

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE WELSH FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Executive Summary

1. The attached report provides an update on the work of the Welsh Food Advisory Committee.
2. The report is for **information** only. **No action** is required.

FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY WALES

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REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE WELSH FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE**Advisory Committee Meetings:**

1. The Welsh Food Advisory Committee held a closed meeting in Cardiff on 3 April.
2. Representatives from the Agency's Social Science Research Unit attended the meeting to inform the Committee on the role of the Unit established in 2007. Members noted the Unit's key activities and achievements over the period July 2008 to January 2009. The Committee was informed on some areas of work proposed for 2009-10 including supporting the Saturated Fat Campaign, carrying out further research to support the calories and wider nutrition information scheme for the catering industry, commissioning research in to gluten labelling, commissioning an evidence review on organisational behaviour change, supporting the food hygiene campaign for Food Safety Week, Governance activities e.g. progressing a Framework for commissioning social science research, and contributing to the next strategic and science and evidence plans.
3. In preparation for forthcoming Board discussions on the Strategic Plan 2010-2015, the Committee was provided with a broad overview of the process and structure of the Plan and a review of the work undertaken by the Executive to date and referenced the progress made as set out in the consultation document. Members revisited each of the points raised by them since the Board Retreat discussion in November to identify areas of outstanding concern. A number of gaps in the Plan were identified including actions to address the Pennington report recommendations and issues of sustainability, including food waste. Additionally, the committee was of the view that enabling consumers to prepare and cook food safely within the home setting should be identified as a priority action area.
4. The Committee agreed a draft response to be put forward by the executive team to a consultation document issued by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) on its proposals to unify public health services in Wales. The draft response focused on ensuring that the close collaborative working relationship with the NPHS for Wales continues as this body is subsumed into the new public health NHS Trust. Further, the response suggests that this would best be assured by a memorandum of understanding between the FSA and the new NHS Trust.
5. In preparation for forthcoming Board discussions, the Committee received a briefing session on proposed changes to the arrangements for meat official controls hygiene charges. Members noted the principles of the proposals in introducing a new system of calculating charges for meat hygiene controls in approved meat plants based on the time-based costs of carrying out these controls. The Committee concluded that it was content with the proposals. Discussions were held on proposals to increase the charges for meat hygiene controls and to introduce a time-based charge to recover

5% of the costs of the controls for the removal of Specified Risk Material (SRM) and controls in relation to BSE testing. The Committee concluded that it endorsed the reasons for proposing a change to a time based system. Members also discussed, and agreed, the desire to introduce a £400 fee for businesses to initiate a semi-independent review of the MHS's initial assessment of the staff resources needed to carry out chargeable official controls at the premises.

6. The Committee received a briefing session on FSA proposals for BSE Official Controls for OTM Cattle. Information on the Agency's proposed approach to the BSE controls for over thirty month (OTM) cattle was provided against the background of the declining risk from BSE and the need to allocate resources to areas of greatest risk. The Committee also discussed changes proposed in relation to SRM related official controls moving to a more risk based approach for SRM removal. The committee concluded that it was content with the proposals on the understanding that the Agency continued its cautious approach with monitoring to show no loss of control and maintenance of the current high levels of consumer protection. In relation to OTM testing controls, the Committee noted, and agreed the principle of a range of proposals to change two MHS tasks in relation to testing controls namely, moving to an audit of operator's checks on cattle ID and the possibility of applying a health marking on castle before test results being received.

7. The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be an open meeting to be held at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show in Llanelwedd on 21 July 2009.

Other Activities:

8. On 18 March, I chaired a Welsh stakeholder meeting in Brecon to discuss the proposed changes to arrangements for MHS charges.

Forward Look:

9. Please note that items listed are provisional, and are therefore subject to change.

21 July 2009 One day meeting at Royal Welsh Agricultural show 2009	Closed business meeting. Open themed discussions at Royal Welsh Agricultural showground on <i>Primary Production</i> issues.
Date tbc	Business meeting Cardiff
3 / 4 November 2009	Closed and open meeting Llandudno, North Wales. Combination of business and themed session <i>Local Authority enforcement issues</i> .