

# Ensuring UK-Wide Regulatory Alignment

DEFRA and the devolved governments are working together to produce sector frameworks which will provide the basis for co-operation and co-ordination across policy areas. The next phase of work will include stakeholder technical engagement with the objective that these frameworks will be operational by December 2020.

## Chemicals and Pesticide Regulations

Policy area is devolved and there is broad agreement that a continued UK wide approach with a single evidence-based decision-making process would be beneficial.

Following a meeting with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), we have been advised that the process would mean the Chemicals Regulation Division (CRD) would administer active substance approvals at UK level with provision made for devolved environment agencies to offer advice and powers for devolved ministers to intervene.

The proposed framework will also create a dispute resolution function where agreement between administrations cannot be reached.

## Fertilisers

Fertilisers are a devolved matter and there is broad agreement that there should be a common approach to maintaining fertilisers that are produced and sold in UK. This will simplify requirements for importers and exporters.

The framework will support the governance of the manufacturing and marketing of fertiliser across the UK to maintain standards and provide continuity to industry and security of supply for farmers.

## Organics

Organics policy is mostly devolved and there is agreement for the Secretary of State to act on a UK-wide basis as the competent authority on organics with consent from devolved administrations.

The framework is a mechanism to manage future UK-wide organics policy and sets out joint decision-making mechanisms.

## Plant Health

Plant health policy is devolved and the framework updates governance arrangements across the UK Plant Health Service. This builds on existing governance structures including the UK plant health policy group.

## Plant Varieties and Seeds

Marketing and variety registrations are both devolved. For practical and economic reasons, a combined variety registration system is used. Powers that once sat with the EU can now be utilised either jointly or individually.

## Food/Feed Safety and Hygiene

This framework will apply to retained EU food and feed safety and hygiene legislation. Officials have agreed that the following areas are within the scope of the framework:

- General food and feed law and hygiene
- Food and feed safety standards
- Official controls for food and feed
- Public health controls on imported food and feed.

Areas which fall out with the scope of the framework and where there is flexibility for different approaches include:

- Enforcement provisions
- Risk management decisions
- Incident management – practical procedures for managing these.

Risk assessments which are currently carried out by the European Food Standards Authority will be carried out by the FSA and FSS, with four country representation. It should be noted that risk assessments for Northern Ireland will continue to be carried out by the European authority.

Other important points to note include.

- Businesses applying for pre-market approvals/re-authorisations for the GB market (i.e. for feed additives) will submit applications through a single UK-wide process.
- In most cases the administrations will work together to develop a common approach for legislative changes.
- Where this is not possible, and in order to manage any divergence, a dispute resolution mechanism has been put in place.

In relation to all of the frameworks summarised here there will be further stakeholder engagement to ensure that proposals are workable and meet the needs of those industries including Agri-supply which will be affected.