

**REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Executive Summary**

1. The attached report includes advice from the Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee.
2. The Board is invited to **note** the report by the Chair of the Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland. **No action** is required.

**Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland**

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### NIFAC Meetings

1. NIFAC met on 23 May 2007 at the Belfast City Hospital. A summary of the advice from the meeting follows:

#### *Overview of the FSANI Business Plan 2007/2008 (closed)*

2. The Committee was grateful to Greg Irwin, FSANI Assistant Director for his overview of the framework and key elements of the FSANI Business Plan 2007/2008.

#### *Dietary Guidelines – How Realistic Are They? (closed)*

3. The Committee was grateful to NIFAC Member Barbara Livingstone for her presentation on the practical aspects of achieving a balanced diet. This was a useful backcloth for the open session discussion on the Agency's Saturated Fat and Energy Intake Programme.

#### *New Opportunities in Northern Ireland*

4. The Committee was grateful to the FSA Chair, Dame Deirdre Hutton, who spoke to the Committee on the theme of New Opportunities. She reflected on the benefits of partnership and the opportunities for the Agency to work with other organisations to achieve greater consumer benefit, effectiveness and efficiency.

#### *The Challenges Facing Food Service Delivery in the Acute Hospital Setting*

5. The Committee was grateful to Elizabeth McKnight and Karen Robinson of the City Hospital's Nutrition and Dietetics Department for their overview of the challenges facing food service delivery in the acute hospital setting; and to Maria Jennings, Head of FSANI Consumer Choice and Food Standards Division for summarising the Agency's contributions to institutional catering. The Committee enjoyed a lively debate, which included consideration of:
  - The variety of needs that must be met by the service,
  - The use of the hospital's Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST),
  - The use of nutritional standards in the public sector,

- The financial challenges for patient food supply,
- The hospital measures to maintain a high standard of food safety,
- The need to include staff and visitor healthy eating in the policy.

*The Activities of the FSANI General Food Hygiene and Incidents Unit*

6. The Committee was grateful to Trevor Williamson, Head of FSANI General Food Hygiene and Incidents Unit for his overview of the activities of the unit. The following comments and advice were noted:
- Consumer research and consultation is essential in the assessment of the options for Scores on the Doors schemes.
  - It was agreed that the any scheme should be a useful tool for consumer choice, be risk based and supported by research. It must provide clear information to facilitate consumer choice on premises and provide drivers for improvement in compliance with food hygiene requirements.
7. In the absence of further consumer research the Committee favoured a simple pass/fail approach with Eat Safe acting as a higher 'award' standard rather than the more subjective and complex star rating scheme. However further work should be done to determine how existing schemes can or should be integrated and on the scope of premises to which the Scores on the Doors schemes should apply.

*The Food Standards Agency Saturated Fat and Energy Intake Programme*

8. The Committee was grateful to Rosemary Hignett, Head of FSA Nutrition Division and Corrine Vaughan for their contributions on the Agency's Saturated Fat and Energy Intake Programme. A Committee subgroup met on 26 April to consider the consultation and their draft response was reviewed, amended and extended. The full Committee response will be submitted formally as part of the Agency's consultation process.

**Meetings with Others**

9. The Chair has met with a number of stakeholders during the period. For details please see the Board Member Engagements paper number SO 07/06/04.

### **Future NIFAC meetings**

10. The programme and provisional agenda for future meetings of the Committee is described below.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Potential Topics</b>
27 June 2007	Open meeting, FSANI offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recommendations on New Models for Meat Enforcement</li><li>• The Consumer Attitudes Survey</li><li>• Final Report on the Implementation Review Group on the OTM Rule Change</li><li>• EC Proposal to Amend Regulation (EC) 852/2004 on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs</li></ul>
6 September 2007	Open meeting, FSANI offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report from the Food Fraud Task Force</li><li>• Update on the Allergy Action Plan (provisional)</li><li>• Openness (provisional)</li><li>• The HPA's initiatives to tackle obesity (provisional)</li></ul>