

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE WELSH FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Executive Summary

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

Food Standards Agency Wales

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REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE WELSH FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE**WFAC Meetings**

1. The Welsh Food Advisory Committee held a closed meeting on 4 January 2007 in Cardiff. Part of the meeting was devoted to a briefing session on nutritional genomics. Professor John Mathers from the Human Nutrition Research Centre, University of Newcastle described the structure of a genome as an information store and the scientific work being undertaken in relation to sequencing the human genome. The use of nutritional genomics, in identifying opportunities for dietary advice and dietary interventions was discussed. The advantages and limitations of personalised nutrition, as opposed to whole population nutrition, were debated. The Committee also considered the possibility of genotype based interventions producing major health benefits and questioned whether knowledge of one's genotype might promote appropriate behavioural change.
2. In preparation for forthcoming Board discussions on better regulation, the committee was updated on the different better regulation initiatives emanating from Westminster. Members noted the main principles of good regulation and were updated on ongoing and new or revitalised better regulation initiatives. A report was provided on proposals for common commencement dates for legislation, and the Committee noted there were devolution issues which made some of the proposals problematical. The impact of better regulation initiatives on small businesses was recognised as a key challenge for Wales.
3. The Committee also observed a presentation which updated on the work of Food Fraud Task Force and the Welsh Food Fraud Coordination Unit. The future challenges of the Task Force, including the need for proactive intelligence gathering and improved co-ordination of enforcement response, were considered. Discussions were held on the appropriateness of penalties placed in food fraud cases.
4. Subsequent to the meeting, the Committee has been consulted about the proposals to establish an overarching independent Scientific Committee. This has led to some serious concerns, particularly in relation to the intended membership and its ability to provide an independent challenge to the Agency. These concerns have been reflected directly to the Chief Scientist, but the Committee has indicated that there should be more time for deliberation before the Board takes any firm decisions on the proposition.

Forward Look

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

DATE	VENUE	AGENDA ITEMS
7/8 March 2007	Open meeting, North Wales	Preparation for forthcoming Board discussions
9/10 May 2007	Closed meeting, Cardiff	Preparation for forthcoming Board discussions

Other Activities

6. The Acting WFAC Chairman made a presentation to the Welsh Consumer Council Conference on 25 January 2007.