

P-06-1531 Mandate Comprehensive and Specific Food Labelling to Support Dietary Needs and Allergies – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 09 December 2025

Dear all,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Food Standards Agency's response.

1. My thoughts on the attached document

I appreciate the FSA outlining the current position regarding the 14 mandated allergens and their ongoing discussions with clinical and allergy organisations. However, the response does not fully acknowledge the seriousness of the issue for individuals who live with allergies outside of the prescribed list.

For families like mine, the uncertainty surrounding food labelling—especially when ingredients such as “starch” are listed without specifying their source—creates daily risk. Food is not something people can opt out of, and clear information is essential for safety, not convenience.

While the FSA notes that businesses can voluntarily provide more detailed labelling, relying on voluntary measures leaves vulnerable people unprotected. There is an implication that only the major 14 allergens justify robust protection, which leads to a difficult but important question: If someone does not have a ‘common’ allergen, is their life less important? The current system unintentionally creates a two-tier approach to allergy safety.

2. Does the response adequately address the issues I raised?

Respectfully, no.

The core concern I raised was the lack of mandatory clarity around ingredients that can be derived from multiple sources, such as starch, oils, or thickeners. The FSA response confirms that no changes to food labelling law are currently planned in this area. This means uncertainty remains for people with less common or emerging allergens—yet their reactions can be just as severe and life-threatening as those to the major 14.

The FSA notes ongoing research on “emerging” allergens, but no timeline, no interim measures, and no commitment to improving source-specific labelling. This does not alleviate the real-world risk or the everyday anxiety caused by ambiguous ingredient lists.

3. Further questions or points I would like the Committee to consider

- What steps can be taken now, before long-term research is complete, to ensure greater transparency in ingredient sourcing?
- Could mandatory source labelling be introduced for categories like starches, vegetable oils, or thickeners, where multiple potential allergens may be hidden?
- What mechanisms exist for incorporating lived experience—such as families managing complex or non-listed allergies—into the decision-making process?

- Is there a plan to review the system regularly so that people with less common allergies are not left waiting indefinitely for protection.

4. Additional information for the Committee

This issue is about safety, dignity, and the ability to live without fear. Every individual with an allergy deserves to know whether the food they buy is safe for them. At present, many people are forced to avoid a huge range of foods simply because labelling is too vague to confirm whether hidden ingredients may harm them.

I ask the Committee to consider the human impact: parents afraid to feed their children foods that appear harmless; individuals whose allergens fall outside the “main 14” feeling overlooked; and the ongoing mental and financial burden of navigating unclear labelling. Clear, specific labelling is not an unreasonable request—it’s a basic safety need.

Kind regards,

Jessica