

## **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)**

Board members have asked for briefing on the state of negotiations in relation to “TTIP”, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership to give it its full name. TTIP has been the subject of recent media attention, and its profile has increased because of lobby group activity. There have been suggestions that a deal will lead to increased NHS privatisation and a general lowering of consumer protection, including in the area of food standards. Jamie Oliver has also pitched in to the debate and his comments on use of hormones and pesticides in the US were reported in the Times, the Mail, BBC and Twitter feeds.

At a macro level, securing a successful outcome to the TTIP negotiation is a UK Government priority, with benefits estimated to be upwards of £10bn per year to the UK economy. The EU negotiations are being led by the European Commission based on a mandate given to them by Member States. To date there have been six full rounds of negotiations, the last of which took place in July. Looking forward, there are likely to be two further rounds in 2014, in September and either November or December. Ambition is still high to reach some kind of agreement in 2015, though this will require both sides to commit to the negotiations.

From an FSA perspective, we have been tasked by Cabinet Office, alongside other UK regulators, to build contacts with the US side and ensure our experts are engaged in the substantive detail, in particular helping to foster regulatory coherence where possible. Our work in the EU Standing Committee on issues such as anti-microbial rinses therefore takes on additional significance. Steve Wearne is the senior responsible officer for TTIP and Michael Wight is our link to BIS, supported by Ramon Romero on day to day matters. Mike O’Neill, who heads the EU team in Aviation House, has coordinated our efforts to date, including the Defra response to the recent Jamie Oliver comments.

International trade in foodstuffs is underpinned by an international agreement on sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures (the “SPS agreement”) overseen by the World Trade Organisation. The SPS agreement seeks to ensure fair trade whilst also enshrining the right of countries to set their own level of protection by way of introducing any necessary measures (standards) to protect human, animal and plant health. In the EU this is the body of harmonised food, feed, animal and plant health, plus the framework and delivery of official controls. Importantly, “necessary measures” must be proportionate and underpinned by robust science in order to prevent artificial trade barriers being erected. In the context of the TTIP negotiation, an SPS chapter will be part of the agreement, which will provide an additional framework for SPS matters between the EU and the US. Alongside the formal SPS chapter negotiations there are various outstanding issues that are being discussed. Whilst we have not yet got into the detail on these specific issues, both sides know that difficult discussions lie in wait on for example hormones, cloning and GMOs. Nevertheless, these issues will still be subject to the EU’s existing regulatory

structures. For instance a request for the approval of peroxyacetic acid is in the pipeline and should be put to the EU's Standing Committee for approval later this year.

Finally, Board members may be aware of the negative comments in the press about TTIP, specifically the accusations that food standards will be lowered in order to strike a deal. The EU's trade Commissioner (de Gucht) and outgoing Commission President (Barroso) have been clear on this point stating that the European Commission's negotiators were not given a mandate to do this by Member States. (A link to BIS separating myths from fact leaflet can be found @:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transatlantic-trade-and-investment-partnership-ttip-separating-myth-from-fact.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transatlantic-trade-and-investment-partnership-ttip-separating-myth-from-fact))

We will keep Board members updated through a further Board briefing/workshop session in due course.