

# Annual Report 2021

# Food Safety Authority of Ireland

SAFE AND TRUSTWORTHY FOOD FOR EVERYONE



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## To The Minister for Health

The Board is pleased to submit to the Minister of Health its Annual Report and accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021, in accordance with Section 25 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998.

**Martin Higgins**

**Dr Pamela A Byrne**

Chairperson

Chief Executive Officer

# We protect consumers and raise compliance through partnership, science and food law enforcement

*Martin Higgins Pamela A. Byrne*



# 2021 in review

22 years of protecting consumer health and interests



59 Enforcement orders



171 Investigations



Staff continue to deliver through COVID-19 restrictions



227 Risk assessments



Maintained certification to the ISO 9001:2015 standard



13 Protected disclosures



Commitment to staff culture and inclusion



Publication of world-class research and guidance



Food Safety Consultative Council Open Meeting on food safety culture watched by almost 1,000 people



4,500 food supplements notified to the FSAI



775 Media outputs



154 Food alerts and food allergen alerts

## Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer's statement



Dr Pamela  
Byrne, FSAI  
Chief Executive  
Officer



Martin Higgins,  
FSAI  
Chairperson

During 2021, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland delivered a significant programme of work, designed to safeguard consumers. It was a year of opportunity and innovation for the Authority as it looked to continuously improve its structure, systems, and processes, despite the uncertain times it found itself in. The ongoing challenges of COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit and limited resources placed immense pressure on the Authority as it worked to achieve its vision of 'Safe and Trustworthy Food for Everyone'. Despite these challenges, the team in FSAI delivered a significant and valuable programme of work and continued to implement its 2019 – 2023 Strategy; food safety legislation was enforced with 59 Enforcement Orders served on food businesses and 154 food recalls and food allergen alerts were issued; food business queries were answered; 227 risk assessments on food and food ingredients were completed; and scientific reports were published. The Authority continued to implement relevant Brexit-related measures; produced guidance for its regulatory partners and food business operators; and carried out audits and investigations. Prioritising the protection of public health, was and will remain our core focus and ensuring the health and safety of the team was critical against the challenging backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. We would like to recognise our talented team for their enthusiasm and professionalism in achieving the FSAI's mission during 2021. Our people, the Board, our stakeholder committees, and our regulatory partners are essential cogs in a highly sophisticated and complex system of controls that enable the Authority to deliver on its legal mandate. Changes in that system, at any level, requires the Authority to be agile and flexible in its approach but at all times remaining focussed on our core mission of protecting people – their health and their interests when it comes to food. We would like to take this opportunity to commend them for their commitment to our mission despite the challenges they all faced throughout the year. We also recognise the food industry for their commitment to food safety in the face of the Pandemic and thereafter.

We are pleased to present the FSAI Annual Report and accounts for 2021. This report demonstrates the critical role the FSAI plays in the protection of the health of Irish people and those that consume Irish food in 180 markets across the world.

The FSAI continuously innovates to remain ahead of the curve through a combination of talented people, partnerships, cutting-edge science, timely data, regulatory powers, and compliance building activities to keep national food safety and authenticity at the forefront of the public health agenda. In our Annual Report, we would like to recognise the dedication, effort and passion demonstrated by each individual FSAI team member. Our team members are experts in their fields, and it is thanks to them that FSAI goals are achieved. We would also like to express our gratitude to our external partners. It is thanks to these committed individuals that we live in a country which is recognised as having one of the best food systems in the world.

As one of the world's very first food safety agencies, it is imperative that the FSAI continues to evolve using data and cutting-edge science. This protects consumers from the impact of unsafe and untrustworthy food being placed on the market. These data inform business decisions, reducing risks to public health. We would like to recognise our internal experts, the FSAI's Scientific Committee, as well as national and international food safety experts and scientists,

for their work, which informs national and international risk management decisions. The robust data, evidence and expertise they provide are vital to safeguarding public health.

Collaboration and teamwork are core FSAI values, and in order to fulfil our mission we work in partnership with the official agencies and other bodies, both nationally and internationally. The Authority is legally responsible for overseeing and harmonising Ireland's official food control system – from the farm gate to the consumer. This is formalised through service contracts with 30 individual State agencies in Ireland.

Through our policy engagements with our Government partners - the Departments of Health and Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and our service contracts with our regulatory partners – the Environmental Health Service Executive of the Health Service Executive, the food safety and laboratory team within the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine), the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, the Local Authority Veterinary Service, the Marine Institute, the State Laboratory, the HSE Laboratories and the National Standards Authority of Ireland; our resources are prioritised in line with the areas of highest risk to the public health. Our partners collective commitment to continuing to provide the resources to ensure Ireland has a strong system of food controls in place to support the Authority to achieve its mission is critical. We

will continue to work with them to identify improvements to the food control system thereby putting Ireland in an international leadership position for the provision of safe and trustworthy food for everyone.

The FSAI regulates and oversees a dynamic food industry, with the purpose of protecting public health and the interests of consumers. It provides guidance to the food industry in order to equip them with the best knowledge available to safeguard public health and ensure compliance with food law. Through data provided to us from the official inspection agencies, the FSAI identified a 3% increase in the number of food business operators in Ireland in 2020. Overall, in 2021 there were 1,727 more food business operators in Ireland compared with 2020.

The Authority and the official agencies are responsible for providing the evidence to demonstrate that the industry is fulfilling its legal obligations. This can involve: monitoring for chemical and microbiological contaminants; carrying out risk assessments on food hazards; auditing the food service sector, and managing food incidents related to issues that have occurred in Ireland or that have emerged from other EU Member States. The Authority audits Ireland's food safety system to ensure that it is robust and compliant with EU food safety legislation. These findings inform national and international decisions and policies that affect public health and well-being.

Having a data-led, independent, respected, and robust system of official controls in place has proven to be a tremendous asset. It is key to the underpinning of Ireland's societal health and well-being, and to entering new markets and maintaining existing markets. Our work in the management of food incidents is continuous. During 2021, the Authority issued 119 food alerts and 35 food allergen alerts, a slight decrease over 2020. It also dealt with 724 food incidents. The number of complaints from consumers about food or food premises, labelling, and allergens was higher than in 2020. In 2021, the Authority's Advice Line dealt with 4,718 requests from industry. Some of the most common queries were in relation to starting a food business, food supplements, food labelling requirements, and requests for FSAI publications.

Our close working relationships with those working in food safety nationally and internationally ensures that we can share, exchange and leverage critical information in a timely manner where there is a risk to consumers from food, either produced in Ireland or imported into Ireland. Partnerships with agencies such as the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland, Food Standards Scotland, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), and our counterparts in the EU and across the world enable us to access timely, accurate and robust information which helps us to maintain an evidence-based, world-class system of controls that stands up to scrutiny. In 2020, the FSAI co-founded the International Heads of Food

Agencies Forum with colleagues in the Saudi Food and Drug Authority, and the Food Standards Agency Australia New Zealand. This group continued to meet virtually in 2021. In addition, the FSAI continued in its role as Secretariat of the European Heads of Food Safety Agencies for the period 2020–2022. This, together with our participation at EU level, has enabled Ireland to play a key role in influencing food safety in the EU and further afield.

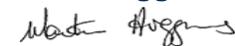
Our team in Corporate Affairs continued to support the Authority to do its job in 2021. And despite working remotely, the Authority continued a programme of work to enhance the Authority's inclusive, collaborative and high-performing culture in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also continued to provide personal and professional development opportunities for Authority staff. In addition, a new committee was set up to embed our approach to being a fair, equitable, and transparent organisation that values diversity and works to ensure all members of the team feel included in the important work we do. Core to this was the hard work and dedication of our staff committee groups that kept the organisation connected over the past year, through virtual book clubs; quizzes; coffee breaks; yoga and virtual relay races.

There is no market for unsafe food – if it is not safe, it is not food. Food safety must be a priority for everyone involved in Ireland's food system. Ireland is renowned internationally as a 'food island' supplying food to 180 markets across the world. Our reputation

globally of a producer of safe and trustworthy food relies on strong compliance with the law by food businesses and whilst the majority of Irish food businesses have a good food safety culture, there is no room for complacency as we continue to meet the challenges of ensuring food is safe in a globally trading food system, a global health pandemic, and a changing geopolitical landscape. The Board and the Executive would also like to recognise their colleagues who retired during the year, after giving many years of service to food safety - Ray Ellard, John Matthews and Dorothy Guinan Dornan. We would like to finally thank our colleagues in the Department of Health especially the Minister and the team in the Food Unit for their continued and unwavering support over 2021 and in managing the impact of Brexit.

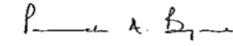
I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, TD; the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, TD; and the staff of their respective Departments. I would also like to thank our staff, Board members, the Scientific Committee, the Food Safety Consultative Council, and the industry fora as we work towards delivering our new strategy over the next 2 years.

**Martin Higgins**



Chairperson

**Dr Pamela A Byrne**



Chief Executive Officer

## An introduction to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland

**The Food Safety Authority of Ireland was established in 1998 under the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 as an independent Government agency responsible for the enforcement of food legislation in Ireland. This Act was enacted in July 1998 and came into effect on 1 January 1999.**

The Authority is a statutory, independent and science-based regulatory enforcement body dedicated to protecting public health and consumer interests in the areas of food safety, hygiene, integrity, and authenticity. It reports to the Minister for Health, who appoints a 10-member Board. It also has a 14-member Scientific Committee (also appointed by the Minister for Health) who assist and advise the Board. As a result, decisions relating to food safety, hygiene and integrity are made using the latest and best scientific advice and information available.

This ensures that people in Ireland, as well as consumers of Irish food in 180 countries across the world, have access to safe and trustworthy food. The FSAI takes all reasonable steps to make sure that

food consumed, produced, distributed or marketed in Ireland meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene reasonably available, and that food complies with legal requirements or, where appropriate, with recognised codes of good practice.

These activities are key to underpinning Ireland's societal health and economic growth.



### Supporting a healthy society and functioning economy

The basis of a healthy society and a functioning economy is healthy people making informed choices about the food they eat. *The Department of Health Statement of Strategy 2021-2023* recognises the importance of appropriate legal frameworks, forward-thinking policy and cohesive structures in order to achieve the highest standards of food safety possible and to achieve the Department of Health's overall objective of improving the health and well-being of people in Ireland.

Unsafe food can have short and long-term health effects, and this can impact considerably on quality of life. In addition,

the consequences of food poisoning can impact on the economy at a societal level through inability to work, as well as through healthcare and social welfare costs. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), unsafe food causes 600 million cases of foodborne diseases and 420,000 deaths each year. One in 10 people are thought to fall ill after eating contaminated food worldwide. It is estimated that 33 million years of healthy lives are lost, globally, each year due to eating unsafe food. In this way, a safer food supply means improvements in the quality of lives of people in Ireland through reduced illness rates, lower health and welfare costs, and increased economic productivity.

Food and drink manufacturing is the largest indigenous sector in Ireland, with an average annual turnover of €27.5 billion. According to the DAFM, employment in the agri-food sector

accounts for 7.7% of total employment in Ireland. It represents 6.7% of modified Gross National Income and 9.5% of total merchandising exports. Data from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) show that the food and beverages sector accounts for 19% of all industrial turnover and 21% of all manufacturing industry turnover.

Ireland exports about 90% of its food and drink production. Irish food and drink exports were worth €13.5 billion in 2021, which represents a 4% increase when compared with 2020. Exports of food and beverages increased by €4.9 billion (61%) between 2010 and 2020. Ireland maintains substantial market positions in the United Kingdom (UK), EU markets, and international markets. According to Bord Bia, in 2021, 34% of Ireland's food and drink exports went to international markets outside the EU and the UK, while 33% went to the EU, and 33% to the UK. In 2016, 32% of exports went to international

markets, 31% to the EU and 37% to the UK.

The FSAI's commitment to compliance building and the provision of safe food underpins the performance of these economically crucial national industries. It also plays a significant role in Ireland's image nationally and globally as a world-class producer of safe and trustworthy food.



## The Irish food safety system

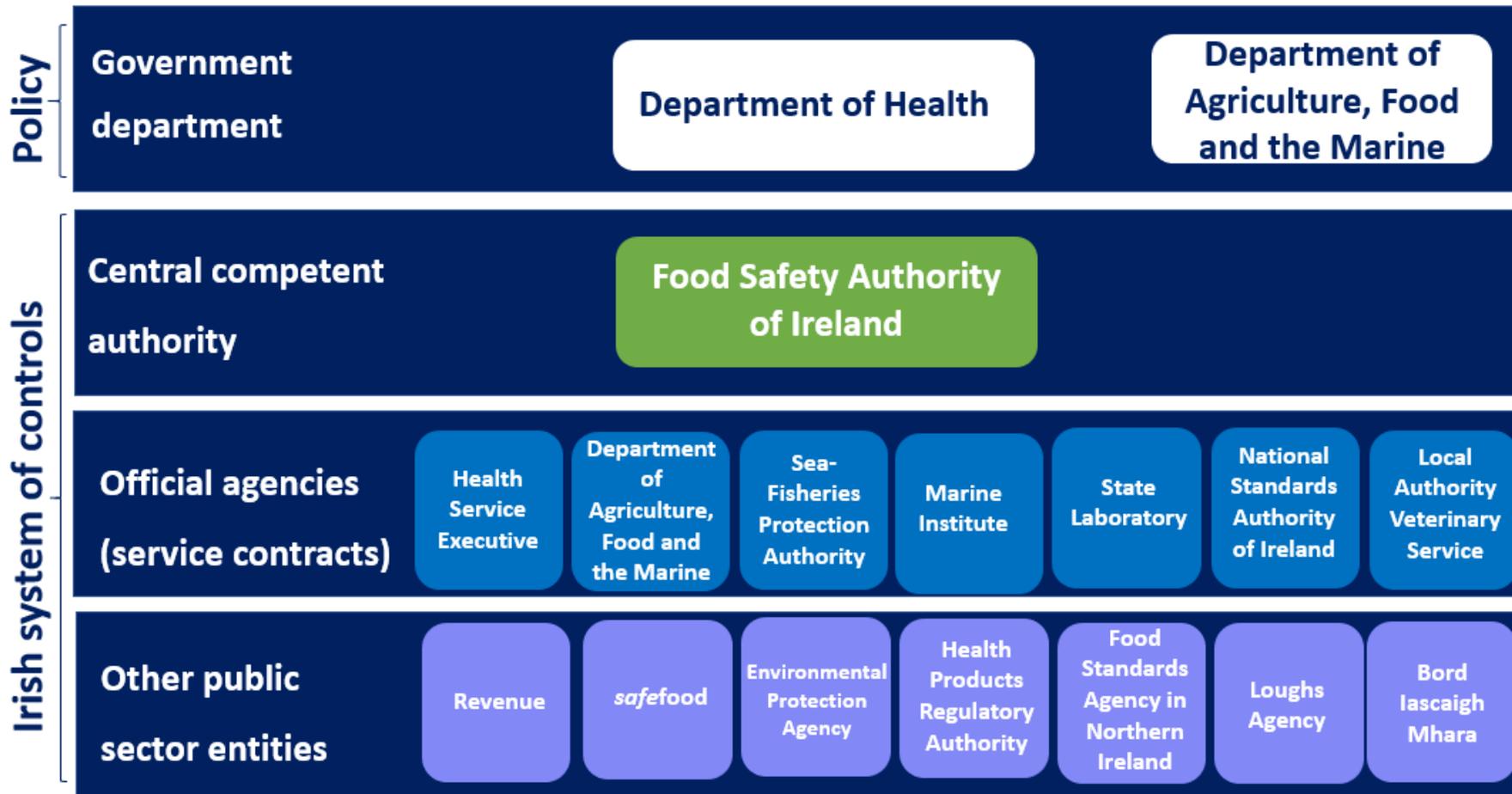


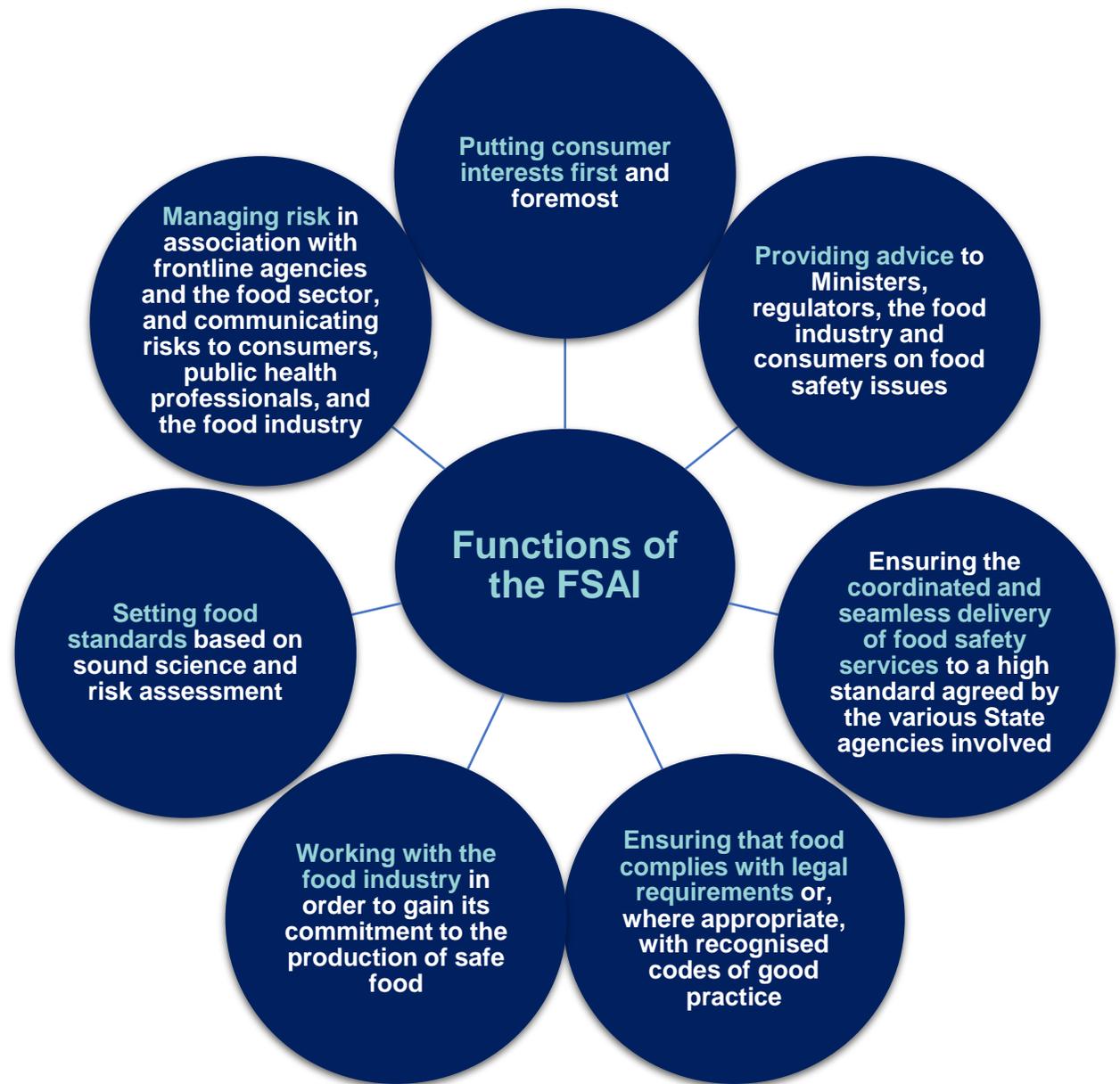
Figure 1 The Irish food safety system

## What the Authority does

The Authority's key remit is the enforcement of food legislation, which is coordinated through working in partnership with other food regulatory authorities.

Food legislation is enforced on behalf of the Authority by a network of official agencies through service contracts programme, which the Authority monitors. The Authority also reports on the agencies' activities and seeks continuous improvement and accountability through a programme of regular audits. Read more about the [range and scope of our work here](#).

**Figure 2** Functions of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland



## How the Authority operates

In 2021, the Authority enforced food legislation through service contracts with 30 official agencies, and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 provides the requisite legislative basis for this. The Authority's role is to coordinate and monitor the activities of these official agencies through service contracts, which outline an agreed level and standard of food safety activity that the official agencies will perform. Service contracts are in place for a minimum of 3 years and may be reviewed during that time at the request of either the Authority or the official agency. Regular meetings are held with senior management in each official agency and with the line managers responsible for the delivery of the inspection and analysis service.

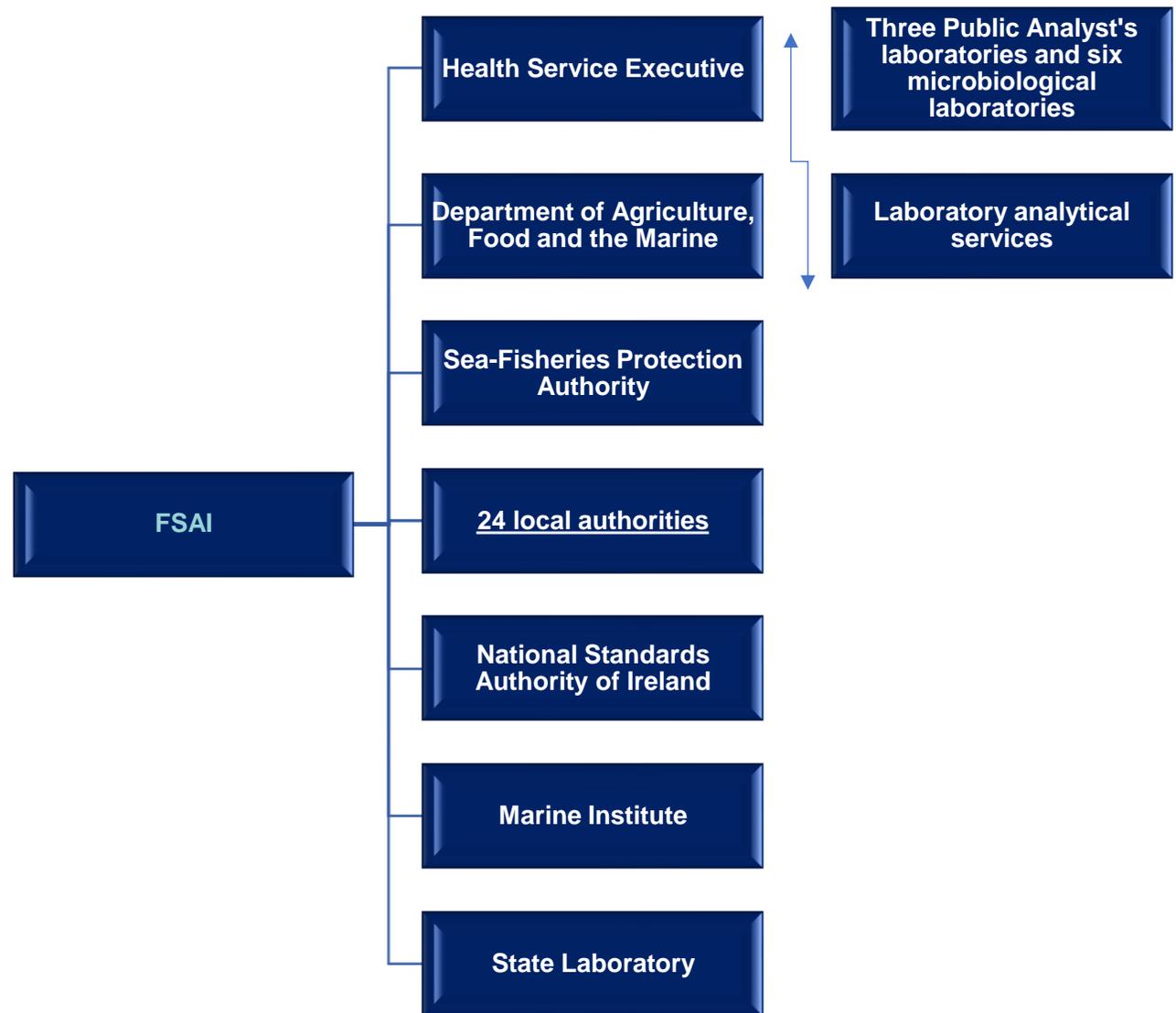


Figure 3 How the Food Safety Authority of Ireland operates

## Industry engagement

The food industry is responsible for the safety of food on the Irish market, whereas the Authority's role is one of oversight and enforcement. The Authority engages regularly with the food industry in order to make food businesses aware of their responsibilities and increase their compliance with food safety legislation. One of the ways in which the Authority does this is through virtual meetings with its four industry fora. These meetings provide the food industry with a platform to discuss pertinent issues and obtain important information from the Authority. They also allow the Authority to raise any ongoing issues with industry and raise awareness of regulatory and legislative changes.

### Artisan Forum

The members of the Artisan Forum are a very diverse and dynamic group of artisan, small-scale or domestic food producers. The Forum provides a useful setting through which the sector and the regulators can engage, interact and exchange information. This in turn helps to enhance compliance throughout this nationally important sector. The Forum met twice, virtually, in 2021, and communications continued in between meetings. Forum members continue to have concerns about the presence of chemicals, in particular glyphosate, in the environment, in food, and in humans, and the possible impact of this on human health. Members feel that their sectors are sometimes inconsistently regulated and overregulated. The possibility of a 'train the trainer' initiative with third-level institutions continues to be pursued.

### Retail Forum

The Retail Forum includes representatives from both the main supermarket chains and the major symbol groups operating in Ireland. The Forum serves to increase understanding of food legislation, to disseminate food safety advice, and share best practice. The Retail Forum held two virtual meetings in 2021: The main issues discussed were food reformulation, bamboo, flour, cannabidiol (CBD) oil products and probiotics.

### Food Service Forum

The Food Service Forum draws its membership from catering businesses, food service businesses and representative organisations. It disseminates food safety advice, shares best practice, and improves understanding of relevant food legislation. The Forum held one virtual meeting in 2021. The main issues discussed were: EU guidance on food safety management systems, allergen labelling, meal ordering, and delivery services and, Brexit.

### Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee

The Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee is the national stakeholder committee for the Irish Shellfish Monitoring Programme. The aim of the Programme is to ensure that only safe shellfish are placed on the market. The Committee is chaired by the Authority and includes representatives from a number of stakeholder groups. During 2021, the Committee met four times and discussed a wide range of issues, including sample coordination, biotoxin events and shellfish water quality. The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority and the Marine Institute provided operational and scientific updates, while other stakeholders provided user feedback on the operations of the monitoring programmes from their perspectives.

## Collaboration

**Collaboration is one of the Authority's core values. Only by working with our stakeholders and our international partners can consumer protection be achieved. The Authority recognises the value and commitment of its national partners and collaborators in delivering a comprehensive system of controls for food safety and authenticity during 2021.**



In 2021, the Authority continued the new virtual collaboration style that the COVID-19 pandemic had precipitated. New ways of maintaining the FSAI's national and international relationships had proven fruitful and had become the norm, with the majority of collaboration being conducted using videoconferencing software.

In addition to the FSAI's work with its regulatory partners, the Authority engages with a number of relevant national and international stakeholders regularly with the aim of maximising the safety and authenticity of Ireland's food.

In 2021, the Authority's stakeholders played key roles in disseminating FSAI messages and safeguarding Ireland's food systems, despite the challenging backdrop of wholly virtual collaboration. For example, the Authority continued to maintain its close relationship with the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland in 2021. The partnership, enabled through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), allows common issues related to consistency of enforcement in both jurisdictions to be addressed, in

addition to ensuring efficient cooperation in the event of a cross-border food incident. The MoU between the Loughs Agency and the Authority outlines the assistance the Loughs Agency provides to the operation of the Irish Shellfish Monitoring Programme in Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough. Over the past year, the Authority's collaboration with *safefood* continued on issues of mutual interest. The Authority also collaborates with Food Drink Ireland (FDI) on horizon scanning through the Emerging Risks and Threats Forum, whose membership includes representatives from the FSAI, FDI, and the larger multinational food manufacturers. The Authority also worked with other regulators in Ireland, including the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA), Bord Bia, Sport Ireland and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Authority contributes to the Health Service Executive Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) Scientific Advisory Committee, and also to the Environmental Protection Agency Advisory Committee.

The Authority is an active contributor on a number of other committees hosted by other organisations, the purposes of which are to raise and maintain standards in the food sector. These organisations include but are not limited to: Associated Craft Butchers of Ireland; Bord Bia; Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI); National Hygiene Partnership; and the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI).

The Authority continued to play a role in Ireland's #BrexitReady campaign, which saw the FSAI develop a cohesive information campaign for relevant stakeholders. It also supported the rollout of guidance by Fáilte Ireland on hospitality reopening during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, the Authority continued to participate in the HSE's committees dealing with the outbreaks of COVID-19 in meat plants and also in the food processing sector.



**The FSAI is the European Heads of Food Safety Agency's Secretariat.**

Engagement with our EU partners and legislators continued in 2021. EU engagement involved the FSAI's continued participation in the European Commission. The FSAI has been the Secretariat of the European Heads of Food Safety Agencies (HoA) since July 2020. The FSAI hosted HoA meetings with Portugal and Germany in 2021.

The FSAI also chairs Food Law Enforcement Practitioners, an EU group of inspectors and laboratory personnel engaged in food law implementation. Throughout 2021, the FSAI continued to engage virtually with its international and EU counterparts and share ideas and information. In 2020, the Chief Executive Officer of the FSAI co-founded the International Heads of Food Agencies Forum with her counterparts in the Saudi Food and Drug Authority, and Food Standards Australia New Zealand. Regular Forum meetings were held during 2021.

The FSAI is the national contact point for the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), a joint initiative between the WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The initiative involves 177 Member States in the routine exchange of information on food safety issues and the sharing of experiences and expertise, and it enables rapid access to information in the event of food safety emergencies. In 2020, these international connections proved invaluable during the

COVID-19 pandemic, facilitating real-time exchange of key information.

The FSAI continues to be a member of Sustainable Food Systems Ireland (SFSI), a DAFM-led initiative to make Ireland's food safety, scientific, technical, policy, and agri-food expertise available in order to support development overseas.

The FSAI assists agencies in other countries, which regard it as a model for single national food control agencies. In 2021, the FSAI continued to play its role, along with a consortium of Irish Government agencies and international partners, in supporting Albania as a candidate for accession to the EU, by strengthening its food safety, veterinary, and plant health standards. The FSAI and its partners are supported in this project by a €5 million EU grant.

In addition, the FSAI participates in a global government-to-government meeting on the use of private certification schemes in the context of official controls. The Authority is an active member of the International Commission on Microbiological Specifications for Foods (ICMSF).

The FSAI has a confidentiality agreement with the United States (US) Food and Drug Administration which facilitates interactions with our American counterparts. In addition, the Authority continues to host foreign delegations who wish to learn more about its strategy and operations.

These collaborations and partnerships are essential in order to ensure a safe and trustworthy food system. The FSAI recognises its partners' contributions as well as the food industry's efforts in achieving the delivery of this system for Ireland in 2021.

## FSAI Strategy 2019–2023

The FSAI launched a [new strategy](#) in 2019. The strategy set out its vision, mission, values, and strategic goals and objectives for the following 5 years.

The FSAI's vision of 'Safe and Trustworthy Food for Everyone' clearly articulates the FSAI's ambition, and the delivery of the strategy builds on the work undertaken in the past, fostering a partnership approach by delivering a strategically planned food safety regulatory system that continues to be relevant, progressive, and robust for the future.

The FSAI's success is firmly based on food law, science, and collaboration with those in the food safety community. Its commitment to protecting consumers is the foundation of its mission, which states:

**'We protect consumers and raise compliance through partnership, science and food law enforcement.'**



Figure 4 FSAI values

**Core to the delivery of our strategy are our values: integrity, respect, passion, transparency, teamwork and collaboration. These values guide the FSAI's decisions and interactions.**

## Corporate social responsibility

**The FSAI is committed to operating in a socially responsible manner. As a government agency, the FSAI is aware of its social responsibility and the impact its activities can have on its stakeholders, wider society, and the environment. The Authority's values of respect and transparency guide it in its commitment to 'doing good'. In 2021, the FSAI identified environmental savings, education, staff well-being, equality, diversity and inclusion, and fundraising as key areas of focus for corporate social responsibility (CSR) development.**

### Minimising environmental impact

The FSAI is dedicated to carrying out its statutory duties in an environmentally friendly manner. It supports EU and national environmental action plans and it also has an active Green Team and as well as a Food Waste Group within the Authority. The FSAI Food Waste Group engages proactively with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications on waste issues within its legal mandate, including the application of circular economy principles across food safety-related areas. The FSAI Green Team aims to educate staff on ways they can minimise their environmental impact in their day-to-day lives.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, FSAI staff were based in The Exchange building in the IFSC area of Dublin. The building holds

LEED Gold standard certification due to its emphasis on sustainability and energy efficiency, and it is rated BER A3. In 2021, the FSAI was able to minimise its carbon footprint for the second consecutive year, as its staff continued to work from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This allowed the FSAI to work and engage with stakeholders in a way that minimised environmental impact and the organisation's carbon footprint, contributing to Ireland's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The FSAI has also previously undertaken specific measures to decrease printing and increase light savings, by reducing the number of printers, as well as making publications available online and using LED sensor-led lighting throughout the building. During 2021, as staff continued working from home, the amount of printing and energy consumption in The Exchange building continued to be very low.

In addition to the mitigation measures outlined above, the FSAI's procurement plan includes, where possible, product energy efficiency ratings and life cycle costs as tender award criteria. The FSAI will continue to be a proactive member of The Exchange Building Environmental Team in 2021, in order to improve consumption of utilities and reduce waste, thus reducing the organisation's carbon footprint, particularly as staff move back to the building in 2022.

## Knowledge transfer

Each year, the FSAI allocates time to the education of the future generation of food scientists, food safety inspectors and those studying for a career in regulatory agencies, through lectures and seminars across Ireland. During 2021, student training was provided through student placement in the FSAI and lectures by staff. Further outreach at third level included more than 50 hours of lectures. In addition, the FSAI website features guidance, webinars and numerous e-learning resources; these also help to contribute to and reinforce the FSAI's educational efforts.

## Staff well-being

During 2021, with FSAI staff working from home, major emphasis was placed on transparent communication and staff well-being. This involved clear communication on decisions, meetings, acceptable norms, and expectations. This was particularly important because many staff members experienced different types of home life during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff well-being was prioritised, and the Staff Committee and its subcommittees ran a number of initiatives which encouraged team spirit and self-care. These included mindfulness sessions, quizzes, paint-along sessions, bingo, Christmas carols, a book club, steps challenges, virtual relay races, and other social activities – many of which were led by the FSAI Well-being Committee and Social Club. Talks were organised and

dissemination of information and organisational changes was managed carefully.

## Equality, diversity and Inclusion

In 2021, the FSAI Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee was established, and [a vision statement](#) was agreed. This Committee aims to ensure that the FSAI operates in fair and inclusive manner.



Over the course of 2021, training and talks in this area were provided to staff on a range of topics, including disability, and LGBTQ+ issues. Opportunities were identified and realised in the areas of leadership, culture, policy, recruitment, training and data. Culture and diversity with the team were celebrated, and the importance of an inclusive environment became fully ingrained in the organisation's culture. Leadership and management personnel played significant roles in supporting their teams during the pandemic. The FSAI is guided in their activities by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission resources and Our Public Service 2020's Vision Statement, Commitments and Maturity Model for Public Service Organisation. This helped staff feel valued and informed and enabled inclusion to influence decision-making. The FSAI continued to provide excellent upskilling opportunities, with staff members availing of online learning, training courses and further professional development opportunities during 2021.

### Fundraising

The FSAI team believes in the importance of giving back. In 2021, several fundraising initiatives were organised for charities. In continuation of our long-standing tradition, a virtual Christmas Carols ceremony was held to raise funds for Cedar House Crosscare Homeless Shelter. Our staff members also collaborated with other organisations to raise money for the Simon Community.



**FSAI Chief Executive Officer Dr Pamela Byrne took part in Focus Ireland's Shine A Light Night.**

In addition, FSAI Chief Executive Officer, Dr Pamela Byrne took part in Focus Ireland's Shine A Light Night to sleep outdoors in solidarity with homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. Dr Byrne live-tweeted this experience from her garden in a bid to further raise awareness of homelessness and to generate funds for Focus Ireland. Operating in a socially responsible manner is part of the FSAI's DNA, and the organisation will continue to build on these initiatives in 2021 and beyond.

## Governance and management

The Authority has a non-executive Board. It is appointed by the Minister for Health and it is responsible for the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer and the oversight of corporate governance in accordance with Government guidelines.

Two independent bodies advise the Board: the Food Safety Consultative Council (FSCC), composed of stakeholders in the food chain (e.g. food industry, consumers), and the Scientific

Committee, composed of scientists. The Scientific Committee comprises 14 independent scientists appointed by the Minister for Health in consultation with the Board. The Chairperson of the Scientific Committee must be a member of the Board. The Scientific Committee advises the Board on scientific matters underpinning food safety and nutrition, and the Authority may not act on an issue referred to the Scientific Committee until such time as its opinion is provided to the Board. The Scientific Committee establishes subcommittees of independent scientists to progress its advice; consequently, the Authority is advised by the work of approximately 83 scientists. The FSCC acts as a forum for debate on food safety issues. It is a constructive vehicle for consumers

and industry to provide inputs to the FSAI's strategy and programme of activities. In 2021, there was some restructuring within the organisation which resulted in the creation of two new functional area's; Audits, Incidents and Investigations and Regulatory Affairs and Compliance Building. These replace the former 'Audit and Investigations' and 'Risk Management and Regulatory Affairs' areas.

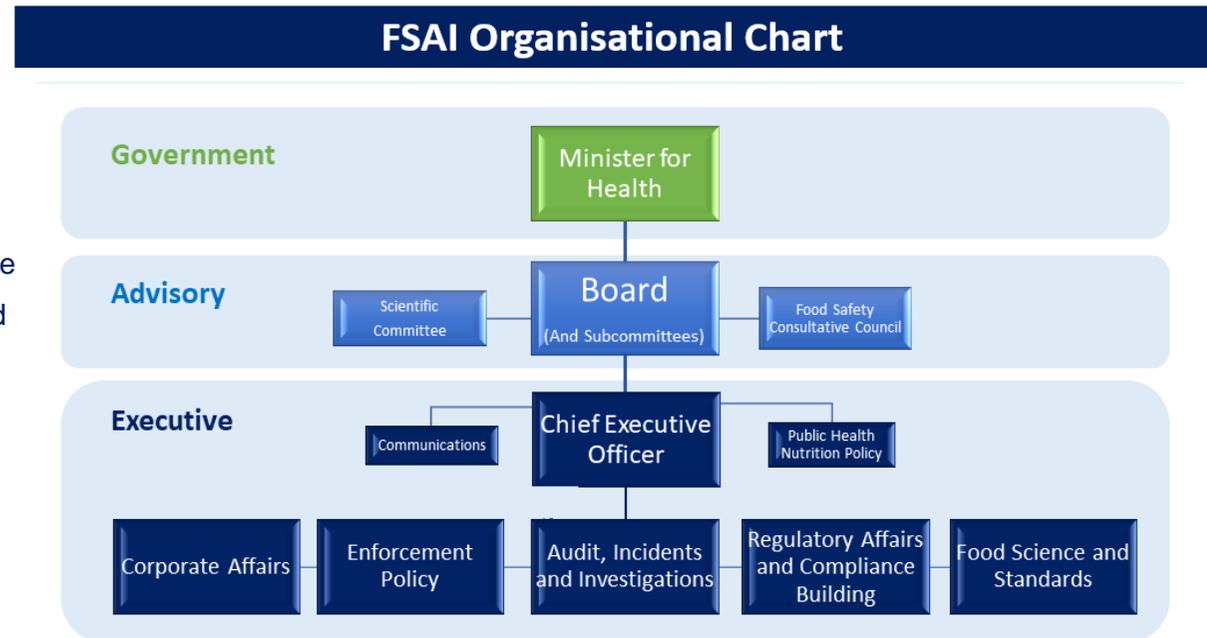


Figure 5 The FSAI Organisational Chart

## Governance and management

### Food Safety Authority of Ireland Board, 2021

Mr Martin Higgins (Chairperson)

Ms Mary Cullen

Mr Derek Cunningham

Prof. Martin Cormican

Ms Ros O'Shea

Mr Gerry McCurdy

Dr Clíodhna Foley-Nolan

Prof. Francis Butler

Ms Ann Horan

Mr Patrick Knight

### Food Safety Consultative Council, 2021

**Mr Ray Bowe (Chair)**

Musgraves Retail Partners

**Ms Maree Gallagher**

Food Law Solicitor

**Mr Cormac Healy**

Meat Industry Ireland

**Mr Dermot Jewell**

Consumers' Association of Ireland

**Mr Jamie Knox**

Keurig Dr Pepper

**Ms Siobhan Murphy**

Health Service Executive

**Mr James McCrudden**

Country Markets

### Food Safety Consultative Council, 2021

**Sorcha Kavanagh**

Conscious Cup

**Catherine Morrison**

Bord Iascaigh Mhara

**Janis Morrissey**

Irish Heart Foundation

**Conor Mulvihill**

Dairy Industry Ireland

**Alice McGlynn**

Bord Bia

**Louise Reynolds**

Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute

### Food Safety Authority of Ireland Scientific Committee, 2021

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University of Galway and Health Service Executive

**Prof. Kevin Cashman**

University College Cork

**Dr Geraldine Duffy**

Teagasc

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State Laboratory

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Trinity College Dublin (retired)

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Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority

**Prof. Dolores O'Riordan**

University College Dublin

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Health Service Executive

**Prof. Dagmar Stengel**

National University of Ireland, Galway

**Prof. Martin Wilkinson**

University of Limerick

## Key highlights of the Authority's activities

### The official food control system: the numbers at a glance

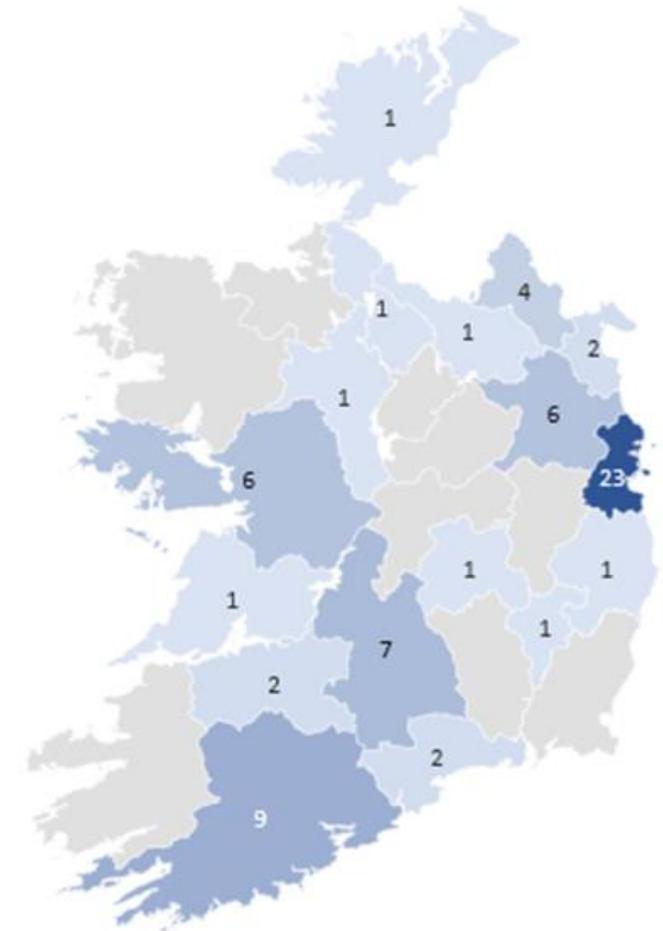
#### Enforcements

During 2021, food inspectors served food businesses with 47 Closure Orders, 2 Improvement Orders and 10 Prohibition Orders, and took 10 prosecutions against food businesses throughout Ireland (Figure 6).

The types of recurring food safety issues which lead to Enforcement Orders and Improvement Notices (Table 1) are poor cleaning and sanitation of premises; poor personal hygiene; lack of running water; inadequate hand-washing facilities; incorrect food storage; lack of, or an ineffective, pest control programme; structural problems arising from a lack of ongoing maintenance; and lack of, or an inadequate, food safety management system. There was a reduction of orders and prosecutions served in 2020 and 2021 as a number of premises were shut or not operating due to the pandemic.

**Table 1 Enforcement Orders and prosecutions served, 2017–2021**

Enforcement action	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Closure Order	64	95	108	31	47
Improvement Notice	263	230	237	104	106
Improvement Order	1	5	4	2	2
Prohibition Order	4	10	13	9	10
Prosecution	11	9	2	5	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>175</b>



**Figure 6** Enforcement Orders and prosecutions, by county, 2021

## Food business inspections

In 2021, 51,771 food businesses were under the supervision of official agencies that have service contracts with the Authority (Table 2). Of the registered food businesses, almost 92% are inspected by the HSE; 5% by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority; 2% by DAFM; and 1% by local authorities. A wide range of activities is carried out by these food businesses, from importing and manufacturing to distributing, retailing and catering operations.

**Table 2** Number and type of food businesses under the supervision of official agencies, 2017–2021

Official agency	Premises type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Primary producers	331	337	340	355	480
	Manufacturers and packers	430	441	428	494	424
	Distributors and transporters	133	236	132	108	115
	<b>Total</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>1014</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>1019</b>
HSE	Service sector	29 177	28 676	28 832	28 769	29 267
	Not assigned	46	46	36	160	285
	Transporters	132	144	130	128	130
	Wholesalers/distributors	1158	1183	1194	1193	1222
	Packers	121	120	112	107	121
	Retailers	13 529	13 336	13 373	13 673	14 537
	Manufacturers	1437	1436	1400	1526	1571
	Third-country importers/exporters	41	41	42	36	37
	Administrative food businesses	162	208	263	306	344
	<b>Total</b>	<b>45 803</b>	<b>45 190</b>	<b>45 382</b>	<b>45 898</b>	<b>47 514</b>
Local authorities	Slaughterhouses	195	182	175	166	175
	Small meat manufacturing plants	209	211	217	199	216
	Poultry plants	38	40	32	35	38

Official agency	Premises type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	Cold stores	43	45	38	42	53
	Butcher shops	8	9	9	7	7
	Mobile businesses	33	34	23	32	31
	Trader/Broker	0	0	0	6	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>527</b>
<b>Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority</b>	Fishing vessels	2079	1912	2077	2080	2081
	Molluscan production areas	182	185	187	189	189
	Registered food businesses on land (including ice plants)	10	11	15	15	15
	Food broker	0	1	1	1	1
	Freezer and factory vessels	60	65	67	57	62
	Processing plants	121	124	116	105	101
	Fresh fishery products plants	60	72	72	68	66
	Importers	58	64	62	56	55
	Cold stores	16	15	4	5	5
	Shellfish farmers	33	35	30	30	33
	Purification plants	17	20	28	23	24
	Dispatch centres	14	15	14	15	15
	Mobile businesses	0	7	0	0	0
	Transporters	0	8	9	8	9
	Wholesalers/distributors	0	8	42	48	53
	Auction halls	0	1	1	1	1
	Other	0	0	0	1	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2651</b>	<b>2543</b>	<b>2725</b>	<b>2702</b>	<b>27 11</b>
<b>Total number of food premises</b>		<b>49 873</b>	<b>49 268</b>	<b>49 501</b>	<b>50 044</b>	<b>51 771</b>

## Food inspections

All official agencies operate risk-based programmes of official controls, and each agency categorises risk in agreement with the Authority. Those food businesses which carry out activities that present the greatest potential risk to human health are prioritised for inspection. Unannounced inspections of food businesses are a key element of the official controls, as well as other activities, such as food sampling and investigation of incidents and outbreaks. There was a decline from 2019 to 2021 in the number of inspections carried out (Table 3). In addition to planned inspections, a significant number of unplanned inspections take place; these arise as a result of food incidents, investigations, follow-ups on complaints from the public, and advisory visits to food businesses. In 2021, the HSE Environmental Health Service carried out 5,999 other inspections of food businesses. There was a lower number of planned food inspections in 2020 and 2021 as a number of premises were shut or not operating during this period due to pandemic. Inspections were also hindered by the need to comply with social distancing and it was not possible to carry out inspections in some food service businesses with vulnerable consumers/residents, such as nursing homes.

**Table 3** Number of planned food inspections by the official agencies, 2017–2021

Official agency	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
HSE (Environmental Health Service)	33 193	32 254	31 189	20 269	20 904
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Inspectorate)	11 569	10 826	12 214	7 408	10 099
Local authorities	4891	4582	4320	3790	3 445
Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority	2245	2122	2121	1911	2 237
National Standards Authority of Ireland	84	62	88	37	40
<b>Total number of food business inspections</b>	<b>51 982</b>	<b>49 846</b>	<b>49 932</b>	<b>33 415</b>	<b>36 725</b>

## Staff working in official controls

The official agencies report annually to the Authority on the staff resources they have dedicated to official controls under the service contracts. In 2021, 1,523 whole time equivalents (WTEs) were involved in carrying out official controls in Irish food businesses (Table 4). There was an increase of 103 WTEs in 2021 over the number in 2020. The food safety inspectorate continues to develop its expertise through training courses. In 2021, 813 courses were taken by the inspectorate, a slight increase on the previous year.

**Table 4** WTEs by official agency, 2017–2021

Official agency	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine</b>					
Inspection Service	338	345	407	495	533
Laboratory Service	82	82	90	88	119
<b>HSE</b>					
Environmental Health Service	339	339	377	425	431
Laboratory Service	130	124	125	132	131
<b>FSAI</b>	73	79	79	87	109
<b>Local authorities</b>	104	101	106	88	91
<b>Marine Institute</b>	41	41	41	39	38
<b>National Standards Authority of Ireland</b>	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority</b>	36	40	45	47	52
<b>State Lab</b>				18	18
<b>Total number of WTEs</b>	<b>1144</b>	<b>1150</b>	<b>1271</b>	<b>1420</b>	<b>1523</b>

## Food sampling

The service contracts include programmes by the official agencies for the sampling and testing of food for compliance with all aspects of food legislation. Samples taken by the food safety inspectorates are analysed by a network of Official and National Reference Laboratories operated by the official agencies. In 2021, 49,658 samples were taken and tested compared with 50,261 in 2020 (Table 5). The slightly lower numbers of samples taken in 2020 and 2021 reflect need to comply with social distancing requirements in addition to a number of business premises being shut or not operating due to pandemic.

**Table 5** Number of samples taken by the official agencies, 2017–2021

Sampling agency	2017	% of total	2018	% of total	2019	% of total	2020	% of total	2021	% of total
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	32 947	57%	35 983	56%	32 035	56%	28,100	56%	29 785	60%
HSE (Environmental Health Service)	11 699	20%	11 678	18%	11 217	20%	5844	12%	9 343	19%
Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority	8353	14%	8386	13%	8463	15%	9726	19%	6 989	14%
Local authorities	3306	6%	3195	5%	2524	4%	2354	5%	2 583	5%
Other agencies	1335	2%	4597	7%	2516	4%	4237	8%	958	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>57 640</b>		<b>63 839</b>		<b>56 755</b>		<b>50 261</b>		<b>49 658</b>	



## Pamela Byrne Chief Executive Officer



The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Authority as well as for providing leadership among her peers in food safety agencies across Europe and beyond. She is supported by the Senior Leadership Team, which oversees operations within the Authority's five functional areas. The CEO's Office is also responsible for liaising with the Authority's Board and coordinating the communications function, as well as stakeholder management and engagement; the FSAI Advice Line; organising events; designing and publishing the Authority's publications; the FSAI website and promoting the Authority's work in the media.

The Public Health Nutrition Policy function is responsible for providing the secretariat for the Authority's Scientific Public Health Nutrition Subcommittee and to various national working groups in the area of nutrition. The Public Health Nutrition Policy team also chairs the Codex Alimentarius Electronic Working Group to develop an international nutrition standard for older infants and young children.

The CEO is the Irish representative on EFSA's Advisory Forum and the European Heads of Food Safety Agencies group. She is a member of the Irish delegation to the Codex Alimentarius Commission; a member of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's Research Advisory Committee; and Chairperson of University College Dublin's Institute of Food and Health Advisory Board. The CEO is also the Chairperson of the Board of the Association of Chief Executives of State Agencies and Chairperson of the Postgraduate Applications Centre in University College Cork.

## Communications

**The Authority actively engages with stakeholders through a variety of online and offline channels. These channels facilitate the flow of information, two-way dialogue and engagement on important food safety issues. Over the past two years, online communications channels became more important than ever before.**

In 2021, Authority staff continued to work remotely, and the new communications methods adapted to maintain and grow stakeholder engagement in 2020 became the new norm.

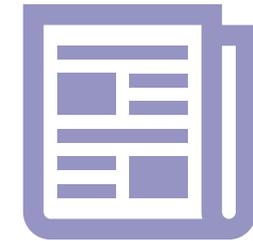
The Authority's Advice Line, website, extranet, social media pages, and webinars are now the most popular ways of delivering our food safety messages and advice. This new way of working has meant that we have been able to reach more people than ever with our online events, but it makes it more challenging to maintain close and meaningful stakeholder relations. As a result, the Authority has created many engaging and interactive initiatives in order to maintain attention on all things food safety related.

### Media

In 2021 the Authority responded to 178 media queries. The number of media queries was slightly higher than in 2020 (174); this figure was once again due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which dominated the news cycle from early 2020 onwards into 2021. The Authority

issued 27 press releases in 2021, which directly resulted in 775 outputs in print, online and broadcast media. Authority staff were regularly invited to speak on national and local radio throughout the year. The

Communications team continued its work on stakeholder engagement, which is a means to improve collaboration, create a wider understanding of the Authority's role, and encourage and create change in line with scientific developments and changes in regulation, while also supporting those directly involved in seeking to provide a robust official food control system



### The FSAI Advice Line

During 2021, the Authority's Advice Line continued to provide food safety and hygiene advice and information to stakeholders. Over the course of the year, the Advice Line received 4,718 queries from people working in the

food service sector; manufacturers; retailers; researchers; distributors; consultants; and consumers. Queries about how to start up a new food business remained one of the most popular again in 2021 and other popular topics included food labelling

legislation; food safety training; food supplements legislation; and requests for FSAI publications. Consumers were also actively encouraged to contact the Authority about any food safety complaints or issues they may have. More than 3,414 consumer complaints were handled by the Authority's Advice Line in 2021, with 36% of complaints relating to unfit food and 24% relating to poor hygiene standards. Overall, the 2021 complaints saw a 23% increase on the complaints reported in 2020. This increase largely reflects the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, whereby many food service businesses were temporarily closed for long periods throughout 2020.

## Social media

The Authority's social media channels provided a key means of communicating in real time with key stakeholders over the course of 2021. It allowed the Authority to provide food businesses with guidance on COVID-19, on Brexit; upcoming webinars; key food safety issues; food alerts, food allergen alerts, and much more. These social media channels also provided a key facility by which stakeholders can contact the Authority with queries through platforms that suit them. At the end of 2021, the Authority had an online community of over 60,000 engaged stakeholders between its Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube



channels. During 2021, the Authority ran social media campaigns on various topics, such as food safety training resources; registering a food business; starting a food business; labelling; Brexit resources; and much more.

## Guidance

The Authority continues to be a leading expert in food safety for its stakeholders, providing timely food safety guidance, and conducting studies and publishing scientific reports on a regular basis. During 2021, a total of 17 new publications were published, and a further 15 publications were updated. All of these were published on the Authority's website, and they include guidance notes for the industry, audit reports, Scientific Committee reports, surveys, and other materials to support the achievement of the Authority's vision of 'Safe and Trustworthy Food for Everyone'.

## Events

The Authority's events moved online in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was a worthwhile learning curve for the Authority and it continued in 2021 where attendance figures continued to increase. Webinars have proven to be a more accessible way to provide stakeholders with relevant food safety advice and information. Over the course of the year, the Authority held 8



webinars, which attracted an audience of 1,288 live participants and generated 2,238 views following the events. Of particular note was the Food Safety Consultative Council Open Meeting on food safety culture - a hybrid event held in November 2021 with national and international speakers which reached almost 1000 between the event and the recording.

## The website



The Authority's website is a valuable source of food safety information for its stakeholders. It was regularly reviewed, maintained and updated throughout 2021.

It continues to take measures to improve and enable its accessibility for users of all devices. The FSAI website had 1,454,022 pageviews in 2021. The most popular sections were Food businesses (especially Starting a Food Business), Food Alerts, Enforcements and Publications. Almost 60% of users accessed the site via smartphone. In 2021, the website team populated and finalised the creation of a new website, which is due to be launched in 2022.

## Protected disclosures

The CEO of the FSAI is a designated person under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014. During 2021, 13 protected disclosures were

made to the CEO, all of which were forwarded to the Audit and Investigations team for assessment and investigation. While COVID-19 restrictions impacted on the timelines during which investigations were conducted, the allegations of wrongdoing contained in the protected disclosures were in all instances investigated either by the FSAI or by authorised officers from an official agency. Where breaches of food law were detected the appropriate enforcement action was taken either by FSAI or the official agency to ensure consumer health or consumer interests were protected.

## Public Health Nutrition Policy

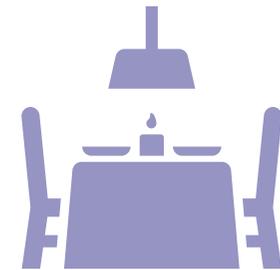
In 2021, the Public Health Nutrition (PHN) Policy team assisted the Scientific Committee in establishing the 2021–2025 Public Health Nutrition Subcommittee and the Working Group on vitamin D recommendations for people aged 5–65 years in Ireland. In early 2021, the PHN Policy team assisted with numerous media queries on the new Scientific Committee report “Scientific Recommendations for food-based dietary guidelines for older adults in Ireland”. In addition, an invited keynote presentation on the report was delivered at the annual Nutrition Society Irish Section conference and a review paper published by the proceedings of the Nutrition Society.

The Chief Specialist Public Health Nutrition serves as a member of the CORU Council and on the Dietitians Registration Board. The PHN Policy team continued to Chair the Codex Alimentarius Electronic Working Group (EWG) on establishing nutrient reference values (NRVs) for persons aged 6–36 months. This included presenting the agenda paper on the work completed at the virtual plenary meeting in November 2021. The PHN Policy team also led the reformulation work for Ireland in the EU-funded Best-ReMaP project. As part of this project data on over 3000 food products was collected from four of the biggest grocery retailers in Ireland and analysed to assess reformulation trends using data the team had collected previously.

### The Food Safety Project Albania

During 2021 the Food Safety Project continued to implement activities in Albania to strengthen food safety, veterinary and plant health standards. Key achievements were made in relation to strengthening the Albanian legal framework, capacity building, communication and awareness and preparation for EU bilateral screening. Workshops took place to support the competent authorities in assessing impact of a new Official Controls Regulation for Albania. Progress was made on improving risk-based controls with development of a methodology for risk profiling food establishments to

determine appropriate inspection frequencies. A risk assessment model for imported agri-food products was developed to align with the EU approach for import controls. A number of training programmes were delivered to official control staff on topics including assessment of HACCP implementation in fish establishments; microbiological sampling; ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections and use of the RUDA (animal identification and movement) database. Public awareness was raised among consumers, farmers and food business operators through campaigns on food labelling, avian influenza and food safety in summer. Throughout 2021 work also continued on the preparation of documents to support Albania in upcoming EU accession negotiations for Chapter 12 of the EU *acquis*.





**Kevin Roantree**  
**Director, Corporate Affairs**

The Corporate Affairs functional area, led by Mr Kevin Roantree, ensures the quality and alignment of the Authority's corporate operations in order to ensure that supporting structures, processes and systems are optimally in place to maximise the impact of the FSAI Strategy.

Corporate Affairs has responsibility for the FSAI's human resources (HR), finance, IT, information and data management, organisational development, Freedom of Information, corporate governance, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and general facilities management functions. This functional area is key to ensuring that the Authority achieves its business objectives internally and externally and utilises innovative approaches to constantly improve its services and ensure the optimal utilisation of resources.

The Corporate Affairs team also leads the Authority's ISO 9001:2015 compliance for its quality management system and works with colleagues across the organisation in developing and delivering on the FSAI's business planning and reporting mechanisms.

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During 2021, the Corporate Affairs functional area ensured, and reported on, its compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) and agreed its Oversight Agreement/Performance Delivery



Agreement (OA/PDA) with the Department of Health (DOH). It continued to progress an extensive programme to develop the Authority's culture; maintained certification to the ISO 9001:2015 standard; provided a broad range of training programmes; and achieved the highest level of assurance regarding the effectiveness of the Authority's systems of internal financial controls, following completion of a review.

The Corporate Affairs functional area is responsible for managing finance, HR, organisational development, data collection and analysis, information, IT, and facilities, as well as for managing and ensuring adherence to the Authority's obligations with regard to governance, procurement, Freedom of Information and data protection. In addition, it oversees the Authority's business planning and reporting mechanisms.

During 2021, in line with Government guidelines, FSAI staff continued to work from home. The Corporate Affairs functional area continued to provide support to staff through ensuring technological support to work remotely, by maintaining the highest

level of communication and support for staff and adapting processes and solutions to allow staff to deliver upon their business objectives within a remote environment. In addition, Corporate Affairs championed a project team which commenced the project to transition the organisation to a blended working model.

### Organisational compliance

During 2021, the Authority ensured, and reported on, its compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016), and it agreed its Operational Agreement / Performance Delivery Agreement with the DOH. In addition, it provided the DOH with quarterly updates on progress against the OA/PDA as part of the agreed governance arrangement, and it did so within an improved business planning and reporting framework, which clearly highlighted progress as well as any deviation from planned work and the measures being taken to manage it.

### Secretary to the Board

Kevin Roantree is the Secretary of the FSAI Board. This role involves supporting the Board in discharging its duties. The Secretary supports the Board, through the Chairperson, in relation to governance matters and ensures that all relevant information is available to the Board and its committees. Along with the Chairperson, the Secretary is responsible for the formal induction of

new members of the Board and organising training, development and mentoring for Board members where required.

### Quality management

The Authority is committed to having a strong quality management system in place, which is essentially based on the concept of identifying customers and their requirements, planning how to meet these requirements, documenting procedures where appropriate, setting measurable objectives for all functional areas and all staff, and regularly reviewing achievements.

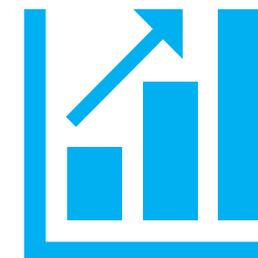
In 2021, the Authority maintained certification to the ISO 9001:2015 standard.

### Organisational development

The HR team within the Corporate Affairs functional area focused on ensuring that staff had the requisite competencies, skills and knowledge to meet both organisational and personal development needs. The Authority places a strong emphasis on continuous learning and development, and it encourages staff to engage in continuing professional and personal development activities. During 2021, a broad range of training programmes were delivered to support this; in addition, a management development programme was introduced, and the Authority supported a number of staff through developmental and further education programmes.

### Finance

An efficient and effective finance function continues to be in place within the Authority, in order to ensure appropriate management and control over resources, as well as to ensure that relevant accounting standards are met and adhered to, and that effective financial management systems and controls are operating. During 2021, the internal auditors conducted a review of the systems of internal financial controls, and the level of assurance achieved was 'substantial', the highest level available. The Authority also ensures that Department of Finance and Department of Public Expenditure and Reform budgetary measures are implemented in terms of salary, travel rates, procurement, and other expenditure savings.





**Dr Bernard Hegarty**  
**Director, Enforcement Policy**

The Enforcement Policy functional area, led by Dr Bernard Hegarty, is responsible for overseeing the enforcement of food legislation in Ireland. A key activity is the management of the service contracts with the Authority's official agencies, which carry out the enforcement activities.

The service contract mechanism for the enforcement of food safety legislation was mandated under the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998, as amended. Service contracts are in place with 30 official agencies. Most of the Enforcement Policy team's activities are focused on supporting the strategic goal of enforcing food legislation with the FSAI's regulatory partners.

The Enforcement Policy team also provides advice to Government Departments on proposed legislation, and it operates one of the Authority's consultative fora (the Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee). There are four main official agencies, and the structure of the Enforcement Policy functional area reflects this operating model. The team also organises the preparation and follow-up for the cross-agency audits carried out by the European Commission and other bodies.

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The official controls on food continued to operate during 2021 despite the challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the year, the Authority published 59 Enforcement Orders (including 47 Closure Orders, 10 Prohibition Orders and 2 Improvement Orders) served to food businesses for breaches of food safety legislation. This was a 40% increase on the 42 orders served in 2020, which indicates a partial recovery of enforcement activity. The number of orders served in 2020 was much lower than the 125 orders served in 2019, reflecting the huge impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the food industry.



Five prosecutions taken for breaches of food safety legislation were publicised: three by the HSE and two by the FSAI. The full texts of the Enforcement Orders served on food businesses were published, in order to provide transparency to the official controls process and also to inform food businesses of practices to avoid.

The COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions also affected the official control system. In addition to closures due to restrictions, inspections were hindered by the need to comply with social distancing and it was not possible to carry out inspections in some food service businesses with vulnerable consumers/residents, such as nursing homes. The HSE Environmental Health Service took on additional work, including contact tracing work in support of the

pandemic controls and checks on indoor dining, so as to ensure compliance with COVID-19 restrictions. A number of food microbiology laboratories were obliged to redirect staff and facilities to support testing of clinical samples for the COVID-19 virus, thus reducing their capacity to carry out official food controls. Such measures had to be limited in duration in order to allow normal food controls to resume as soon as possible.

The official controls are carried out under service contracts with 30 official agencies. The service contracts with the HSE, DAFM, and the NSAI were renegotiated in 2021. The contracts with the local authorities were extended to 31 March 2022 to permit inter-Departmental discussions on the future of this service. The new contracts reflect the requirements of the revised EU legislation on official controls (Regulation (EU) 2017/625). The FSAI also negotiated a comprehensive data-sharing agreement with the DAFM. Management and monitoring of the service contracts continued to be carried out by the FSAI and the official agencies through remote working, and all necessary meetings took place virtually during the year.

The Enforcement Policy staff were greatly assisted in the change to online, remote, and virtual work by their colleagues in the FSAI's IT Team. While the rapid introduction and greater use of online and remote working technologies presented several operational challenges, it also provided new opportunities. Applying these

technologies changed the way Enforcement Policy staff engaged with the official agencies and with other important stakeholder groups. They facilitated more extensive engagement, more rapid communications and often quicker decisions and better progress on important matters. Not having to negotiate the availability of appropriate physical facilities either inside or outside the FSAI premises simplified the logistics associated with arranging stakeholder events, while remote working technologies made attending and participating in events – or parts of events – a more realistic option for a wider and greater number of stakeholders. In the immediate future, with the expected return to more normal modes of working, the challenge will be to secure, and indeed further deepen, the degree of stakeholder engagement that has characterised the greater part of the last 2 years.

### Official controls legislation



During 2021, the Authority continued its activity on the revised EU legislation on official controls, Regulation (EU) 2017/625. This Regulation sets out rules for the performance by EU Member States of controls in the agri-food sector, replacing previous official controls legislation, Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 and Regulation (EC) No 854/2004.

A programme of work to implement Regulation (EU) 2017/625 continued during 2021, including:

- Collaboration with the official agencies on a cross-agency strategic committee to oversee development of the official controls system
- Input into the development of tertiary legislation (implementing and delegated EU Acts) in relation to Regulation (EU) 2017/625 at EU level
- Further updates to a comprehensive inventory of the official controls legislation, including the tertiary legislation as a resource for the official agencies and the FSAI
- Provision of guidance and training to the official agencies on the requirements of the Regulation and the implementing national legislation
- Provision of advice to the Department of Health (DOH) and the DAFM on the national legislation to give effect to the Regulation's requirements.



### Management of service contracts

During 2021, the Enforcement Policy team led discussions with the County and City Management Association (CCMA), which represents the Chief Executives of the local

authorities. The focus of the constructive dialogue was to review the operation and funding of the local authority veterinary service and propose a future model. The outcome of the discussions was a proposal from the CCMA which the FSAI considered would not provide an adequate basis for the future service. The transfer of the service to the DAFM was proposed as a future option, and the service contract and funding with the local authorities was extended to 2022 to allow time for this transfer to be finalised.

In 2021, the FSAI worked with the official agencies following the end of the transition period provided for in the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement. The official controls system had to accommodate hugely increased levels of official controls on the import of food, reflecting the status of the UK (excluding Northern Ireland) as a third country. The FSAI worked with the official agencies to prepare for the proposed UK requirement for veterinary certificates to accompany consignments of animal-origin foods from Ireland to Great Britain. The requirement was delayed eventually to 2022, when it will be introduced in three phases between 1 July and 1 November 2022. The preparations included the transfer of some food businesses between the official agencies so as to facilitate efficient certification.

S.I. No. 79/2020, which amended the revised EU legislation on official controls, Regulation (EU) 2017/625, assigned some new responsibilities to the FSAI, including oversight of official

laboratories designated by the DOH, and a requirement for the FSAI and the HSE to publish guidelines to support implementation of various aspects of the Regulation. A significant programme of work was carried out by the FSAI and the HSE to develop this guidance, including on:

- the provision of a second expert opinion for official sampling and food testing
- the recognition of appropriately qualified experts for the purposes of a documentary review
- the use of the enforcement powers available under S.I. No. 79/2020.

The FSAI continues to provide guidance on supervisory arrangements for food businesses with complex food activities that could potentially involve more than one official agency carrying out official controls. A meeting of a cross-agency group agreed changes to the existing guidance. This group also drafted guidance to improve the inter-agency consistency of processes for obtaining approval from an official agency when processing foods of animal origin – a legislative requirement for certain food businesses.

The FSAI chairs meetings of the Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee, a stakeholder forum for the shellfish industry. These meetings continued online during 2021, and it was noticeable that

attendance was higher than was recorded at previous physical meetings of the forum, with more representatives from different stakeholder groups participating. Meeting participants received updates from the FSAI, the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, and the Marine Institute on these organisations' activities.

The Enforcement Policy team coordinates the preparation and follow-up of the official agencies for the audits that the European Commission (DG SANTE) conducts to verify the compliance of Ireland with the official controls legislation. In 2021, this work included:

- In January, finalising the responses to a 2020 audit that investigated controls on food fraud in all the official agencies.
- Coordinating an audit to evaluate the control of residues and contaminants in live animals and animal products
- Coordinating an audit to evaluate the control systems in place in the DAFM and the local authorities on the production and placing on the market of bovine meat, including traceability
- Making extensive preparations for a DG SANTE country profile audit, including a general follow-up on the findings and recommendations of its audits over the last few years.

## Advisory work

The FSAI prepared advice for the DOH on developments in national and EU legislation. This advice supported the preparation by the DOH of two new orders (S.I. No. 152/2021 and S.I. No. 543/2021) under Section 5 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, 1998 Act to update the list of food laws within the remit of the FSAI and the service contracts. The FSAI also provided advice on a proposed revision in the laws permitting food retailers to supply foods of animal origin to other retailers under an EU derogation from extra requirements of food hygiene legislation.

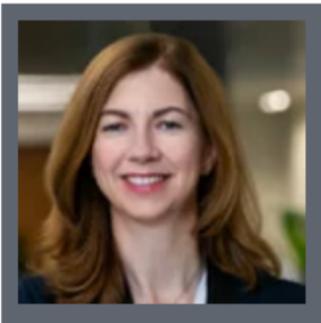


## EU engagement

EU engagement included continued participation in two EU Member States and European Commission expert groups, as well as working on the legislation governing food contact materials and on a standard format for producing National Control Plans for official controls across the EU, and for reporting on them. The FSAI has been appointed by the DOH and the DAFM as the single contact point required by Regulation (EU)



2017/625 for producing National Control Plans. Additionally, Enforcement Policy team members participated in an EU working group dealing with compliance with EU rules on olive oil monitoring and reporting.



**Gail Carroll**  
**Director, Regulatory Affairs and Compliance Building**

Gail Carroll leads the Regulatory Affairs and Compliance Building (RACB) functional area. Gail was appointed to the Director role in August 2021 and leads a multi-disciplinary team of experts in food regulation and compliance building.

The RACB team is a new team established in 2021 following organisational restructuring of the former Risk Management and Regulatory Affairs team after the retirement of Director Ray Ellard in 2021.

There are four teams in RACB – Environmental Health, Training and Compliance, Veterinary Public Health and Agriculture, and Imports and Exports. The RACB team works closely with staff in the official agencies to facilitate informed and consistent application of food law by supporting implementation through training and guidance. RACB works with the food sector to raise compliance with food legislation and standards, operates the Authorities Retail, Food Service and Artisan industry fora and manages the FSAI Food Safety Consultative Council. The RACB team provides expert advice to the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and supports them in the development of food legislation at European Union level and internationally through Codex Alimentarius.





The RACB functional area manages the Authority's food supplement notification system. Those placing a food supplement on the market are legally obliged to notify and provide the FSAI with a copy of the supplement label.

During 2021 there were over 4,500 food supplements notified to the Authority, a 50% increase on 2020 and over 100% increase since 2018. There has also been an increase in the complexity of regulatory and enforcement issues to be managed, due to a range of factors, which include; the increasing popularity and range of food supplements, the growth in their supply through e-commerce, Brexit and other specific issues, such as the emergence of the popularity of cannabidiol (CBD) supplements and incidents relating to ethylene oxide residues. In response to this trend, the FSAI commenced a review of how supplements are regulated which will continue into 2022. The FSAI regulates food supplements in conjunction with the HSE with significant work carried out in 2021 to address safety and compliance issues and also works with other agencies such as the HPRA.

### **Consultation and stakeholder engagement**

A key part of the role of RACB is to engage proactively with the food industry to build compliance with food legislation. The FSAI

engages with various industry representative groups, this enhances its ability to be informed of the views held by important sectors of Ireland's food industry whilst providing the FSAI with a practical opportunity for engagement on food safety and food regulatory matters

### **Food Safety Consultative Council**

A new Food Safety Consultative Council (FSCC) for the period 2021/2026 was appointed by the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD. The Council is chaired by Mr. Ray Bowe and has 23 consumer, food industry, food inspectorate and academia representatives with twelve of these Members newly appointed in 2021. The FSCC is a statutory Council established under Section 14 of the FSAI Act, 1998. Its purpose is to facilitate consultations, for the purpose of promoting higher standards or for any other matters relating to the functions of the Authority. In 2021 the Council continued to hold meetings on-line and dealt with numerous topics including the impact of COVID-19, Brexit, various food safety issues, governance of the Council and development of a new workplan. In November the Council held an open meeting on 'Food safety culture - how Food Businesses and Consumers Benefit'. The event included presentations and discussions by leading experts and heard the experience of a range of industry representatives on how they are building a culture of food safety. Holding the meeting virtually facilitated a much bigger audience reach with over 450

engaged attendees throughout the live event with hundreds watching on-line afterwards.

### Industry forums

RACB chaired on-line meetings of the FSAI Retail Forum, Food Service Forum and Artisan Forum during 2021. These Industry Fora are an important means for the FSAI to consult with the food industry bringing competitors from a sector of the food industry together to discuss food safety with the FSAI and advance best practice in their sector. A range of topics were discussed during 2021 including a particular focus on Brexit with the Retail Forum and discussion and information exchange on various topical food safety issues. Minutes of all FSCC and food industry fora meetings are published on the FSAI website to facilitate transparency in this work.



### Environmental Health and Regulatory Affairs

At the start of 2021 the FSAI Chief Specialist in Environmental Health, Dorothy Guina Dornan retired, the position remained vacant throughout

2021 but has now filled by a new Chief Specialist in Environmental Health.

The Environmental Health team play a critical and strategic role in protecting the consumer through supporting the FSAI, the Environmental Health Service, the Food Safety Laboratory Service of the HSE and other official agencies in the consistent and effective implementation and enforcement of food legislation. They work closely with industry to build compliance and foster a culture of food safety within Ireland's food industry. In 2021 the Environmental Health team of RACB lead on provision of expert advice on a range of regulatory affairs issues including in relation to a major change to food labelling legislation proposed under the EUs 'Farm to Fork' strategy. The FSAI hosted a public consultation on the EU proposals on behalf of the Department of Health, in addition to preparation of responses and position papers for Government in relation to the EU proposals, engagement with industry stakeholders on the proposed changes, attendance at EU meetings on labelling topics and chairing the EU Heads of Agency subgroup on the legislative framework for sustainable food systems.

The team also had regular engagement with trade bodies on regulatory issues, including those in relation to spirit drinks, dealing with industry complaints on spirit drink labelling and various compliance issues. The FSAI works on spirit drinks regulatory issues in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Revenue and Customs.

During 2021 there was regular engagement with Food Drink Ireland (FDI), Enterprise Ireland and other trade bodies on range of regulatory issues related to Brexit, foods for special medical purposes, food labelling, food supplements and other matters.

Work continued in relation to regulation and official controls of foods sold through e-commerce. The FSAI worked with the HSE in relation to responsibilities for registration and other requirements of food law relevant to e-commerce operators which facilitate delivery of prepared food from restaurants and takeaways. The increasing prevalence of these operators may require the development of new approaches to food law enforcement.

During 2021, members of the team participated in EU working groups on general food law, e-commerce, food information and labelling, official controls, and import controls contributing to development of legislation at EU level and providing expert advice to the Department of Health in relation to food legislation.

## Veterinary Public Health and Agriculture

The RACB Veterinary Public Health and Agriculture team provide expert support for official agencies and industry through advising on technical and legal



queries; providing training; developing guidance, participating in service contract management and liaison meetings; providing technical expertise for FSAI audits and carrying out on-site visits. In 2021 the team provided technical support on numerous issues, such as animal by-products, residue controls, and pesticides, in addition to providing technical secretariat support to the Scientific Committee Ad-hoc Subcommittee on *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis* (MAP) and Crohn's disease which published its report in 2021. The team also ensures that the FSAI contributes to industry stakeholder initiatives, such as Bord Bia's quality assurance schemes. In October 2021 the FSAI Chief Specialist in Veterinary Public Health, John Matthews, retired with a replacement for this post in progress.

## Food Imports and Exports

As part of organisational restructuring and to mainstream the long-term additional work associated with the UK leaving the EU, the former Brexit team was incorporated into RACB in 2021. The RACB team continued to lead the cross-agency working group on import controls on high-risk foods of non-animal origin. This is a collaborative group of FSAI, HSE, DAFM and Revenue who input to EU legislative developments on high-risk foods, advise DoH in relation to legislation, and address issues relating to official controls on imported foods. As a result of Brexit there were a range of additional regulatory issues for this group to consider during 2021

as well as other enforcement issues relating to third country imports of high-risk foods. The RACB team represented the FSAI at EU working groups and expert groups advising on development of tertiary legislation and implementation of official controls under Regulation (EU) 2017/625 and on imports of food of non-animal origin (Regulation (EU) 2019/1793) and attended meetings of the Heads of Agency working group on imports and certification.

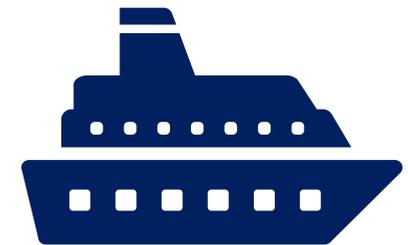
## Brexit

From 1 January 2021 third country import controls were required on foods from the UK (excluding Northern Ireland) to EU Member States. While significant preparations had been made across Government, official agencies and food importers, the scale and complexity of the new import requirements required a continued focus throughout the year to support official controls and build compliance with industry as the import control system adjusted to the new EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.

The FSAI continued to work in partnership with HSE and DAFM throughout 2021 to support implementation of these new official controls at Border Control Posts (BCP) at Dublin Port and airport and the newly designated Rosslare Europort; and to manage new food incidents in relation to foods imported from the UK to Ireland (excluding Northern Ireland) as food businesses adjusted to their

new import obligations. The Authority contributed to the Governments Brexit work through the Department of Health's Brexit Operations Team which continued to meet throughout 2021.

A large focus of the FSAI's Brexit work during 2021 was preparation for new UK import requirements. Under the UK model pre-notification and export certification was expected to be required for a large range of foods exported from Ireland to Great Britain. FSAI supported the Departments of Health and Agriculture, Food and the Marine providing advice and support on policy and operational issues relating to provision of export certification. FSAI also worked with the official agencies to prepare for this change including to assess and understand the UK's certification requirements for food, preparing for new official controls, ensuring systems were in place to allow Irish food companies access certification and preparing the food businesses themselves. During 2021 this required changes in official supervision arrangements for several premises to ensure that veterinary certification was available where required by the UK model. Initially it had been expected that these requirements would be from April 2021, but this date was changed



several times during the year by the UK, and eventually deferred further.

During 2021 the FSAI continued our Brexit stakeholder engagement and communication activities. This included advising food businesses on regulatory issues, issuing 13 Brexit Ezines, participation in Brexit webinars and cross-Government Brexit industry forums and engaging directly with the FSAI Industry Forums and with Food Drink Ireland.



**Peter Whelan**  
**Director, Audit, Incidents, and Investigations**

Following a restructuring in 2021, Mr Peter Whelan, now leads the Audit, Incidents and Investigations functional area, which is responsible for conducting audits, responding to food incidents, investigating protected disclosures and investigating allegations of food fraud. The Audit and Investigations team carry out audits of the official food control system, as well as targeted audits of food businesses in order to ensure compliance with the Authority's legal mandate. The Incidents team are responsible for leading on risk management decisions required in relation to food incidents, and for issuing warning notices to the public about food recalls and withdrawals and are the national contact point for the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), a network managed by the European Commission to exchange information between members of the network – including EU Member States, the European Commission and EFSA – on hazards identified in food, feed, and food contact materials.

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The Authority's annual risk-based audit programme is designed to ensure adequate coverage of all relevant areas of activity and all official agencies over a period of 5 years. Audit reports and their corrective action plans are published on the Authority's website. The team also provides support during third country and SANTE F audits in Ireland. Authorised officers conduct special investigations in conjunction with the official agencies and other State agencies where serious breaches of food law have been alleged, or food fraud has been detected. These investigations are designed to determine the nature and extent of non-compliance with food law and/or related food fraud offences. Outcomes of such investigations may result in enforcement actions and criminal proceedings being taken against offenders. Notifications to the CEO of the FSAI, who is a designated person under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014, are investigated by the Audit and Investigations team.



### Food incidents – alerting the public

A key aspect of liaison with both the food industry and the official agencies is dealing with food incidents, that is where food is, or is suspected of, being contaminated, and poses a threat to consumers at home or abroad. In such situations, a fast risk

management response is required in order to determine whether food should be recalled or withdrawn from the market and whether the public needs to be informed. In 2021, on average, three public warnings per week were issued in relation to foods that posed a danger to the public. These were issued in the form of food alerts and food allergen alerts.

As part of this work, the Food Incidents team is the national contact point for the EU's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), a network to exchange information between its members – EU Member States, the European Commission and EFSA – on hazards identified in food, feed, and food contact materials. The group is also the contact point for the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), a global network of national food safety authorities whose secretariat is hosted by the WHO. In 2021, the RASFF dealt with 4,676 notifications. Of these, 28 were notified by Ireland. There were 16 notifications in respect of food that had originated in Ireland; a total of 148 notifications were related to foods distributed in Ireland.

In 2021, there was a regular and increasing flow of food incidents to which a response capability was required on a 24/7/365 basis. During the year, the Food Incidents team dealt with 724 food incidents, compared with 663 in 2020. Of these 724 food incidents, 378 were full incidents (compared with 360 in 2020). Nevertheless,

the number of food incidents in 2020 and 2021 was higher than in all other years since 2006, when there were 210 food incidents.

A total of 154 public warnings about food being recalled or withdrawn from the market were issued in the form of food alerts (119) and food allergen alerts (35), a slight decrease overall when compared with 2020 figures.

In 2021, 119 food alerts were issued, advising the public and the food sector of the need for a withdrawal (from the food chain) or recall (from consumers). The principal reasons for these alerts were a direct or indirect threat to consumers due to the presence of foreign matter, pathogenic microbes such as *Salmonella* or *Listeria*, or chemical contaminants such as ethylene oxide.

Three in every 100 people in Ireland have food allergies. It is therefore important that they are made aware of any product that contains an undeclared allergen. There are 14 categories of allergens which by law must be declared on a label. In 2021, the Authority issued 35 food allergen alerts. Subscribers to the Authority's alert system are informed of these alerts by text message.

Apart from public warnings, a key activity is the management of food-related incidents together with staff in the inspection and laboratory services, the official agencies, and affected food businesses.



## Audits

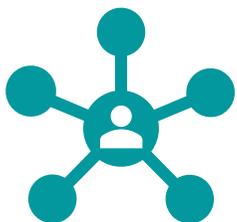
The COVID-19 pandemic impacted significantly on the Authority's official controls and targeted audit programmes in 2020. In 2021, it published a report on a targeted audit of halal claims on meat and

poultry. Audits resumed in 2021 and were conducted using a combination of remote and on-site methods, while at all times ensuring compliance with Government public health guidelines.

## International audits

Ireland's official controls system is subject to regular assessment by the European Commission's DG SANTE audit function. In 2021, three remote audits were conducted by SANTE F to evaluate the control systems in place governing the production and placing on the market of bovine meat, including traceability, residues in food, as well as a general follow-up. No remote or on-site audits were conducted by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration during 2021.

The Authority continues to represent and participate on behalf of Ireland in the European Commission-chaired National Audit Systems Network.



## Central Intelligence Hub

The Establishment of a Central Intelligence Hub (CIH) within the Authority forms the first of a four-phase proposed programme of work to ensure that the necessary support and coordination is provided to the

official agencies to adequately address the threat to consumer health and interests presented by fraudulent and deceptive practice in the food chain. Population of the Central Intelligence Hub database commenced during 2021 with current and appropriate historic and predictive intelligence material. During this period the development of support material and training was delivered to official agency users as part of the roll-out to the extended network of partner portal users.

As the competent authority with overall responsibility for the enforcement and coordination of food legislation in Ireland, the FSAI is best placed to take a central role in setting up and coordinating the CIH function due to its 360-degree regulatory overview of the Irish food chain and its legal mandate. The capture and analysis of data, information and intelligence informs both risk-based decision-making in the management of investigations and the process of informing service delivery of official controls that prevent and protect against fraudulent and deceptive practices, as required by Regulation EU 2017/625. To facilitate this function,

during 2021 a cohort of 13 officers from the FSAI, DAFM, HSE, Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, and local authorities undertook the Higher Diploma in Intelligence Operations in order to carry out the role of Intelligence Analysts. These individuals along with other nominated official agencies representatives will play an integral role during 2022 in the production of first Irish Food Fraud Strategic Assessment (IFFSA).

The IFFSA represents a significant step forward in improving and understanding the intelligence picture surrounding food fraud. It is not envisaged that the IFFSA will answer all questions around the full extent of agri-food fraud. The first assessment will instead:

- Establish a baseline understanding in relation to the nature and prevalence of fraudulent and deceptive practice in the agri-food chain
- Allow for prioritisation of those issues which pose the greatest evidenced or anticipated threats to the consumer
- Contribute to the identification of gaps in Ireland's knowledge so that they can be addressed appropriately
- Provide the basis upon which risk-based planning for the implementation of official controls to identify and address fraudulent and deceptive practice in the Agri-food chain can be based on analysis.



## Food fraud investigations

During 2021, authorised FSAI officers, together with other State regulatory authorities and the official agencies, conducted 171 investigations, which was an increase of 76 on the 2020 figure.

These investigations required a variety of approaches, ranging from the execution of 12 search warrants secured in the District Court and subsequently executed to the monitoring of social media pages in cases where the operation of online unauthorised food businesses was suspected. Outcomes from investigations resulted in 7 Closure Orders, 4 Prohibition Orders, 5 Compliance Notices and 5 Fixed Payment Notices being issued. Food safety concerns identified during these investigations necessitated the removal of in excess of 46, 000 kg of food. One investigation resulted in 51 2,4-Dinitrophenol (DNP) capsules being taken of the market. In this instance, the DNP, a drug that is sold illegally as a weight-loss supplement, was being placed on the market using an online platform.

During 2021, the Authority engaged with online platforms Facebook and Instagram, where illegal food businesses were selling online. This engagement resulted in 28 illegal food businesses pages being taken down.

Prosecution proceedings taken by the Authority concluded in a number of cases. Arrabawn Co-Operative Society Limited was convicted and fined a total of €40,000 on eight counts for breaches of food law at its liquid milk



processing plant in Kilconnell, Ballinasloe, Co Galway at a sitting of Ballinasloe District Court on 4 November 2021. In addition to the fine, agreed costs of €45,000 were recovered. The case was brought by the Authority following receipt of a protected disclosure in August 2020. The investigation found that documents had been illegally forged or altered and that these documents were then provided to business customers, third-party auditors and to the FSAI and DAFM authorised officers. The former Quality Manager of the plant was also convicted on three counts, including for provision of misleading information to an authorised officer; this person was fined €6,500 during the same court sitting. Separately, an independent food transporter in Co Meath was convicted and fined a total of €750 on three counts and ordered to pay FSAI costs of €2,500 at a sitting of Navan District Court on 24 September 2021. Prosecution proceedings were commenced after the food business operator failed to respond to written requests and to a compliance notice requiring them to register their food business; the food

business operator also provided misleading information to an FSAI authorised officer.

## Food fraud – national and international cooperation

The Food Fraud Task Force is chaired by the FSAI, and during 2021, two virtual meetings of the task force were convened. This multi-agency, multidisciplinary forum continues to consider and report on issues that are likely to significantly impact on food integrity/authenticity. In 2021, FSAI staff attended two virtual meetings of the Cross-Border Task Force on Food and Rural Crime. During the year, a multi-agency task force was established to assess the threat posed by cannabis edibles.



**FSAI staff participating in a Garda Roads Policing checkpoint**

During the year, FSAI staff participated in multi-agency roadside checkpoints organised by An Garda Síochána.

In collaboration with An Garda Síochána and Revenue's Customs Service, the Audit, Incidents and Investigations team participated in the joint Europol/INTERPOL operation targeting food crime. Known as Operation OPSON, returns submitted by Ireland to Europol in 2021 included seizures of 51 DNP capsules, 384 kg of food of animal origin, and 2 kg of a seafood-type type product.

On behalf of the Authority, the Audit, Incidents and Investigations functional area acts as the national food fraud contact point for the European Commission. During 2021, staff participated in two EU Food Fraud Network meetings, which were held virtually. In addition, the Authority monitored the European Commission's Administrative Assistance and Cooperation/Food Fraud Network database. In 2021, Ireland published five cases relating to food supplements and meat. Ireland responded to other EU Member State cases as required.

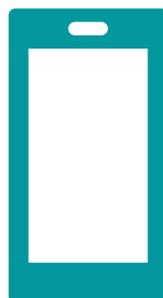
The FSAI continues to participate in the Food Industry Intelligence Network (FIIN) and it meets quarterly with members of the FIIN management board. FIIN currently represents a number of large food industry companies in Ireland and the UK. FIIN meetings involve discussion of intelligence reports and sharing of relevant information on food fraud. Representatives from the FSAI also sit

on the Emerging Risks and Threats Forum, jointly chaired by IBEC and the FSAI.

The FSAI continues to participate in the European Heads of Agency Food Fraud Working Group.

In collaboration with the University of Manchester, the Authority continues to participate in a project on the development of an operational toolkit for food safety practitioners committed to reducing non-compliance in the food industry. It is envisaged that practitioners, regulators, and enforcement personnel will utilise the toolkit to analyse deviance in the food system, and to design intervention mechanisms to correct such deviances.

The Authority also participated in the EU FoodSmartphone project, which endeavours to identify science and innovation gaps and how they relate to high-speed and novel biorecognition of food contaminants. Kits will be developed that can be attached to smartphones to instantly analyse foods.





## Dr Wayne Anderson Director, Food Science and Standards

The Food Science and Standards functional (FSS) area provides expert food safety scientific services for the FSAI. FSS staff focus on collating and critically evaluating scientific evidence as well as generating data to support risk assessment and underpin technical advice.

The FSS functional area has a team of dedicated scientists and administrators who work together to expand its expertise and apply this knowledge to protect consumers' health and interests. In addition to risk assessment, its work includes developing compliance tools and drafting technical guidance for the food industry and enforcement officers, providing expert support for food incidents and investigations, conducting direct official controls on certain foods and providing technical insight into Government Departments for the development of food legislation at European level.

The FSS functional area ensures that the best scientific advice is available to FSAI through management and support of the FSAI Scientific Committee which consists of independent scientists appointed by the Minister of Health. It contributes to the wider scientific community through lectures at third level and by delivering papers at national and international scientific meetings. Its scientists collaborate extensively with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and provide technical input into the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission which sets international food safety standards.

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## Supporting food law enforcement

The official agencies strive for consistent, effective, and efficient food law enforcement by inspection officers and official laboratory staff. The FSS functional

area supports this effort with scientific and technical advice. In 2021, a comprehensive chemical safety sampling plan for 2022 was compiled by the FSS team and agreed with the HSE, which subsequently introduced new elements of the risk-based approach recommended by the FSAI's Scientific Committee.

The participation of FSS scientists in the development of legislation at EU level enabled the FSAI to identify 13 new testing requirements in upcoming legislation, thus helping official laboratories to get a head start on developing methods to preparing for this new legislation. Work on a national chemical contaminants sampling programme covering all foods, and involving all agencies, was also progressed in response to ongoing developments within expert working groups convened by the European Commission.

In 2021, the FSS team produced guidance note 38 '*Guidance for Foods governed under Regulation (EU) No 609/2013, Foods for Specific Groups*'. The team also progressed work on national guidance on food safety management systems that is applicable to

the interpretation of hygiene legislation by all agencies. A calculation tool to evaluate compliance with nutrition labelling was developed and made available to agency staff through training sessions and this proved to be a popular time-saving innovation. Additional training materials were developed and delivered to HSE inspectors on the topics of novel foods legislation; additives legislation for all agency staff; and on the safety of ice and water. Training materials were also developed and delivered to horticulture inspectors in the DAFM on the topic of risk assessment for sampling frequency. Scientific and technical support was particularly necessary for some of the larger 2021 food incidents as well as more detailed investigations into potential non-compliance by food businesses. Cannabidiol (CBD) oils and hemp foods continued to be a major focus under novel foods regulations, and scientific support on the interpretation of testing results was especially important in strengthening enforcement action to protect consumers' health and interests.

The FSAI's microbiological expertise was pivotal in assisting the HSE and a company to resolve an issue with Salmonella contamination of dried soups and sauces.

During 2021, the FSS chemical safety team was extremely busy providing risk assessments for the significant number of food incidents caused by residues of the banned substance ethylene oxide in food. The team's skills were also needed to support the

DAFM in resolving two isolated contamination incidents in farm animals; these involved dioxins in one instance and heavy metals in another.

FSS expertise in food safety risk assessment and food law compliance was utilised in official controls carried out directly by the FSAI. In 2021, 427 foods for specific groups were notified and assessed for compliance with the applicable composition legislation, and 404 nutrition and health claims on these foods' packaging and marketing materials were also checked for compliance. In addition, nutrition and health claim checks were carried out on 244 food supplements.

Three infant formula companies' marketing materials were audited for conformance with an agreed code of practice aligned to compliance with the applicable legislation restricting claims and promotion of these foods.

In the novel foods area, preliminary comments were provided to the notifiers of three traditional foods; feedback was given on 11 novel food consultations with other EU Member States; and eight novel foods requests were received by the FSAI and are being processed.



Finally, a report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the enforcement of food law in Ireland in 2022 was published on the FSAI website. It highlighted the difficulties encountered by the FSAI as well as the official agencies and food businesses during repeated lockdowns, and some of the innovative developments introduced to manage risk while preventing disruption to the food supply.

### Strengthening science and evidence

In 2021, the Minister for Health appointed a new FSAI Scientific Committee, chaired by Professor Martin Cormican, HSE. The Committee met three times during the year and established three subject-specific standing subcommittees on chemical safety, biological safety, and public health nutrition. They agreed rules of procedure, as required by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998, and these were signed off by the Board.

A workplan was agreed and published on the FSAI website and five requests for advice were drafted and accepted; in addition, it was agreed to continue work on one outstanding previous Scientific Committee issue. Two opinions from the previous Scientific Committee agreed in 2020 were published in 2021. These were *Mycobacterium avium subsp. paratuberculosis and its links to Crohn's Disease*; and *Scientific Recommendations for Food-based Dietary Guidelines for Older Adults in Ireland*.

FSAI scientists produced 227 risk assessments to support food safety incidents and investigations, with over half of them involving chemicals in food. These scientists maintained FSAI influence on the direction of important food safety research by serving on the steering boards of five major national research programmes funded by the DAFM and covering topics such as the safety of horticulture foods, *Campylobacter* control in chickens, and the food safety implications of *C. difficile*.

In 2021, the FSAI's research project to estimate salt intake by the Irish population began, following delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. FSS scientists evaluated 13 food safety research projects for 3 different research funding bodies and published an update on the *FSAI Research Priorities 2022* report on the FSAI website, in order to help stimulate research to support regulatory science. A study of reformulated food in the retail environment was conducted to test a new evaluation tool and this was accompanied by a systematic review of the literature. Other food studies were progressed to establish the exposure of consumers to sulphites, and also to establish the microbiological safety and quality of bottled water in Ireland.

In addition, the FSS team published three food study reports – one on alcohol content of fermented foods, and two on the nutritional content of yoghurts and breakfast cereals.

In the field of zoonosis, the 2019 national zoonosis data were published on the FSAI website and, for the first time, these data were generated using a new semi-automated programme developed by FSAI scientists which will ensure faster publication of data in the future.

FSAI participation in the Science Foundation initiative to place researchers in public bodies bore fruit in 2021. Dr Kevin Burke, University of Limerick, produced a literature screening system for identifying early warning signs of emerging risks. In addition, he created a dashboard to show real-time trends in food incidents, and he also analysed enforcement data from the FSAI and the HSE to examine patterns of non-compliance by food businesses. Dr Mary O'Connell Motherway, University College Cork, reviewed the FSAI Notifications Database for probiotics containing food supplements. She carried out an online review of probiotic foods on the market in Ireland and completed a literature review of specific microbial strains used in probiotic foods. Her work will continue in 2022 and will contribute greatly to the ability of the FSAI to assess the safety of probiotic foods.

## Scientific collaboration and technical advice

The significant contribution made by the FSAI to the work of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) continued in 2021. A new focal point agreement was established to ensure that EFSA had a national information dissemination point in Ireland.

The focal point managed and expanded the network of research institutions in Ireland which have been approved to compete for EFSA research funding; this network now consists of 12 institutions, including Technological University Dublin, which was added in 2021. The focal point also organised a successful workshop with EFSA for the different bodies which must, under EU law, transmit data to EFSA, with the aim of improving efficiency and timeliness of data transfer.

The FSAI participated in five EFSA network meetings with EU Member States on subjects such as nanotechnology, microbiological risk assessment, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

EFSA has the European brief for identifying emerging risks, and the FSAI participated in both meetings of the Emerging Risks Exchange Network and completed both surveys on emerging risk signals issued by EFSA. To support this activity, the FSAI Emerging Risk Screening Group met four times in 2021 to consider 10 briefing notes on possible signals of emerging risk; in addition, the FSAI



attended the Food Drink Ireland Emerging Risks and Threats Forum on two occasions to share information with the food industry. Four FSAI experts participated over 3 days in an EFSA horizon scanning exercise which considered possible divergence in regulatory science against the background of the EU Farm to Fork strategy. In a similar vein, the FSAI also provided analysis of possible chemical safety problems that could potentially arise from the EU Farm to Fork strategy goal to reduce pesticide and fertiliser usage and increase organic food production.

In 2021, the European Commission continued holding virtual meetings. FSS team members attended 46 expert meetings on legislation development, which were organised by the European Commission and the European Council. They also briefed the DOH for votes on the completed work. Six submissions to the European Commission were made on issues relating to legislation development. In addition, the FSAI took part in three European Commission taskforce meetings on maximum safe limits for vitamins and minerals in food.

On the international stage, Codex Alimentarius Commission meetings where global food standards are agreed operated virtually with translation. The FSAI participated in Codex Committee meetings on food additives as well as meetings on contaminants.

Expert meetings of the WHO group on Food Allergens continued to take place in 2021, completing work on part 3 of their brief concerning voluntary allergen declarations. These meetings were also attended by the FSS Chief Specialist in Food Science and Technology. In This way, the FSAI provided feedback on the WHO food safety strategy as part of this consultation process.

### Engagement and communication

FSS scientists deal with many queries from stakeholders both directly and through the FSAI Advice Line. In 2021, they responded to 825 queries. Of these, 322 related to chemical safety matters, 152 to nutrition, 71 to biological safety, and 280 related to novel foods and other food technology issues.

The Allergen Declaration on Non-prepackaged Food Working Group is composed of FSAI staff, civil society representatives, industry representation groups, and the official agencies. It focuses on improving consumer protection for those with food allergies buying unwrapped food. In 2021, the working group concluded their work following completion of a three-year workplan.

During 2021, 10 projects relating to information compilation, guidance development, updates, and communications were delivered. The FSAI published guidance for the food industry on safe practice for fermentation of fruit and vegetables; this was in



response to requests received from the FSAI Artisan Forum. In addition, the guidance on safe process validation was updated.

A major technical contribution was also made to the NSAI food hygiene standard for food processing: IS342, and to the development

by Bord Bia of a code of practice for producers of duck eggs.

Further industry support work in 2021 included preparing amendments to the FSAI MenuCal calorie menu labelling tool to improve its estimation of calories for fried foods, and preparing an update on approved health claims allowed on food labels and marketing materials. There were also many formal interactions with the food industry throughout 2021, including eight presentations at the FSAI food industry fora and consultative council, and three presentations on FSAI legislation and activity updates at Food Drink Ireland regulatory affairs meetings organised for the food manufacturing industry.

The FSS team also delivered a webinar on compliance issues for foods containing hemp and foods containing CBD. In addition, they trained members of Civil Defence on food allergen management and legal requirements.

In 2021, all meetings of international scientific committees that FSS scientists are members of were held virtually. FSAI scientists



presented eight papers at international events, including the Dubai International Food Conference and the International Association of Food Protection European Symposium. An additional three papers were delivered at national scientific meetings. Two peer-reviewed papers

were published by FSAI scientists, one on the work of the Scientific Committee and another on phosphate additives in food and guidelines for people with chronic kidney disease. As part of the FSAI Science Strategy 2020–2024, FSS scientists continued to support third-level institutions, including delivering 20 lectures to both undergraduate and postgraduate students at five universities and institutes of technology.

Finally, a major initiative in 2021 saw the signing of a 4-year, €2 million Food Reformulation Task Force service level agreement with the DOH. In addition, public health nutrition scientists collaborated on a workplan to deliver the Department of Health Roadmap for Food Product Reformulation in Ireland, and they also carried out complex data analysis and acquisition activities to ensure commencement of the work.

## Corporate governance

In compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016), the Authority has a Corporate Governance Framework in place. This Framework was developed in order to assist in improving efficiency and enhancing openness and transparency. The Framework provides guidance for the organisation, detailing aspects such as conducting Board business, strategic planning, operational processes, risk management, financial controls, and standards of behaviour. During 2021, the Authority ensured and maintained compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016).

## The Board

The key functions of the Board include reviewing and guiding strategic direction and major plans of action, risk management policies and procedures, annual budgets, and business plans; setting performance objectives; monitoring implementation of the Authority's strategy and business plans; and overseeing major revenue and capital expenditure and investment decisions. The Board has a formal schedule of matters specifically reserved for its consideration. The Board commences each meeting with a private session of the Board, where no FSAI staff members are present.

## Board Audit and Risk Committee

The Authority has a fully functioning Board Audit and Risk Committee which undertook the following audits during 2021: review of internal financial controls, health & safety (COVID) assessment. In 2021 the Audit and Risk Committee carried out an Effectiveness Survey and presented a report on its findings to the Board for consideration. The Financial Statements, as approved by the Board Audit and Risk Committee and the Board, were subject to audit by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General. Four Board Audit and Risk Committee meetings were held in 2021. The Board Audit and Risk Committee has an independent role in providing the Board with assurance on internal

control, risk management, audit, and assurance matters as part of the systematic review of the Authority's control environment and governance procedures. The Board Audit and Risk Committee operates under an agreed charter and prepares a formal annual report for the Board.

- Number of meetings: Four
- Chairperson: Ms Mary Cullen January to June 2021, Mr Gerry McCurdy June 2021 to present.

## **Nominations and Remunerations Committee**

The Performance Development Committee is appointed to devise and implement an appropriate mechanism to assess the performance of the Chief Executive Officer and, through the Chief Executive Officer, to review the performance of the FSAI Executive Team. As required, the Committee agrees remuneration with Government Departments, develops job descriptions, identifies the relevant competencies and ideal candidate profile for posts, agrees the recruitment and search process, and sets a specific timetable. The Performance Development Committee convenes as required by the Board.

- Number of meetings: Two
- Chairperson: Martin Higgins
- Membership: Ms Mary Cullen, Mr Patrick Knight.

## **Statutory and other notices**

In accordance with Section 41 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998, the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995 and the Standards in Public Office Act, 2001, members of the Authority's Board, Scientific Committee and Scientific Subcommittees, as well as designated FSAI staff, are required to submit a declaration of interests annually. These are in turn submitted by the FSAI to the Minister for Health and/or to the Standards in Public Office Commission, as appropriate.

## **Protected Disclosures Act 2014**

There were thirteen protected disclosures made to the FSAI in 2020 from employees or former employees of the food industry.

## **Prompt Payment of Accounts Act, 1997**

The FSAI's policy is to ensure that all payments are made promptly. Every effort, consistent with proper financial procedures, is being made to ensure that all suppliers are paid within the required time frame, in accordance with best practice. The FSAI publishes quarterly reports of compliance on its website.

## **Freedom of Information Act 2014**

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 asserts the right of members of the public to access official information to the greatest extent possible consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy of individuals. The FSAI complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and publishes under Section 8 of the Act. This publication contains information about the services provided, or to be provided, to the public by the FSAI, and it also features a disclosures log and financial information. During 2020, there were 28 Freedom of Information requests.

## **European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007**

The European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 133/2007) gives legal rights to those seeking access to information on the environment from public authorities. During 2021, there were 2 requests under Access to Information on the Environment legislation.

## **Customer Charter**

The FSAI has a Customer Charter detailing its full commitment to providing customers with an efficient, timely, professional, and courteous service. The Charter sets out the standards of service customers can expect to receive from the FSAI.

## Strategic goals and achievements

### Goal 1 Enforcement and compliance

To enforce food law and increase compliance, in collaboration with our regulatory partners, through a world-class food control system

#### Objective 1.1 Lead and support Ireland's food safety regulators to implement a fair, consistent and effective system of enforcement

- A coordinated official control survey of the microbiological safety of refrigerated ready-to-eat (RTE) spreads and dips (18NS5) was published and a 2021 study on microbiological safety and suitability of bottled water was co-ordinated.
- A guidance document on Foods for Specific Groups was developed and work on national guidance on food safety management systems was progressed that is applicable to the interpretation of hygiene legislation by all Agencies.
- A chemical safety sampling plan was agreed and provided to the HSE to execute in 2022 and there was significant input into DAFM pesticides and veterinary medicines sampling programmes for 2021.
- Detailed technical input was provided to the official agencies on a number of topics: for example, changing legislation covering ethylene oxide and titanium dioxide; review of national microbiological sampling submission forms; sampling of milk from vending machines; and testing of cannabidiol oils and hemp foods.
- A calculation tool to evaluate compliance with nutrition labelling was developed and made available to agency staff through training sessions.
- An update of guidance on laboratory practice with respect to the Official Controls Regulation was circulated to Official Agencies.
- A comprehensive suite of service contracts was maintained with the official agencies to cover their official controls on food safety.
- The Authority supported the HSE to maintain official controls during the ransomware cyber-attack which disrupted IT systems.
- A new blended training methodology was adopted, which allowed for training projects to be delivered in an effective and efficient way during covid restrictions through webinars, reading materials as well as presentations from subject matter experts, breakout groups, discussion and Q&A sessions.

- A 'Principles of Intelligence-led Food Fraud Control' training session was delivered to provide inspectors from the official agencies with the tools and knowledge to adopt an intelligence-led approach to combatting fraudulent and deceptive practices in the agri-food chain.
- The FSAI funded the food safety controls conducted by local authorities and the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI).
- The Authority participated in a review with the County and City Management Association of the structure and funding of the local authority's veterinary service.
- The FSAI continued the development of e-learning modules for official agencies staff including updating the cross-agency Food Additives eLearning modules in 2021.
- A number of self-serve training courses were developed for official agencies over the course of 2021. These included:
  - Ice and Water – Assessing Regulatory Controls (cross-agency)
  - Nutrition Tolerances Calculator (HSE)
  - Food incidents (FSAI staff)
  - Dairy Labelling Training – Nutritional Health Claims (DAFM diary inspectorate)
  - Dairy Labelling Training – Food Information for Consumers (DAFM diary inspectorate)
  - Novel Foods (HSE).
- A suite of training materials and resources were updated, and new resources were developed in advance of the 2021 Sante F General Review Mission. These included:
  - A webinar: Food flavourings in the meat and dairy sectors (DAFM and Local Authority (LA))
  - Two eLearning modules: Food Additives eLearning modules 2021 (updated) (cross-agency)
  - A self-serve course: Food Additives Training (cross-agency)
  - Management of aspects of Ireland's participation the European Commission's Better Training for Safer Food initiative.
  - Operating the food notification system for food supplements, foods for special medical purposes and infant formula/follow-on formula. A number of enhancements were completed on the notification database in 2021 to improve end user and FSAI functionality.
  - Management of technical, regulatory and legal queries from official agency and FSAI staff.
- The FSAI reviewed Brexit developments and provided advice and support to the Government and official agencies in relation to new requirements which took effect on the 1 January 2021. This involved working with the Government and Official Agencies to support new official controls on imported foods from the UK (excluding Northern Ireland) 2021 under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement and Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol.
- Work was also undertaken with the Government, Official Agencies and industry to prepare for official controls in relation to export certification to Great Britain line with the UK Border Operations Model. This involved an FSAI assessment of LA and HSE

supervision premises, official controls, and the coordination of transfer of supervision for premises requiring veterinary export certification.

### **Objective 1.2** Manage risks in the food chain and respond effectively to any national or international food incident or crisis

- Thirty-two Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (iRASFF) Food Fraud Notifications were received by the FSAI in 2021. Six iRASFF Food Fraud notifications were created by the FSAI in 2021.
- A consistent theme for the official agencies during 2021 was the impact of Brexit on official controls programmes carried out by the official agencies and the FSAI. The FSAI worked across Government and official agencies to manage and respond to change in risks from 1 January 2021 as part of the national Brexit response. This included responding to new issues and incidents in relation to foods imported to Ireland from the UK which developed throughout 2021.
- In 2021, the Authority dealt with 724 food incidents.
- The FSAI, supported by its official agencies, identified and reported 28 products to the EU's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF). This operates on a 24/7/365 basis.

### **Objective 1.3** Ensure the safety, integrity and authenticity of the food chain by detecting, deterring and preventing breaches of food law, and taking action to protect consumers

- A total of 154 public warnings about food being recalled or withdrawn from the market were issued in the form of food alerts (119) or food allergen alerts (35), a slight decrease overall compared to the number of alerts issued in 2020.
- To support the work of the food incidents team, 159 risk assessments were carried out, including 108 in the chemical safety area alone.
- Ninety investigations were carried out in conjunction with other State regulatory authorities and the official agencies.
- Seven protected disclosures were investigated.
- In 2021, the FSAI published 59 Enforcement Orders (including 47 Closure Orders, 10 Prohibition Orders and 2 Improvement Orders) served to food businesses for breaches of food safety legislation. This represented a 40% increase on the 42 Enforcement Orders served in 2020, which had seen a large reduction in Enforcement Orders due to the huge impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the food service sector.

**Objective 1.4** Strive for a world-class official food control system for Ireland which delivers the best outcomes for consumers

- 427 foods for specific groups were notified and assessed for compliance with the applicable composition legislation with 404 nutrition and health claims checked for compliance on these foods.
- The marketing materials of three infant formula companies were also audited for conformance with an agreed code of practice aligned to compliance with the applicable legislation restricting claims and promotion of these foods.
- During 2021 the number of food supplements notified to the FSAI under S.I. 506 of 2007 continued to increase to 4824 in 2021 compared to 3161 in 2020 along with an increase in the complexity of issues to be addressed in relation to notified supplements. In Q4 2021 the FSAI initiated a review of the food supplements notifications which will continue into 2022.
- Under novel foods regulations, preliminary comments were provided to the notifiers of three traditional foods, feedback was given on 11 article 4 consultations from other member states while 8 article 4 requests were received by FSAI and are being processed. The Department of Health was provided with briefings on 22 novel foods proposed for vote by member states by the European Commission prior to incorporation into the approved list.
- The FSAI carried out a review of 12 EFSA risk assessments and the Department of Health was briefed to facilitate their vote on their inclusion in the EU positive list.
- A report on the impact of COVID-19 on the enforcement of food law in Ireland in 2022 was published on the FSAI website.
- A number of existing audit reports and action plans were updated.
- Two audit projects to assess the effectiveness of official controls were developed.
- During 2021, the FSAI continued work on the implementation of the revised EU legislation on official controls, Regulation (EU) 2017/625. This Regulation set the rules for the performance by EU Member States of controls in the agri-food sector and it replaced the previous official controls legislation (Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 and Regulation (EC) No 854/2004). Work included leading the Cross-Agency OCR Steering Committee comprising FSAI, DAFM, HSE, SFPA and LA.
- The FSAI coordinated the preparation and follow-up of the official agencies for the audits that the European Commission (DG-Santé) conducts to verify the compliance of Ireland with the official controls legislation. In 2021, this work included:
  - Finalising the responses to a 2020 audit that looked at controls on food fraud in all the official agencies
  - Coordinating an audit to evaluate the control of residues and contaminants in live animals and animal products
  - Coordinating an audit to evaluate the control systems in place in DAFM and the local authorities on the production and placing on the market of bovine meat, including traceability
  - Extensive preparation for a DG-Santé country profile audit including a general follow-up on the findings and recommendations of their audits over the last few years.

- The FSAI coordinated a technical review by the official agencies for accuracy of a draft report from the US FDA on their 'Food Safety Systems Recognition' assessment of Ireland in 2018 (as part of the engagement between the US FDA, the European Commission and Member States).



## Goal 2 Science, expertise and evidence

To advance food safety and integrity through independent science, expertise and a strong evidence base

### Objective 2.1 Support risk-based decision-making and policy with high-quality, independent expertise

- A new FSAI Scientific Committee was appointed by the Minister of Health under the Chair, Prof. Martin Cormican, University of Galway.
- The Scientific Committee met three times and established three subject specific standing sub-committees in chemical safety, biological safety and public health nutrition.
- The Scientific Committee agreed rules of procedure as required by the FSAI Act and these were signed off by the Board. A workplan was agreed and published on the FSAI website and five requests for advice were drafted and accepted as well as agreement to continue work on one issue remaining from the previous Scientific Committee.
- Two opinions from the previous Scientific Committee agreed in 2020 were published in 2021. These were, *Mycobacterium avium* Subsp. Paratuberculosis and Its Links to Crohn's Disease and Scientific Recommendations for Food-based Dietary Guidelines for Older Adults in Ireland.
- The FSAI provided advice to the official agencies on the national legislation to give effect to the revised EU legislation on official controls, Regulation (EU) No 2017/625. This included advice on the provision of second expert opinions in the case of disputed results of official control samples and advice to official agencies in relation to import controls on foods of non-animal origin.
- FSAI advice supported the preparation by the Department of Health of two new orders (S.I. No. 152 and 543 of 2021) under Section 5 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, 1998 Act to update the list of food laws within the remit of the FSAI and the service contracts.
- FSAI scientists produced 227 risk assessments to support food safety incidents and investigations with over half of them involving chemicals in food. An exposure assessment on sulphites in food was completed and the risk to consumers was characterised.

- A report on the way forward for salt reduction in food was provided to the Department of Health to assist in reformulation policy.

## Objective 2.2 Expand the evidence base through research, coordinated studies and scientific collaboration

- The FSAI contributed to the direction of important food safety research by serving on the steering boards of 5 major national research programmes funded by DAFM including the safety of horticulture foods, Campylobacter control in chickens and the food safety implications of *C. difficile*. The FSAI is also part of the industry advisory group for the Science Foundation Ireland VistaMilk research centre, FSAI scientists evaluated 13 food safety research projects for 3 different research funding bodies and published an update of the FSAI research needs report on the FSAI web site to help stimulate research to support regulatory science. A study of reformulated food in the retail environment was conducted to test a new evaluation tool and this was accompanied by a systematic review of the literature.
- Three food study reports were published: one on alcohol content of fermented foods and two on nutritional content of yoghurts and breakfast cereals.
- Data on salt in foods was updated on the FSAI website as part of ongoing monitoring of food reformulation for the Department of Health.
- The 2019 national zoonosis data was published on the FSAI website and, for the first time, this was created using a new semi-automated programme developed by our scientists that will ensure faster publication of data in the future.
- The FSAI continued participation in the Science Foundation Ireland initiative that places researchers in public bodies. One researcher produced a literature screening system for signals of emerging risks, created a dashboard to show real time trends in food incidents and analysed enforcement data from the FSAI and HSE to examine patterns in non-compliance of food businesses. Another researcher reviewed the FSAI notifications database for probiotic containing food supplements, carried out an online review of probiotic foods on the market in Ireland and completed a literature review of specific microbial strains used in probiotic foods.
- A Chemical Safety Regulatory Scientist Forum was established and chaired by the FSAI to link regulatory scientists in State Agencies including the EPA, HPRA, HAS, HSE and DAFM.

### Objective 2.3 Advance risk assessment practice to promote trust and engagement

- Expert meetings of the World Health Organisation (WHO) group on food allergens continued in 2021, completing work on part 3 of their brief concerning voluntary allergen declarations. These were again attended by one of FSAI's senior Scientists. The FSAI also provided feedback on the WHO food safety strategy as part of its consultation process. An evaluation of staff scientific skills was undertaken to identify gaps in expertise to facilitate strengthening of science in the FSAI and identify additional skills.
- Scientific expertise was shared with Food Standards Scotland and *safe food* via a series of planned exchanges throughout the year.
- A new European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Focal Point agreement was set up to ensure EFSA had a national information dissemination point in Ireland.
- The EFSA Focal Point in the FSAI managed and expanded the network of research institutions in Ireland approved to compete for EFSA research funding and this now consists of 12 institutions.
- The EFSA Focal Point in the FSAI also organised a successful workshop with EFSA for the different bodies who must, under EU law, transmit data to EFSA with the aim of improving efficiency and timeliness of data transfer.
- FSAI participated in 5 EFSA network meetings with member states on subjects like nanotechnology, microbiological risk assessment and Genetically Modified Organisms.

### Objective 2.4 Grow our ability to identify emerging risks and threats to the food chain

- The FSAI participated in two European Commission Joint Research Centre meetings on food fraud and quality.
- The authority participated in both meetings of the EFSA Emerging Risks Exchange Network and completed surveys on emerging risk signals issued by EFSA. One briefing note was produced for EFSA, and a short issue was drafted for discussion at the meeting.
- The FSAI Emerging Risk Screening Group met 4 times in 2021 to consider 10 briefing notes on possible signals of emerging risk
- A media monitoring platform was developed and trialled to search for signals of emerging risks.
- The FSAI attended the Food Drink Ireland Emerging Risks and Threats forum twice to share information with the food industry.
- Four FSAI experts participated in an EFSA horizon scanning exercise over three days looking at possible divergence in regulatory science against the background of the EU farm to fork strategy.
- The FSAI provided analysis of possible chemical safety problems that could potentially arise from the EU Farm to Fork strategy goal to reduce pesticide and fertiliser usage and increase organic food production at an EFSA stakeholder workshop.

- The authority collaborated with the National Poisons Information Centre in Beaumont Hospital, Dublin on a pilot of a nutriviigilance system for Ireland which was completed and communicated in 2021.

### **Objective 2.5** Influence the development of food standards and enforcement approaches at European and international level

- Numerous expert meetings were attended on legislation development organised by the European Commission and the European Council. The DoH were also briefed for votes on the completed work. Submissions were made to the European Commission pertaining to the development and enforcement of legislation. The FSAI took part in meetings of a number of EU Commission taskforces.
- The FSAI participated in the Codex Committee meetings on food additives and on contaminants and the Codex Committee on Food Labelling.
- The authority Continued to participate in a network of other EU Member States, and in the European Commission, working on a standard format for producing National Control Plans for official controls across the EU and for reporting on them. Under the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses, the FSAI continued to chair an electronic working group on establishing nutrient reference values (NRVs) for older infants and young children. This work included an international Consultation on General Principles for NRVs held in May 2020 and an Agenda Paper submitted in December 2020.
- The FSAI provided substantial input to the development of the Irish national position on the revision of the Food Information to the Consumer (FIC) Regulation as part of the EU's 'Farm to Fork Strategy'. This included:
  - Hosting a public consultation on behalf of DoH to inform the development of the Irish national position and publishing a report of the consultation findings in December 2021.
  - Developing a corporate position and advice paper for DoH on the five proposed FIC revisions.
  - Publishing the FSAI response to the EU Inception Impact Assessment on the labelling revisions
  - Attending EU meetings on the FIC review and chairing the EU Heads of Agency working groups on labelling topics including date marking, Food Law and sustainability.
- The FSAI provided input into the development of tertiary legislation (implementing and delegated EU Acts) in relation to the revised EU legislation on official controls, Regulation (EU) No 2017/625 as members of the European Commission Expert Group and Working Group on the Official Controls Regulation and the European Commission Working group on temporary measures for the import of food and feed of non-animal origin (Regulation (EU) No 2019/1793).

### Goal 3: Engagement and communication

To be a leader in the safety and integrity of food through communication, partnership, collaboration and advocacy

**Objective 3.1** Provide clear and evidence-based advice and information to promote food safety and build compliance with food law

- The Authority's website, [www.fsai.ie](http://www.fsai.ie), was updated regularly and maintained in order to ensure accessibility for all users on all devices. A new website was created based on current user feedback. This new website aims to cater to FSAI stakeholders with a new user interface optimized for mobile. The website will be published in 2022.
- During 2021, the FSAI website generated approx. 1,454,000 page views. In 2021 the Food Business, News and Alert sections of the website were the most popular.
- Regular ezines were distributed to subscriber groups during the year. The FSAI continues to use webinars and e-learning tools to support increased compliance with food safety legislation.
- Active two-way engagement with the FSAI's stakeholders was achieved. An increase in the number of followers on social media platforms was recorded, with 20,400 followers on Facebook (2020: 19,400); 10,500 followers on Twitter (2020: 9,900), 26,771 followers on LinkedIn (2020: 23,300) and 1,400 followers on Instagram.
- Engagement with the official agencies was facilitated through SafetyNet, an extranet for the FSAI and the official agencies staff. Documentation and meetings information was shared through this portal; the FSAI also provided access to online training for both internal and external users.
- In 2021, 4,718 queries were received by the FSAI Advice Line from people working in the food service sector; manufacturers; retailers; researchers; distributors; consultants; and consumers. All queries were responded to by our internal experts.
- Guidance for the food industry was published on safe practice for fermentation of fruit and vegetables and guidance on safe process validation was updated.
- A major technical contribution was also made to the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) food hygiene standard for food processing: IS342. The FSAI's calorie menu labelling tool, Menucal, was amended to improve its estimation of calories for fried foods and an update to approved health claims allowed on food was published on the website.
- The Civil Defence was trained in allergen management and legislative requirements.

- The FSAI Advised the Department of Health on revised legislation to set the extent of retail-to-retail supply of animal-origin foods that should be permitted under a ‘marginal, localised and restricted’ (MLR) exemption from certain EU food hygiene laws.
- Work continued on a compliance building project in 2021. The project aims to create a novel compliance solution to assist Irish food and drink producers to make compliant health and nutrition claims on their products.
- Redevelopment of the Food Safety and You training programme began.
- Industry Brexit queries were responded to through dedicated Brexit advice line, 13 industry Brexit newsletters were published, and updated Brexit information and resources were provided through the FSAI website, webinars and industry stakeholder forums.

**Objective 3.2** Work in partnership with Government, other State agencies, academia, and civil society organisations to champion food safety within Ireland

- Two virtual meetings of the Food Fraud Task Force in 2021; this task force is chaired by the FSAI.
- Food Industry Intelligence Network (FIIN) meetings were attended.
- The FSAI co-chaired one meeting of the Cross-Border Task Force on Food and Rural Crime.
- The authority participated in multi-agency operations, including the execution of search warrants in domestic dwellings where fraudulent and deceptive practices were suspected.
- The FSS functional area presented 8 scientific papers at international meetings including and 3 papers were delivered at national scientific meetings.
- Two peer reviewed papers were published by our scientists one on the work of the Scientific Committee ‘*Independent Science to Support Food Safety and Public Health Protection in Ireland*’ and others on phosphate additives in food and guidelines for people with chronic kidney disease ‘*Revising Dietary Phosphorus Advice in Chronic Kidney Disease*’ and ‘*European food safety guidelines on dietary phosphate additives: implications for people with chronic kidney disease*’
- The FSAI continued to support third level institutes and delivered over 50 hours of lectures to a mix of undergraduate and post graduate students at universities and institutes of technology in Ireland.
- The FSAI participated in 2 international local organising committees for scientific conferences.
- 2021 saw continued engagement with the Food Safety Trainers’ Network.

- The FSAI hosted and moderated an online briefing session for interested stakeholders on the topic of Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) toxicity, with the assistance of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, Bord Iascaigh Mhara and IFA-Aquaculture and the Marine Institute.
- During 2021, the FSAI held breakfast bite webinars on food safety training, labelling, the legal position of cannabis-based food products like CBD oils in the EU, managing food safety in a food business and starting a food business.
- Four meetings of the FSAI Food Safety Consultative Council were held and a new workplan was agreed. An open meeting was held in November 2021. The theme of the open meeting was Food Safety Culture – How Food Businesses and Consumers Benefit.
- Twelve new ministerial appointments were made to the Food Safety Consultative Council during 2021 for a 5-year term bringing up to 23, the full membership of the Council.

**Objective 3.3** Collaborate with key stakeholders to foster and promote a culture of food safety and compliance within Ireland’s food industry

- The FSAI participated in a Garda-led operation targeting the illegal presentation of equines for slaughter.
- The Service Contract Committee overseeing enforcement consistency between the HSE Environmental Health Service and the FSAI met three times in 2020.
- Presentations were provided at the FSAI Food Industry © and consultative council together with FSAI legislation and activity updates for the Food Drink Ireland regulatory affairs meetings with the food manufacturing industry.
- Regular engagement with Food Drink Ireland groups and other trade bodies in relation to specific regulatory issues.
- The FSAI’s industry and food sector groups – the Retail Forum, Artisan Forum, and the Food Service Forum met regularly during 2021 and included a range of inputs from FSAI specialists and from official agencies aimed at supporting compliance with food legislation.
- During 2021, the FSAI also held liaison meetings with the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) and industry representative groups.
- The Cross-agency Committee on Import of Food of Non-animal Origin met twice in 2021 to coordinate and support the enforcement of import controls.
- The FSAI was involved in the HSE-led COVID-19 National Standing Oversight Committee (NSOC), which oversaw outbreaks of COVID-19 in meat plants and other workplaces.

- During 2021, the FSAI increased engagement with the Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee, a collaborative forum with the Irish shell-fisheries industry; this engagement was achieved through the use of video-conferencing meetings.

### **Objective 3.4** Improve our capacity and capability by working with others to advocate for safe and trustworthy food for everyone

- The FSAI continued the role of Secretariat of the European Heads of Food Safety Agencies group. The FSAI organised a meeting of this group in collaboration with the Presidency of the European Heads of Food Safety Agencies. Many staff members sit on the European Heads of Food Safety Agencies expert working groups.
- The authority co-chairs the Heads of Agency working group on food supplements and has evaluated a list of botanicals.
- The FSAI provided technical support to Bord Bia in the development of a code of practice for duck egg producers.
- The FSAI contributed to industry stakeholder initiatives, such as the Bord Bia Quality Assurance Scheme, the ACBI Butchery Apprenticeship Scheme and the Irish Grain & Feed Association HACCP.



## **Goal 4 Organisational excellence**

To empower our people, strengthen our systems, and develop our culture to achieve organisational excellence and maximise our impact

### **Objective 4.1** Ensure a high-performing and empowering culture for our people, built on innovation, shared values and teamwork

- At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in Ireland, the Government's guidelines and instructions were for people to work from home if possible. This continued in 2021 and staff delivered the majority of the Authority's planned work for the year by adapting its approach and methods. Additionally, they also delivered a substantial amount of additional reactive work. The organisation continued to review the on-going impact of COVID-19 and ensure that appropriate supports were put in place to support the new way of working, as well as ensuring that the well-being of staff was a key priority.

- A number of project briefings were held throughout the year. Project briefings are recognised as a key communication tool to inform staff about organisational activities that they may not be directly involved in.
- The Authority's values of integrity, respect, passion, transparency, teamwork and collaboration continue to be an important driver of how work is done and ensuring the FSAI's culture evolves and develops to support the delivery of work programmes and ensuring we achieve our vision and strategy. Work continued on embedding these values and during 2021 a Peer-to-Peer Values Recognition Scheme was introduced as a way of recognising behaviours that support our values. Our Values Framework was also reviewed and updated to reflect a remote work environment.
- The Authority progressed a detailed programme seeking to further develop a positive, collaborative and high-performing working environment. This included actioning responses from the 2018 staff survey, organising themed workshops for all staff, and implementing a programme for staff, management, and leadership development. In late 2020, a new staff survey was conducted and the findings from this will be used to develop the organisation further in future years. Learning and development initiatives continued, mostly delivered remotely, and the Leadership Programme for managers continued to be rolled-out.
- The Authority's recruitment needs were reviewed, and recruitment progressed throughout the year, in line with sanctions received from the DOH. A skills gap analysis, as well as staff learning and development plans, were undertaken in order to plan for future organisational needs.
- Human resources policies were reviewed and updated in order to ensure compliance with relevant employment legislation and best practice.
- The performance system continued to be embedded into the Authority's management system, facilitating regular feedback and review to guide the organisation's team and individual performance.
- The Authority hosted a number of students throughout the year across all functional areas.
- Staff safety, health and well-being remained a key priority for the Authority during 2021 as COVID-19 continued to impact people's lives. There were on-going initiatives under the Life@FSAI Health and Wellbeing Framework, during 2021. These initiatives included a wide range of activities to support staff, including mindfulness, yoga, coffee roulette, an Employee Assistance Programme, and a steps challenge, book club, and team-building exercises.
- Regular staff meetings and quarterly staff seminars were held throughout the year. In addition, the Senior Leadership Team met on average, once a week to discuss issues and make decisions on key areas for the organisation. Functional area meetings, team meetings, and project meetings were also held with all teams on a monthly basis. Regular meetings of the Health and Safety Committee were held and the annual work programme was implemented. Staff Committee meetings were held regularly during 2020, thereby facilitating open discussions on numerous issues of relevance to staff.
- The internal communications strategy was revised throughout the year in line with organisational change, and it remains key to the organisation's tool for engaging with our people. The role of internal communications during COVID-19 and the period of time working

remotely has been critical to our success in implementing necessary changes to working arrangements and adapting to ensure they worked effectively.

- In December 2020, the FSAI set up an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, endorsed by the senior leadership team. During 2021, in accordance with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission legislation and Our Public Service 2020 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Vision Statement and Maturity Model, the FSAI carried out a series of action under the area's of leadership, recruitment, training, data, structure and culture. This action included talks, training and review of processes with regard to fairness and inclusion.

#### **Objective 4.2** Provide a robust and targeted information framework to deliver internal efficiencies and meet stakeholder and customer needs

- During 2021, the FSAI updated software development applications to support business activities to meet increased and changing business needs.
- Updates were made to the various mechanisms that the FSAI uses to prepare and process certain datasets to enable earlier reporting to EFSA, in line with new recommended deadlines that apply to the 2021 data. This included some temporary solutions to received and process data following the HSE cyber-attack.
- New audio-visual technology for Meeting Rooms to include visual display (room camera); sound (room microphone) and faster computers to enhance presentation deliveries when using hybrid collaboration tools.
- The FSAI continued to progress work relating to its Data Strategy, with some system work completed to begin the process of retiring outdated and unsupported systems. As well as planning various review processes to build and improve on existing data collection processes and frameworks.
- Many of the key databases that the FSAI requires in order to carry out its corporate functions were updated. They included the Internal Audit and Continual Improvement Database, the database for managing FSAI Advice Line queries, and the RASFF Database, which is used to manage and collate food alerts and notifications.
- The FSAI managed the redeveloped food notification system, in line with the principles defined within the FSAI Data Strategy. The new food notification system has improved end-user functionality and it includes a broader remit for the capture of notification information on food supplements and foods for special groups.
- During 2021, the FSAI's electronic document management system and intranet, 'Our Space', continued to be used by staff as a central repository for document management and as an internal communications tool. Sections were set up specifically for for COVID-19 pandemic staff remote working, containing relevant advice, resources and tips, well-being content, IT information, and learning

resources. A section was also set up for informal discussions among staff. Document collaboration and engagement proved to be a major benefit to the organisation, especially when staff were working remotely.

- The FSAI's library service focused on the enhanced delivery of electronic resources to staff working remotely.
- The number of consumer complaints decreased during 2021, with over 3,414 consumer complaints handled by the Advice Line. Of these complaints, 36% related to unfit food and 24% related to poor hygiene standards.
- The Advice Line dealt with 4,718 requests from industry. Some of the most popular queries were regarding legislation on food labelling requirements; food supplements, requests for publications, as well as food safety training and food business start-ups.
- All FSAI Advice Line queries were responded to, in line with the FSAI Customer Charter.

**Objective 4.3** Ensure that our governance structures support informed and accountable decision-making underpinned by responsive leadership, risk management processes and compliance

- The FSAI continued to implement its 2019–2023 strategy, ensuring that its resources, impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and adapting to a remote working environment at short notice, were allocated in an efficient and appropriate manner, in order to maximise the benefits and impacts of the strategy. The 2022 business plan was also developed and submitted to the DOH for consultation and agreement.
- The 2021 business plan was substantially delivered by the end of the year and any deviations from the original plan were reported on and discussed between the FSAI Board and the DOH during their quarterly governance meetings.
- The FSAI operates under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016). Under the guidance of the Board, the Authority continued to review, ensure compliance with, and report on its full compliance with the Code. The FSAI Oversight Agreement/Performance Delivery Agreement was agreed with the DOH.
- The FSAI adhered to its risk management framework and it continued to embed risk management into all aspects of its business planning, delivery and alignment to appropriate decision-making.
- An audit of the funding arrangements for the local authority veterinary service was completed and informed the review of the service.
- During 2021, the Authority dealt with twenty-eight Freedom of Information requests and twenty-one Parliamentary Questions. Thirteen protected disclosures were made under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014. All Freedom of Information requests were dealt with in a timely manner and in accordance with the relevant legislation.
- The FSAI was able to successfully defend a decision not to release official control records as part of a FOI request, which was appealed to the Information Commissioner.

- The FSAI continued to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, and it processed no Subject Access Requests in 2021.

#### **Objective 4.4** Embed a culture of quality through ensuring that systems, processes and procedures meet the highest standards

- The FSAI operates a business management system in order to ensure organisational excellence, quality of service and compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) and relevant legislation. The business management system ensures that risks and opportunities are identified and addressed, that a customer focus is maintained, and that a consistent, process-based approach underpins activities. Following an external audit in 2021, certification to the international quality standard ISO 9001:2015 was maintained.
- In 2021, the FSAI supported a fully mobile workforce which enabled staff members to work from home effectively and collaboratively. This involved the migration of the email environment cloud including the provision of email archiving and an enhanced cloud-based backup solution. The deliverables were business operational enhancements with an increase to staff mailbox capacity, IT operational enhancements with fully managed software upgrades, increased security and governance processes with the introduction of multi-factor authentication (MFA) and the delivery of a more resilient email infrastructure to include higher predefined service levels of availability. The integration of chat-based collaboration platform was also completed with document sharing, online meetings, and calling features was also delivered as part of the project.
- The IT team further developed the IT infrastructure to support and enhance business operations. This was achieved using the core server infrastructure; the work included upgrading hardware and software in order to meet best practice industry standards. This included redesigning and streamlining the backup architecture, which has enhanced business continuity benchmarks.
- The Storage Area Network which hosts all the local onsite data and essential business applications located in The Exchange was upgraded to a best of breed SAN technologies with a high capacity and secure infrastructure underpinned by a robust support contract which inputs into the FSAI's business continuity and disaster recovery planning process.
- Key FSAI databases were redeveloped to include the anonymisation of data and records in order to meet GDPR and data protection requirements.
- Increased measures were put in place to protect the Authority from cyber-attacks, which included technology enhancements and staff awareness programmes. This was because since the move to remote working there has been an increase in global cyber-attacks. The cyber awareness information highlighted how users are the last line of defence and that they need to remain vigilant when using corporate IT systems.
- The FSAI received a high rating score from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) as part of its annual legislative energy returns. The SEAI report highlighted how the FSAI is working towards becoming a more energy-efficient organisation and that the move

to an LED building has significantly contributed to the rating. The FSAI continues to contribute positively to the overall Government Climate Action Plan through both staff engagement and environmentally impacting initiatives. Initiatives such as The FSAI Green Team and the FSAI Food Waste Group improve awareness at an organisational and national level.

#### **Objective 4.5** Enhance recognition of the FSAI's identity, influence and reputation among staff, stakeholders and customers

- Ongoing press activities enhance organisation recognition and awareness about the work of the FSAI.
- FSAI staff regularly speak at local, national and international events. In 2021, these talks took place primarily online. This enabled the organisation to reach larger groups in a more accessible way.
- Regular local, national and international stakeholder engagement allows the FSAI to be well respected and valued for its knowledge and expertise in the field of food safety.
- A service level agreement was agreed with the Department of Health on food reformulation worth €2 million over 4 years.
- During 2021 the FSAI's participation in the EU Food Safety Project continued. This involved participation on the implementation of activities in Albania to strengthen food safety, veterinary and plant health standards.
- The FSAI's active presence on social media allows it to facilitate two-way communication with its stakeholders. This enables it to remain relevant and to meet its stakeholders on the social media platforms where they are spending their time.
- The FSAI continues to influence the global food safety community through the publication of world-class class scientific publications.
- The FSAI's prompt and responsive Advice Line acts as a useful touchpoint to industry, consumers and other interested stakeholders.

## Appendix 1 Industry fora members

### Artisan Forum, 2021

**Mr John Matthews**

**Chairperson – Until Sept 2021**

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

**Mr Tim Camon**

**Chairperson – Until Sept 2021**

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

**Ms Darina Allen**

Slow Food Ireland/Ballymaloe

Cookery School

**Ms Sally Barnes**

Woodcock Smokery

**Mr Eoin Bird**

The Wooded Pig

**Mr John Brennan**

Leitrim Organic Farmers Co-op

**Mr Kevin Brennan**

Teagasc

**Mr William Cleary**

Beekeeper

**Ms Jeffa Gill**

Durrus Cheese

**Ms Simone Kelly**

The Rocket Man Café

**Mr Sean Kent**

Poultry Expert

**Mr Donal Lehane**

Chair of Community Food Group

**Mr David Lang**

Associated Craft Butchers of  
Ireland

**Ms Jane Murphy**

Cáis

**Ms Mary Regan**

Regan's Organic Farm

**Ms Dearbhla Reynolds**

The Cultured Club

**Mr Declan Ryan**

Arbutus Breads

**Ms Elisabeth Ryan**

Independent Micro Breweries

### Food Service Forum, 2021

**Ms Clodagh Crehan and Ms  
Sinead Murphy (Chairperson(s))**

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

**Ms Lana McGinn**

Gather and Gather

**Ms Louise Collins**

Eddie Rocket's (IRL) Limited

**Mr Pat Crotty**

Vintners' Federation of Ireland

**Mr Adrian Cummins** Restaurants  
Association of Ireland

**Ms Martina Donohoe**

Aramark

**Mr Adam Heyes**

Subway Ireland

**Ms Louise Hickmott**

McDonald's Restaurants of Ireland

**Ms Mary Flynn**

Catering Management Association  
of Ireland

**Mr Ronan Walsh** Irish Hotels  
Federation

**Eoghan McLoughlin**

Irish Prison Service

**Ms Manuela Spinelli**

Euro-Toques Ireland

**Ms Helen Stratham and Lynsey  
Mitchell**

KFC

## Retail Forum, 2021

**Ms Clodagh Crehan and Ms Sinead Murphy**  
(Chairperson(s))

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

**Ms Lucy O'Connor**

Musgrave Retail Partners  
Ireland

**Ms Samira Nicolo**

Retail Ireland/Ibec

**Ms Katie Creamer /  
Antoinette Kennedy**

Aldi

**Ms Tara Buckley**

Retail Grocery Dairy & Allied  
Trades Association (RGDATA)

**Ms Nicola Branigan**

Avoca

**Mr Gareth Coburn**

Sysco

**Ms Aileen Nolan**

Dunnes Stores

**Ms Elaine Clohosey**

BWG Foods

**Mr Jonathan Halls**

Boots

**Ms Aoife Noonan**

Lidl Ireland

**Ms Lynda Kenny**Musgrave  
Wholesale/Daybreak

**Mr Rob McEvoy**

Circle K

**Ms Claire Briody**

Tesco Ireland

**Ms Joanne Barry**

Barry Group

**Mr Ben McGinn**

Gala Retail

**Mr Neil Spreadbury**

Iceland Foods

**Ms Peter Wight**

Marks & Spencer

## Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee, 2021

**Mr David Lyons/Ms Christine King**  
(Chairpersons)

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

**Mr Dave Clarke/Mr Conor Duffy  
/Dr Sinead Keaveney/Mr Joe Silke/Mr Patrick Costello**

Marine Institute

**Ms Patricia Daly/Ms Vicky Lyons/Mr Geoff Robinson/Ms Joanne Gaffney**

Bord Iascaigh Mhara

**Dr Sarah Buckley/Dr Gary NcCoy/Mr Brian Nolan/Mr Bernard O'Donovan/Dr Micheál O'Mahony/Ms Aileen O'Sullivan**

Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority

**Ms Teresa Morrissey/Mr John Harrington/Mr Pat Mulloy/Mr Finian O'Sullivan/Mr Kian Louet-Feisser/Mr Des Moore/Ms Nadia Ferguson**

Irish Shellfish Association and  
Processing Industry

**Ms Valerie Hannon/Ms Kate Harrington/Ms Maeve O'Reilly/Ms Claire Cremin/Ms Marie Feehan**

Irish Water

**Mr Paul Hickey**

Health Service Executive

**Dr Sarah McLean**

Loughs Agency

**Mr Liam Ó Súilleabháin**

Environmental Protection Agency

## Appendix 2 Scientific subcommittee members

### Biological Safety Subcommittee, 2021

**Dr Geraldine Duffy (Chair)**

Teagasc

**Dr Declan Bolton**

Teagasc

**Dr Michael Callanan**

Munster Technological University

**Dr Theo de Waal**

University College Dublin

**Ms Anne Dwan**

Health Service Executive

**Prof. Séamus Fanning**

University College Dublin

**Dr Cormac Gahan**

University College Dublin

**Dr Patricia Garvey**

Health Protection Surveillance  
Centre

**Dr Montserrat Gutierrez**

Department of Agriculture, Food  
and the Marine

**Dr Sinead Keaveney**

Marine Institute

**Prof. Noel McCarthy**

Trinity College Dublin

**Prof. Grace Mulcahy**

University College Dublin

**Dr Lois O'Connor**

Health Protection Surveillance  
Centre

**Dr Micheál O'Mahony**

Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority

**Dr Helen O'Shea**

Cork Institute of Technology

**Dr Fiona Walsh**

Maynooth University

## Chemical Safety Subcommittee, 2021

**Dr Andrew Flanagan (Chair)**

Dublin Public Analyst's Laboratory

**Prof. Iouri Gounko**

Trinity College Dublin

**Dr Breige McNulty**

University College Dublin

**Prof. David Brayden**

University College Dublin

**Ms Rosemary Hayden**

Dublin Public Analyst Laboratory

**Dr Micheál O'Mahony**

Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority

**Mr Alan Breen**

Department of Agriculture, Food  
and the Marine

**Ms Ita Kinahan**

State Laboratory

**Dr Finbarr O'Regan**

Department of Agriculture, Food  
and the Marine

**Prof. Enda Cummins**

University College Dublin

**Dr Celine Mannion**

Department of Agriculture, Food &  
the Marine

**Prof. Fiona Regan**

Dublin City University

**Ms Jenny Fortune**

Health Service Executive

**Dr Declan McKernan**

National University of Ireland,  
Galway

**Dr Craig Slattery**

University College Dublin

**Assoc. Prof. Tara McMorrow**

University College Dublin

## Public Health Nutrition Subcommittee, 2021

**Prof. Kevin Cashman (Chair)**

University College Cork

**Dr Annemarie Bennett**

Trinity College Dublin

**Dr Cathy Breen**

Health Service Executive

**Prof. Lorraine Brennan**

University College Dublin

**Prof. Eileen Gibney**

University College Dublin

**Dr Laura Kehoe**

University College Cork

**Dr Eamon Laird**

Trinity College Dublin

**Dr Sinéad McCarthy**

Teagasc

**Prof. Helene McNulty**

Ulster University

**Dr Emeir McSorley**

Ulster University

**Prof. Anne Molloy**

Trinity College Dublin (retired)

**Dr Anne Nugent**

Queen's University Belfast

**Dr Lisa Owens**

St James's Hospital

**Dr Lisa Ryan**

Galway-Mayo Institute of  
Technology

**Dr Audrey Tierney**

University of Limerick

**Dr Janette Walton**

Munster Technological University

**Fiona Ward**

Children's Health Ireland (Crumlin)

**Prof. Mary Ward**

Ulster University

## Appendix 3 Statement of Board members', Chief Executive Officers, and Scientific Committee members' interests (1/01/2021 to 31/12/202)

Board member	Commercial interest		Non-commercial interest	
	Name of organisation	Nature of interest	Name of organisation	Nature of interest
<b>Mr Martin Higgins</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Prof. Francis Butler</b>	Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food, Food Standards Agency, UK	Four meetings per year approximately	None	–
	Delivered a short online training programme in risk assessment to the Saudi Food and Drug Authority, September 2021	Consultant		
<b>Prof. Martin Cormican</b>	None	–	Director of Food and Water Laboratory GUH	Public service role
			Director of Salmonella, Shigella and Listeria Reference Laboratory GUH	Public service role
<b>Ms Mary Cullen</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Mr Derek Cunningham</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Dr Clíodhna Foley-Nolan</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Ms Ann Horan</b>	Glanbia	Ordinary Shares	None	–
	Associated British Foods	Ordinary Shares		
<b>Mr Patrick Knight</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Mr Gerard McCurdy</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Ms Ros O'Shea</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>				
<b>Dr Pamela A Byrne</b>	None	–	None	–

Scientific Committee member	Commercial interest		Non-commercial interest	
	Name of organisation	Nature of interest	Name of organisation	Nature of interest
<b>Prof. Kevin Cashman</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Dr Geraldine Duffy</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Prof. Seamus Fanning</b>	Crème Global	Providing scientific direction	None	–
	Dawn Farm Foods Ltd.	Providing scientific direction		
<b>Dr Mark Fenelon</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Dr Andrew Flanagan</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Dr Montserrat Gutierrez</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Prof Alan Kelly</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Ms Ita Kinahan</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Prof. Anne Molloy</b>	Expert Advisor	European Food Safety Authority	None	–
<b>Dr M'cheál O'Mahony</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Prof. Dolores O'Riordan</b>	None	–	Kerry Group	Shares
<b>Ms Ann Marie Part</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Prof. Dagmar Stengel</b>	None	–	None	–
<b>Prof. Martin Wilkinson</b>	None	–	None	–

## Appendix 4 Board members' biographies

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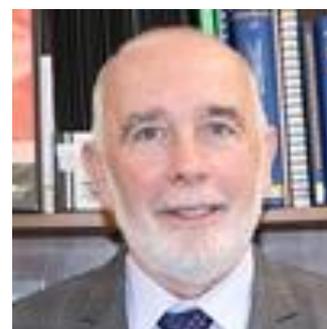
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1. Mr Martin Higgins

2. Ms Ann Horan

3. Ms Mary Cullen

4. Mr Derek Cunningham

5. Prof. Martin Cormican

6. Mr Patrick Knight

7. Ms Ros O'Shea

8. Mr Gerry McCurdy

9. Dr Clíodhna Foley-Nolan

10. Prof. Francis Butler

### 1. Mr Martin Higgins (Chairperson)

Martin Higgins was the founding Chief Executive of *safefood*, the all-island food safety promotion board, and led the organisation from its foundation in 1998 until his retirement in 2014. Prior to that he was the first Director of Corporate Services in the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI), having previously been a Principal Officer in the Department of Health, specialising in finance and health agency regulation. He has professional qualifications in accountancy, international regulation and governance, and is a qualified mediator and executive and leadership coach. He is a member of the Institute of Directors and a Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute. He has in the past been a Board member of the Irish Medicines Board, CORU, the health and social care professionals regulator, and the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland. In 2021, he was appointed to the Board of HIQA.

### 2. Ms Ann Horan

Ann Horan is a former Chair of the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA). Her executive roles have included the positions of Chief Executive of the DCU Ryan Academy; Managing Director, Bank of Ireland Finance and Bank of Ireland Commercial Finance, and Head of Group Risk & Compliance at Bank of Ireland. She has served on several boards, including Dublin City University, the Institute of Bankers, South Dublin Chamber of Commerce, and she has chaired associations, including the UK-based Factors and Discounters Association and the International Women's Forum. In addition, she chaired the audit committees of the HPRA and South Dublin County Council. During her successful career, she developed expertise in the areas of leadership, strategic planning, financial control, and corporate governance. She has proven ability to operate in both the public and private sectors and has direct experience in the areas of regulation, finance, education, and public health. She is a Chartered Certified Accountant with a Masters in Finance from DCU.

### 3. Ms Mary Cullen

Ms Mary Cullen is a chartered accountant. She attended Trinity College Dublin, where she studied Business, Economics and Social Studies (BESS), following which she joined Price Waterhouse, now PwC. She held a number of senior executive roles with PwC, including responsibility for partnership and company secretarial matters and partner affairs. She is a Trustee of the Royal Dublin Society (RDS) Pension Funds and is a former member of the Foundation Board of the RDS.

She is a member of the Audit Committee of The Office of the Attorney General. Previously, she was a Board Member of Temple Street Children's University Hospital, Dublin; Chairperson of the Board of Cappagh National Orthopaedic Hospital, Dublin; and a Board Member of Beaumont Hospital, Dublin.

#### 4. Mr Derek Cunningham

Mr Derek Cunningham is a communications consultant. Previously, he was a Special Adviser at the Department of Health and Head of Communications with the Irish Farmers' Association. He is a former journalist with RTÉ television and radio. He is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin (TCD) and has postgraduate qualifications from TCD and Dublin City University (DCU). He served on an Advisory Group of the Information Society Commission and was Chairman of the RTÉ Audience Council.

#### 5. Professor Martin Cormican

Professor Martin Cormican graduated from University of Galway Medical School in 1986. He trained in Ireland, the UK and the USA. In 1999, he was appointed Consultant Microbiologist at Galway University Hospital and Professor of Bacteriology at the University of Galway. Since May 2017, he has the position of HSE National Lead for Healthcare Associated Infection and Antimicrobial Resistance. He has also contributed to the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccination and therapeutics. His research interests are antimicrobial resistance, foodborne infection and the links between the environment and human health.

#### 6. Mr Patrick (Pat) Knight

Pat Knight was An Post Group HR Director/Chief People Officer from 2004–2019, prior to that he was General Manager HR with Waterford Crystal (1986–2004) and prior to that he was Personnel Officer with Bord na Mona. He is currently working selectively as an HR and Change Management Consultant. He has over 30 years' management executive/C-suite experience, and he also has many years' experience as a full Board member. He has a proven HR track record in business transformation, including developing, negotiating, and implementing strategic, operational, cultural and organisational change; establishing and maintaining high standards of corporate governance – including ethical behaviour at senior management level; sourcing top talent, and building leadership capability at all levels of management. He has a Masters degree (M.Sc. Mgmt) from Trinity College and is a Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

#### 7. Ms Ros O'Shea

Ms Ros O'Shea is an independent, non-executive director with a portfolio of board positions in the financial, public and charitable sectors, including with the Bank of Montreal Europe plc, BlackRock's Irish funds, and Pieta House. She also chairs the PwC Alumni Network in Ireland. She is a partner with Board Excellence Ltd, a consulting firm providing advice and leadership training in governance, culture, risk and compliance, and she lectures on these topics at the UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School, and the Institute of Banking. Previously, she enjoyed a highly successful executive career, spanning almost 20 years, with two of Ireland's largest companies: CRH plc, where she was Head of Group Compliance & Ethics, and Smurfit

Kappa Group plc. She has first class honours bachelor and master's degrees in business from UCD, a diploma in Corporate Governance from the UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School, and is an associate of the Institute of Tax, and a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, having trained with PwC. She has also completed the Master Trainer Programme at the Irish Management Institute (IMI), holds a diploma in Aircraft Finance and Leasing from the Law Society of Ireland, is a graduate of the Value Creation through Effective Boards programme at Harvard Business School, and is a Certified Bank Director as designated by the Institute of Banking. In addition, she is the author of the book *Leading with Integrity: A Practical Guide to Business Ethics* and is a regular contributor to news and print media.

#### **8. Mr Gerry McCurdy**

Mr Gerry McCurdy has more than 40 years' experience working in a policy and regulatory environment dealing with food safety, public health and consumer protection. He qualified as an environmental health officer at the University of Ulster in 1978 and went on to attain a Master of Science Degree in 1991. He has held a number of senior positions in local and central government and was instrumental in setting up the Food Standards Agency (FSA) in Northern Ireland. As Northern Ireland Director of the FSA he developed close working relations with the FSAI and the Food Safety Promotion Board. Following his retirement in 2013, Mr McCurdy has worked as a food safety consultant for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and for the World Bank, on projects in Bosnia and Bangladesh. Mr McCurdy has considerable experience at Board level and is currently a member of the FSAI Board and Chair of its Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. He is also the Deputy Chief Commissioner for the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland; a Board Member of the Northern Ireland Consumer Council and a member of their respective audit and risk committees.

#### **9. Dr Cliodhna Foley-Nolan**

Dr Cliodhna Foley-Nolan MB, BCh, BAO, DCH, DObs, MPH, FFPHM is a Consultant in Public Health Medicine. She has worked as Director of Human Health and Nutrition at *safefood* (Food Safety Promotion Board) and as Specialist in Public Health Medicine in the Health Service Executive. Dr Foley-Nolan has a medical degree from University College Cork (UCC) and a Masters in Public Health from UCD, and is a Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. Dr Foley-Nolan holds a Senior Lecturer post at UCC and is a trainer and examiner at the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. She has served on a number of national advisory groups, including the National AIDS Advisory Group, as well as advisory groups on tuberculosis, immigrant health, food poverty, and antimicrobial resistance. She has served on the Boards of the Veterinary Council of Ireland; obesity policy groups in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland; the Faculty of Public Health Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland; and the HRB Centre for Health and Diet Research.

**10. Prof. Francis Butler**

Professor Francis Butler is a Principal Investigator in the University College Dublin (UCD) Institute of Food and Health and the UCD Centre for Food Safety. He is Head of Subject in Biosystems Engineering at UCD. His main research is in food safety with a particular focus on traceability systems and quantitative risk assessment of microbiological and chemical hazards in foods. Professor Butler coordinates the UCD MSc in Food Safety and Risk Analysis. He has led several large-scale quantitative microbial food risk assessments, and has made some novel contributions to the characterisation of microbial distributions in food and to the development of novel sampling strategies for contaminants in foods. He is currently leading projects using molecular microbiological techniques to identify the sources and routes of transmission of pathogens through the food chain. Other research interests include food chain integrity and the traceability of foods. Professor Butler has published more than 150 publications in refereed journals, as well as over 100 refereed papers in international conference proceedings and more than 150 additional national conference and other workshop presentations. He has coordinated or partnered in upwards of 30 research projects, including four European Union Framework projects. He has trained a substantial team of researchers and scholars, including 20 PhD students to completion and 13 research master's students, as well as 14 postdoctoral researchers. He has served on several Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Health Organization expert meetings on microbiological risk assessment. Prior to joining UCD, Professor Butler worked in production management in the Irish dairy industry

# Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2021

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# Governance Statement and Board Members' Report

For the year ended 31 December 2021

## Governance

The Board of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) was established under the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998. The functions of the Board are set out in Section 31 of the Act. The Board is accountable to the Minister for Health and is responsible for ensuring good governance and performs this task by setting strategic objectives and targets and taking strategic decisions on all key business issues. The regular day-to-day management, control and direction of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland are the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the senior leadership team. The CEO and the senior leadership team must follow the broad strategic direction set by the Board and must ensure that all Board members have a clear understanding of the key activities and decisions related to the entity, and of any significant risks likely to arise. The CEO acts as a direct liaison between the Board and management of the Authority.

## Board responsibilities

The work and responsibilities of all those associated with the operation of the Board are set out in the Code of Practice for Board members, Chairperson, Chief Executive Officer, and Secretary. The Code also sets out the matters specifically reserved for Board

decision. Standing items considered by the Board include:

- declaration of interests,
- reports from committees,
- financial reports/management accounts,
- performance reports, and
- reserved matters.

The Food Safety Authority Act, 1998, Section 26 (5), requires the Board of the Authority to prepare financial statements in such form as may be approved by the Minister for Health with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, and to keep all proper and usual accounts of money received and expended by it.

In preparing these financial statements, the Board of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Authority will continue in operation; and
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject

to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.

The Board confirms that it has complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements. The Board is responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Authority and which enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with Section 26 of the Act. The maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information on the Food Safety Authority's website is the responsibility of the Board. The Board is responsible for approving the annual plan and budget. There is an on-going evaluation of the performance of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland by reference to its annual business plan and budget. The Board is also responsible for safeguarding its assets and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Board considers that the financial statements of the Authority give a true and fair view of the financial performance and the financial position of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland at 31 December 2021 except for non-compliance with the requirements of FRS 102 in relation to retirement benefit entitlements, as directed by the Minister for Health. The Board approved the signing of this statement and the financial statements for

the year ended 31 December 2021 on 21 June 2022.

The Board consists of a Chairperson and 9 ordinary members, all of whom are appointed/re-appointed by the Minister for Health. The members of the Board were appointed for a period of either 3 or 5 years and meet 6 times per annum.

The table below details the appointment period for members serving during the year:

Board Members	Role	Date Appointed	Latest re-appointment	Additional detail
Mr. Martin Higgins	Chairperson	February 2013 (Ordinary Member)	Appointed Chairperson in February 2018	–
Mr. Derek Cunningham	Ordinary Member	February 2013	June 2016	Term ended June 2021
Ms. Ros O'Shea	Ordinary Member	June 2016	–	Term ended June 2021
Ms. Mary Cullen	Ordinary Member	June 2016	June 2021	–
Prof. Francis Butler	Ordinary Member	May 2019	–	–
Mr. Gerard McCurdy	Ordinary Member	May 2019	May 2022	–
Dr. Cliodhna Foley-Nolan	Ordinary Member	October 2019	October 2022	–
Prof. Martin Cormican	Ordinary Member	June 2021	–	–
Ms. Ann Horan	Ordinary Member	June 2021	–	–
Mr. Patrick Knight	Ordinary Member	June 2021	–	–

During 2021 the Board completed an effectiveness survey which sought to assess the Board's performance, the strength of its enabling processes and structures as well as its obligations under the annex on gender balance, diversity and inclusion. The Board reviewed the resulting report from the survey in 2022.

### Gender Balance in the Board membership

As at 31 December, the Board had 3 (37.5%) female and 5 (62.5%) male members, with 2 positions vacant. The Board therefore does not meet the Government target of a minimum

of 40% representation of each gender in the membership of State Boards.

The following measures are planned to maintain and support gender balance on this Board:

- The Minister has been requested to consider the requirements of the annex to the Code of Practice to ensure the FSAI maintain the balance of equality and improve diversity and inclusion through when nominating appointees to the vacant positions on the Board.

The Board has established two sub-committees, the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), and the Performance & Development Committee (PDC).

The ARC comprises three Board members and one independent member. The role of the ARC is to support the Board in relation to its responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance and associated assurance. The ARC is independent from the financial management of the organisation. In particular the Committee ensures that the internal control systems, including audit activities are monitored actively and independently. The ARC reports to the Board after each meeting.

The members of the Audit and Risk Committee are: Mr. Gerry McCurdy (Chair), Dr. Cliodhna Foley-Nolan, Ms. Ann Horan and Mr. Fergal Ó'Briain. There were 4 meetings of the ARC in 2021.

The PDC comprises three Board members. The role of the PDC is to devise and implement an appropriate mechanism to assess the performance of the CEO and, through the CEO, to review the performance of the FSAI Executive Team. As required, the PDC sets remuneration for the CEO as directed by the Department of Health, develops the job description, identifies the relevant competencies and ideal candidate profile for the post, agrees the recruitment and search process, and sets a specific timetable. The PDC convenes as required by the Board and reports to the Board after each meeting.

The members of the PDC are Mr. Martin Higgins (Chair), Ms. Mary Cullen and Mr. Patrick Knight. There were 2 meetings of the PDC in 2021.

## Schedule of attendance, fees and expenses

A schedule of attendance at the Board and Committee meetings for 2021 is set out in note 4(c) of the Financial Statements.

## Key personnel changes

The Board terms of Mr Derek Cunningham and Ms Ros O'Shea ended during 2021.

## Disclosures Required by Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016)

The Board is responsible for ensuring that the Authority has complied with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies ("the Code"), as published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in August 2016. The following disclosures are required by the Code:

- employee short-term benefits breakdown - set out in note 4 (b) to the financial statements,
- consultancy costs - set out in note 4 (h) to the financial statements,
- legal costs and settlements - set out in note 4 (h) to the financial statements,
- travel and subsistence expenditure - set out in note 4 (a) and 4(c) to the financial statements, and
- hospitality expenditure - set out in note 4 (f) to the financial statements.

## Statement of Compliance

The Board has adopted the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) and has put procedures in place to ensure

compliance with the Code. The Food Safety Authority of Ireland operated in compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies for 2021.

## Statement of compliance

The Board has adopted the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies* (2016) and has put procedures in place to ensure compliance with the Code. The Food Safety Authority of Ireland operated in compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies for 2020.

On behalf of the Board of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland:



**Martin Higgins**

**Dr Pamela A Byrne**

Chairperson

Chief Executive Officer

27 June 2022

24 June 2022

# Statement on Internal Control

For the year ended 31 December 2020

## Scope of responsibility

On behalf of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI), we acknowledge the Board's responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal control is maintained and operated. This responsibility takes account of the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016).

## Purpose of the system of internal control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a tolerable level rather than to eliminate it. The system can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or detected in a timely way.

The system of internal control, which accords with guidance issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, has been in place in the Authority for the year ended 31 December 2021 and has been maintained up to the date at the time of approval of the financial statements. In addition, the Board is provided with further assurance as to the quality of the Authority's internal control as the FSAI is certified to the Quality Management System Standard ISO 9001:2015. This Standard confirms that the Authority operates a set of policies, processes and procedures

appropriate for planning and execution of its core business.

## Capacity to handle risk

The FSAI has an Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) comprising three Board members and one external member, with financial and audit expertise. The ARC met four times in 2021.

The FSAI has an internal audit function as defined in the Board's Charter for Internal Audit. The Authority has outsourced its Internal Audit Function to BDO Ireland. The work of the internal audit function is informed by analysis of the risk to which the body is exposed and annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. The analysis of risk and the internal audit plans have been endorsed by the ARC and approved by the Board. The Internal Auditor provides the Board with reports of internal audit activity.

The ARC has developed a risk management policy that sets out risk management processes and details the roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to risk. The policy has been issued to all staff who are expected to work within the Authority's risk management policies, to alert management on emerging risks and control weaknesses and assume responsibility for risks and controls within their own area of work.

## Risk and control framework

The FSAI has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, to mitigate those risks.

A risk register is in place which identifies the key risks facing the Authority and these have been identified, evaluated and graded according to their significance. The register is updated by the Senior Leadership Team and presented to the ARC and Board as a standing item. The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure that risks are managed to an acceptable level.

The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibility for operation of controls assigned to specific staff. We confirm that a control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- procedures for all key business processes have been documented,
- financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability,
- there is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget which is kept under review by senior management,
- to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies,

- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the information and communication technology systems,
- there are systems in place to safeguard the assets, and
- control procedures over the use of grant monies and the allocation of funding to outside agencies to ensure adequate control over approval of such monies and also to ensure that grant funding has been applied for the purpose intended.

The FSAI makes payments to local authorities in relation to the provision of veterinary services. Annual service contracts are agreed with local authorities. Payments are based on quarterly claims from the local authorities based on activity levels.

## Ongoing monitoring and review

Formal procedures which have been established for monitoring control processes and control deficiencies are communicated to those responsible for taking corrective action and to management and the Board, where relevant, in a timely way. We confirm that the following ongoing monitoring systems are in place:

- key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place
- reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned, and

- there are regular reviews by senior management of periodic and annual performance and financial reports which indicate performance against budgets/forecasts.

## Procurement

We confirm that the FSAI has procedures in place to ensure compliance with current procurement rules and guidelines. Matters arising regarding controls over procurement are highlighted under internal control issues below.

## Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Control Environment

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, in early 2020, and the resulting public health advice and safety measures rapidly changed the working practices of the FSAI. The FSAI monitored the developments closely and sought to mitigate the risks that may have impacted affect the FSAI's business operations, staff and stakeholders.

Actions taken by the FSAI, during 2021, included:

- Maintain the operation of FSAI in a remote working environment for the purpose of ensuring continuity of service provision.
- Ongoing COVID-19 risk assessments for staff and stakeholders.
- Continual assessment of significant risks affecting the FSAI, the impact of COVID-19 on these

risks and the agility of FSAI to respond effectively.

- Ensuring robust segregation of duties remains and adequate cover is in place should specific approving authorities be unavailable.
- Ensuring all existing data protection and records management policies and procedures continue to apply as normal.
- Assessing potential for weaknesses in internal controls resulting from COVID-19 and took measures to monitor and update internal controls where necessary

## Review of effectiveness

We confirm that the Authority has procedures to monitor the effectiveness of its risk management and control procedures. The FSAI's monitoring and review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal and external auditors and the Audit and Risk Committee which oversees their work and the senior management within the Authority responsible for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

We confirm that the Board conducted an annual review of the effectiveness of the internal controls for 2021 in March 2022.

## Internal Control Issues

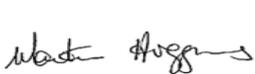
### Procurement

During 2021 expenditure of €291,000 was incurred in relation to eight contracts for services where the procedures employed did not comply with procurement guidelines:

- Approximately €31,000 relates to agency fees for temporary ICT staff. The total cost of these contracts was €249,900, which comprises salary costs of €176,700 (including VAT). These were previously disclosed in 2020. FSAI expects to regularise these contracts, as part of capital project developments, however market constraints have hampered progress in this regard.
- Approximately €127,000 relates to the provision of legal services. A submission has been made to the OGP to utilise the legal services Framework to regularise this contract.
- The remaining amounts, totalling €133,000, relate to expenditure incurred on expired contracts. The Authority is currently considering its service requirements with regards to these contracts. The implementation of hybrid working will impact on the service requirements of these services.

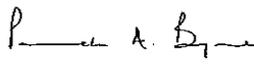
There were no internal control weaknesses identified during 2021 other than those disclosed above.

On behalf of the Board of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland:



**Martin Higgins**  
Chairperson

27 June 2022



**Dr Pamela A. Byrne**  
Chief Executive Officer

24 June 2022

# Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General

## Report for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas

### Qualified opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland for the year ended 31 December 2021 as required under the provisions of section 26 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 — The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland and comprise

- the statement of income and expenditure and retained revenue reserves
- the statement of financial position
- the statement of cash flows and
- the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, except for the non-compliance with the requirements of FRS 102 in relation to retirement benefit entitlements referred to below, the financial statements give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland at 31 December 2021 and of its income and expenditure for 2021 in accordance with FRS 102.

### Basis for qualified opinion on financial statements

In compliance with the directions of the Minister for Health, the Food Safety Authority

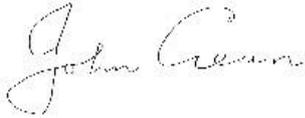
of Ireland accounts for the costs of retirement benefit entitlements only as they become payable. This does not comply with FRS 102 which requires that the financial statements recognise the full cost of retirement benefit entitlements earned in the period and the accrued liability at the reporting date. The effect of the non-compliance on the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's financial statements for 2021 has not been quantified.

I conducted my audit of the financial statements in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) as promulgated by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions. My responsibilities under those standards are described in the appendix to this report. I am independent of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the standards. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

### Report on information other than the financial statements, and on other matters

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland has presented certain other information together with the financial statements. This comprises the annual report, the governance statement and Board members' report and the statement on internal control. My responsibilities to

report in relation to such information, and on certain other matters upon which I report by exception, are described in the appendix to this report. I have nothing to report in that regard.



John Crean

**For and on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General**

29 June 2022

## Appendix to the report

### Responsibilities of Board members

As detailed in the governance statement and Board members' report, the Board members are responsible for

- the preparation of financial statements in the form prescribed under section 26 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998
- ensuring that the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with FRS 102
- ensuring the regularity of transactions
- assessing whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate, and
- such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free

from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

I am required under section 26 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 to audit the financial statements of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and to report thereon to the Houses of the Oireachtas.

My objective in carrying out the audit is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement due to fraud or error. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the ISAs, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. In doing so,

- I identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements whether due to fraud or error; design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks; and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not

detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- I obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal controls.
- I evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures.
- I conclude on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, on whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Food Safety Authority of Ireland to cease to continue as a going concern.

- I evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

I report by exception if, in my opinion,

- I have not received all the information and explanations I required for my audit, or
- the accounting records were not sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records.

### Information other than the financial statements

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information presented with those statements, and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, I am required under the ISAs to read the other information presented and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or with knowledge obtained during the audit, or if it otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based

on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

### **Reporting on other matters**

My audit is conducted by reference to the special considerations which attach to State bodies in relation to their management and operation. I report if I identify material matters

relating to the manner in which public business has been conducted.

I seek to obtain evidence about the regularity of financial transactions in the course of audit.

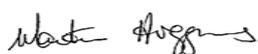
I report if I identify any material instance where public money has not been applied for the purposes intended or where transactions did not conform to the authorities governing them.

# Statement of income and expenditure and retained revenue reserves

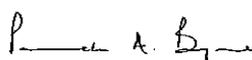
For the year ended 31 December 2021

	Notes	2021 €'000	2020 €'000
<b>Income</b>			
Oireachtas Grant	2	19,959	17,536
Other Income	3	1,532	981
Operating Income		21,491	18,517
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>21,491</b>	<b>18,517</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Administration, Operations & Promotion	4	10,655	9,697
Communications activities	5	384	369
Depreciation of Fixed Assets	6 & 14		619
	14	613	
Albanian Project	14	769	499
Reformulation Taskforce	15	148	0
Local Authority Veterinary Service	7	8,090	6,923
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>20,659</b>	<b>18,107</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Appropriations</b>			
		832	410
Transfer from/(to) the Capital Account	8	400	387
Loss on Disposal		0	(1)
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for year after Appropriations</b>		<b>1,232</b>	<b>796</b>
<b>Balance at 1 January</b>		<b>(142)</b>	<b>(938)</b>
<b>Balance at 31 December</b>		<b>1,090</b>	<b>(142)</b>

The Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. The Statement of Cash Flows and notes 1 to 18 form part of these financial statements. On behalf of the Board of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland:



**Martin Higgins**  
Chairperson  
27 June 2022



**Dr Pamela A. Byrne**  
Chief Executive Officer  
24 June 2022

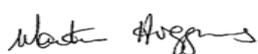
# Statement of financial position

As at 31 December 2021

	Notes	2021 €'000	2020 €'000
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Property, Plant and Equipment	6	852	1,211
Intangible Assets	6 (a)	33	74
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Receivables	9	661	594
Cash and Cash Equivalents		3,285	2,606
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<b>3,946</b>	<b>3,200</b>
<b>Current Liabilities (amounts falling due within one year)</b>			
Payables	10	2,856	3,342
Net Current Assets / Liabilities		1,090	(142)
<b>Total Assets less Liabilities before Pensions</b>		<b>1,975</b>	<b>1,143</b>
<b>Representing</b>			
Capital Account	8	885	1,285
Retained Revenue Reserves		1,090	(142)
		<b>1,975</b>	<b>1,143</b>

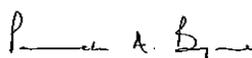
The Statement of Cash Flows and notes 1 to 18 form part of these financial statements.

On behalf of the Board of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland:



**Martin Higgins**  
Chairperson

27 June 2022



**Dr Pamela A. Byrne**  
Chief Executive Officer

24 June 2022

## Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 December 2021

		2021	2020
	Notes	€'000	€'000
<b>Net cash inflow from operating activities</b>			
(Deficit)/Excess Income over Expenditure		832	410
Depreciation and Impairment of Fixed Assets	6 & 15	624	630
(Increase)/Decrease in Receivables	9	(67)	(10)
Increase/(Decrease) in Payables	10	(486)	677
<b>Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities</b>		<b>903</b>	<b>1,707</b>
<b>Cash Flows from Investing Activities</b>			
Payments to acquire Plant & Equipment	6	(199)	(199)
Payments to acquire Intangible Assets	6 (a)	(25)	(45)
<b>Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities</b>		<b>(224)</b>	<b>(244)</b>
<b>Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>		<b>679</b>	<b>1,463</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January		2,606	1,143
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at 31 December</b>		<b>3,285</b>	<b>2,606</b>

# Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2021

## 1. Accounting policies

The basis of accounting and significant accounting policies adopted by Food Safety Authority of Ireland are set out below. They have been applied consistently throughout the year and for the preceding year.

### a) General information

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland was set up under the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998, with a head office at The Exchange, George's Dock, IFSC, Dublin 1, D01 P2V6. The Food Safety Authority of Ireland's primary objectives as set out in Part II of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 are as follows:

To take all reasonable steps to ensure that:

- (a) food produced in the State (whether or not distributed or marketed in the State), and
- (b) food distributed or marketed in the State meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene reasonably attainable and it shall, in particular, take all reasonable steps to ensure that such food complies
  - (i) with food legislation in respect of food safety and hygiene standards, or
  - (ii) where appropriate, with the provisions of generally recognised standards or codes of good practice aimed at ensuring the

achievement of high standards of food hygiene and food safety

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland is a Public Benefit Entity (PBE).

### b) Statement of compliance

The financial statements of Food Safety Authority of Ireland for the year ended 31 December 2021 have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102, the financial reporting standard applicable in the UK and Ireland issued by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), as promulgated by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority, as modified by the direction of the Minister for Health in relation to superannuation. In compliance with the directions of the Minister for Health, the Authority accounts for the costs of superannuation entitlements only as they become payable (see 1 (i) below). This basis of accounting does not comply with FRS 102, which requires such costs to be recognised in the year in which entitlement is earned.

### c) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the accruals method of accounting, except as stated below, and under the historical cost convention in the form approved by the Minister for Health with the concurrence of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform under Section 26(5)

of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998. The accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's financial statements.

#### **d) Capital funding**

The fixed assets of the FSAI are funded from a combination of capital grants and allocations from current revenue. Funding sourced from grants is transferred to a capital account which is amortised in line with the depreciation of the related assets.

#### **e) Revenue**

##### **Oireachtas Grants**

Revenue is generally recognised on an accruals basis; one exception to this is in the case of Oireachtas Grants which are recognised on a cash receipts basis.

##### **Deferred Income**

Project income received in advance is treated as deferred income and reported as a payable falling due within one year. The income is released to the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Reserves in line with the expenditure incurred in the reporting period.

##### **Other Revenue**

Other Revenue is recognised on an accrual's basis.

#### **f) Plant and equipment**

Plant and equipment are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation, adjusted for any provision for impairment. Depreciation is provided on all plant and equipment at rates

estimated to write off the costless the estimated residual value of each asset on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives, as follows:

(i) Leasehold improvements	15% per annum
(ii) Computer equipment	33% per annum
(iii) Office furniture	15% per annum
(iv) Office equipment	15% per annum
(v) Scientific equipment	15% per annum
(vi) Motor vehicles	33% per annum

Residual value represents the estimated amount which would currently be obtained from disposal of an asset, after deducting estimated costs of disposal, if the asset were already of an age and in the condition expected at the end of its useful life.

If there is objective evidence of impairment of the value of an asset, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves in the year.

Intangible fixed assets are shown at their net book value having been depreciated at 33% on a straight-line basis.

#### **g) Receivables**

Receivables are recognised at fair value.

#### **h) Operating leases**

Rental expenditure under operating leases is recognised in the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves over the life of the lease. Expenditure is recognised on a straight-line basis over the lease period, except where there are rental

increases linked to the expected rate of inflation, in which case these increases are recognised when incurred. Any lease incentives received are recognised over the life of the lease.

#### **i) Employee benefits**

##### **Short-term Benefits**

Short-term benefits such as holiday pay are recognised as an expense in the year, and benefits that are accrued at year-end are included in the payables figure in the Statement of Financial Position.

##### **Retirement Benefits**

A superannuation scheme has been approved by the Minister in accordance with Section 39 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998. The scheme provides for a contributory defined benefit pension scheme for all employees. Deductions from salaries are retained and are treated as income by the Authority. The Department of Health's annual grant to the Authority is net of the deductions retained. The Public Service pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act, 2012 became law on 28 July, 2012 and introduced the new Single Public Scheme ("Single Scheme") which commenced with effect 1 January 2013. All new employees to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, who are new entrants to the Public Sector, on or after 1 January 2013 are members of the Single Scheme. Single Scheme members' contributions are paid over to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

By direction of the Minister for Health no provision has been made in the Financial Statements for future pension liabilities. Payments under the schemes are charged to the Statement of Income and Expenditure and retained reserves when paid.

#### **j) Local authority veterinary scheme**

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland provides funding to local authorities in relation to the provision of veterinary services. The Authority receives funding from the Department of Health (as part of its annual determination) in this regard.

Funding received from the Department of Health and amounts paid to Local Authorities are recognised on cash received and cash paid basis, in line with Section 34 of FRS 102.

#### **k) Key estimates and judgements**

The preparation of these financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities at the reporting date and the amounts reported for income and expenditure during the year. Judgements and estimates are continually evaluated and are based on historical experiences and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The nature of estimation, by definition, means that the actual results may differ from the estimates made. The estimates and assumptions that can have a material effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements are set out below:

(i) **Establishing useful lives for depreciation purposes of equipment and leases** Equipment and leases comprise of a significant portion of the Authority's assets. The annual depreciation charge depends on the estimated useful lives of each type of asset. Given the relative short-term nature of the equipment assets, the estimation of the useful life of these assets is subject to regular review. Details of the useful economic lives is included in the accounting policies.

(ii) **Establishing useful economic lives for amortisation purposes of capital grants** The annual amortisation charge depends primarily on the estimated useful lives of each type of asset. The useful economic lives are subject to regular review. Details of the useful economic lives are included in the accounting policies.

## 2. Oireachtas grants

The Oireachtas Grants voted to Food Safety Authority of Ireland from Vote 38 Department of Health as shown in the financial statements consist of:

	Sub-head	2021	2020
		€'000	€'000
Grants for current expenditure	E.1.	19,713	17,172
Grant for capital expenditure	L.1.	246	364
<b>Total</b>		<b>19,959</b>	<b>17,536</b>

## 3. Other income

	Note	2021	2020
		€'000	€'000
Superannuation Deductions		234	237
Sale of Publications		184	156
Sundry Income		198	88
Reformulation taskforce		147	0
Albania CE Fund	14	769	499
		<b>1,532</b>	<b>981</b>

## 4. Administration, operations & promotion

	Note	2021	2020
		€'000	€'000
Remuneration and Other Pay Costs	4(a)	6,832	6,327
Rent, rates, service charges and insurance		1,470	1,491
Research costs		54	87
Legal and consulting fees	4(h)	212	44
IT, telephone and internet		1,064	1,220
Operating expenditure	4(g)	1,023	526
		<b>10,655</b>	<b>9,697</b>

## (a) Remuneration and other pay costs

	Notes	2021	2020
		€'000	€'000
Staff Salaries, basic pay		5,346	5,405
Staff salaries, overtime		2	0
Retirement benefit costs		205	98
Retirement lump sum costs		364	0
Employer's contributions to social welfare		552	555
Staff training and development		174	125
Staff travel and subsistence cost - national travel		32	24
Staff travel and subsistence cost - international travel		2	10
Agency staff		105	43
Board members' emoluments	4(c)	50	67
		<b>6,832</b>	<b>6,327</b>

The FSAI paid €86,472 (2020: €76,099) to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in respect of employee contributions under the single pension scheme.

In 2021 €204,931 was paid to the Department of Health in respect of additional superannuation contributions (ASC) deducted from staff salaries (2020: €209,927).

## (b) Employee benefits breakdown

Range of total employee benefits		Number of Employees	
From	To	2021	2020
60,000	69,999	16	7
70,000	79,999	8	9
80,000	89,999	7	4
90,000	99,999	3	7
100,000	109,999	2	2
110,000	119,999	4	4
120,000	129,999	0	0
130,000	139,999	0	0
140,000	149,999	0	0
150,000	159,999	0	0
160,000	169,999	1	1

Note: for the purposes of this disclosure, short term employee benefits in relation to services rendered during the reporting period include salary, overtime allowances and other payments made on behalf of the employee but exclude employers PRSI.

## (c) Board members' attendance, fees and expense

Board Member		Board Fee	Travel Expenses	Meetings Attended Board	Meetings Attended Audit and Risk
		€	€		
Martin Higgins	Chairperson	11,970		6 of 6	
Derek Cunningham	Term ended June 2021	3,493		2 of 2	
Mary Cullen		7,695		6 of 6	2 of 2
Ros O'Shea	Term ended June 2021	3,493		2 of 2	2 of 2
Gerard McCurdy		7,695		6 of 6	4 of 4
Clíodhna Foley-Nolan		7,695		4 of 6	2 of 2
Francis Butler		0		6 of 6	
Martin Cormican		0		5 of 5	
Ann Horan		4,467		4 of 4	2 of 2
Patrick Knight		4,467		4 of 4	
		<b>50,976</b>			

During 2021, 6 Board meetings were held (2020:10 - 8 regular meetings and 2 additional meetings to discuss, inter alia, the impact of COVID on the FSAI).

Two Board members did not receive a Board fee under the One Person One Salary Principle (OPOS), as they are employed by other State organisations.

The Audit and Risk Committee includes one external member. This position is held by Fergal Ó'Briain. Fergal Ó'Briain attended 3 of 4 ARC meetings in the year and was not in receipt of a fee under the OPOS principle.

**(c) Chief Executive Officer salary**

	2021	2020
	€'000	€'000
Chief Executive Officer, Pamela Byrne	163	162
	<b>163</b>	<b>162</b>

The CEO remuneration package for 2021 was annual basic salary of €163,300 (2020: €161,900) with standard public sector arrangements.

The above salary values do not include the value of retirement benefits earned in the period. The key management personnel (excluding Board members) are members of the FSAI's contributory defined benefit pension scheme.

**(e) Key management personnel compensation**

Key management personnel in the Food Safety Authority of Ireland consist of the CEO, five Directors and members of the Board. Total compensation paid to key management personnel, including Board members' fees and expenses and total CEO remuneration amounted to €762,275 (2020: €784,981).

**(f) Hospitality expenditure**

	2021	2020
	€'000	€'000
Staff hospitality	2	2
Advisory Committee hospitality	0	0
Client hospitality	0	2
Board hospitality	0	0
	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>

In 2021 a small gift (cost €275) was provided to a member of the former Scientific Committee, who could not be gifted in 2020. In 2020 a voucher for €100 was given to members of the FSAI Scientific Committee, and subcommittees, who work on a voluntary basis. The total value of these vouchers was €7,500. The term of the Scientific Committee ended in 2020. To recognise the members' contributions, over the term of the committee, a small gift was provided to 13 members. The total expenditure on these gifts was €3,000. No vouchers were provided in 2021.

**(g) Operating expenditure**

	Notes	2021 €'000	2020 €'000
Recruitment Expenditure		45	14
Stationery and Postage		42	15
Cleaning and Catering		0	2
Repairs and Maintenance		210	190
Audit Fee		15	15
Food Legislation Compliance		115	57
Training – official agency staff		23	41
Food supplement database		14	67
Committee Expenses		0	11
Library Supplies		60	53
Dilapidations		208	0
General Expenditure (including hospitality)	4(f)	291	61
		<b>1,023</b>	<b>526</b>

**h) Consultancy costs**

Consultancy Costs include fees paid to external parties providing advisory services of any nature.

	2021 €'000	2020 €'000
Legal (i)	148	19
Consultancy	64	25
<b>Total consultancy costs</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>44</b>
Legal costs capitalised	0	0
Consultancy costs capitalised	0	0
Consultancy costs charged to income and expenditure	212	44
	<b>212</b>	<b>44</b>

(i) This refers to general legal advice. No expenditure was incurred in the reporting period in relation to legal costs, settlements and conciliation and arbitration proceedings relating to contracts with third parties.

## 5. Communication activities

	2021	2020
	€'000	€'000
Public Relations	115	85
Industry Events	61	50
Industry Liaison	11	18
Publications	197	216
	<b>384</b>	<b>369</b>

## 6. Tangible fixed assets

	Motor Vehicles	Computer Equipment	Office Equipment	Office Furniture	Leasehold Improvements	Scientific Equipment	Total
	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000
<b>Cost:</b>							
At 1 January 2021	22	1,084	130	329	2,166	311	4,042
Additions	0	184	15	0	0	0	199
Disposals	0	0	0	0	(1)	0	(1)
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>At 31 December 2021</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1,268</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>2,165</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>4,240</b>
<b>Accumulated Depreciation</b>							
At 1 January 2021	14	926	99	202	1,280	310	2,831
Charge for the year	7	164	14	47	325	1	558
Depreciation on Disposals	0	0	0	0	(1)	0	(1)
<b>At 31 December 2021</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1,090</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>1,604</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>3,388</b>
<b>Net Book Value</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>852</b>
<b>At 31 December 2021</b>							
<b>At 31 December 2021</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>886</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1,211</b>

The assets disclosed above include motor vehicles, computer equipment, office equipment and office furniture assets, relating to the Albanian project, for which FSAI is receiving the benefit. The original cost of these assets is €36,655 (2020: €36,655). These assets will transfer to the Albanian equivalent of FSAI at the end of the project. See note 14 for further information in relation to the project.

**(a) Intangible Fixed Assets**

	2021	2020
	€'000	€'000
1 January, Opening Net Book Value	74	95
Additions at Cost	25	45
Less Depreciation Charge for the year	(66)	(66)
<b>31 December, Closing Net Book Value</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>74</b>

Intangible fixed assets consist of software licences which are written off over their useful life.

**7. Local Authority Veterinary Service (LAVS)**

	2021	2020
	€'000	€'000
LAVS Payments	8,090	6,923

Payments are made to 25 Local Authorities for the provision of veterinary services, quarterly in arrears. Funding is channelled through the Department of Health and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and is included as part of the annual determination. The obligation to transfer funding to LAVS is only triggered when corresponding funding is received from the Department of Health.

**8. Capital account**

	2021	2021	2020	2020
	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000
At 1 January		1,285		1,672
Transfer from/(to) Income and Expenditure and Retained Reserves				
Additional funds allocated to acquire Fixed Assets	199		199	
Funded through operations				
Funds allocated to acquire Intangible Assets	25		45	
Amount Released on Disposal			(1)	
Amortisation in line with asset depreciation	(624)	(400)	(630)	(387)
<b>Balance at 31 December</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,285</b>

## 9. Receivables

	2021	2020
	€'000	€'000
Prepayments	661	594
Debtors		
	<b>661</b>	<b>594</b>

## 10. Payables

Amounts falling due within one year.

	2021	2020
	€'000	€'000
Trade Creditors	363	126
Accruals	279	187
Deferred Rent Accrual *	974	1,035
Payroll Accruals	223	189
Deferred Albanian income	773	1,542
Deferred project income	16	52
Tax Creditor – VAT	10	9
Tax Creditor – PAYE/PRSI	171	169
Tax Creditor – PSWT	46	33
	<b>2,855</b>	<b>3,342</b>

\* Under the terms of the lease agreement there was a provision for a rent-free period of one year, which occurred in 2018. FRS 102 requires that this rent-free period be recognised over the lifetime of the lease. The Deferred Rent Accrual represents the balance of the rent-free period, which will be recognised in the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves in future years.

## 11. Operating Leases

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland commenced a 20-year lease for the first floor of the Exchange Building, George's Dock, IFSC, Dublin 1 in October 2017. The lease is subject to rental reviews every 5 years and includes a rent-free year from 1 January 2018. In accordance with FRS 102 lease incentives are released over the life of the lease. The annual effective cost of the lease, excluding service charge, is €1,147,000.

At 31 December 2020 the FSAI had the following future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases:

	<b>The Exchange</b>
<b>Lease obligations falling due:</b>	<b>€'000</b>
within 1 year	1,147
between years 2 to 5	4,587
after 5 years	12,326

## 12. Dilapidations

In 2017 the FSAI moved premises from Abbey Court to The Exchange. Since moving premises, the FSAI have engaged with the former landlord, along with the OPW, in relation to a dilapidation charge arising from the finalisation of the former lease agreement. Following consultation with the OPW, an independent property valuer and with the assistance of the CSSO an amount of approximately €358,000 was paid to the former landlord. A provision for €150,000 had previously been recognised in the financial statements in relation to this matter.

## 13. Board Members' Interests

The Board adopted procedures in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Expenditure and Reform in relation to the disclosures of interests by Board Members and these procedures have been adhered to in the year. There were no transactions in the year in relation to the Board's activities in which a Board Member had a beneficial interest.

## 14. External Projects – The Food Safety Project, Albania

A consortium of Irish government agencies and their international partners has successfully tendered for a €5 million EU grant to support Albania as a candidate for accession to the EU, by strengthening its food safety, veterinary and plant health standards.

The project covers the period 14 Jan 2019 to 13 Jan 2022.

The consortium is led by the FSAI and includes the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Sustainable Food Systems Ireland, the Finnish Food Authority, and an Albanian partner, Creative Business Solutions.

The FSAI received funding of €2.606 million in previous years to deliver the project. No additional expenditure was received in 2021. Cumulative expenditure to 31 December 2021 was €1.833 million and a balance of €773,000 was on hand at year end (note 10). The expenditure incurred in relation to this project is set out below.

	2021	2020
	€'000	€'000
Remuneration and Other Pay Costs	248	214
Project travel- national	3	7
Project travel - international	5	11
International Expert Support*	303	167
Rent, rates, service charges and insurance	13	30
Industry events	44	0
Publications	72	42
Depreciation of project assets	11	11
Other	70	17
<b>Albanian project</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>499</b>

\* International Expert Support represents the input of personnel with experience in relevant disciplines that have been engaged to enable the successful delivery of the Albanian project. This includes areas such as phytosanitary, senior legislation, veterinary and organisational development experts that have been identified by the FSAI or the consortium partners.

## 15. Food Reformulation Taskforce.

In October 2021 the FSAI signed a service level agreement with the Department of Health to establish and operate a Food Reformulation Taskforce (FRT), to deliver on a food reformulation action plan developed by the Obesity Policy Implementation Oversight Group who are charged with delivery on the Government's Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016-2025. The FRT will be in operation until 31 December 2025 and is expected to cost approximately €2.06 million over the course of the project.

The expenditure incurred during 2021 in relation to the project, funded by the Department of Health is set out below:

	2021	2020
	€'000	€'000
Licensing/nutritional information datasets	148	0

## 16. Events after the reporting date

There are no events between the reporting date and the date of approval of these financial statements for issue that require adjustment to the financial statements.

The Board recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic is a significant event which occurred in 2020 and continued during 2021. The Board is taking the situation seriously and is monitoring the situation, in conjunction with management, on an ongoing basis. The business continues to operate with measures in place to protect staff. Staff are working remotely and services continue to be provided. To date, the operations and most of the entity's activities are being maintained while adjusting to the different way in which the business is being delivered. In 2022 the business will implement a hybrid working model to maximise the benefits of remote working while delivering on its business objectives.

As the FSAI is funded by moneys provided by the Exchequer, through the Department of Health, the Board considers it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

## **17. Financial position**

The FSAI's financial performance in 2021 outlines a surplus of €1,232,000 after appropriations, which reflects a net cash inflow of €903,000 from operating activities. This increase in retained funding arose in 2021 due to a reduction in anticipated expenditure, late in Q4, which occurred after the final drawdown of the FSAI's annual allocation. The FSAI is engaging with the Department of Health on how best utilise this available funding to maximise the return to the Exchequer during 2022.

## **18. Approval of Financial Statements**

The Financial Statements were approved by the Board on 21 June 2022.



**Food Safety Authority of Ireland**  
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