

Scottish Food Advisory Committee
Crowne Plaza, Glasgow
28 February 2007
09:30 – 12:30

Open Session

Present

Committee Members:

Prof. Graeme Millar, Chair
Prof. Bill Reilly, Deputy Chair
Prof. Charlotte Maltin
Dr. John Cowden
Prof. Brian Ratcliffe
Dr. Catherine Benton
Jim Arbuckle
Moyra Burns
Amanda O'Donoghue
Catherine Brady

FSAS Officials:

Dr George Paterson, Director, FSAS
Lydia Wilkie, Assistant Director, FSAS
Jim Thomson, Assistant Director, FSAS
Jane Ferries, Committee Secretary, FSAS
Melanie Martin, Committee Administrator, FSAS
Karen Minto, Assistant Communications Officer, FSAS
Peter Midgley, Head of Food Law Enforcement Branch, FSAS

ITEM 1

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

1. The Chairman welcomed members, guests and observers to the open meeting of the Scottish Food Advisory Committee (SFAC). The Committee was pleased to be in Glasgow.
2. The role of SFAC is to provide advice to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) on all food safety and standards matters, which have a specific Scottish perspective. The Agency in turn has to fully consider the Committees views when determining its actions and the policy advice it gives to Ministers.
3. Most food issues are devolved to Scottish Ministers and changes are implemented by the Scottish Parliament. This Committee is an essential element to the Agency to ensure that devolution is fully taken into account. The Committee holds regular meetings throughout Scotland.

4. 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.
5. The Chairman asked for items of AOB. Four items were raised.
6. There were apologies from Dr David Cameron, SFAC member.

ITEM 2

MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

7. The Chair directed the Committee to the minutes from the previous meeting.
8. Members were aware that the Folate debate was complicated to record and although the majority of the minutes were accurate they asked for the following amendments to be made:-
 - Under Para 16 Option 4 – members asked for this to be amended to read ‘The Committee agreed this was not a suitable option’
9. Members also asked for an update to the question raised by them during the January Open meeting (***Had fortification of folate and Vitamin B12 combined been considered?***)
10. Secretariat informed the Committee this question was being actioned by FSAS and a response would be with them as soon as possible.
11. Members agreed that excluding the changes mentioned above the minutes were a true record and accurate reflection of the meeting 24 January 2007.

ACTION: Secretariat to amend minutes to reflect changes as requested by the Committee.

ACTION: FSAS to respond to the question raised by members relating to Vitamin B12.

ITEM 3

FSAS PROPOSED EVENTS PLAN 2007-08

12. The Chair welcomed Karen Minto, Assistant Communications Officer, FSAS to the table who presented to the Committee FSAS’s Proposed Events Plan highlighting the events confirmed and those under consideration for 2007 – 08. Karen asked members for comments on the plan and suggestions they had for other events or improvements to the current stands at stakeholder events.

13. The Chair felt that FSAS had an obligation to be present at the Annual Scottish Public Health Conference in November. At the very least FSAS should attempt to host a stand at this event and possibly put forward a speaker either from FSAS or SFAC. The Chair volunteered to speak if this was arranged.
14. General comments from the Committee concerning the other events within the plan were:-
- Some members felt that Food & Feed Regulations were a relatively new area and one which should have a high profile within FSAS exhibits. There were comments that information concerning these regulations should be placed outside the Food Hall of the Royal Highland Show. There were also suggestions to work alongside other stakeholders such as Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) and possibly Local Authorities.
 - Members were pleased to see that FSAS were considering working with the Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) and informed the Agency they could possibly work alongside them at the 'Taste of Grampian' event in June 2007.
 - Members felt it would be worthwhile for a presence at both the Royal Northern BEEF TECH and the Scottish Winter Fair and asked the Agency to look at working with Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) at these events.
 - Members were keen for FSAS to build on the interactive demonstrations on their stand as they felt this was a particularly good way of providing consumers with key messages. They also suggested that improvements to the oven in the Interactive Kitchen were needed as some felt this was a waste of space which could be used more effectively.
 - Members asked that exhibits by FSAS, other than the Interactive Kitchen, needed to be focused and have a clear message.
15. Karen thanked the members for their comments on the plan and added that the FSAS Communications Team (Comms) were currently looking at making improvements to the Interactive Kitchen and also producing more interactive activities for the stands especially with the third phase of the Salt Campaign about to be launched. She added that the Agency was currently considering another stand at the Royal Highland Show outwith the Food Hall and Comms would liaise with officials with regards to the BEEF TECH and Scottish Winter Fair events.
16. The Chair requested that the Agency considered holding the next Recipe for Success in conjunction with an SFAC meeting. He also asked if FSA UK were aware of the success of this event and if they held events other FSA offices.

17. The Agency informed the Committee that other FSA offices were aware of Recipe for Success and had seen recordings of previous shows. There was a suggestion that the next Recipe for Success in Dundee should be professionally recorded for promotional use. They added that FSA offices across the UK were hosting different events but they were all working together to promote the same messages.
18. Karen added that Comms in FSAS would look at the possibility of combining a Recipe for Success with a SFAC meeting and were happy to work with the Committee.
19. The Chair asked members to consider which events they would be able to assist with. Members were asked to provide Karen with their availability.

ACTION: Comms to seek agreement for FSAS attendance at the Scottish Public Health Conference in November.

ACTION: Comms to arrange a speaker from FSAS/SFAC to attend the Scottish Public Health Conference if agreed as an FSAS attended event.

ACTION Comms to attempt to arrange the next Recipe for Success to coincide with an SFAC meeting.

ACTION: Comms to arrange for 'Recipe for Success' event in Dundee to be recorded.

ACTION SFAC members to inform Karen of their availability for specific FSAS events.

ACTION Comms to inform Secretariat of SFAC member involvement with FSAS events.

ITEM 4

FSAS BUSINESS PLAN 2007-08

20. The Chair welcomed the Senior Management Team (SMT) from FSAS who gave a brief presentation covering an overview of the FSAS Business Plan 2007 – 08 including;
 - Resource allocation and budgets for 2007/08
 - Work being carried out within the four main Strategic Themes

FOOD SAFETY

- Research and Surveillance
- Proportionate Enforcement
- Allergen Labelling Guidance & Awareness
- Local Food Hygiene Initiatives
- Role as a Competent Authority
- Audit of Enforcement
- Incidents & Emergencies

CHOICE

- Food Hygiene Information Scheme
- EatSafe
- Front of Pack Labelling
- Consumer Engagement

EATING FOR HEALTH

- Consumer Information and Action
- Industry Action
- Public Sector Action

HOW WE DELIVER

- Implement Scottish Regulation
- Competent Authority
- Better regulation/Enforcement
- Principles
- Strong Partnership Working

21. Members of the Committee asked the following questions relating to the FSAS Business Plan 07 – 08 :-

1. Did Scotland proportionately have a bigger problem with campylobacter than the rest of the UK?
2. Did FSA know what proportion of campylobacter cases reported came from private water supplies?
3. How will the Changes in Local Authority Enforcement (CLAE) review impact on the amount of work carried out by Local Authorities (LAs) and what resource implications would there be?

22. The Agency responded to the Committees questions:-

1. Campylobacter and salmonella figures were roughly the same throughout the UK. The only remarkable difference in figures within Scotland compared to the rest of the UK came from reported cases of Ecoli O157.
2. The projects currently being undertaken by FSAS were to attempt to identify if private water supplies were a contributing risk factor for campylobacter cases. No precise figures were available at present.

3. It would be unfair to deal with the CLAE review as a stand alone issue as there were numerous issues effecting LAs. There was a concern with the capability within the enforcement regime in the widest sense. With regards to resources, Scotland was fortunate to have the knowledge of resources allocated to all 32 LAs whereas in England there are over 460 different LAs all with different responsibilities therefore making resource issues more complicated. The review was in early stages and the Agency stated that SFAC would be involved with the progress of this at a later date.
23. Members of the Committee raised concerns with front of pack labelling. Some felt that the FSA were not promoting this scheme as voluntary. Members stated that in their opinion the most suitable way to get more people on board was to have better engagement with industry to educate them. At present the multiple schemes were confusing to the consumer and a universal scheme was needed.
24. The Chair commented that the FSA Board were in favour of front of pack labelling and recognised that the debate was now one for EU.
25. The Agency informed the Committee that an independent group had been set up to establish consumer requirements. This may show that the traffic light system is not the best way forward and it may be that listing Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) could be. The recommendations from this group could have an influence on future FSA Board debates.
26. The Chair opened the debate to observers.
27. **Bernard Forteath – President - Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS)**

Bernard commented on the close working relationship with REHIS and FSAS and stated that this could only be of benefit to the consumer. He raised concerns with the lack of training places for Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) and the shortage of jobs for students once qualified. He added that resources for LAs needed to be looked at along with the number of duties expected to be carried out by EHOs. He informed the Committee that REHIS would be issuing a consultation which would reflect these concerns and asked if the Committee had any comments on the current LA situation.

28. The Chair recognised there was a problem with resources and hoped FSAS would ask SFAC to comment on the consultation once published. He also commented on the difficulties and legal complications within Scotland. He added that views may be changed with process and best use of resources after the Scottish Elections in May.

29. Members commented that the evaluation of the Food Hygiene Information scheme pilot could help to raise the profile of LAs and EHOs.

30. **SANDRA FRASER – HOME ECONOMICS TEACHER, GLASGOW**

Ms Fraser commented that it was important for FSAS to recognise that children were consumers and asked for more focus to be placed on them. She had concerns over funding within schools to allow Home Economic teachers to teach the correct food safety and nutrition messages to children.

31. The Chair informed the observers that the Committee were very aware of resource issues within schools and were in full support of resources being used to educate children. He added there was also a need to continue with the education of adults.

32. The Chair thanked all those involved in the presentation and the observers for their comments.

ACTION: CLAE review to return to SFAC agenda.

ITEM 5 ENFORCEMENT PROJECTS

33. The Chair welcomed Peter Midgley, Head of Food Law Enforcement Branch, FSAS, to the table who gave a brief presentation on the Enforcement Projects FSAS had been working with including:-

- Monitoring Data of HACCP project
- Business Support of the HACCP project
- Supported Businesses and their sectors
- Size of Businesses supported
- EatSafe/CookSafe/Retailsafe
- Evaluation of the HACCP project
- Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS) update

34. The Chair thanked Peter for the presentation and recognised that the Scottish Executive (SE) funding for the HACCP project (£4m over two years) was well spent and FSAS had achieved a great deal within this time. He asked for the Agency to explain the decision to move from a Government funded scheme to a stand alone financial scheme and what the SE thought of this move.

35. The Agency responded by stating that the funding bid of £4m over two years (2004-06) was spent by helping businesses meet the required legislation which would be put in place in January 2006. From January 2006 it became a legal requirement to meet the legislation and the Agency felt they could not fully fund this project further. The SE was fully aware of the decision to cease funding this project. The Agency

added that as a competent authority they had a role to continue monitoring this project.

36. The Chair opened the debate to the observers.

37. **DOUGLAS SCOTT – SCOTTISH FEDERATION OF MEAT TRADERS (SFMT)**

Mr Scott commented that butchers would be in favour of the FHIS however the publication of hygiene reports on the web were a different issue. He stated that it was felt that this was not a way to encourage partnership working between the enforcer and food businesses nor, in his opinion, did it help towards improving hygiene standards. He asked if SFAC supported the publication of the hygiene reports on the web and if they felt that standardisation of these reports was needed.

38. The Chair commented that this information was available through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. He added that to enable correct interpretation of these reports they made need to be standardised throughout the 32 LAs and made more user friendly by using a language all consumers could understand.

39. The Agency informed the Committee and observers that the publication of reports was not included in the FHIS pilot scheme. They added that a full evaluation of the HACCP project and the drop in funding of this project would be carried out in the next financial year.

**ITEM 6
SFAC RESPONSE TO FOLATE CONSULTATION**

40. The Chair opened the debate by referring to the SFAC draft response to the FSAS consultation '**Options to Increase Folate Intake of Young Women**' contained in members papers. He stated that the response was based on discussions held at the meeting in January 2007 and the information the Committee had at that time. He informed Committee members that the 2nd sentence in the paragraph under 2b (***It was crucial to recognise that fortification alone would not decrease the number of NTDs***) was not accurate factually although it did represent what was said at the last meeting.

41. Members agreed that this sentence was factually incorrect and asked that this was changed to reflect the SACN report. They also added that the open paragraph on page two should be changed for consistency.

42. Secretariat asked if the wording under Option 4 should be changed to reflect earlier discussions that members did not agree this was a suitable option.

43. Members agreed to this change.

44. Under paragraph 4a in reference to wholemeal flour the Committee asked that the sentence reflected the fact they were aware of a possible increase in the risk of over consumption of folic acid if wholemeal flour was to be fortified.
45. Members asked under first paragraph on page two to include a reference to the uncertainty of colon cancer and the lack of support of evidence in the data from USA and under 2d the public health advice sentence should be clarified by adding 'in relation to NTDs'.
46. The Chair asked Secretariat to make the necessary changes and for their response to be formally submitted to the Agency along with an Annex showing their full discussion at the January meeting. He also stated that a further briefing session on Folate would take place in London on April 17 and encouraged SFAC members to attend if possible.
47. The Deputy Chair asked if member of the Board would have sight of the SFAC response to the consultation.
48. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the FSA Board would receive a summary of all responses to the consultation before their discussions in May however added that a copy of the response would be issued to all Board members so they were fully aware of SFAC's views on this subject.
49. Members asked if it was the FSA's intention to commission further research in other areas of folate particularly in the elderly and with measurements of Vitamin B12.
50. The Chair commented that part of SACNs report was to recommend further research in relation to the masking of Vitamin B12. If the FSA Board agreed these recommendations they would then be put forward to the Chief Medical Officer (CMO).

ACTION Secretariat to make appropriate changes to the response before formally submitting to FSAS.

ACTION Secretariat to ensure all FSA Board members receive a copy of the SFAC response.

ITEM 7 – Any other business

51. The first item of AOB came from Charlotte Maltin who informed the Committee she was approached by a consumer with the Avian Flu incident and asked the Agency for an update, particularly in relation to the movement of meat products.
52. The Agency responded by informing the Committee and observers that FSA had been fully involved and aware of all actions taken. They were involved with Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) who were identifying and tracing all movements of all materials. The Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) were also involved and there were ongoing discussions within this area. The Agency added that their advice on the website remained the same however individual incident talks were still ongoing.
53. The Chair commented that FSA were a minor Agency involved with this and DEFRA were in the lead
54. The second item of AOB was raised by the Chair. He asked members for comments on the FSA Science Blog on the website.
55. Members agreed that the blog should focus on Andrew Wadge. They agreed it was one of many ways to reach consumers and brought a personal touch to the work of the FSA. There were concerns with the level of people who would be aware that it was there and asked that the blog was given a higher profile on the website. Suggestions were made for summaries of commissioned research work, which could go into the public domain, to be added to the blog. This could be done through links within the blog or be attached as a separate paragraph. It was felt it was important to ensure it was scribed in non expert language and maintain its informality using layman terms.
56. The Agency stated that Andrew Wadge, Chief Scientist FSAS, had expressed an interest in attending an SFAC meeting in the near future to explain his role further.
57. The Chair raised the third item of AOB informing members of the reappointment to SFAC of Dr David Cameron and Professor Brian Ratcliffe for a further two years as of 15 March 2007.
58. The Chair raised the fourth item of AOB informing member that Amanda O'Donoghue had replaced Catherine Brady on the governing Board of Food Certification Scotland (FCS)
59. The Chair informed members and observers that the next SFAC meeting would take place on 23 May in Edinburgh.
60. The meeting closed at 12:30.

ACTION Secretariat to arrange for Andrew Wadge to attend an SFAC meeting.

ACTION: Secretariat to amend minutes to reflect changes as requested by the Committee.

ACTION: FSAS to respond to the question raised by members relating to Vitamin B12.

ACTION: Comms to seek agreement for FSAS attendance at the Scottish Public Health Conference in November.

ACTION: Comms to arrange a speaker from FSAS/SFAC to attend the Scottish Public Health Conference if agreed as an FSAS attended event.

ACTION Comms to attempt to arrange the next Recipe for Success to coincide with an SFAC meeting.

ACTION: Comms to arrange for 'Recipe for Success' event in Dundee to be recorded.

ACTION SFAC members to inform Karen of their availability for specific FSAS events.

ACTION Comms to inform Secretariat of SFAC member involvement with FSAS events.

ACTION: CLAE review to return to SFAC agenda.

ACTION Secretariat to make appropriate changes to the response before formally submitting to FSAS.

ACTION Secretariat to ensure all FSA Board members receive a copy of the SFAC response.

ACTION Secretariat to arrange for Andrew Wadge to attend an SFAC meeting