

FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY: INFORMATION RELEASED UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

DATE RELEASED: 10 FEBRUARY 2020

**Request**

*In 2019 how many DNA tests were conducted on food products for fish species identification? How many of these came back with unsatisfactory results? Please give details of these unsatisfactory results including product/brand/manufacturer of the product, the species it was supposed to be and the quantity and species of the detected fish or other foodstuff.*

**Response**

The FSA is unable to provide a full response to your request as it does not hold all the relevant information needed to fully determine how many DNA species tests were carried out by local authorities on fish products in 2019.

The FSA holds only partial information in relation to your request.

To put this partial information into context, please note the following points.

- Food Standards Scotland (FSS) is responsible for food safety in Scotland so you would have to request any data on local authority sampling in Scotland from FSS.
- Some, but not all, local authorities report sampling results using the FSA's United Kingdom Food Surveillance System (UKFSS) - use of the system is voluntary

Please also note that:

- Day to day responsibility for enforcement of food standards law in food businesses, including the taking of samples, rests with local authorities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Food sampling is only one of a number of different approaches that local authorities take to assess compliance with food law - other approaches include, for example, checking traceability and inspecting food during inspections.
- Local authorities conduct the sampling, arrange for relevant testing and carry out enforcement activity where required.
- The number of samples taken will depend on a range of factors including the number and types of businesses, the results of past inspections and other types of intervention.
- Sampling is not conducted on a random or representative basis but, rather, is used as part of a targeted approach.
- The FSA collects sampling data on an annual basis through its Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS) but this only provides information on the total number of samples local authorities take during the preceding financial year and does not provide details of what particular testing was undertaken or the results of that testing.

***Local authority data reported on UKFSS relevant to your request***

The data that we are able to provide is derived from samples on UKFSS taken in 2019. The data has not been verified with the reporting authorities to ensure its accuracy.

The data available to the FSA through the UKFSS for 2019 indicates that 15 samples of food products were analysed for fish species identification, all of which were satisfactory. This figure excludes samples that are still being processed in the system that are yet to be reported for 2019.