

FSA MOVES THE GOALPOSTS AFTER THE MATCH HAS STARTED

With today's announcement we would suggest that the FSA have significantly moved the goalposts after the start of the match. The question is, who would ever have predicted it? We hope that we can be forgiven for pointing out that at [The Canna Consultants](#) we did just that when we published our Position Paper [The Novel Food Process](#) on 9th March 2020 – one year and two days prior to the FSA's actual announcement of it.

In case there are any doubters, here is what we said all that time ago:

We do not necessarily believe that the UK FSA will, by 1/1/21, have the systems and/or resources in place to assess the validity of applications (which by definition could only have been submitted to them on or after 1/1/21), by 31/3/21. Therefore, for equally politically expedient reasons, we believe that the deadline is likely to be extended for those who submit their applications to the UK FSA by a date (in advance of 31/3/21) which afforded the UK FSA sufficient time to conduct the validation process on the application.

As indicated, we believe that there will come a point at which the UK FSA will announce a "submitted for validation by" date as its new de-facto deadline,

Therefore, we believe that the introduction of a "submitted by" date will ensure that the UK FSA, even if swamped with applications in January 2021 (most of which we expect to be doomed to failure), it will have a "release valve" for those which in respect of which it is unable to conduct the validity assessment by 31st March 2021.

The disappointing element of the FSA's decision is not that they have made it, but that they have made it at such a late stage of proceedings and done so after having "sworn blind" not a couple of weeks ago that the date would not change.