

Our Reference: FOI 1631

By email:

Date: 7 November 2014

Dear

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your request for information which was received by us on 13 October 2014.

You requested the following:

Please can you release any internal or external reports or legal advice on how TTIP, CETA or TISA might affect food standards in the UK.

I am particularly concerned about the prospect of unlabelled food entering the UK from North America.

Mike O'Neil of the UK Food Standards Agency told me last November he could not guarantee that GM food, growth hormones or endocrine disruptors would continue to be prevented from entering the UK post TTIP, CETA and TISA.

If these cannot be released, please provide details of how many reports or pieces of advice exist, whether these were internally or externally produced, and how many were commissioned by the FSA.

Your request has been handled under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

Following a thorough search of our records, I can confirm that the Food Standards Agency produced an internal report to its Board on TTIP in August 2014. The report provides a short update on the state of play of the negotiations, the recent media coverage, the FSA's interests and the role of the Commission. A copy of this paper is attached.

Whilst the FSA does not hold any further information I thought it might be helpful to draw your attention to a range of material on the TTIP negotiations and its potential impacts which are already in the public domain. As you may be aware the European Commission is negotiating the trade deal on the behalf of EU Member States. As such information on the TTIP negotiations is available on the website of the European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/ttip/resources/index_en.htm#_documents, including assessments of the potential effects of the trade deal and the EU negotiating position on key aspects. There have been several formal rounds of negotiations since the start in August 2013 and the European Commission has published summaries on their website. Negotiations are now in their 7th round and the estimated benefits to the UK of the deal is £4-10 billion.

In your request for information you refer to a previous conversation that you had with the FSA. Whilst it is true that we cannot guarantee the outcome of the TTIP negotiations the European Commission has made it clear, on behalf of all EU Member States, that TTIP will not affect the way the EU legislates on food safety. Any proposal to allow products, substances or processes currently banned by EU legislation would require changes to the legislation. These legislative changes would require the support of a majority of Member States and the European Commission has not been given a mandate to make any concessions in the areas you have identified in order to agree the deal.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number at the top of this letter in any future communications.

If you are not satisfied with the way the Agency has handled your request for information, you should write within two calendar months of the date of this letter to the Openness Team, and ask for an internal review. They will arrange for the Complaints Coordinator to conduct the review. Their address is Food Standards Agency, Room 2C Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6NH (email: Openness.team@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Agency. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or through the website at: www.ico.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

■■■■■

■■■■■■■■■■

Head of Chemical Safety Policy Unit