## Dietary Reference Values and Reference Intakes

The provisional UK Common Framework on Nutrition labelling, Composition and Standards refers to Dietary Reference Values (DRVs) in the following sections:

**PART B: OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY**

> *2.2.3.* ***European Food Safety Authority:*** responsibilities related to the establishment of Dietary Reference Values, and the publication of guidance documents (including those regarding procedural requirements) which must be adhered to; and, from time to time, updated to reflect technical, scientific, or public health developments.

**PART D: PROPOSED OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS**

> 2.1 Subject to any future review/revision, all parties will continue to use the Reference Intakes and Dietary Reference Values set by retained EU law.
> 2.2 Equivalent lists to the current union/community lists will be published on GOV.UK (in order to present a consolidated UK list for industry and the public) – but this may also be repeated in other places for DAs with relevant links being provided in each.

The description in the text is ambiguous and this could potentially lead to confusion and contradiction in the proposed future arrangements.

Recommendations on the setting of DRVs in the UK is currently the responsibility of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN; Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)) which is tasked with informing the UK and devolved governments on matters related to food and nutrition in the UK. Before SACN was constituted in 2000 the DRVs were the responsibility of COMA. The set of UK Dietary Reference Values (mostly from the 1991 COMA report with SACN updates on some nutrients and energy) differs from those of EFSA for a number of nutrients and the way in which the values are derived. The reference values used by other EU member states will also likely differ from those proposed by ESFA in some regards.

Clarity on which set of DRVs and Reference Intakes will form the basis of the new arrangements is important as they are used to protect the consumer in multiple ways. DRVs are used in the labelling of foods and in providing the consumers with the ability to evaluate the healthiness of foods (e.g. the traffic light system of food labelling). Reference intakes are used to benchmark the safety of Novel Foods (see below), the levels at which free vitamins are provided, and the safety of proposed public health interventions such as folic acid fortification.

## Novel Foods

The provisional UK Common Framework seeks to provide;

> "a governance mechanism for decisions relating to changes in the following policy areas (which are currently provided for at an EU level): nutrition and health claims made on foods; the addition of vitamins, minerals and certain other substances to foods; composition and labelling of food supplements; the composition and labelling of food intended for infants and young children, food for special medical purposes, and total diet replacement for weight control ("Foods for Specific Groups").

An important category that seems to have been omitted from the proposed arrangements relates to Novel Foods and Processes. Many innovations in the food sector relate to Novel Foods and Processes. Under Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 a novel food is defined as a food that does not have a significant history of consumption within the European Union before 15 May 1997. This definition includes traditional foods from third countries. Such foods are subject to a pre-market safety assessment before a decision is made on EU wide authorisations. Such foods are subject to a pre-market safety assessment before a decision is made on EU-wide authorisation. The European Parliament and the Council requires that all applications for the authorisation of novel foods shall be submitted to the Commission (https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2016.4594) who may then request a risk assessment from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). In assessing the safety of novel foods, EFSA considers the following:

- Whether the novel food concerned is as safe as food from a comparable food category already existing on the market within the Union;
- Whether the composition of the novel food and the conditions of its use do not pose a safety risk to human health in the Union;
- A novel food, which is intended to replace another food, does not differ from that food in such a way that its normal consumption would be nutritionally disadvantageous for the consumer.

Each member state has a standing committee on novel foods which carries out an assessment of applications for authorisation (Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes | Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes). In the UK the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP) is a non-statutory, independent body of scientific experts that advises the Food Standards Agency on any matters relating to novel foods (including genetically modified foods) and novel processes (including food irradiation). When the UK leaves the EU it will have to put its own arrangements for Novel Foods in place.

The process of authorisation of Novel Foods is important for the protection of public health and consumer rights. It is also an important consideration in international import/export agreements and the continuation of food trade with the EU. Agreement on how Novel Foods will be handled in the devolved nations is relevant to the Common Framework.