



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

From Steve Brine MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health and Primary Care

39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU

Lord Teverson  
Chair of the EU Energy and Environment Sub-Committee  
House of Lords  
London SW1A 0PW

19 MAR 2019

*Steve Brine*

### **UK Access to the EU Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF)**

Further to my evidence session with the EU Energy and Environment Sub-Committee on 6 March, I would like to provide further clarification on UK's access to RASFF.

During the evidence session, Lord Rooker asked whether the UK will continue to be a full member of RASFF, given that we will no longer be a Member of the EU. He also asked about the state of negotiations and who is physically doing it, i.e. who is negotiating access to EU Agencies, Systems and Databases for the UK. I explained that the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is leading negotiations for the UK on access to EU Agencies, Systems and Databases relevant to its policy areas and that of the Food Standard Agency (FSA).

In view of Lord Rooker's concerns on access to RASFF, I subsequently raised the issue again with the negotiating team in DEFRA. I can now confirm that, if the UK leaves the EU without a deal, then as a third country the UK will be eligible to receive food safety notifications from the EU - as required by EU law - where a food or feed subject to a notification under the Rapid Alert System has been dispatched to that third country. However, not having full RASFF access would mean less data than is currently available, which may affect the UK's timely communications on food and feed safety issues.

In order to mitigate this potential loss of full access to RASFF, the FSA has strengthened its capability and capacity by building on proven mechanisms (such as monitoring of key data sources and new Strategic Surveillance Programme) to respond effectively to any foodborne contamination or outbreak incident that occurs in the UK for the protection of consumers. During the implementation period (after UK has left the EU), the UK would continue to have full access to RASFF and receive the same levels of notifications as are currently received through the RASFF system.

As I stated during my evidence session, Government remains fully committed to ensuring through our Future Economic Partnership with the EU that the UK continues to have access to relevant EU bodies, systems and databases that would support the joint ambitions that the EU and UK have for food and feed safety. We are seeking a strong and effective partnership with the EU, which we want to see reflected in our relationship with its agencies and other bodies.

Consequently, the FSA is also working hard to ensure that our world-class expertise in managing food incidents is maintained when the UK leaves the EU. Leaving the EU does not change Government's top priority which is to ensure that UK food remains safe and is what it says it is.

Yours sincerely

*Thank you again for welcoming  
me to your committee*



**STEVE BRINE**