

HM Government

Review into the Integrity and Assurance of Food Supply Networks

Note of meeting with Federation of Wholesale Distributors (FWD)

Location: Defra, Nobel House

Date: 27 June 2013

Attendees:

James Bielby - Chief Executive - FWD

Professor Chris Elliott – Independent Reviewer – Review into the Integrity and Assurance of Food Supply Networks

Mary Newman – Secretary - Review into the Integrity and Assurance of Food Supply Networks

Nick Hughes – Review into the Integrity and Assurance of Food Supply Networks

NB – Comments belong to James Bielby unless stated

1. Reflections on the horsemeat incident

The view of some industry stakeholders is that the reaction of Government and the FSA wasn't very joined up. The requirement to test products for horse DNA in a very short space of time was asking a lot and, given that industry was testing already, was felt to be unnecessary by some people.

There was a communications failure in that testing was going on quite transparently yet the media were calling it a cover up.

The impact of horsemeat was on legitimate businesses but fraud was committed by criminals.

2. Strengths of current industry procedures for ensuring standards

The industry can pat itself on the back in terms of the processes that already take place for ensuring standards are met.

3. Possible improvements to current procedures – intelligence, horizon scanning

A view the FWD would have some sympathy with is that all that is needed to strengthen supply chain integrity is another HACCP for authenticity.

There is a failure in process at the moment about how intelligence is shared. There's a lot of mistrust between the industry and Government which you're never going to solve. Food businesses are fierce competitors - they will make capital out of each other's problems.

There is a job to do for industry and government to better share intelligence and engage in more horizon scanning.

4. Further action

Invited Chris Elliott to attend a meeting of wholesalers in September, facilitated by the FWD.

11 September 2013