

WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Government Decontamination Service and the Food and Environment Research Agency

Date 24 February 2009

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Hilary Benn) I am pleased to announce that following careful consideration, the UK Government Decontamination Service (GDS) (an executive Agency of Defra) will join the new Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera) that Defra is establishing, from 1 April 2009. The remit and functions of the GDS, which I announced on 13 October 2008, will continue as a badged service provided by the Food and Environment Research Agency i.e. it will still be known as the UK Government Decontamination Service. This gives Fera a wider national emergency response and recovery capability, supporting UK Resilience. In particular, the inclusion of GDS within Fera will strengthen the science capability underpinning GDS functions and areas of expertise.

The GDS will cease to be a separate executive agency on 31 March 2009. Its Annual Report and Accounts for 2008/09 will be completed and presented to Parliament in due course.

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The Minister of State (Lords) Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Lord Hunt). My Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Hilary Benn) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

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