The role of innovation in future food policy-making

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Science, Evidence and Research Division

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Food Standards Agency: Ensuring food you can trust

Food is safe

Food is healthier and more sustainable

Food is what is says it is

Our role as a regulator

1. Following EU Exit, FSA is responsible for all food and feed **regulatory approval** in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (working alongside Food Standards Scotland)

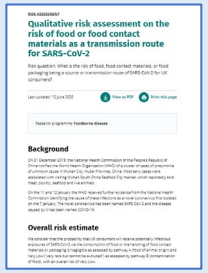
2. We follow a robust risk analysis process to deliver **independent evidence-based** advice and recommendations to ministers

3. We are committed to supporting **new foods** come to the UK market while **protecting consumers'** food safety

FSA Science, Evidence & Research

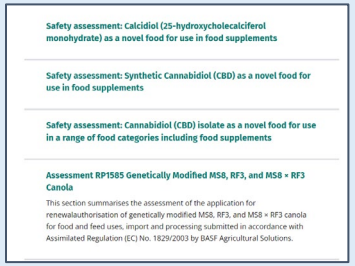
170 scientists & analysts delivering the science and evidence needs of the FSA

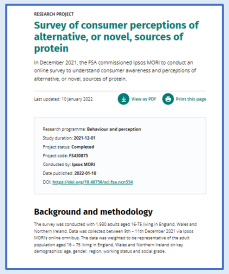
Risk analysis

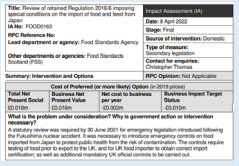


Risk assessments

Market authorisation safety assessment





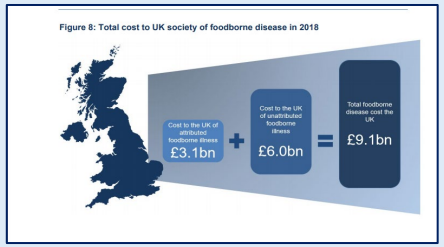


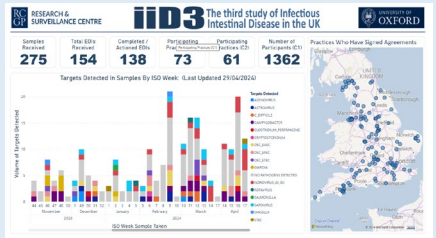
Impact assessment & consumer evidence

Research & Evidence

Research priorities

Internal analysis





External research projects

Measuring impact

Maintaining science capabilities

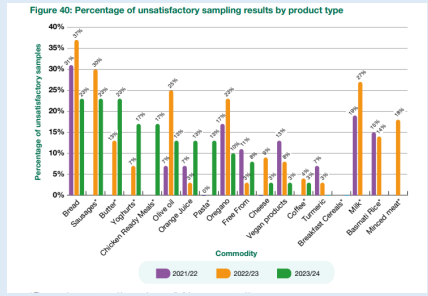
Science Advisory Committees

ACMSF
ACNFP
ACAF
Science Council
ACSS
COT

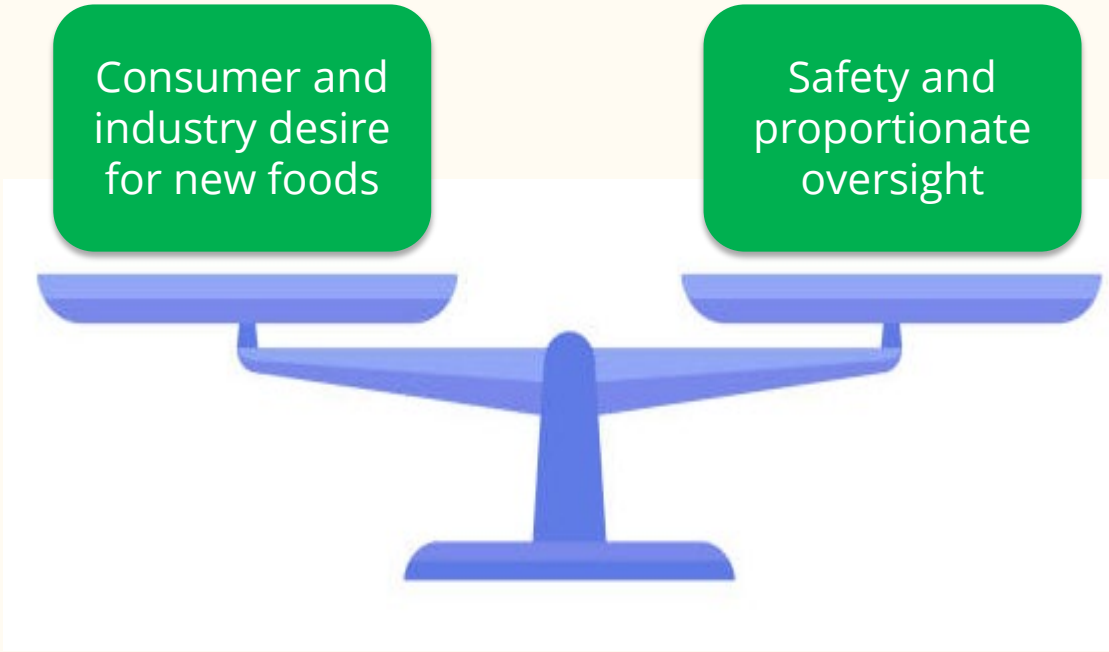
Government Chemist
Centre for Environment Fisheries & Aquaculture Science
fera
afbi
UK Health Security Agency
Animal & Plant Health Agency

National Laboratories

Sampling & surveillance



Balancing act as a regulator

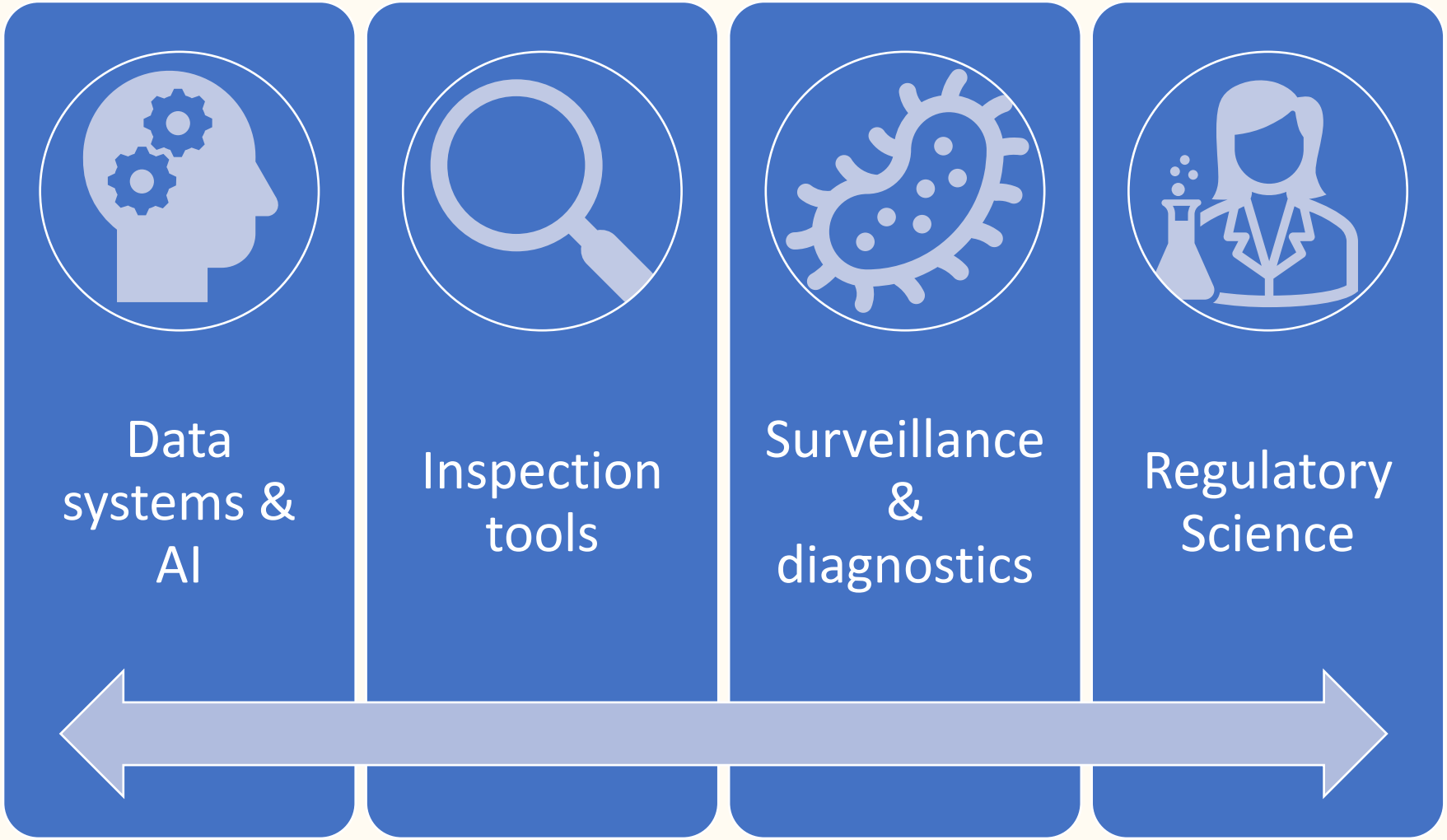


Our ambition

1. We aim to be a **proportionate and agile** regulator supporting food innovation while maintaining food safety standards

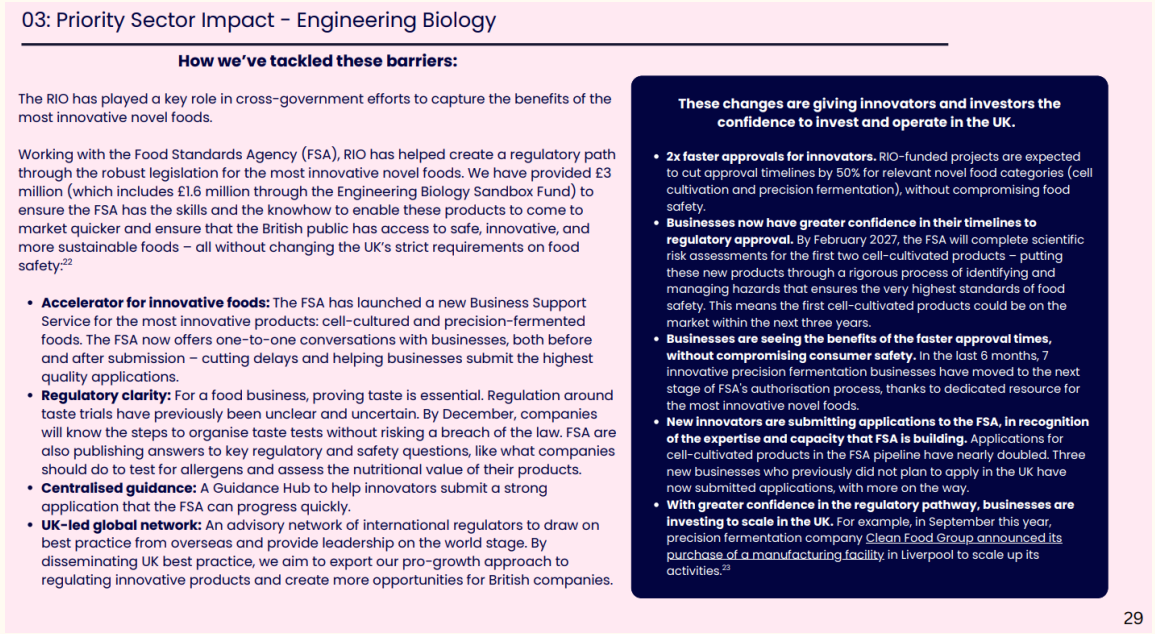
2. We look to get the balance right in terms of **how much information** we need from business applicants to be able to conduct risk assessments and deliver **safe and swift** regulatory decisions

Innovation in Food Safety & Regulatory Science



Regulatory Innovation Office

Support for innovation in food safety regulation



03: Priority Sector Impact - Engineering Biology

How we've tackled these barriers:

The RIO has played a key role in cross-government efforts to capture the benefits of the most innovative novel foods.

Working with the Food Standards Agency (FSA), RIO has helped create a regulatory path through the robust legislation for the most innovative novel foods. We have provided £3 million (which includes £1.6 million through the Engineering Biology Sandbox Fund) to ensure the FSA has the skills and the knowhow to enable these products to come to market quicker and ensure that the British public has access to safe, innovative, and more sustainable foods – all without changing the UK's strict requirements on food safety.[22]

- **Accelerator for innovative foods:** The FSA has launched a new Business Support Service for the most innovative products: cell-cultured and precision-fermented foods. The FSA now offers one-to-one conversations with businesses, both before and after submission – cutting delays and helping businesses submit the highest quality applications.
- **Regulatory clarity:** For a food business, proving taste is essential. Regulation around taste trials have previously been unclear and uncertain. By December, companies will know the steps to organise taste tests without risking a breach of the law. FSA are also publishing answers to key regulatory and safety questions, like what companies should do to test for allergens and assess the nutritional value of their products.
- **Centralised guidance:** A Guidance Hub to help innovators submit a strong application that the FSA can progress quickly.
- **UK-led global network:** An advisory network of international regulators to draw on best practice from overseas and provide leadership on the world stage. By disseminating UK best practice, we aim to export our pro-growth approach to regulating innovative products and create more opportunities for British companies.

These changes are giving innovators and investors the confidence to invest and operate in the UK.

- **2x faster approvals for innovators.** RIO-funded projects are expected to cut approval timelines by 50% for relevant novel food categories (cell cultivation and precision fermentation), without compromising food safety.
- **Businesses now have greater confidence in their timelines to regulatory approval.** By February 2027, the FSA will complete scientific risk assessments for the first two cell-cultivated products – putting these new products through a rigorous process of identifying and managing hazards that ensures the very highest standards of food safety. This means the first cell-cultivated products could be on the market within the next three years.
- **Businesses are seeing the benefits of the faster approval times, without compromising consumer safety.** In the last 6 months, 7 innovative precision fermentation businesses have moved to the next stage of FSA's authorisation process, thanks to dedicated resource for the most innovative novel foods.
- **New innovators are submitting applications to the FSA, in recognition of the expertise and capacity that FSA is building.** Applications for cell-cultivated products in the FSA pipeline have nearly doubled. Three new businesses who previously did not plan to apply in the UK have now submitted applications, with more on the way.
- **With greater confidence in the regulatory pathway, businesses are investing to scale in the UK.** For example, in September this year, precision fermentation company Clean Food Group announced its purchase of a manufacturing facility in Liverpool to scale up its activities.[23]

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DSIT Funding of £3M

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68f7548ffd57416292f12d9a/regulatory_innovation_office_one_year_on.pdf

The UK's New Innovation Hub

Food Standards Agency
food.gov.uk

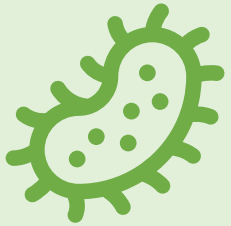
Novel foods require pre-market authorisation before they can be sold in Great Britain. These technologies can pose unique safety risks and complex regulatory questions.

The new Innovation Hub will **protect consumers** by making sure these new foods are safe before they can be sold, as well as giving **greater clarity on regulatory requirements** to innovators and investors.

Our Programmes:

Cell-Cultivated Sandbox

The FSA is working with industry and academia to gather rigorous scientific evidence about Cell-Cultivated Products (CCPs) and the technologies used to make them.



Innovation Research Programme

A rapid one-year programme to enhance the FSA and FSS's capabilities and specialist expertise in regulating innovative food technologies, with a particular emphasis on precision fermentation.

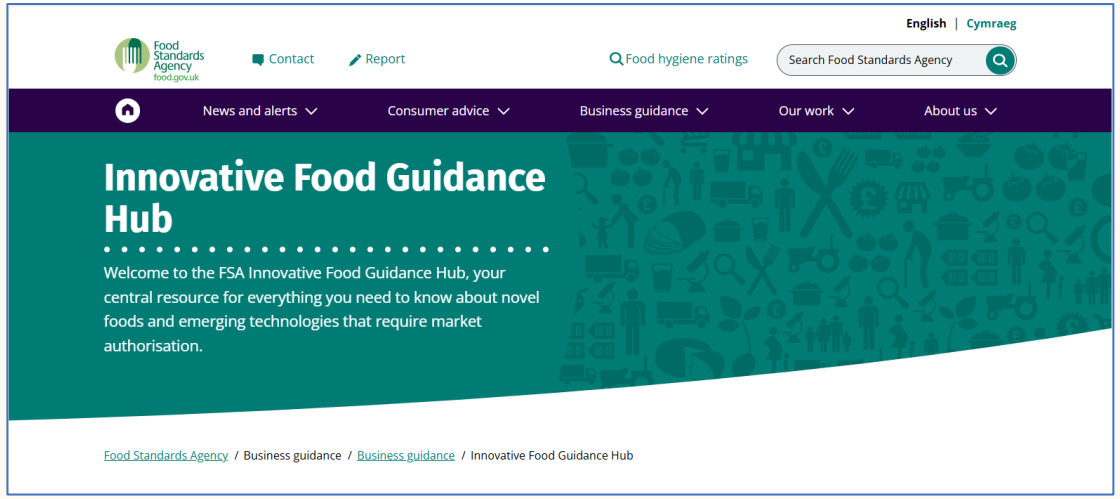
The UK's New Innovation Hub

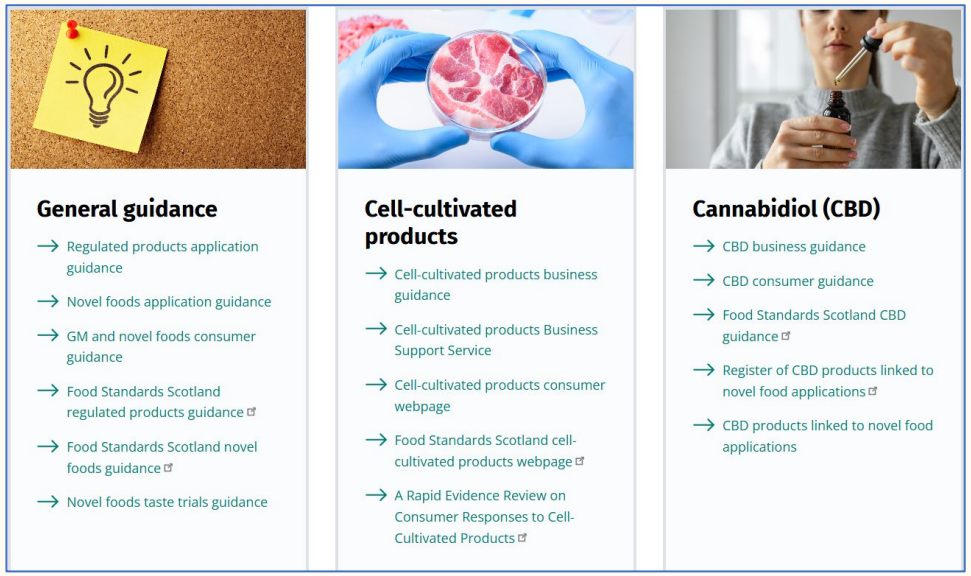
These two innovative programmes enhance the FSA & FSS's capabilities and expertise in regulating innovative food technologies.

Reducing barriers for industry to obtaining market authorisation, with improved capacity to assess product safety, providing increased clarity for applicants and answering key regulatory questions to enable market access.

Efficiency	More efficient regulatory assessment of innovative products.
Transparency	A clearer understanding for industry of what they will need to provide and how long the regulatory process will take.
Future proofing	Improve our understanding of future innovative products, so we can prepare and continue to improve.

Supporting innovation





Cell-cultivated products Business Support Service

This service is designed to support companies wishing to submit applications for cell-cultivated products to the GB market authorisation service. It supports the applicant throughout the life of the application, offering both pre- and post-submission support.

Last updated: 30 June 2025
See all updates

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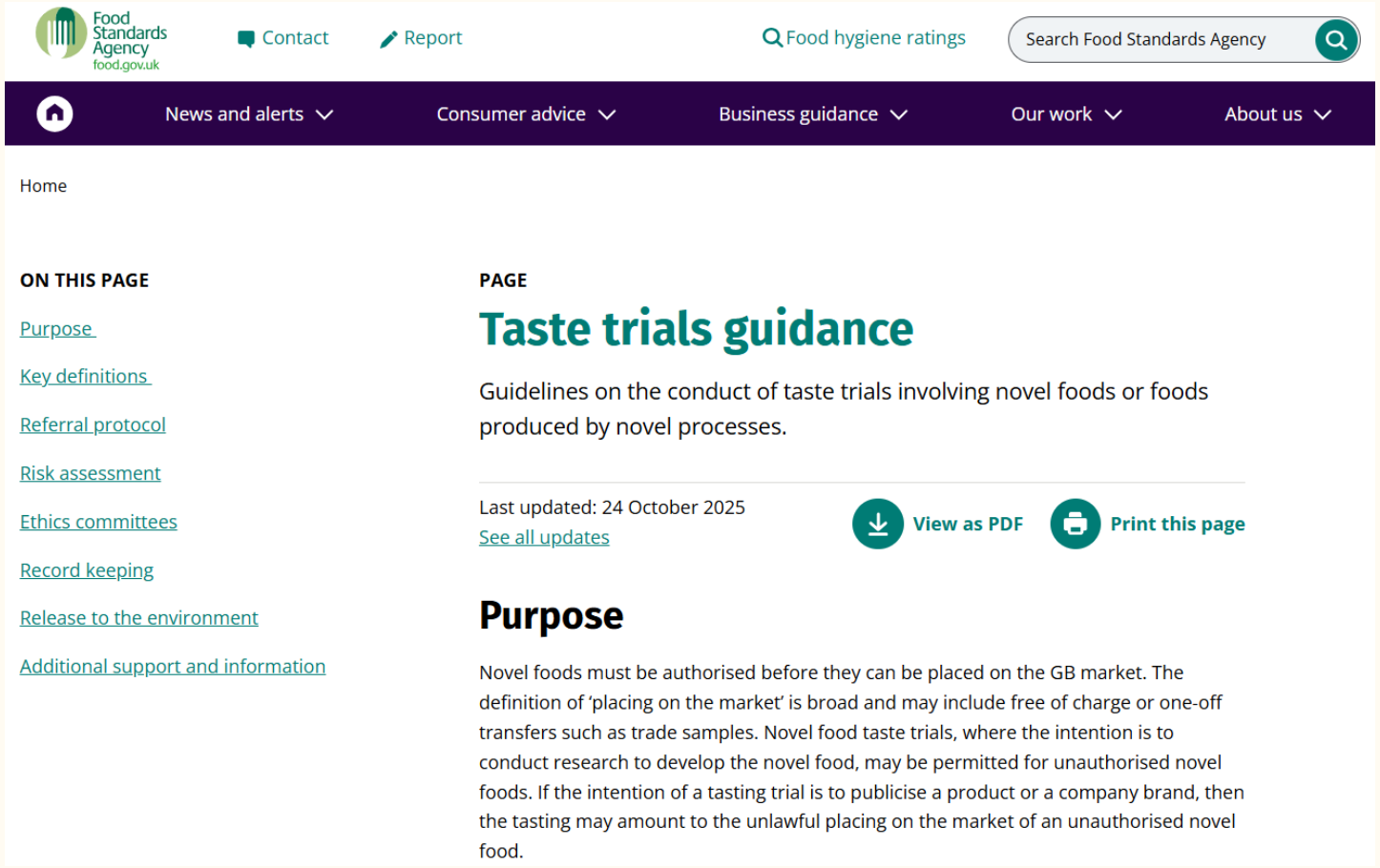
The Business Support Service (BSS) is a new pilot service offered by the Food Standards Agency, in partnership with Food Standards Scotland (FSS). This service is designed to support companies wishing to submit applications for cell-cultivated products to the UK market authorisation service. It supports the applicant throughout the life of the application, offering both pre- and post-submission support.

Now includes precision fermentation

Novel Foods Tasting Guidelines

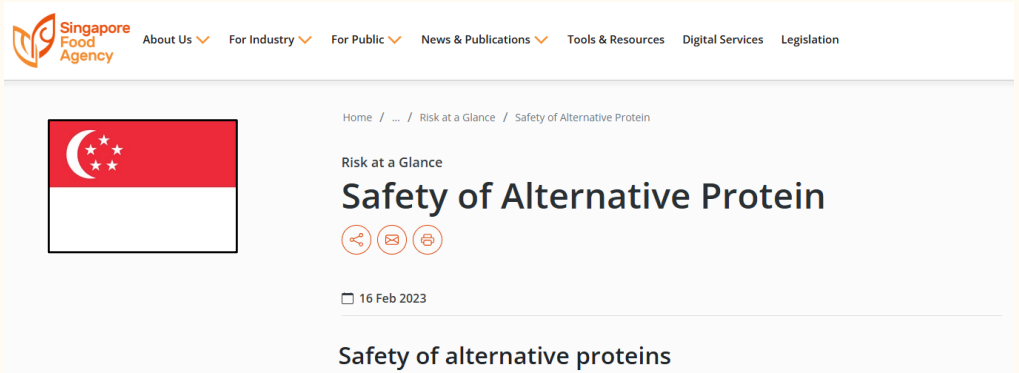


Working in partnership

- International engagement e.g. Singapore
- Working with the UK research community

	CARMA (Cellular Agriculture Manufacturing Hub)	Microbial Food Hub	Bezos Centre for Sustainable Protein	NAPIC (National Alternative Protein Innovation Centre)
Lead University	University of Bath Professor Marianne Ellis	Imperial College London Dr Rodrigo Ledesma-Amaro	Imperial College London Dr Rodrigo Ledesma-Amaro	University of Leeds Professor Anwesha Sarkar
Key Numbers	£12M, by EPSRC, for 7 years; est. 2023	£14M by BBSRC; est. 2024	£24M by Bezos Earth Fund; est. 2024	£15M by Innovate UK, BBSRC & industry partners; est. 2024
Remit	Cellular agriculture (cultivated meat, fermentation)	Fermentation	Alternative proteins (general)	Alternative proteins (general)
Aims	Distinct work packages, spanning bioprocessing to social sciences	Developing novel technologies for precision, biomass and traditional fermentation-based food & food ingredients	Wide range of research (incl. engineering biology, biofoundry, automation) as well as knowledge-sharing focus	Translation of technology to food products

From Cell Ag UK: https://cellag.uk/alternative-protein-hubs



Thank you

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Find out more about FSA science

https://www.food.gov.uk/our-work/science-and-evidence