

## FSA ‘stands ready’ to assess risk of chlorinated chicken and hormone-treated beef

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THE Food Standards Agency (FSA) ‘stands ready’ to assess the safety risk of chlorinated chicken and hormone-treated beef, its chief executive Emily Miles has said.

According to Ms Miles, the regulator’s capacity to carry out such an assessment has been boosted by Brexit Treasury funding over the past two years, with risk analysis staff doubling from 25 to 50 and more than 90 new scientists sitting on evidence committees.

Any review of chlorinated chicken and hormone-treated beef would consider how safe the products are to eat, but also look at a wider range of consumer concerns.

Though Ministers have copied the EU ban on both products into UK law, some doubt remains about whether the country would be able to maintain this position in the face of renewed pressure from major agricultural exporters such as the USA.

Speaking at a Westminster Food and Nutrition Forum event this week (July 7), Ms Miles confirmed the FSA is already looking ‘in principle’ at the available science, though a formal request for an assessment has not yet been lodged.

Ms Miles said: “At the moment, if you have got a regulated product, like a treatment for meat such as chlorine wash or a novel food, you have to apply to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) for a risk assessment, which then goes to the Commission and the Council of Ministers to decide whether or not it is safe to put on to EU plates.

“The FSA takes responsibility from EFSA and the Commission in January at the end of the transition period, so we are going to be doing risk assessments for any application for things like that.

“We will look at the safety aspects, but we will also look at other legitimate factors, like consumer opinion, price, animal welfare and environmental impact.

“We will then put a dossier together and make a recommendation to Ministers, because they have the final say, and we would publish our evidence.”

As well as being triggered by an application, a risk assessment can also be carried out on the instructions of a Government Minister or the FSA board.

**Article written by Abi Kay, Chief Reporter, Farmers Guardian**