



# Open Meeting of the Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee On 7 March at the FSA Offices, Belfast.



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**OPEN MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND FOOD ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE ON WEDNESDAY 7 MARCH – FSA OFFICES, BELFAST.**

**Agenda**

1. 10.35 AM – **Welcome and introductions**
2. 10.40 AM – Minutes of the Open meeting of 29 November 2017.
3. 10.45 AM – Chair's report and Director's Update
4. 11.00 AM – Science Update and Update from the Chair of the Science Council - **Patrick Miller**
5. 11.30 AM – Raw Drinking Milk - **Gary Davis**
6. 12.00 PM – International Strategy – **Catherine Bowles**
7. 12.30 PM – **Lunch**
8. 1.05 PM – Nutrition Surveillance - **Naomi Davidson**
9. 1.45 PM – Public Attitudes Tracker - **Grace Fleck**
10. 2.20 PM – **AOB**
11. 2.25 PM – **Close**

**PAPER FOR DISCUSSION**  
**Minutes of Open Meeting on 29 November 2017**

**Executive Summary**

Attached are the minutes of the 29 November NIFAC open meeting.

Members are invited to:

- Agree minutes as a true record of proceedings.

FSA Northern Ireland

Contact: Seth Chanas  
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**REF NIFAC MINUTES 10/17**  
**OPEN MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND FOOD ADVISORY**  
**COMMITTEE (NIFAC) ON 29 NOVEMBER 2017, 10.30AM, AT THE FSA**  
**OFFICES, BELFAST.**

<b>Those present:</b>	<b>FSA Executive</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laura Sandys – FSA Deputy Chair.</li> </ul> <p><u>NIFAC members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colm McKenna – Chairman.</li> <li>• Christine Kennedy.</li> <li>• Elizabeth Mitchell.</li> <li>• Colin Reid.</li> <li>• Aodhan O’Donnell.</li> <li>• Sara McCracken.</li> <li>• Fiona Hanna.</li> </ul> <p><u>Apologies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phelim O’Neill.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seth Chanas – NIFAC Secretariat.</li> <li>• Roberta Ferson – NI Head of Finance Business Support and Communications.</li> <li>• Sharon Gilmore – NI Head of Standards and Dietary Health.</li> <li>• Kathryn Baker – NI Head of Consumer Protection.</li> <li>• Michael Jackson - Head of Regulatory Standards and Assurance.</li> </ul> <p><u>By Video/Teleconference</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nina Purcell – Director Regulatory Delivery &amp; Wales</li> <li>• Paul Cook – Outbreaks &amp; Emergencies team.</li> <li>• Julie Pierce – Director of Openness, Data and Digital</li> <li>• Michelle Patel, FSA Director of Communications</li> </ul>

**1. Welcome and introductions**

1.1. The Chair welcomed all NIFAC members to the meeting, explaining that were apologies had been received from NIFAC member Phelim O’Neill. The Chair also welcomed the observers who had attended this Open meeting.

**2. Minutes of the meeting of 13 September 2017.**

2.1. The Chair asked if there were any comments on the minutes of NIFAC’s open meeting on 13 September. No changes were requested and the Secretariat agreed to publish the minute as presented.

**Action Point – Secretariat to arrange for publication of the minutes of the NIFAC meeting on 13 September 2017.**

**3. Chair’s Report and Director’s Update**

- 3.1. The Chair updated NIFAC on a number of events he had attended since the previous meeting including a dinner held by the Livestock and Meat Commission.
- 3.2. Roberta Ferson then updated the Committee on activities of the FSA in NI since the previous meeting as included in meeting papers. The following items were mentioned:
  - Campylobacter Process Hygiene Criterion.
  - Compulsory and Voluntary Meat Country of Origin Training for EHOs.
  - New Approach for Managing Shellfish Water Quality Issues.
  - Launch of Calorie Wise scheme with out of home businesses.
- 3.3. It was explained that the Campylobacter Process Hygiene Criterion will be introduced on 1 January and had emerged from the work the FSA had led on around campylobacter.
- 3.4. The Country of Origin Training for EHOs had been well attended and will be complimented with an application for checking compliance. This has been an NI led initiative.
- 3.5. It was explained that the new approach for managing shellfish water quality issues is a pilot scheme and the first one of its kind.
- 3.6. The launch of the Calorie Wise scheme with out of home businesses had been a successful event and had been chaired by the Chair of NIFAC Colm McKenna. This scheme had been worked on for some time by the FSA in NI’s Dietary Health team in partnership with the District Councils.

**4. Regulating Our Future – The Food Standards Agency’s Role as a Supporting Regulator under Primary Authority.**

- 4.1. The Chair welcomed Nina Purcell, the FSA’s Director Regulatory Delivery & Wales and Michael Jackson, FSA Head of Regulatory Standards & Assurance to the meeting to introduce the above paper due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board. Nina Purcell joined the meeting by video conference from the FSA’s office at Southgate House in Cardiff. The paper covered:

- the FSA's role as supporting regulator under the Enterprise Act 2016;
- the proposal for the Board to limit activity;
- the primary relationship between the Local Authority and the Food Business; and
- a suggested review in 2 years.

4.2. There then followed a discussion, during which the following points were made:

- This is a good paper on a complex issue, though not directly related to regulation in Northern Ireland, which does not operate a Primary Authority model.
- The FSA must remain clear that when operating as a supporting regulator, any advice it gives should be general and applicable across industry to avoid a perception that the role constitutes consultancy. It was reassuring to hear that this consideration was a key principle for the executive team also.
- Reassurance that the FSA can protect its ethos of independence, openness and transparency within the role of a supporting regulator are welcomed. Maintaining consumer confidence will be essential to the FSA's credibility as a regulator.
- Clarification that if the FSA assumed the role of Supporting Regulator, as recommended, this should not have a negative impact on its ability to maintain its wider responsibilities is also welcomed.

4.3. The Chair thanked Michael Jackson and Nina Purcell for bringing this paper to NIFAC for consideration and asked them to introduce the next paper.

## **5. Regulating Our Future – Development of the Assurance Framework for the Target Operating Model.**

5.1. Nina Purcell and Michael Jackson also introduced this paper, similarly due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board. The presentation covered:

- the focus on the first tier of the regulating pyramid;
- the various assurance schemes the various levels of competency within the current system;
- high level principles around eligibility;
- progress around third party assurance and inspection strategies; and
- the successful operation of models elsewhere.

5.2. There then followed a discussion, during which the following points were made:

- NIFAC heard a very detailed introduction to this paper, which was useful in helping to tease out many of the issues. The paper itself is well constructed and the use of visual elements were valuable for illustrating concepts.
- Consideration should be given to the reasons why a Certified Regulatory Auditor couldn't add value to the subject of an audit though advice. It is acknowledged that it would not be appropriate for an auditor to provide support and guidance to a business when undertaking the audit function. Providers of audit would have to ensure that they were set up appropriately to guarantee clear separation between audit and consultancy services to support businesses but to withhold such advice could be considered a missed opportunity and NIFAC endorsed the idea of trying to make this work.
- The FSA must also ensure that those operating within this area possess the relevant competencies. The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health may be able to run a course, which would count as a form of accreditation. Care must be taken, however, that a function is not being created without clear evidence of a demand.

5.3. The Chair thanked Nina Purcell and Michael Jackson for this update.

## **6. Update on FSA's Activities Concerning Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).**

6.1. The Chair welcomed Paul Cook, of the FSA Outbreaks & Emergencies team, to the meeting by video conference to introduce the above paper, due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board. The presentation covered:

- an update on AMR activities;
- the global nature and implications of the issue;
- key elements and attempts to slow AMR;
- recent activities; and
- the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food.

6.2. There then followed a discussion, during which the following comments were made:

- This is a welcome paper and the involvement of the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food is also welcome.

- The logging of feeds used on farms as happens with the Farm Quality Assurance scheme is one possible model for the FSA to look at in seeking to reduce antimicrobial usage in the food chain. The Better Beef Challenge in Northern Ireland, which NIFAC saw on our October site visit, also emphasised timely interventions with vaccinations to minimise the need for antibiotic feed fortification.
- The international nature of the workstreams and how these were envisaged to continue following the UK's exit from the EU is reassuring.

6.3. The Chair thanked Paul Cook for bringing this item to the Committee.

## **7. Strategic Surveillance Update.**

7.1. The Chair welcomed Julie Pierce, FSA Director of Openness, Data and Digital, to the meeting to introduce the above paper by video link from the FSA's office at Aviation House in London. The presentation covered:

- the new SRO for the workstream;
- the commitment to provide an update to the Board;
- progress to date;
- drivers including EU exit, climate change and AMR; and
- proposal for a review of the lab network.

7.2. There then followed a discussion, during which the following points were made:

- While all the papers NIFAC considered at this meeting are commended in terms of their quality, this one is particularly well written. The review of the UK official control laboratories is an important piece of work. Identifying outbreaks early by detecting microbial contaminants continues to be an important capacity to maintain. The use of the hackathon event is also praised.
- It is also reassuring that there is a strong link to the FSA Communications team in this work. This link will be key to the success in identifying risks and issues across the food system.
- The use of the example of the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as an exercise to identify potential risks would be worthwhile and could help to calcify much of the theoretical thinking from other departments into a clearer grasp of the issues at stake.

7.3. The Chair thanked Julie Pierce for assisting with the Committee's consideration of this paper.

## **8. Understanding People: Social Science in The Food Standards Agency.**

8.1. Julie Pierce then remained on the video link to update the Committee on the above paper. The presentation covered:

- The proposal to align social science policy with the Communications team's segmentation work;
- 

8.2. There then followed a discussion, during which the following points were made:

- The Committee congratulated the FSA on the scope and quality of the work displayed in this presentation.
- The move toward social media and online communications was supported, emphasising that a focus should also be maintained on those lacking the means to access these messages. These are frequently the most vulnerable individuals who could benefit most from information. It was acknowledged that the FSA also does good outreach and events work. The importance of education and of getting the message to the right consumers was highlighted as the key to effective communications and the evidence based way in which the FSA does its communications work was commended.

8.3. The Chair thanked Julie Pierce for bringing this item to the Committee.

### **Any Other Business**

8.4. Comments were invited from observers on any of the items the following comments were received:

- The naming and shaming of retailers whose raw chicken contained high levels of campylobacter, while contributing effectively to campylobacter reduction, has also contributed to a scepticism among some producers about whether the FSA can be trusted with commercially sensitive data. The FSA faces a challenge in rebuilding this trust if it is to persuade businesses to share data in the future.
- The lack of a specific food-fraud offence in statute represents a lacuna in the legislation. The filling of this gap may be beneficial for the work of the National Food Crime unit.
- The link between the Food Crime Unit and the District Councils is not clearly spelled out and more detail on this would be welcome.

8.5. No further business was raised and the meeting was closed. The next Open meeting will be held on 7 March.

### TABLE OF ACTION POINTS

No	Action	To be actioned by	To be completed by
1.	<b>To make amendment to paragraph 3.4 and arrange for publication of the minutes of the NIFAC meeting on 12 September 2016.</b>	<b>Secretariat</b>	07/03/2018
2.	<b>To circulate a summary of findings of Just Eat research on FHRS to NIFAC members.</b>	<b>Director</b>	07/03/2018

**PAPER FOR INFORMATION**

**Update from Director for NI, People and Organisational Change to NIFAC  
7 March 2018.**

**Executive Summary**

Attached is the FSA in NI Director's update to the Committee for November 2017. This report covers the period from 22 November 2017 to 28 February 2018.

- No action by members is necessary.

FSA Northern Ireland

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## **Food Is Safe**

### **Vacuum Packing Guidance Compliance**

Checks in approved cutting plants in NI are underway to determine the level of compliance with current FSA vacuum packing guidance with regard to Clostridium botulinum. This follows the recent detection of meat labelling and meat hygiene irregularities in approved establishments in Britain. The checks are focussed on those businesses that are vacuum packing fresh meat, handling vacuum packed meat and supplying vacuum packed meat to retail and caterers. A total of 38 establishments have been identified and a protocol has been developed jointly by the FSA in NI's Operational Policy and Delivery team, Local Authority team and Incidents team to collate the findings for analysis and further action by FSA in NI where appropriate.

### **New Process Hygiene Criterion on Campylobacter**

The new Process Hygiene Criterion on Campylobacter was implemented in NI on 1 January 2018. To date, all but one of the NI poultry slaughterhouse Food Business Operators (FBOs) are taking samples. The remaining FBO is waiting on an FSA policy statement on the derogation available for low throughput establishments.

### **BSE Negligible Risk status**

Following the achievement of regional BSE Negligible Risk status for NI in 2017, some FBOs have commenced harvesting bovine intestines for rendering into fat and greaves for human consumption.

### **Acrylamide Regulations – Guidance for Councils.**

Views have been sought from NI District Councils on the draft guidance for Local Authorities on interpretation & implementation of Commission Regulation (EU) 2017/2158 (acrylamide regulation). The guidance on the Regulation promotes best practice in managing acrylamide as a food safety hazard. UK FBOs will be required to manage acrylamide in listed foods from 11 April 2018.

### **HACCP Training**

Selected representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), FSA in NI and District Councils have recently completed a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) (advanced) level 4 course, organised by the FSA in NI's Local Authority Policy and Delivery team, to enhance the competency and training of competent authority officers engaged in official controls at approved establishments. The course has been scheduled to be held again in September 2018 for those remaining officers requiring the training.

### **Incidents and investigation skills**

Incidents and investigation skills training was rolled out to each of Northern

Ireland's 11 district councils by the FSA in NI's Consumer Protection Team, over the period October 2017 to January 2018. The training was designed to be interactive and provide opportunity for two-way dialogue between council and FSA officers. Each training day consisted of two sessions – a morning session focussing on incident response procedures within the FSA, and a bespoke afternoon session focussing on a choice of either witness statement taking, cautioned interview skills, or evidence management. This is the first time incident training has been conducted in this format, and FSA colleagues were encouraged by the participation of council colleagues and positive feedback received.

## **Gathering and Using Science, Evidence and Information**

### **Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE) Regulations**

A joint FSA/DAERA public consultation has been launched on consolidating the domestic TSE Regulation. This enacts a series of amendments to the EU TSE Regulations which have been enforced on an administrative basis since 2010. It also includes changes to the costs associated with the TSE testing of fallen animals and the application of the young lamb stamp.

EU proposals to reduce the list of small ruminant Specified Risk Material (SRM) and to allow alternative systems for ageing sheep using a cut-off date, received a qualified majority vote on 1 February 2018. The FSA in NI's OPD team arranged a stakeholder meeting between Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU), DAERA and the Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association on 28 February.

### **Derogation for The Transport of Meat Above Temperature**

The implementation of the EU Commission derogation for the transport of meat above temperature which applied from 1 January 2018 has been deferred allowing existing UK authorisations to become compliant. Changes to existing NI authorisations are almost complete.

### **Antimicrobial Resistance**

The FSA in NI's OPD team was part of a multi-agency group tasked with implementing a scheme for monitoring antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in broilers. This satisfies the obligation on the UK as an EU Member State to carry out official controls regarding AMR surveillance. Sampling commenced in Moy Park Dungannon on 22 January and will continue throughout 2018.

### **Sterilisation of Tools and Equipment in Approved Slaughterhouses**

A consultation exercise regarding FSA guidance on the use of alternative methods of sterilising tools and equipment has been launched. This describes the authorisation of systems such as UV light and chemical sterilisers as an alternative

to water at 82C in approved slaughterhouses and cutting plants.

### **Safe Catering**

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the NI HACCP tool - Safe Catering Pack has been undertaken by LAPD team. The outputs of the evaluation will be used to decide whether, and how the Safe Catering Pack should be improved to meet the needs of its users and to make better use of electronic technology.

### **Audits of Official Control Delivery**

An Organisation and Management audit was carried out in Mid Ulster BC between 21 and 23 November 2017. The audit report has been issued along with an action plan containing 2 recommendations. The recommendations made related to internal monitoring and control procedures. A further Organisation and Management audit will be carried out in Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon BC during the week beginning 05 March 2018.

### **Empowering Consumers**

#### **Calorie Wise industry engagement**

FSA in NI's The Standards and Dietary Health Team have been working in partnership with District Council Environmental Health Officers to deliver a series of workshops across Northern Ireland on the Calorie Wise scheme and the Menu Cal tool. To date, 13 workshops have been delivered to 188 attendees representing 122 food businesses. Food businesses ranged from cafes, restaurants, coffee shops, workplace canteens, hotels, pubs, takeaways and hospital trust catering facilities. Another three workshops are planned for March 2018.

Early evaluation indicates that the workshops have been successful in encouraging businesses to consider calorie labelling, healthy catering, healthier options, portion control and use of the Menu Cal tool. Follow up support for food businesses working towards the Calorie Wise award will be provided by designated Calorie Wise Champions in District Councils, with further support provided by the Standards and Dietary Health Team when required.

FSA have also had regular engagement with many chain catering establishments to encourage participation in the Calorie Wise scheme with several businesses at the final stages of implementation.

#### **Know Your Calories**

The Know Your Calories campaign, launched on 26 February, aims to raise awareness of calories in NI so that people can make informed decisions about the

food they eat. The four-week campaign will make people aware of their recommended daily calorie intake and direct them to where to find calorie information on food labels and on menus when eating out. Our research shows differences in dietary patterns between socioeconomic groups, with unhealthy diets more prevalent in deprived areas across NI. We're focusing on the portion of the population often described as the working poor which makes up - C2 & D with some drifting into C1.

We've already secured coverage across a range of media including Good Morning Ulster, The Frank Mitchell Show, the Belfast Telegraph and the Irish News. Our messages will be appearing on bus stops, Cool FM, Q radio, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter as well as video-on-demand. We've also got a strong partnerships strand to the campaign – Co-op, Subway and Henderson's have indicated that they will support the campaign in store or through their online channels.

A sample of the creative accompanying this campaign has been sent to members along with these papers.

## **Aligning Incentives**

### **Northern Ireland Feed Stakeholder Meeting**

The FSA in NI's OPD team held a very well attended Northern Ireland Feed Stakeholder Meeting on 7 December. There was considerable interest in the agenda item on EU Exit. The Northern Ireland Grain Trade Association (NIGTA) highlighted that NI imports 90% of feed raw materials and 40 lorries per day cross the border each day in both directions transporting compound feed and stressed that all regulation should work from Day One. There was also concern that any new arrangements would not accommodate or encourage smuggling for financial gain.

Other agenda items included an update on the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed, Food Fortress, Earned Recognition and the National Enforcement Priorities.

Food Fortress is going from strength to strength with 77 compound feed manufacturers in the scheme, taking in 100% of the NI and 50% of the RoI market. 90% of imported feed material is also now covered.

### **Allergens Masterclass with Further Education colleges**

In January, the FSA in NI Standards and Dietary Health Team along with colleagues from Safefood and Gluten-free Ireland ran a series of allergens masterclasses with catering students in further education colleges across Northern Ireland.

The aim was to complement the District council led allergen enforcement strategy, whilst, the focus was on the practicalities of controlling food allergens in a catering setting and in particular:

- Why those in the catering industry cannot afford to ignore food allergens
- The regulatory and legal aspects of food allergen management
- The impact on quality of life for those with allergies.

The masterclasses were held in 8 Further Education regional campuses, with some incorporating students from more than one campus.

They were very well received by around 400 students and members of teaching and catering staff. Consideration is now being given as to how we can provide this again going forwards, with possibilities including presenting at a student conference or possibly webinars.

### **Being the Best Organisation We Can Be**

#### **Assured Certification of Exports**

A member of the LAPD team and the NI District Council representative of the UK Export Working Group attended a recent UK Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) workshop on Assured Certification of Exports. This provided an opportunity for representatives involved with the certification of exports to provide the APHA project team with feedback on the existing certification system and comments on the viability of proposals to improve and simplify processes for the future.

#### **Digital and Electronic Methodology in Meat Inspection**

A member of the OPD team accompanied the FSA's Chief Operating Officer Colin Sullivan and Head of Field Operations Martin Evans on recent site visits to Dunbia and Moy Park Dungannon to examine the potential use of digital and electronic methodology in meat inspection. This provided an excellent opportunity to share information of areas of mutual interest and included a discussion on poultry welfare.

#### **EU Exit Preparations**

Negotiations between the UK Government and the European Commission on the terms upon which the UK will leave the EU in March 2019 are ongoing. The FSA continues to plan for a smooth exit under any scenario, which includes preparing the UK for the future economic partnership we hope to negotiate with the EU as well as the scenario in which no mutually satisfactory agreement can be reached and the UK exits without a deal.

FSA in NI continues to work with FSA colleagues, Executive Office and DAERA to ensure NI issues relating to food safety, compositional standards and food labelling (nutritional, safety and information for consumers) are raised and considered in the planning process. This included FSA in NI representation at Executive Office and DAERA organised meetings with District Councils in late 2017.

M Jennings

**Director for NI, People and Organisational Change.**

## **PAPER FOR DISCUSSION**

### **Science Update and Update from the Chair of the Science Council**

#### **Executive Summary**

Patrick Miller, the FSA's Head of Science Strategy and Governance, will present by video link from the FSA's office at Clive in London to introduce this item on a paper due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board.

The papers for this item have been published on the FSA website and can be found through the links below:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/fsa180305.pdf>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/fsa180306.pdf>

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland

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## **PAPER FOR DISCUSSION**

### **Raw Drinking Milk**

#### **Executive Summary**

Gary Davis, the FSA's Deputy Head of Regulatory Delivery Division, will attend the meeting to introduce this item on a paper due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board.

The papers for this item have been published on the FSA website and can be found through the link below:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/fsa180307.pdf>

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

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## **PAPER FOR DISCUSSION**

### **International Strategy**

#### **Executive Summary**

Catherine Bowles, the FSA's Deputy Director - EU Exit, Regulatory & International Strategy, will introduce an item on the FSA's international strategy. This presentation relates to a paper due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board and will be delivered by video conference from the FSA's office at Clive House in London.

The papers for this item have been published on the FSA website and can be found through the link below:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/fsa180308.pdf>

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

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## **PAPER FOR DISCUSSION**

### **Nutrition Surveillance**

#### **Executive Summary**

Naomi Davidson, the FSA in NI's Senior Scientific Advisor (Dietary Health), will introduce an item on Nutrition Surveillance. This presentation represents the first of a series of regular updates from the Standards and Dietary Health team that NIFAC will receive over the coming year. A handout containing the slides to accompany this presentation will be available at the meeting.

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

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## PAPER FOR DISCUSSION

### Public Attitudes Tracker

#### Executive Summary

Grace Fleck, Insights Officer with the FSA's Openness, Data & Digital team will attend the meeting to present an item on the recently published Public Attitudes Tracker. The Tracker can be found through the link below:

[https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publicattitudesreportwave15\\_0.pdf](https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publicattitudesreportwave15_0.pdf)

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

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