Q4- What mitigation strategies, including any monitoring approaches could be implemented to detect and prevent weather related food risk?

In this guide

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Regarding severe weather conditions (flooding, drought, heatwave), the workshop participants identified potential mitigation and monitoring activities. It was suggested that increased viral testing and general surveillance can aid early detection of weather-related outbreaks. It was also suggested that there is an increased need for parasite and virus surveillance in shellfish.

Expert decision systems and forecasting based on other countries that have experienced severe weather conditions may help guide preventative or responsive protocols. Using the Early Warning System (EWS) and monitoring the stability of the cold chain may also be helpful and a practical approach for mitigation. Monitoring of the cold chain can be extended to food businesses and retailers to ensure adherence to set standards. Increased genomic sequencing for antimicrobial resistance is another important strategy for monitoring how pathogens are adapting. Furthermore, a useful mitigation strategy for FSA to adopt would be a programme to enhance consumer awareness of pathogen growth in relation to higher temperatures, to encourage safe practices (e.g., monitoring refrigerator temperatures during a heatwave).

Q5- Members were asked to provide ideas to support research projects associated with the IID3 project, specifically low-cost, passive sampling methods for identifying the main causes of foodborne disease. Responses are described below:

1. Improving detection methods in samples i.e. metagenomics.
2. Partner with health apps to track gastrointestinal symptoms
3. Coupling meteorological data with surveillance data
4. Use of AI to integrate multiple sources of information.
5. Wastewater monitoring, extend to look for markers of different pathogens.
6. Link IID to national lab databases. IID3 specific to GP practices and geographic locations but could link to lab data to give more information.
7. Random retail surveys and link to IID3. Couple the data for source attribution.
8. Monitoring of feed and products for mycotoxins.
9. One health approach for IID3.
10. AMR surveillance including antifungal resistance.
11. Supplement the bowel cancer sampling protocol for additional tests such as genome sequencing.
12. Monitor the sale of anti-diarrhoeal medicine as an indicator of an outbreak.