

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD**DISCUSSION PAPER**

Background paper for ACMSF meeting, 29th January 2015, Manchester Conference Centre

The Food and You survey Wave 3

1. At the June 2014 ACMSF meeting, findings from the FSA's Kitchen Life study were presented. The package of work¹ which Kitchen Life was part of, providing evidence on domestic food safety practices, also includes the Food and You survey, and ACMSF members indicated an interest in hearing about the findings from the most recent wave of the survey.
2. Food and You is the FSA's flagship social survey of consumers' reported behaviours, attitudes and knowledge relating to food safety and other associated topics. The survey uses a random-probability sampling methodology to provide a robust representation of the UK population aged 16 and above living in private households. It is a biennial survey and, so far, waves have taken place in 2010, 2012 and, most recently, 2014. As a cross-cutting survey, Food and You is an important vehicle for monitoring progress against the Agency's strategic plan.
3. Food and You was conceived in 2008, when the Social Science Research Committee (SSRC) recommended that the FSA should develop a new survey to collect robust quantitative data on the public's reported behaviour, attitudes and knowledge relating to food issues. The introduction of the Food and You survey was further endorsed following the work that ACMSF and SSRC undertook to explore an increase in the incidence of listeriosis amongst those aged over 60.
4. Food and You is a face-to-face survey, with approximately 3,000 interviews conducted at each wave. Samples have been boosted in Scotland and Northern Ireland to 500 interviews at each wave to allow for further within country analysis. At Wave 3, for the first time, a sample boost to 500 interviews was also implemented in Wales. The overall UK response rate was 52% at Wave 3, similar to that at previous waves, and in line with other similar surveys.

¹ This package of work included an evidence review http://www.foodbase.org.uk/admintools/reportdocuments/700-1-1185_X04009_FINAL.pdf, the 'Kitchen Life' study http://www.foodbase.org.uk/admintools/reportdocuments/818-1-1496_KITCHEN_LIFE_FINAL_REPORT_10-07-13.pdf and endorsement of Food and You. This work was recommended by SSRC and ACMSF in response to their work following an increase in cases of listeriosis in those aged over 60 http://ssrc.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/mnt/drupal_data/sources/files/multimedia/pdfs/listeria.pdf ; <http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/committee/acmsflisteria.pdf>.

5. The survey covers a number of topics related to food issues. These include (at Wave 3) household information, eating habits, shopping, food safety, health, healthy eating (in Scotland and Northern Ireland) and general demographic information. While efforts have been made to maintain continuity in the questions asked across the waves, the survey has evolved with the changing responsibilities and priorities of the Agency².
6. Wave 3 headline findings for the UK were published as an Official Statistic in October 2014, followed by individual country findings for each of the four UK nations in December 2014. All findings (from the UK overall and individual countries) were reported in four bulletins: Eating, cooking and shopping; Food safety in the home; Eating outside the home; and Experience of food poisoning and attitudes towards food safety and food production. Two additional bulletins were published for each of Scotland and Northern Ireland (Advice on healthy eating; and Health and eating) as the FSA is responsible for nutrition policy in those countries.
7. The UK headline findings from Wave 3 of Food and You can be found at the following link: http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/food-and-you-2014-uk-bulletin-executive-summary_0.pdf. The presentation accompanying this paper will provide an overview of some of the key findings.
8. In order to realise further potential of the Food and You data, secondary data analysis has been commissioned to gain further insight and understanding than that revealed with initial data analysis. Previous secondary analysis of Waves 1 and 2 has been conducted to explore the links between domestic food safety practices and a variety of social variables (socio-demographic and socio-economic), and also associations between food safety and nutrition practices. As part of these pieces of work a composite measure of reported food safety behaviour – the Index of Recommended Practice (IRP) – has been developed. The IRP comprises 10 food safety behaviours which cover the ‘4 Cs’³ and date labelling, using 16 questions from the food safety module of Food and You. The index is a binary measure, with respondents scoring ‘1’ for each reported behaviour in line with recommended practice, and ‘0’ for each behaviour not in

² For example, when the first wave of the survey was developed in 2009, the FSA was responsible for both food safety and nutrition policy. Accordingly, the first wave of the survey asked questions relating to both these topics across the UK. In 2010 responsibility for nutrition policy was transferred to the Department of Health and the Welsh Government in England and Wales respectively, but remained the responsibility of the FSA in Scotland and Northern Ireland. The second and third waves of the survey therefore included an additional question module on healthy eating in Scotland and Northern Ireland, which was not asked of respondents in England and Wales. Further changes included the addition of a module on novel food production techniques at Wave 2, which is not included in either of the other two waves.

³ Cooking, chilling, cleaning, and avoiding cross-contamination

line with recommended practice. A higher IRP score indicates more reported food safety behaviours being in line with recommended practice.

9. A further secondary analysis project has now been commissioned to conduct additional analysis of the Waves 1-3 data. The research questions which will be explored as part of this analysis are currently being devised, and the process for this has included workshops with external academic social science experts, to ensure the analysis is evidence based and underpinned by academic literature. It is anticipated that 4 – 6 working papers will be published over the next year as part of this project.
10. Further detail on Food and You, including links to published reports, can be found at the following link: www.food.gov.uk/food-and-you

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January 2015