What might a “Brexit” mean for food control?

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Considerations

• Legislation as a basis for food control
• Imports, exports and domestic controls
• Making changes to EU legislation
• General Brexit effects on food control?
• Brexit effects on domestic food control?
• Future food control?
Food safety legislation in the UK

The legal basis

• European legislation – agreed in Brussels by 28 Member States
• Sets the hygiene and safety standards
• Mainly for business but requirements for regulatory checks (Official controls)
EU food safety and hygiene regulations

Main regulations

• General food law (EC 178/2002)
• Hygiene of foodstuffs (EC 852/2004)
• Hygiene for food of animal origin (EC 853/2004)
• Official controls on products of animal origin (EC 854/2004)
• Official controls on feed and food (EC 882/2004)*
• Microbiological criteria for foodstuffs (EC 2073/2005)

* Under review
Imports, exports & domestic controls

- Food moves “freely” across EU single trade area
- Strict controls for “3rd country” imports
- EU approval manufacturing/processing plants
- Veterinary certification (extra costs)
- Import fees
- Inspection at Borders - time delays
- Must meet EU standards
Making changes to EU legislation - Official Controls review case study

• One EU food control model?
• Official vets not Environmental Health
• Risks loss of public protection
• UK has a voice and some support
• Plans to review all hygiene legislation
• Ongoing UK influence?
General Brexit effects on food control?

- Loss of “Free trade” status
- UK as “3rd country”?
- Checks on EU imports?
- New Free trade agreement with EU e.g. Norway or Switzerland?
- Will need to meet all EU standards, no voice in new legislation
- New trade agreements, new standards?
Brexit effects on domestic food control?

- EU standards for exports to EU remain
- New national legislation – higher/lower standards?
- Less/different business controls?
- “Cheaper less competent inspectors”?
- Independent, consistent public sector inspections?
- What price public protection?
Operational food control

- Inspection
- Verification
- Audit
- Sampling and analysis
- Surveillance
- Education and advice
- Food Hygiene Rating scheme
Future food control?

Brexit or not there will be changes:

• Less public sector intervention, more intelligence led or reactive activities
• Greater risk based focus
• More “business responsibility”, more reward
• More consumer influence/empowerment
• Conflict between local and national interests?
• “Post code lottery?”
Thank you

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