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| Questioning guide for focus group discussions |
| Aim: To investigate the impact of food fraud on the consumer and test the efficacy of fraud prevention strategies in enhancing consumer trust in food products and producers. |
| Version two (06/01/2016) |

Discussion plan

1. Awareness, understanding and attitudes towards food fraud
2. How consumers currently choose meat and fish products and how they would choose an authentic product
3. Traceability in relation to the authenticity of food products
4. Finishing up

**Introduction and warm up**

Thank you for taking part in the focus group.

This focus group is semi-structured, which means it doesn’t follow a rigorous set of questions, it might change a little bit based upon what you say. There are no right or wrong answers, we are interested in what you think and feel. If you don’t understand something or you need more explanation please just ask. We will be recording the interview so that we capture all your answers. This is a group discussion so please feel free to talk to me and other members of the group, but please remember not to talk over the top of each other. Anything you say is confidential. You will only be identified by participant number. Is this OK?

My name is [insert name] and my colleague is [insert name]. Can you please introduce yourself and tell us what your favourite beef and fish meal is.

**Today we are going to talk about food fraud, which is committed when food is deliberately placed on the market, for financial gain, with the intention of deceiving the consumer. If a food has been subject to fraud - it is fraudulent/fake, not what it says it is, it has been tampered with in some way.** An example of this would be the horsemeat scandal, where foods advertised as containing beef were found to contain undeclared [horse meat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse_meat).

1. **Awareness, understanding and attitudes towards food fraud**

To begin with, I have photos of five food products: **beef** **steak; beef lasagne; salmon fillet; cod fish fingers; and wholemeal bread [ANSWER SHEET].** Imagine these products sitting on a supermarket shelf. Can you write down all the ways in which each product can be made fraudulent/fake.

[LOOKING AT YOUR ANSWERS, WHAT WAYS COULD EACH PRODUCT BE MADE INAUTHENTIC, WHAT PRODUCT IS THE EASIEST/HARDEST TO BE MADE FRADULENT, WHY]

Can you recall any cases of food fraud in relation to these foods? What about any other foods not photographed?

[EMPHASISE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN MANY DIFFERENT CASES OF FOOD FRAUD, SUCH AS THOSE ON SHOWCARD A: tHE MAIN TYPES INCLUDE THE MISDESCRIPTION OF FOOD-products, SALE OF UN-FIT FOOD, SALE OF MEAT FROM ANIMALS THAT HAVE BEEN STOLEN/ILLEGALLY SLAUGHTERED]

Is food fraud acceptable? Why is food fraud not acceptable to you? Does the type of adulteration matter? What has the potential to occur in a worse-case scenario of food fraud?

**2. How consumers currently choose beef and fish products and how they would choose an authentic product**

[GIVE PARTICIPANTS 2-3 MINUTES TO LOOK AT BEEF STEAK (FISH FILLET) PACKAGING ON SHOWCARD B (D)]

When you buy beef steak (fish fish), where do you buy it from? What do you look for? (Probe: what product attributes do you look for (such as quality, price, country of origin, labels) and why?; what labels do you look for and what do they mean to you?)

Are you familiar with these logos and claims [SHOWCARD C THEN E]?

Do you use them to decide what product to choose?

What do they mean to you?

Is this the same for a beef lasagne (fish fingers)?

Do you have any concerns about the authenticity of the beef (fish) that you buy? (Probe: what are your concerns, what has motivated your concerns, do these concerns affect your confidence in beef products/you’re eating/buying behaviour?)

Did the horsemeat scandal affect you in any way? (E.g. maybe your confidence, eating and buying behaviour?)

If I asked you to buy an authentic beef steak (fish fillet) …what would you do as a consumer? (Where would you go and what would you look for on the product to reassure you of its authenticity?)

Is this the same for a beef lasagne (fish fingers)?

If you did all those things you have just mentioned, would you be convinced that the product was authentic? (Probe: why?)

What more could be done to help reassure you as a consumer of the authenticity of beef (fish) and beef (fish) products?

Who should be responsible for improving your confidence in beef and beef products?

Are you aware of any actions taken by companies or government to improve the authenticity of beef and beef products? (Probe: are they enough?)

[GIVE PARTICIPANTS 2-3 MINUTES TO LOOK AT SALMON FILLET PACKAGING ON SHOWCARD C AND ASK THEM SIMILAR QUESTIONS TO THE ABOVE FOR BEEF STEAK]

**3. Traceability**

[GIVE AN OVERVIEW OF A UK SUPPLY CHAIN USING SHOWCARD F] What do you think?

How important is it for you to know where your food has come from? Why?

Is it important to you to know who has produced and handled the food that you buy and eat? Why?

 Is it important to you to be able to verify all the claims on food packaging?

Do you feel confident as a consumer that you know where your food comes from and who has handled it? Do you look for this information on products? What would help you to feel more confident?

What I’m describing is Traceability…being able to identify and check what is in the food and knowing what happened to it at every stage in the production chain.

Are you aware of any actions taken by companies or government to help you understand the traceability of beef and fish products? What do you think could be done?

Has anyone seen this type of image before? [SHOWCARD G].

Have you used it before? What for?

What was it like to use?

This code has the ability to give you product specific traceablilty information in relation to authenticity at the point of purchase, using a smart phone or handheld device. So you could obtain additional authentic information about the history of the product from any point in the supply chain. If we take beef steak as an example, this code could verify that the product came from aberdeen angus cattle, or indeed, if it was really organic [EXPLAIN SHOWCARD H]

What do you think?

Would you want this type of code to be placed on beef and fish products?

What information would you like to have about the history of the product via the QR CODE?

Would you pay more for beef and fish products with a QR code similar to this one?

Compared to logos or claims currently on packaging, how would you trust products with a similar type of QR code?

Is this type of traceability important for all food products?

Who should be responsible for improving your confidence in the traceability of your foods?

In addition to traceability information, would you like any other information via the QR code? (Prompt: Recipes, nutrition information, feedback opportunity, vouchers).

**4. Finishing up**

How do you feel about the discussion?

Thank you for participating in the focus group