other members, including two Scottish members
- FSA advised by a range of committees, including the statutory Scottish Food Advisory Committee
- Strategic Plan for 2010-15 currently being finalised following extensive consultation



# Food Standards Agency - constitution

- FSA executive – London HQ and offices in Aberdeen, Belfast and Cardiff
- Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) – an Executive Agency of FSA operating across GB. York HQ, plant staff working across GB
- FSA Chief Executive and 8 Directors, plus Chief Executive of MHS
- FSA and MHS will merge from April 2010



# Food Standards Agency - purpose:

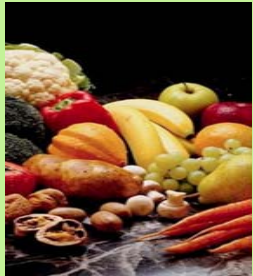
- to provide advice and information to the public and to Government on food safety, from farm to fork, and on nutrition and diet
- to protect consumers through effective food safety enforcement and monitoring



# Food Standards Agency

Vision: Safe food and healthy eating for all

Values: Putting the consumer first



Openness and independence

Science and evidence based



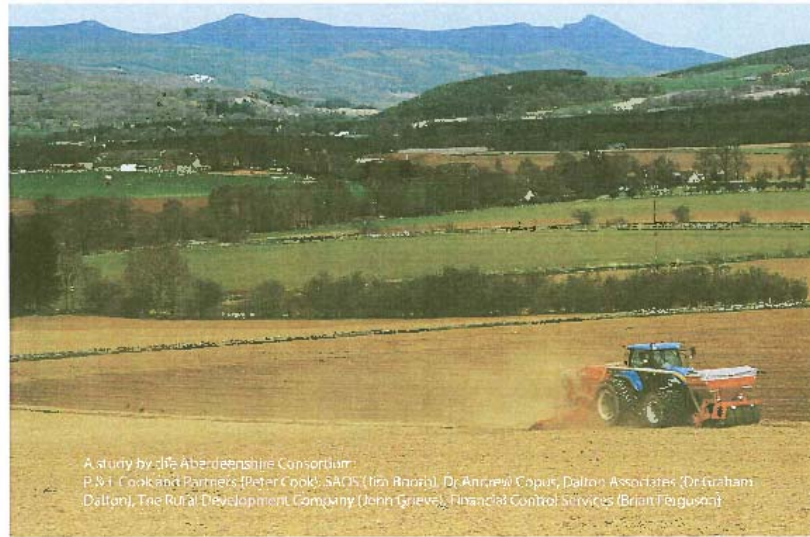
A study for NESAG,  
Aberdeenshire  
Council and  
Scottish Enterprise  
November 2009

Summary Document

# Agriculture in Aberdeenshire looking to the future



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A study by the Aberdeenshire Consortium:  
P & L Cook and Partners (Peter Cook), SACOS (Iain Brown), Dr Andrew Copus, Dalton Associates (Dr Graham Dalton), The Rural Development Company (John Grievie), Financial Control Services (Brian Ferguson)



# 'Agriculture in Aberdeenshire – Looking to the Future'

- Common interests in the meat sector identified as high priority
  - including waste costs, 5<sup>th</sup> quarter and regulatory costs.
- Also good opportunity today for us to look at some wider issues
  - food safety
  - working together for consumer protection.
- Strong agricultural sector is dependent on consumer confidence and trust in the food supply.



# Waste Costs and Fifth Quarter - closely related

- FSA/MHS supportive of QMS-led initiative on 5<sup>th</sup> quarter - works with individual plants to facilitate this trade, e.g. advising and approving plants processing tripe for export.
- Mesenteric fat – currently classed as SRM due to association with bovine intestine and lymph nodes. Industry wishes to harvest mesenteric fat – has potential value, whereas currently costs plants in waste disposal as SRM.



# EC Regulation



- EC TSE Regulation - SRM controls are in place to protect public health and animal health from risks of TSEs.
- TSE Roadmap
- SRM and other public health controls – Health Ministers and CMOs take close interest in any reviews of existing controls.
- EFSA risk assessment expected on casings made from bovine intestine
  - FSA will consider risk assessment and EC's reaction re. next steps



# FSA Regulatory Costs



## Charging for Official Controls

Tierney Report to FSA Board (2007) – key recommendations

- Reduce the costs of delivering official controls – MHS Transformation
- Increase the level of cost recovery from industry, to reduce the MHS budget deficit
  - FSA Board view is these should run in parallel
- Meanwhile, work to review system of Official Controls at EU level



# MHS Transformation



- MHS gross costs (GB) reduced by 19% in real terms between 2006/07 and 2008/09.
- MHS costs reduced in 2008/09 by £9.0m from 2007/08, (Scotland £1.1m).
- FTE headcount (GB) cut from 2,024 in 2006/07 to 1,614 in 2008/09 – 410 staff (20%) – 319 frontline and 91 management/admin posts. Further reductions planned.
- Scotland – MHS staff reduction of 48 (20%) from 2006/07 to 2008/09, from 237 to 189.38 ops staff and 10 management/admin.
- Modernisation funded directly with £12.2m, and accelerated through the use of additional £6.6m from savings against budget from normal operations.
- A new operations management team is in place.
- MHS have re-set their relationship with OV suppliers and raised expectations of their capability.
- MHS more e-enabled, has less bureaucracy, reduced overheads, no regional offices, better data and more information exchange.



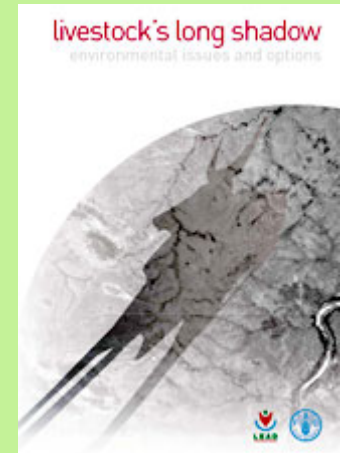
# MHS Charges to Industry



- Obligated under EC law to charge for official controls in certain meat plants (e.g. slaughterhouses, cutting plants, approved wild game plants).
- Support to industry through Maclean subsidy - £190m in GB since 2001, Scotland £23m.
- Annual net cost of operations (subsidy) 2008/09 ~ £36m GB, ~ £3m Scotland
- April 2009 – FSA Board considered a trajectory for reducing this to £10m by 2014-15 – to consider more detailed proposals from the executive.
- FSA needs to spend its budget across all strategic priorities.
- New charging system due at end September – based on time costs – aims to encourage FBOs to make more efficient use of MHS time – use of ‘Business Agreements’.
- To date, no charge increases for 2009-10 – if plants have the same throughput and same requirements for MHS time as 2008-09, charges should remain at 2008-09 levels.
- EC commenced discussions with Member States on reviewing charging arrangements for Official Controls – FSA/MHS contributing.



# Wider Considerations



- FAO Report – *Livestock's Long Shadow* (2006)
  - global production of meat predicted to double by 2050
  - environmental impact per unit of meat – to be cut by half to avoid further environmental damage?
  - livestock considered as one of top 3 most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems
- Sustainability: environmental, economic, social
- Food security

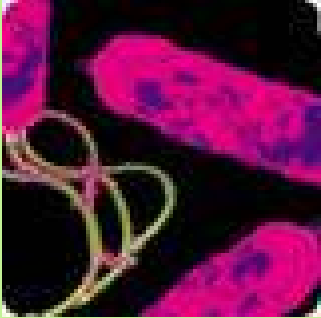


# Local Pressures

- Livestock numbers are in decline in Scotland and across UK.
- Decline is contributing to over-capacity in the slaughtering sector.
- Will current high prices encourage farmers to keep more breeding stock for the longer-term, or conversely to make short-term gains whilst prices are good?
- Geographic constraints



# Food Safety



Underpins all that we do – critical for consumer confidence and trust.

All parts of supply chain and relevant public bodies must fulfil their responsibilities.

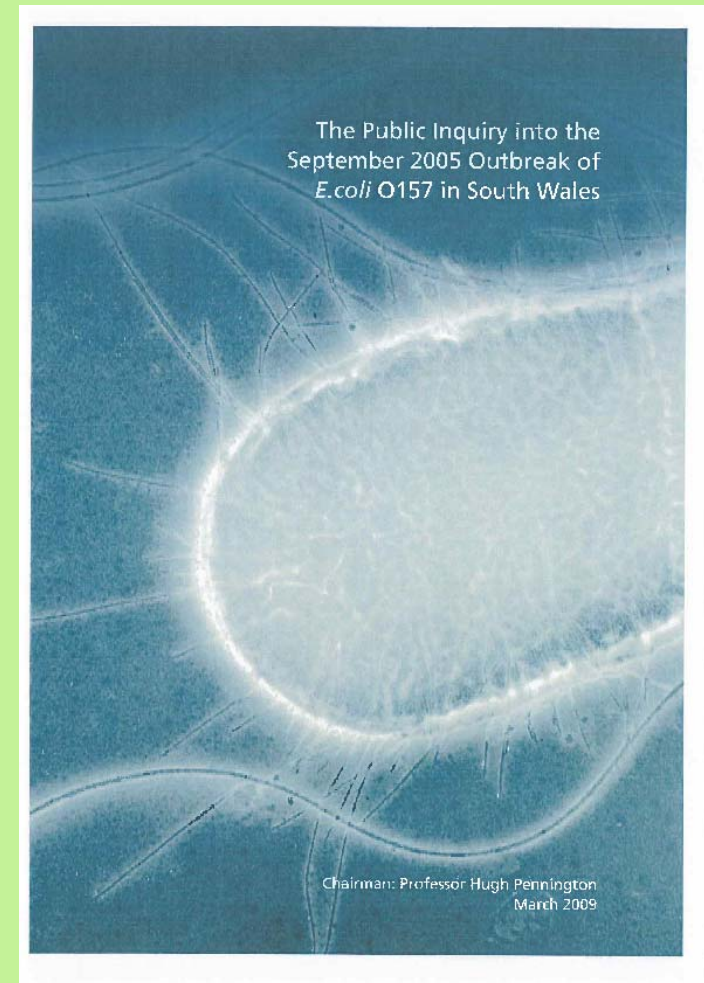


- 'Pennington 2' report
- Russian audit of fishery premises
- FSA Focussed audit of approved premises



# 'Pennington 2'

- 'Pennington 2' report into the E. coli O157 outbreak in South Wales 2005 – published in March 2009
- Responsibility for the outbreak falls squarely on the shoulders of the FBO
- Inquiry also found widespread failures in food safety regulation and enforcement
- Serious flaws also identified in the public sector procurement of food – where consumers are often at greater risk of food poisoning e.g. young children, the elderly



# Next Steps

- 2005 outbreak was in Wales, but FSA looking at the recommendations across UK - Food Hygiene Delivery Programme Board established to act on a UK basis – all pathogens, all foods.
- FSA needs to work more effectively with food enforcement bodies to ensure higher levels of compliance and reductions in food poisoning
- Will require guidance and training to be better directed, and to encourage more effective, rigorous, consistent and sustained interventions by enforcement officers.



# Russian audit of fishery premises

- Russians audited Scottish premises exporting fish to Russia – February 2008
- Audit findings – led to prohibition on exports from all but 3 Scottish plants exporting fish to Russia
- Meeting in Moscow – June 2008
- Programme agreed to address deficiencies
- Re-audited – November 2008
- Trade recommenced – January 2009



# FSA focussed audit of premises approved by LAs

- FSA audit programme 2004-08 - majority of LAs had non conformity re. lack of detail about approved establishments.
- Audit - 15 LA visits and 30 'reality checks' at premises from February to June 2009
- A further 35 files were also examined
- Circulated to all Scottish LAs at end August, and published on FSA website.



# Findings and Next Steps

- Excellent cooperation from all LAs
- Identified areas of good practice as well as a number of deficiencies.
- Issues also for FSA to address – this is underway.
- Letter to Heads of Service re. need to review enforcement at approved establishments and taking action to ensure no similar non-compliances.
- FSA has invested considerably in HACCP training for Enforcement Officers and businesses.
- Whilst the primary responsibility for food safety lies with FBOs, enforcement is important for improving compliance.
- Need evidence that where there are clear non-compliances, that these are addressed using the enforcement options available.



We all want a vibrant and sustainable food and agriculture sector - building on the many strengths highlighted in your report - but food safety is essential to support this vision, and none of us want 'Pennington 3'.

Thank you.

