

Scottish Food Advisory Committee
28 October 2009
St Magnus House, Aberdeen
Open Session

Present

Committee Members:

Dr David Cameron – Deputising as Chair
Moyra Burns
Amanda O'Donoghue
Christopher Trotter
Bernard Forteath
Jim Wildgoose
John Cowden
Lesley Stanley

FSA Officials:

Lydia Wilkie, Assistant Director, FSAS
Ryan Bruce, Committee Secretary, FSAS
Neil Douglas, Committee Administrator, FSAS
Patrick Miller, Team Leader – Science Strategy and Governance, FSA (Item 3)
Bill Adamson, Head of Strategic Policy and Consumer Engagement, FSAS (Item 5)
Peter Midgley, Head of Local Authority Food Law Enforcement, FSAS (Item 6)

1. Deputy Chairman's Introduction and Welcome

- 1 The Deputy Chair welcomed members, guests and observers to the open meeting of the Scottish Food Advisory Committee (SFAC) and advised every one of the housekeeping rules. The Committee were pleased to be in Aberdeen.
- 2 The role of SFAC is to provide advice to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) on all food safety and standards matters, in particular those with specific Scottish perspective. The Agency in turn has to fully consider the Committee's views when determining its actions and the policy advice it gives to Ministers. Food issues are devolved to Scottish Ministers and legislation is implemented by the Scottish Parliament. This Committee is an essential element for the Agency to ensure that devolution is fully taken into account. The Committee holds regular meetings throughout Scotland.
- 3 Members of the Committee were invited to declare any conflicts of interest on specific areas before they are discussed to allow a decision to be taken on whether participation would be correct.
4. There were apologies from:
 - Committee Chair Graeme Millar,
 - Committee Member Carrie Ruxton,
 - Committee Member Charlotte Maltin,

- FSA Official Charles Milne
- FSA Official Jim Thomson

2. Minutes and Matters arising from previous meeting

5. The Deputy Chair directed the Committee to the minutes from the previous open meeting on the 2 September 2009 in Dundee.
6. The Deputy Chair discharged the following items:-
 - **Under Para 19 Page 3**
Information was sent to the Sub Group in relation to Font Size for the Front of Pack Labeling Consultation.
 - **Under Para 21 Page 4**
Issue date for SACN Sugars in relation to Obesity was sent to Committee Members on 11 September 2009
 - **Under Para 26 Page 4**
Fergus Millan from Scottish Government has offered to come to SFAC and to provide a presentation once the Obesity Route Map has been published.
 - **Under Para 36 Page 6**
Website link for the Common Health Legacy Pamphlet was issued to Committee Members on 2 September 2009.
 - **Under Para 27 Page 6**
Commonwealth Games to be added to the work plan for discussion at a future meeting.
7. Members agreed the minute was a true and accurate reflection of the meeting held on 2 September 2009.
8. Committee Member Lesley Stanley, who was unable to attend the previous SFAC meeting, updated the Committee in regards to two items,
9. Firstly, Lesley briefly summarised a SACN (Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition) Stakeholder Consultation meeting regarding their draft Iron and Health Report, which she had attended with fellow Committee Member Jim Wildgoose earlier in the month. The draft report was an agenda item at the previous SFAC meeting, Lesley stated that participants in the meeting recommended that advice concerning levels of red meat intake should be incorporated into the more general advice regarding the composition of a healthy balanced diet, rather than making specific recommendations on levels of red meat intake. The advice would therefore sit alongside other advice relating to other foods on the eatwell plate.
10. Secondly Lesley updated the Committee regarding Aspartame and various perceived side effects. Lesley stated that the European Food Safety Authority

(EFSA) is currently discussing this item, and moreover that anecdotal evidence is being taken into account in their discussions. Lesley recommended the Committee to endorse this process and encourage EFSA to give the evidence thus gained appropriate consideration in their subsequent discussions. She also stated that she is currently assisting in a pilot study in conjunction with Hull University Hospitals NHS Trust looking at perceived acute effects of Aspartame. Lesley stated that she would continue to update the Committee in relation to both areas of work. Lydia Wilkie stated that the FSA had met with the audience member who raised this issue at the previous SFAC meeting, and that the FSA would continue to consider all evidence linked to this issue.

3 FSA Science Strategy

11. The Deputy Chair welcomed Patrick Miller from Food Standards Agency to the table. The Deputy Chair informed the Committee that Patrick would provide a presentation on the FSA Science Strategy.
12. Patrick Miller provided a presentation to the Committee and advised the following during his presentation:
 - The Agency is developing its next Science and Evidence Strategy for 2010-15 in partnership with the new Strategic Plan. The new Science and Evidence Strategy will set out our strategic priorities for the evidence that we need and the activities we will undertake to ensure we obtain and use it effectively. The Strategy will help to support delivery of our Strategic Plan 2010-15, test progress, and inform development of our future strategy beyond this.
 - The Agency has developed a draft Science and Evidence Strategy drawing on responses to the formal 12-week consultation on the Agency's draft Strategic Plan priorities and associated science needs. It also reflects other input from stakeholders and the General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS), and the Science Review of the Agency and the Agency's response.
13. Committee members raised various points relating to Patrick's presentation including prioritisation, resource, the new FSA Strategic Plan, response to food crises, and campylobacter.
14. In response to various points raised Patrick stated that a more co-ordinated long term Research Strategy would feature strongly in the new Strategy.
15. On a specific point, Committee Member John Cowden questioned whether the Specification of the Food Safety Surveillance data that Health Protection Agency and Health Protection Scotland provides to the FSA, is fit for purpose.

Action - The Agency to respond to Committee Member John Cowden, regards the Specification of the Food Safety Surveillance Data.

16. Various issues were then raised by the audience including the involvement of Social Science in the draft Strategy, the Psychology of Consumers, Food Producers and Business, and Psychology in relation to Marketing.
17. An audience member suggested that the Committee “tap in” to any links with similar European and International Committees or Bodies.
18. The Deputy Chair thanked Patrick Miller for providing his presentation to SFAC and also thanked both Committee Members and audience for their comments.

4 Front of Pack Labelling Consultation and Saturated Fats Consultations

Front of Pack Labelling

19. The Deputy Chair introduced this item and asked Committee Member Amanda O`Donoghue to provide an update on the sub group’s progress in relation to the Front of Pack Consultation.
20. Amanda reminded the Committee that the sub group met on the 1 September to look at the questions raised in the Consultation. Amanda described the discussions that took place including possible exemptions to the scheme, portion sizes and salt threshold levels. Amanda informed the Committee that a draft response had been prepared by the sub group and asked the Committee for any questions in relation to the draft response.
21. It was made evident that the Committee was content with the sub group’s response and it was agreed that the Secretariat would send the response to FSA on behalf of the Committee.

Action - The Secretariat to Submit the Front of Pack Consultation response to FSA.

Saturated Fats Consultation

22. The Deputy Chair introduced the Saturated Fats Consultation agenda item and it was agreed that SFAC would not submit a response in relation to this Consultation but re-affirmed the Committee’s support for the overall strategy as agreed in 2007 regarding this area.
23. The Deputy Chair stressed that the area of non U.K produced food should be factored in to the Consultation, because since 2007, consumption behaviour has changed, and that such produce is now more significant in terms of overall consumption.

5 Sustainability

24. The Deputy Chair welcomed Bill Adamson from Food Standards Agency Scotland to the table. The Deputy Chair informed the Committee that Bill would be providing a presentation on Sustainability.
25. Bill Adamson provided a presentation to the Committee and updated on the following:
 - The Agency's general approach to sustainable development in policy making and outlining the outcome of the specific consultation on its advice on fish consumption.
26. The Deputy Chair thanked Bill Adamson for providing his presentation to SFAC.
27. The Deputy Chair opened the discussion to Committee Members and to a tabled question from a Committee Member regarding Environmental Sustainability and how it links to the Agency's fish consumption advice, Bill emphasized that the Agency's advice regarding Sustainability is closely integrated with the Agency's dietary advice.
28. An FSA official in the audience stated that there is currently a shell fish review ongoing, and that this review will help inform future Agency advice regarding shell fish consumption.
29. The Deputy Chair then opened the discussion to the audience, and the issue of alternative forms of Omega 3 intake was raised. A specific question was asked questioning whether algae synthesises long chain, biologically more beneficial fatty acid, thus allowing for dietary benefits for consumers.

Action – FSAS to respond to the audience member regarding algae and its Synthesis process

30. Lydia Wilkie encouraged Committee Members to visit the Eatwell Website which presents the advice relating to fish consumption for comment and/or feedback.

6 Scores on the Doors Update

31. The Deputy Chair welcomed Peter Midgley from Food Standards Agency Scotland to the table. The Deputy Chair informed the Committee that Peter would be providing an update presentation on Scotland's proposed Scores on the Doors Scheme.
32. Peter Midgley reminded the Committee that they were provided with a verbal update on this subject at their meeting on 4 February 2009. Since that time, Peter informed the Committee that a UK Scores on the Doors Steering Group had been established, and that arrangements had also been established in Scotland for Local Authority and wider Stakeholder liaison.

- 33 .In April 2009, East Lothian Council became the first Scottish Local Authority to implement the FHIS beyond the existing five pilot Authorities. Nineteen further Authorities have indicated an intention to implement the scheme by April 2012, subject to appropriate support from the Agency.
34. It was stated that at the time of the meeting approximately 82 per cent of the Scottish Population would be covered by the Scheme, based on the number of Scottish Local Authorities expressing support for the proposed Scheme.
35. It was agreed that updates regarding this item would continue on a six monthly basis but with flexibility built in.
36. The Deputy Chair thanked Peter Midgley for providing his presentation to SFAC.

7 Public Session / AOCB

37. No items were raised under this section.
38. The Meeting finished at 12.00.

Summary of Action Points.

Action - The Agency to respond to Committee Member John Cowden regards the Specification of the Food Safety Surveillance Data.

Action - The Secretariat to submit the Front of Pack Consultation response to FSA.

Action – FSAS to respond to the audience member regarding algae and its Synthesis process.