



FSA'S SCIENCE HORIZONS

David Atkins

**Head of the Chief Scientist Team
FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY**

www.food.gov.uk

david.atkins@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk



THE UK FSA'S SCIENCE

- 50% of all staff with a strong background in the natural and other analytical sciences
- >140 eminent scientists on 10 independent SACs
- c£20 million on R&D including national and EU partnerships
- Intelligent customers of evidence and analysis
- Working with the international scientific community



INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE FSA's SCIENCE

- FSA is the latest Department to have its use of science reviewed by the government's Chief Scientific Advisor
- Started in Jan 2008, extensive independent review, Report published on 16/04/09
- Agency has 3 months to respond



SCIENCE REVIEW: THE KEY MESSAGE

The report commends the Agency's use of science and the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser and Head of GO-Science, Professor John Beddington says:

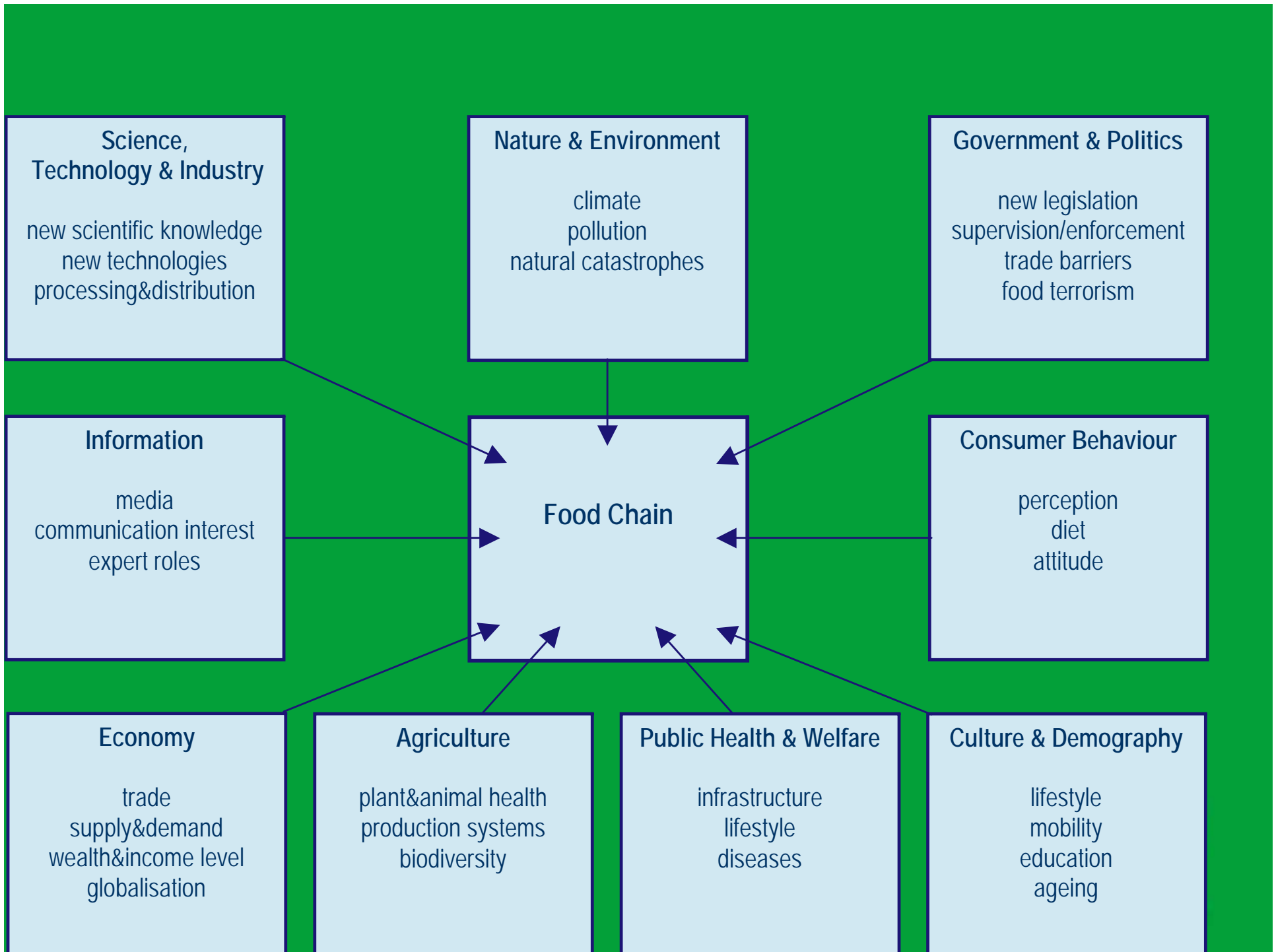
“This review indicates that the FSA is using science and scientific advice in an extremely impressive way. In many respects the agency is ahead of the field, particularly in its use of openness and transparency in the way scientific advice is developed and presented. “



HORIZON SCANNING NEEDS

- **Immediate** : being prepared for the next challenge, national and international networks to spot the bad stuff coming our way
- **Medium to long term** : potential impacts on food safety and healthy eating of:
 - Food security/global warming
 - New technologies
 - New foods
 - Social/cultural/economic changes





HORIZON SCANNING ACTIONS

- **Immediate :**
 - National and international networks
 - Research and surveillance programmes
- **Medium to long term :**
 - FSA HS Programme
 - Partnerships –we can't do this alone
 - Development of the new Strategic Plan 2010-2015
 - Development of the new Science and Evidence Strategy 2010-2015



HORIZON SCANNING FSA PROGRAMME

Supports the Agency's future policy development and strategic planning by identifying:

- Emerging risks and technologies
- New challenges and opportunities
- New areas of research
- Gaps in knowledge ; and
- Issues for early public engagement



HORIZON SCANNING FSA ACTIVITIES

- Co-ordinated by the FSA's HS Unit
- Part of everyone's job
- All 10 SACs required to undertake as part of their business
- The SAC's HS work is co-ordinated by the overarching independent GACS
- Partnerships with others



HORIZON SCANNING PARTNERSHIP WORKING

EXAMPLES:

- EFSA's Emerging Risks Project (EMRISK)
- GO-Science's Horizon Scanning Centre
- The Human and Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance Group
- National & international workshops



HORIZON SCANNING

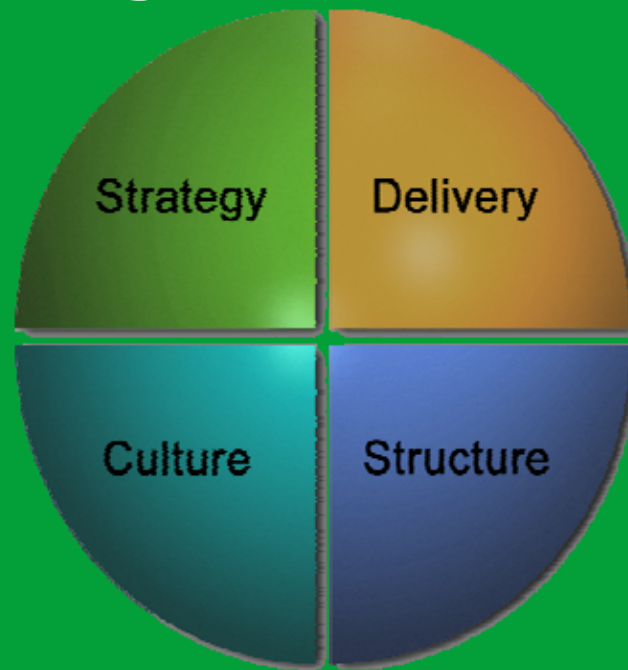
GACS' ROLE

- Draws together the SACs' HS activities and provides a strategic lead; e.g.:
- Hosting a workshop in June to
 - explore the future landscape for the production of healthier primary products
 - identify the key developments in primary production in the next 10-20 years
 - determine the barriers to achieving the desirable changes
 - recommend prioritised next steps



FSA Strategic Plan

High level framework



Stage One – Situation analysis & direction-setting

Jul 08	Horizon scanning for main trends; identifying their impacts & key uncertainties
Jul-Sep 08	Risk analysis: identifying where we can most impact on public health
Sep-Nov 08	PESTLE analysis of main drivers; identifying impacts, uncertainties
Oct-Nov 08	Early engagement with stakeholders on emerging high-level plan, including GACS
Nov 08 onwards	Mapping the risks & opportunities across the food chain for food safety and healthy eating
Nov-Feb 09	Developing objectives, outcomes and strategic priorities



Strategic Plan architecture

- Purpose: Safe food & healthy eating for all
- 2 Objectives: food safety & healthy eating
- 7 simple outcome focussed propositions:
 - 3 support Food Safety aim
 - 1 supports both aims
 - 3 support Healthy Eating aim
- Strategic priorities at next level down. Measures for strategic priorities will be developed later. Strategic Plan will contain a mix of outcome measures, process/output/input measures



Strategic planning timeline

- Stage Two – Engagement & consultation

Mar-Jun 2009	12-week consultation and stakeholder engagement, including consultation on associated science and evidence needs
Jun 2009	Board discussion

- Stage Three – Strategic Plan development

Jun-Nov 2009	Develop Strategic Plan measures and costings
Feb 2010	Strategic Plan to be discussed at Open Board meeting
Apr 2010	Launch Strategic Plan



THE FSA'S NEW SCIENCE & EVIDENCE STRATEGY

- Timely report - S&E strategy to underpin next strategic plan under development as part of written consultation on new SP
- Stakeholder events planned – internal and external
- GO-Sc Review recommendations will help in setting direction for S&E strategy



GO-Sc HEADLINE RECOMMENDATIONS

- the need for more clarity as to where and how policy decisions are made, prioritised and implemented
- the need for more consistent and satisfactory use of external expertise
- the need to look at longer term issues in a more strategic way
- the need for more collaborative working with others across Government and other external stakeholders
- greater career opportunities for staff
- even in a period of declining resources, the amount of funds devoted to high quality scientific research related to the work of the agency, should not fall, and neither should standards for funding be lowered.



What is the Science and Evidence Strategy?

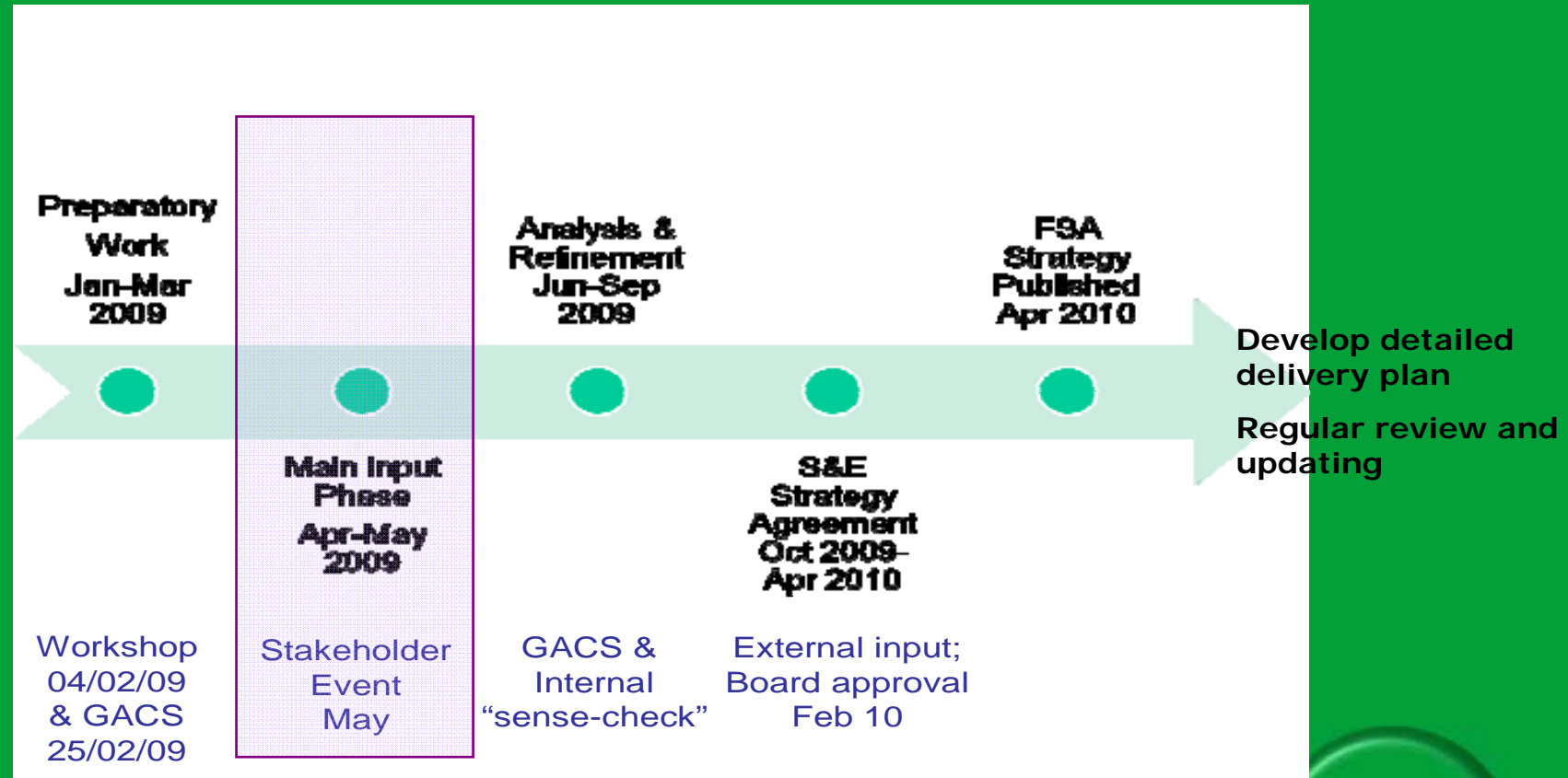
Sets out what being 'science and evidence based' means for us:

- the science, evidence and analysis we'll need:
 - to underpin delivery of our Strategic Plan
 - evaluate progress
 - inform development of future strategy
- how we gather and use science, evidence and analysis, including by working with others.



Science and Evidence Strategy 2010-2015

The process: what happens next



Science Review

Nutrition
portfolio review



