

# COLLABORATIVE FOOD SAFETY FORUM

## Enhancing Early Outbreak Investigations Information-sharing and Response

### The UK Scoping Group Process

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# Food Standards Agency

- Established 1 April 2000 by Act of Parliament
- UK-wide body
- Non-ministerial Department
- Responsible for all aspects of food safety and standards



# Food Standards Agency

- FSA has no enforcement powers
- Enforcement carried out by Local Authority Officers
- Instruction and direction given by FSA after risk assessment of information



# European Regulations

- Food safety legislation largely derives from European Directives
- These are implemented into law via national Regulations
- Regulation (EC) 178/2002
- Published 28 January 2002
- Articles 14-20 applied throughout European Union from 1 January 2005





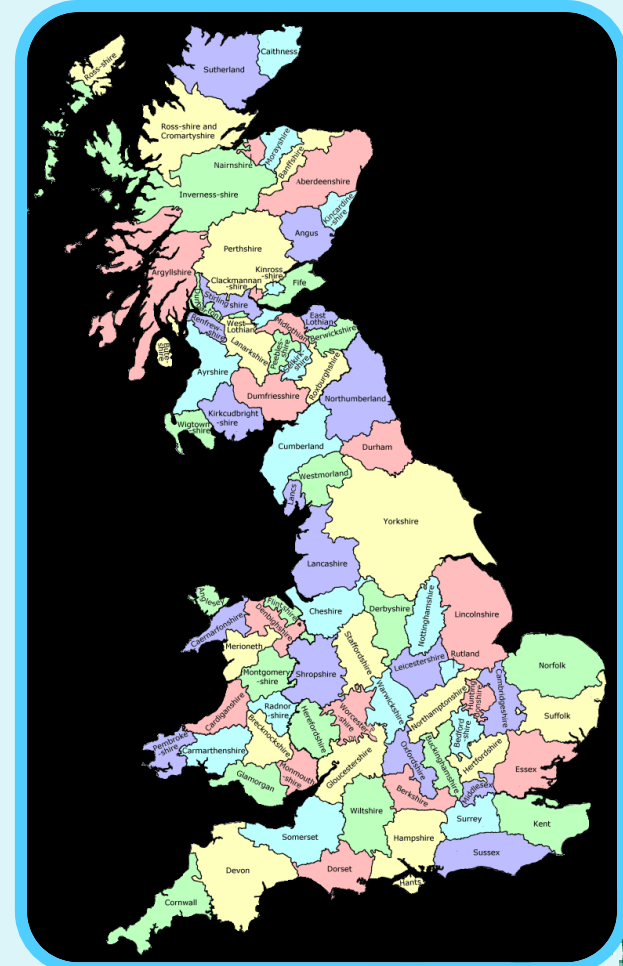
# UK General Food Law

- Article 14 outlines food safety requirements and states that food shall not be placed on the market if it is *unsafe*.
- Food is considered to be *unsafe* if it is:
  - *injurious to health or*
  - *unfit for human consumption*



# UK Counties

- Divided into Counties
- Further divided into Local Authorities.
- 465 Local Authorities in UK
- Responsible for enforcing food law.



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# Scoping Group Meetings

## Definition of an Incident

- An incident is any event, where based on information available, there are concerns about actual or suspected threats to the safety or quality of food that could require intervention to protect consumers interests.





# Scoping Group Meetings

## Scoping Group Definition

Scoping Groups are intended to **gather** information to be used as a valuable component of the risk assessment process, to inform subsequent risk management processes.





# When To Use Scoping Groups

During incidents, particularly high level incidents when further information is required from food business operators and/or their representatives to:

- Inform the Agency risk assessment,
- Ensure relevant commercial stakeholders are aware,
- Identify cascade/ communication mechanisms available to trade including SMEs,
- Establish supply chain and distribution chain information



# Timing of a Scoping Group

- The Incident Manager determines when a Scoping Group is necessary
- The meeting should be held in the early stages of an incident
- This helps with incident management



# Membership

- Scoping Groups must be fit for purpose and adequate research is undertaken to invite appropriate FBOs,
- This will include FBOs listed on the FSA Stakeholder database with an interest in the area concerned
- Trade organisations, businesses directly involved
- Representatives from related businesses if they may have additional information, hauliers, freight clearance agents





# Membership

- Some FBOs have indicated that the presence of enforcement representatives, non Governmental organisations and media dissuades them from openly sharing commercially sensitive information with the FSA.
- Therefore in most cases a wider stakeholder meeting would be more appropriate for non - industry stakeholders.





# How a Meeting is Convened

- Membership is decided
- Incident Manager drafts a letter
- Details about the meeting subject are given
- Expectations of participants are outlined
- Logistics of the meeting are provided
- Usually called at short notice, as little as 2 hours notification.
- Letter is e-mailed and a follow up phone call is made
- Response requested

# Scoping Meeting Invite

- Food Standards Agency Scoping Group Meeting to discuss Dioxin Contamination of Pig and Poultry Feed in Germany
- To Interested Parties,
- The Food Standards Agency will be holding a scoping meeting at Aviation House on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January from 3.00 to 4.00 pm in room 403 to discuss and obtain information relating to the Dioxin Contamination of Pig and Poultry Feed in Germany and the implications of any further food destined for the UK market.
- This scoping group meeting is being held in line with the FSA Incident Response Protocol to obtain further information from food business operators. Invitations have been restricted to organisations and trade associations which we believe can provide appropriate information to us. Providing advice to companies on what to do is not one of the objectives of this meeting.

# Scoping Meeting Invite

- Depending on the outcome of our investigations it may be appropriate at a later date to hold a wider stakeholder meeting at which we would update attendees on the information the Agency has, in line with our openness policy.
- We expect all participants to contribute information to the discussion. If you are not comfortable with this please feel free to put any relevant information to us in an email.
- I would be grateful if you could let me know whether you are able to attend this meeting by 1:00 pm on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January by responding to this email. If you are unable to attend but are able to provide information please could you forward this to me by 14:00 Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January.
- If you are unable to attend the meeting in our headquarters offices in London arrangements can be made for participation via video links within our devolved offices.



# Benefits of Scoping Groups

- Large amounts of useful information can be obtained quickly
- Assists with risk management options
- Promotes partnership working
- Promotes trust
- Promotes consumer confidence





# Benefits of Scoping Groups

- Information gathered can be used again in similar situations
- This assists quick and rapid actions
- Trust is built between the FSA and stakeholders
- Trust leads to more comprehensive information being shared



# When Have Scoping Groups Been Used?

- Dioxin Contamination of Pig and Poultry Feed in Germany
- Salmonella contamination potentially associated with leeks and potatoes
- Cryptosporidium potentially associated with leafy green salad bags
- Botulism in commercially produced curry sauce

# Any Questions



Thank you for your kind  
attention

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