

Annex

Request

Your request for information is now as follows:

In 2018 how many DNA tests were conducted on food products for fish species identification? How many of these came back with unsatisfactory results? Please give details of these unsatisfactory results including product/brand/manufacturer of the product, the species it was supposed to be and the quantity and species of the detected fish or other foodstuff.

Response

Information on how Local Authorities carry out sampling

The FSA has a statutory function to protect public health and consumers' other interests in relation to food and drink as the central competent authority for food safety. However, the day to day responsibility for enforcement rests with local authorities (LAs).

LAs decide on their local sampling priorities, using a risk based-approach, conduct the sampling, arrange for relevant testing and carry out enforcement activity where required. The number of samples taken will depend on a range of factors including the number and types of businesses, the results of past inspections and other types of intervention.

Food sampling is only one of a number of different approaches that LAs will take to assess compliance with food law. During food standards inspections, officers will check invoices, traceability, menus and descriptions, the physical product being processed or in storage including checking the labels. It's not always necessary to sample in order to determine a food business operators compliance.

Data held by the FSA

LAs report their sampling activity through the annual Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS). However, this system only provides high level information to the FSA on the total number of samples taken by each LA and does not provide details of the parameters tested or the sample results.

[The FSA's Annual Report on Food Law Enforcement for 2017/18](#) reports that 16,316 visits specifically to take samples England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It also shows that 452,930 food hygiene and food standards interventions were carried out in food businesses, where may also have included sampling (for instance, during a routine inspection).

The only data the FSA holds on the number samples for the products you have requested are reported by LAs through the United Kingdom Food Surveillance System (UKFSS). Unlike LAEMS, this system is not used by all LAs to report their

sampling data and the data may appear a period of time after it has been collected by LAs.

Of the data available to the FSA through the UKFSS for 2018 indicates that 15 samples of food products were subject to 167 separate tests for fish species identification, all of which were satisfactory. This would exclude samples that are still being processed in the system that are yet to be reported for 2018.