

**REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE SCOTTISH FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Executive Summary**

1. The attached report provides an update on issues emanating from the Scottish Food Advisory Committee.
2. The Board is invited to **note** the report by the Chair of the Scottish Food Advisory Committee. **No action** is required.

**Food Standards Agency Scotland**

**Contact:** Prof. Graeme Millar Tel: 01224 285104  
Email: [melanie.martin@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.martin@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

Melanie Martin Tel: 01224 285104  
Email: [melanie.martin@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.martin@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

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**SFAC MEETING**

1. SFAC held their Open meeting on Tuesday 17 March at the Apex City Quay Hotel in Dundee.
2. Main topics for discussions were:

**Chairman's Introduction and Welcome**

3. The Chair made an official welcome to the three new members of the Committee Lesley Stanley, Bernard Forteath and Jim Wildgoose.
4. There were apologies from Jim Thomson, Assistant Director FSAS.

**FSA Scotland Consultation – Proposed Changes to the Charging Arrangements and Charging Levels for Official Meat Controls Carried out in Scotland**

5. The Chair welcomed Elspeth MacDonald, Head of Animal Food Chain and Novel Foods branch, FSAS to the table.
6. The Chair mentioned that at the 4 February open meeting, the Committee had discussed and agreed how they would progress and handle their response to the consultation.
  - It had been agreed that forming a sub group would be the best way forward and a sub group of 5 Committee members was formed.
  - The sub group met with various relevant stakeholders between 23 February and 6 March, for further information and discussions on the impact of proposals in Scotland. A minimum of 2 sub group members attended each meeting.
  - All 5 sub group members had met on 9 March to discuss and agree their response to the consultation.
7. The Committee were invited to comment on the sub group draft response to the consultation, and agree the final Committee response at the 17 March open meeting.
8. The Committee held a detailed discussion on the consultation and agreed the basis of their response. The Committee members asked to see the amended

version of the response incorporating the discussion held, for final comments and agreement from the Committee before it was submitted to FSAS. The response deadline for the consultation to FSAS was 25 March.

9. The Committee Secretary clarified that there was time to circulate the amended response to the Committee for final agreement, before submitting the Committee's response to the consultation to FSA Scotland by the 25 March deadline.

### **Official Controls for OTM (Over 30 Month) Cattle – Moving to a Risk Based Regime**

10. The Chair welcomed Paul Holley and David Carruthers from the TSE Team, FSA Headquarters to the table.
11. The Chair introduced the Agenda item by informing everyone of the following: Against what was perceived to be a declining risk from BSE and the need to allocate resources to areas of greater risk, the FSA had been reviewing the levels of supervision of BSE official controls for over thirty month (OTM) cattle and investigating the scope to move towards a more proportionate risk based regime, which placed more responsibility for meat safety on the food business operator.
12. Paul Holley gave a presentation on the review of supervision levels of specified risk material (SRM) controls for OTM cattle and David Carruthers gave a presentation on the testing aspects.
13. The Committee held a detailed discussion on their views on the issues.
14. Views requested from the Committee on whether physical checks on cattle eligibility by MHS continue to be needed for consumer protection, and whether the health marking derogation could be applied in the UK were:
  - The Committee members did not agree with the health marking derogation being applied in the UK, as the health mark says the meat is safe to eat and has credibility. The health mark process should stay as it is. In other words once it is stamped there is no dubiety that it is fit for human consumption and safe to eat.
  - Regarding whether physical checks on cattle eligibility by MHS continue to be needed for consumer protection, this was a judgement call around whether they believe the food business operators had in their interest to make sure they had done the checks. Therefore, does the MHS need to duplicate their effort? The Committee felt there was every incentive for the food business operators to make sure they do the checks as part of good practice for the sake of their reputation. Therefore, the Committee felt that the MHS do not need to duplicate the food business operators' efforts.

- The Committee agreed that the MHS should reserve the right to go in unannounced and audit and inspect at any stage but that the MHS should not literally be on the shoulder of food business operators. In principle the Committee agreed with the enforcement aspect movement of the MHS moving away from a 100% check to unannounced audits and inspections, however they needed to be satisfied that the agreed system was workable with the other Agencies involved, for example the Rural Affairs departments.

15. Paul Holley asked for clarification on the Committee's views for moving to a more risk-based approach:

- The Chair clarified that in principle the Committee agreed to the move to a more risk-based approach.

### **Review of Agency's Advice on Fish Consumption Consultation**

16. The Chair welcomed Sandy McDougall, Head of Contaminants, Hygiene, Additives and Shellfish FSAS to the table.

17. The Agency was reviewing its dietary advice to consumers on fish consumption to take into account nutrition, food safety and wider sustainability issues. The consultation sought comments about the Agency's proposed approach to include these wider aspects in future advice on fish consumption.

18. The Committee held a detailed discussion around their views on the consultation and formed the basis of their response. It was agreed that the Committee Secretary would draft a response following the points made during the discussion, then circulate the draft to the Committee for comments and final agreement. The response deadline for the consultation was 1 April.

### **FSA Progress Update on SFAC Working Group Recommendations Arising from the Scottish Consumer Council Report 'Young People and Food Safety – Five Years On'**

19. The Chair welcomed Will Munro, Contaminants, Hygiene, Additives and Shellfish branch, FSAS to the table.

20. Following publication of the then Scottish Consumer Council (SCC) report titled 'Young People and Food Safety – Five Years On' SFAC members formed a working group to consider the report and the Agency food hygiene advice. The working group was formed following 29 August 2007 open meeting. (SCC has been amalgamated into Consumer Focus Scotland).

21. Will Munro introduced the update paper which provided the progress update that FSAS had been tasked with providing in 6 – 12 months, following ratification of the working group recommendations by SFAC on 6 March 2008.

### **Meeting with Others**

22. The Chair attended a pre-appointment meeting for the new Food Standards Agency Scotland Director on the 17 April.

### **FUTURE SFAC OPEN MEETING**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>POTENTIAL TOPICS</b>
29 April 2009	St Magnus House, Aberdeen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consultation on the Food Standards Agency Strategy for 2010 - 2015</li><li>• The Public Enquiry into the September 2005 Outbreak of <i>E.coli</i> 0157 in South Wales</li><li>• Briefing on outcomes of the GO-Science Review</li></ul>