

# Open Meeting Of The Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee On 12 September at the FSA Office, Belfast.



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**OPEN MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND FOOD ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE ON MONDAY 12 SEPTEMBER – FSA OFFICE, BELFAST.**

**Agenda**

1. 10.00 am – Welcome and introductions
2. 10.10 am – Minutes of the meeting of 6 July 2016
3. 10.15 am – Chair's report and Director's update
4. 10.30 am – **Animal Welfare - Jason Feeney**
5. 11.00 am – **Regulating Our Future Programme Update -  
Nina Purcell**
6. 11.30 am – **Program for Government - Tristen Kelso and  
Quintin Oliver (Stratagem)**
7. 12.10 pm – **The Consumer Interest in the Food System -  
Ely Mirzahosseinkhan**
8. 12.40 pm – **Update from the FSA in NI Standards and  
Dietary Health Team - Sharon Gilmore**
9. 1.10 pm – AoB
10. 1.15 pm – Close



**PAPER FOR DISCUSSION  
MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING ON 6 July 2016**

**Executive Summary**

Attached are the minutes of the 6 July NIFAC open meeting.

Members are invited to:

- Agree minutes as a true record of proceedings.

FSA Northern Ireland

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**REF NIFAC MINUTES 4/16**

**OPEN MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND FOOD ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE (NIFAC) ON 6 JULY 2016, 10.00AM, AT THE FSA OFFICES,  
BELFAST.**

<b>Those present:</b>	<b>FSA</b>
<p><u>NIFAC members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Henrietta Campbell – Chairman.</li><li>• Aodhan O’Donnell.</li><li>• Christine Kennedy.</li><li>• Phelim O’Neill.</li><li>• Colin Reid.</li><li>• Elizabeth Mitchell.</li><li>• Brian Smyth.</li></ul> <p><u>Apologies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• David Lindsay</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Michael Jackson –NI Head of Local Authority Policy and Delivery.</li><li>• Roberta Ferson – NI Head of Finance, Business Support and Communications.</li><li>• Seth Chanas – NIFAC Secretariat.</li><li>• Kirsten Dunbar – NI Head of Operational Policy and Delivery.</li><li>• Joanne Casey – NI Standards and Dietary Health team.</li></ul> <p><u>By Video/Teleconference</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nick Laverty – Hygiene Delivery Branch.</li><li>• Javier Dominguez – Food Safety Policy team.</li><li>• Paul Cook – Head Of Microbiological Risk Assessment.</li><li>• Jason Feeney – Chief Operating Officer.</li><li>• Richard Hoskin – Head Of Incidents &amp; Resilience.</li></ul> <p><u>Apologies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maria Jennings – Director for Northern Ireland and Organisational Development.</li></ul>

## **1. Welcome and introductions**

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. It was explained that NIFAC member David Lindsay would not be able to attend the meeting and had passed on his apologies. This would have been the last meeting within David Lindsay's appointment. The Chair paid tribute to his contribution throughout his appointment. These sentiments were echoed by the Committee.
- 1.2. It was also explained that this would be the final NIFAC meeting within the Chair's term of appointment. The process of appointing a new Chair is underway and is expected to be completed soon though, as the appointment requires the approval of the Ministers with Health responsibilities in Westminster as well as the devolved administrations, the process can take some time to complete.

## **2. Minutes of the meeting of 11 May 2016.**

- 2.1. The Chair asked if there were any comments on the minutes of NIFAC's open meeting on 11 May. The Secretariat explained that an error had been detected and rectified at heading 2 of the minute as included in the papers. No other amendments had been suggested previously by NIFAC members. No further changes were requested and the Secretariat agreed to arrange for the publication of the minute.

**Action Point – Secretariat to make arrangements for publication of the minutes of the NIFAC meeting on 11 May 2016.**

## **3. Chair's Report and Director's Update**

- 3.1. Michael Jackson updated the Committee on items from the Director's report contained in the meeting papers, including:
  - Multi-Agency Livestock Meeting;
  - Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS);
  - Local Authority Liaison; and
  - Programme for Government Engagement.
- 3.2. On the Multi-Agency Livestock Meeting, it was explained that the FSA in NI had been working closely with partner organisations to counter criminality. Officials had also been working closely with their counterparts in the Republic of Ireland to ensure that issues of interpretation are dealt with consistently.
- 3.3. It was explained that there is a target of October for the implementation of the statutory scheme for food hygiene ratings. This would be contingent on the secondary legislation being in place.

- 3.4. On the Local Authority Liaison item, it was explained that there were new working arrangements in place for working with District Councils as a consequence of Local Government Reform.
- 3.5. It was explained that the new Programme for Government represents a new approach in Northern Ireland. There will be a challenge for non-ministerial departments to ensure that they are adequately represented. It was queried whether NIFAC should provide a response to the consultation on the delivery plan for the Programme for Government. Michael Jackson suggested this would be appropriate and that as the next meeting would fall within the consultation period, this should be included on the agenda.

**Action Point – Secretariat to ensure that Programme for Government consultation response is on the agenda for the NIFAC Open meeting in September.**

**4. Update on development of a framework for assessment of foods which may present an increased likelihood of harm. & An update on burgers served less than thoroughly cooked in food service outlets.**

4.1. The Chair welcomed Nick Laverty and Patrick Miller of the FSA's Hygiene Delivery Branch, to introduce the above papers, by video link from the FSA's office at Aviation House in London with the FSA's Head Of Microbiological Risk Assessment, Paul Cook, joining the meeting by teleconference. The paper covered:

- the risky foods ad-hoc advisory group;
- the time-table for presentation of the final framework;
- the use of change as a driver for the framework;
- clarification of the approach taken with rare-burgers;
- the position previously agreed with the FSA Board; and
- providing an update as well as seeking comments on the message to consumers.

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

- It was encouraging to hear the membership of the ad-hoc expert advisory group. The membership gives confidence that the expertise and experience required is there.
- If change is to be the driver for the application of the framework, it will be key, not only to be clear about what will be considered to constitute a change, but also to examine how we will know that change has occurred.
- Applied to the serving of burgers less than well done, this raises particular complexities for a regulator seeking to balance consumer choice with maintaining an awareness of the risks consumers are being



asked to consider. This complexity means that the FSA needs to communicate 3 separate messages on burgers. Firstly, when cooking at home, the FSA must advise consumers to ensure burgers are cooked thoroughly. Secondly, when eating in an establishment, which has an advisory statement about their burgers and measures in place to minimise risks. Thirdly, there will need to be a message about how consumers should expect their burger to be cooked when eating in an establishment that has no such plan for minimising risks. This will present a considerable communications challenge for the FSA and it is good to hear that a communications plan has been agreed. Where controls are in place, consumers should know.

- It is reassuring to note that, where businesses are being made aware of the measures they will need to have in place in order to safely offer burgers less than thoroughly cooked, they often reassess the value of offering this choice. Anecdotal evidence from around the table at the meeting suggested that restaurants will often refuse customers the option where it is requested and the establishment is not equipped to provide it safely. This is encouraging.
- The proposals for an enhanced review of PHE epidemiological evidence, including the mining of the STEC enhanced surveillance system, is welcomed and similar arrangements should be considered for NI through the Public Health Agency. However, it is recognised that the level of reported cases of STEC in NI is significantly lower than in England, many of which are not associated with food and, as VTEC tends to peak in NI during the 3rd quarter of the year, caution is advised should early figures from the new system of monitoring, to be in place by September 2016, appear optimistic.
- Though currently not a common feature of establishments that cater for customers seeking burgers less than thoroughly cooked, for the purposes of future proofing the policy on consumer messaging, it may be beneficial to consider challenges posed by such food when ordered remotely, whether by phone or over the internet.
- There will also be a challenge for Local Authorities to regulate and this will need care given existing pressures on local government.
- There has clearly been a huge amount of work done to get this point and the FSA is to be congratulated.

4.3. The Chair thanked Nick Laverty, Patrick Miller and Paul Cook for bringing this paper to NIFAC for consideration.

## **5. Antimicrobial resistance.**

5.1. The Chair welcomed Javier Dominguez of the FSA's Food Safety Policy team to the meeting to introduce this item by video link from the FSA's office at Aviation House. The presentation covered:

- the significance of the threat posed by antimicrobial resistance;
- the O'Neill report;
- increasing concerns about the use of antibiotics in agriculture and livestock; and
- the role for the FSA.

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

- This paper is welcome and is the first paper on this topic to be considered in a long time. It is not entirely clear what the FSA's role is in tackling the problem of antimicrobial resistance and, in particular, where the FSA will lead. It was reassuring to hear that the Department for Health in Northern Ireland hosts an expert group on the issue including representatives from the FSA as well as DAERA.
- The problem of antimicrobial resistance is well known and it behoves all sectors to do what is needed to ensure the public's safety. There has been an increase, in the United States, of producers certifying poultry as antibiotic free and it is interesting to hear about research being carried out both in academia as well as by industry in Northern Ireland. Regulations can help to protect individual consumers, while movements such as 'no antibiotics ever' in the US concern how food is produced more widely.
- NIFAC endorses the aspirations of the paper. The next step would include a delivery plan and NIFAC look forward to seeing how this will develop.

5.3. The Chair thanked Javier Dominguez for this update.

## **6. Update from the FSA in NI Operational Policy and Delivery Team.**

6.1. The Chair welcomed Kirsten Dunbar, the FSA in NI's Head of the Operational Policy and Delivery team to the meeting to deliver an update on the work of the team in NI. The presentation covered:

- the staff within the Operational Policy and Delivery team;
- the team's responsibilities;
- work around residues, stakeholder engagement and zoonoses;
- responsibility for various workstreams ;

- key Performance Indicators;
- dairy hygiene work and the expansion in the sales of raw drinking milk; and
- upcoming work;

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

- This was an extremely impressive presentation. NIFAC frequently becomes aware of the work of individual teams as the result of a discrete piece of work and the day-to-day work of officials within the NI office can frequently go unrecognised. It is clear from this presentation that a significant amount of work is carried out as a matter of routine.

6.3. The Chair thanked Kirsten Dunbar for bringing this item to the Committee.

## **7. Annual Report on the handling of incidents covering the period up to the end of March 2016.**

7.1. The Chair welcomed Jason Feeney, the FSA's Chief Operating Officer and Richard Hoskin, the FSA's Head Of Incidents & Resilience to the meeting to introduce the above paper by video link from the FSA's office at Foss House in York. The presentation covered:

- a reminder of the resilience function and the 24 hour incident response capability;
- the responsibility to ensure participation in UK government resilience matters;
- the 3 nation approach;
- numbers of notifications and recalls 2015/16;
- exercise Prometheus;
- new drill and exercise plan; and
- collaborative work with industry to mitigate herb and spice recalls.

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

- This was a helpful paper and it was good to see a structured process for capturing the lessons learnt from previous incidents. It is also encouraging to hear evidence of the close working relationship between the incidents teams in the 3 nations and the approach to devolution throughout this paper is to be commended.
- The importance of this work, and the fact that however many incidents are averted, we are only ever one incident away from reputational damage should it be mishandled, comes through strongly in the paper and the resilience and strength of the organisation is well presented.

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

## **8. Eatwell Plate Refresh.**

8.1. The Chair welcomed Joanne Casey, of the FSA in NI's Standards and Dietary Health team to the meeting to deliver a presentation, requested at the previous NIFAC meeting, on the refresh of the Eatwell Guide. The presentation covered:

- the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) Carbohydrate and Health Report July 2015;
- the change from the 'Eatwell Plate' to the 'Eatwell Guide';
- other changes;
- portion size;
- the sections of the guide;
- information from the National Diet and Nutrition Survey and Kantar Worldpanel;
- sources of added sugar for children in NI aged 11-18.
- hydration;
- front of pack labelling; and
- key recommendations.

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

- This was an excellent presentation conveying some quite concerning statistics around nutrition in Northern Ireland, particularly for younger people.
- The guide would be particularly useful for schools and it is good to hear about engagement with the Home Economics teachers' conference and other activities to ensure a widespread distribution.

8.3. The Chair thanked Joanne Casey for bringing this item to the Committee.

## **Any Other Business**

8.4. This meeting represented the last Open meeting of NIFAC within the tenure of Henrietta Campbell's Chairmanship. NIFAC members paid tribute to the Chair as a vociferous champion of food issues pertinent to Northern Ireland's consumers and a powerful voice for the Committee within the FSA Board whose Chairmanship had established a collegiate and effective working relationship between members and with the FSA effective.

8.5. No further business was raised and the meeting was closed. The next Open meeting will be held on 14 September.

### TABLE OF ACTION POINTS

No	Action	To be actioned by	To be completed by
1.	<b>To make arrangements for publication of the minutes of the NIFAC meeting on 11 May 2016.</b>	<b>Secretariat</b>	14/9//2016
2.	<b>To ensure that Programme for Government consultation response is on the agenda for the NIFAC Open meeting in September.</b>	<b>Secretariat</b>	14/9//2016

**ACTION POINTS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Owner</b>	<b>Target Completion Date</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Complete</b>
1.	6/7/2016	To make arrangements for publication of the minutes of the NIFAC meeting on 11 May 2016.	Secretariat	14/9//2016	Minutes published on the FSA Website	<b>Completed</b>
2.	6/7/2016	To ensure that Programme for Government consultation response is on the agenda for the NIFAC Open meeting in September.	Secretariat	14/9//2016	PfG on agenda for this meeting	<b>Completed</b>

## PAPER FOR INFORMATION

### Update from Director for NI and Organisational Development to NIFAC 12 September 2016

#### Executive Summary

Attached is the FSA in NI Director's update to the Committee for September 2016. This report covers the period from 30 June to 7 September.

- No action by members is necessary.

FSA Northern Ireland

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## **Food Is Safe**

### **Reporting of incidents**

In July, the FSA published its annual report of incidents for 2015. During 2015, the FSA and Food Standards Scotland were notified of and investigated 1,514 foods, feed and environmental contamination incidents in the UK. Of these, 129 incident notifications were received and investigated by officers in FSA in NI and 122 food alerts were issued in NI.

Earlier this year the FSA also commenced the publication of incident data on a quarterly basis. This quarterly list summarises alerts issued by the FSA to recall or withdraw products. It also includes information about where we supported foodborne outbreak investigations.

The information published describes the overall details of the incident, the level of risk to consumers and what action we, industry and/or local authorities took. The FSA has collated this data to make it easier for consumers to access incident information.

### **Application for BSE negligible risk status**

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has recently completed a consultation on the proposal to apply to the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) for BSE negligible risk status for Northern Ireland. The Food Standards Agency was consulted early in the process and was content for the application to proceed providing that, if negligible risk status was achieved, appropriate safety controls, acceptable to the Food Standards Agency would be put in place. Members of the FSA in NI's Operational Policy and Delivery team continue to be included in the discussions. All responses to the consultation were in favour of the application being made.

We expect that the dossier will go to the NI DAERA Committee and Executive Committee during September before submission to the OIE by 8th October for consideration at its May 2017 meeting.

## **Food Is What It Says It Is**

### **Northern Ireland Consumer Food Labelling Research**

As part of wider FSA consumer insight market research to better understand the consumer interest with regards to food, the Standards and Dietary Health Team published a report following research with NI consumers about their understanding and use of retail food labelling information, how this influences their behaviour, and their concerns and priorities around labelling information. The research involved a combination of eight focus group discussions; eight accompanied shops and a survey using the FSA online panel.

### **Key findings**

Overall, participant attention to labelling information appeared to be driven by a particular need, for example, if participants were following a specific diet or had specific dietary or allergen requirements. Outside of these circumstances,



participants tended only to use labels to check the “use by” or “best before” dates and occasionally checked labels when buying new or unfamiliar products. Reasons for not checking labelling information included participants routinely buying familiar products and therefore not considering it necessary to check product information. A further barrier related to comprehension and interpretation of current labels, with people perceiving them to be overly numerical or requiring complex calculations.

In spite of these barriers, there was a general overall appetite for increased provision of labelling information, especially nutrition information and portion size as a consequence of current social trends towards maintaining a healthier diet. Participants expressed a need for greater visualisation and simplification of data which could encourage more informed, habitual usage of labelling information going forward.

Please click on the link below to view the published report:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/northern-ireland/researchni/understanding-ni-consumer-needs-around-food-labelling>

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

### **Minimum Standards within Health and Social Care Setting**

As part of the implementation of Department of Health A Fitter Future for All Obesity Prevention strategy 2012-22, the issue of food provision within health and social care settings has been highlighted as an important area for development. The Standards and Dietary Health Team in partnership with the Public Health Agency (PHA) and safefood have jointly produced minimum nutritional standards for catering in Health and Social Care setting. The draft standards are food based standards modelled on the Eatwell Guide.

The 12 week consultation for these minimum standards for catering in health and social care was launched on 22nd August.

The standards will apply to all facilities that serve food and/ or beverages to staff and visitors operating within Health and Social Care settings including catering facilities as well as private retail and vending machines. It is planned that they should be adhered to when food contracts are being specified in the procurement process and should also be applied when planning menus.

It is also anticipated that these nutritional standards will be rolled out across government and in time across the wider public sector.

## **Empowering Consumers**

### **Food Hygiene Rating Scheme**

Final preparations are being made for the introduction of the statutory scheme with the secondary legislation required for implementation of the Food Hygiene Rating Act (NI) 2016 having been notified to the NI Assembly on 23 August. It is intended

that the statutory scheme will come into operation on 7 October 2016 and district councils are planning to make maximum use of the transitional arrangements and notify the majority of businesses within scope of the scheme of their statutory rating immediately thereafter. A training course on the statutory scheme for all district council staff who will be implementing the scheme has been developed in partnership with the Northern Ireland Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Implementation Group and this will be delivered on 21 and 22 September 2016. We will continue to work with the Implementation Group, which consists of representatives of each of the 11 district councils, in order to address any issues that may arise during the transition from the voluntary to the statutory scheme.

Work is ongoing to develop the regulations that will require the publication of hygiene ratings by food business operators providing an online ordering service and it is anticipated that the public consultation on this regulations will be launched before the end of 2016.

## **Aligning Incentives**

### **Quality Assured Beef and Lamb Inspections**

In further preparation for the implementation of Earned Recognition (ER) for animal feed enforcement in Northern Ireland, the LMC's Quality Assured Beef and Lamb Scheme has now been assessed by the FSA and given approved status for a reduction in inspection frequency for its members in relation to primary production, food and feed hygiene. As part of the approval process, a memorandum of understanding between the FSA and LMC has been signed and includes details of the necessary engagement and information exchange arrangements that have been put in place.

### **Primary production Audit**

A report of the FSA in NI audit of DAERA Agri-food Inspection Branch (AfIB) Primary Production team was issued on 5 September. The audit examined the official controls performed by DAERA AfIB to determine Food Business Operator compliance with the requirements of Annex I of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004. Annex I specifically relates to primary production.

The audit was carried out in June and consisted of an examination of records and procedures in Dundonald House followed by four reality check visits with primary production inspectors to farms in Northern Ireland.

The auditors noted the delivery of official controls in primary production establishments was very good and no recommendations were made during the audit.

### **Meat Charging**

The agreed proposals from the stakeholder group on meat charging chaired by Bill Stow (Stow 1) have now been implemented. Stow 2 discussions have commenced with representatives from the Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association, Ulster Farmers' Union and the NI Pork and Bacon Forum included in the group.

### **Programme for Government engagement**

Engagement activities to ensure that the FSA's strategic priorities are reflected in the indicators that underpin the draft Programme for Government's (PfG's) 15 high level outcomes have continued. On 24 August I met with Anthony Harbinson, deputy secretary of the Department of Justice and on 2 September, I met with Katrina Godfrey of the Executive Office. Katrina Godfrey is the deputy SRO for PfG reporting to Malcolm McKibben. We discussed opportunities for the FSA to input into PfG indicators, emphasising that we are keen that the FSA be recognised in innovation, economy, crime, health and food poverty and opportunities to be involved in the ongoing work for the Northern Ireland Civil Service for the Future.

The PfG sets out the direction for the NI Executive for the next 5 years and representatives of Stratagem will be delivering an in-depth presentation of the issues for the FSA at this meeting. As the work of the FSA spans several departments, in particular Health, Agriculture, Economy and Justice I will be holding further meetings with Permanent Secretaries to discuss how we can continue to work collaboratively across government in NI.

M Jennings

**Director for NI and Organisational Development.**



## **PAPER FOR DISCUSSION**

### **Animal Welfare**

#### **Executive Summary**

Jason Feeney, the FSA's Chief Operating Officer, will introduce the above paper, due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board. This item will be presented by video link from the FSA's office at Foss House in York.

The full paper can be found on the FSA website through the link below:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/fsa160904.pdf>

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

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## **PAPER FOR DISCUSSION**

### **Regulating Our Future Programme Update**

#### **Executive Summary**

Nina Purcell, FSA Director of Wales and Local Delivery, will introduce the above paper, due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board. This item will be presented by video link from the FSA's office at Southgate House House in Cardiff.

The full paper can be found on the FSA website through the link below:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/fsa160906.pdf>

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

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**PAPER FOR DISCUSSION**  
**Programme for Government**

**Executive Summary**

Quintin Oliver and Tristen Kelso of Stratagem NI, will deliver a presentation setting out an overview of the new PfG approach and considering implications for the FSA. Slides accompanying the presentation will be available at the meeting and relevant documents, including the recent PfG Framework document that recently went out for consultation can be found on the NI Executive's new PfG site:

<https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/consultations/draft-programme-government-framework-2016-21-and-questionnaire>

An agenda covering the main points of discussion is included in this pack.

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

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# Agenda

11.30am -12.10pm

Programme for Government 2016-21:

- Background
- In practice
- Implications –for your issues & NIFAC/FSA
- Wider context: Brexit; Official Opposition; Local Government reform; Departmental restructure
- Points to ponder
- Questions





## **PAPER FOR DISCUSSION**

### **The Consumer Interest In The Food System**

#### **Executive Summary**

Ely Mirzahosseinkhan, FSA Consumer Engagement Manager, will introduce the above paper, due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board. This item will be presented by video link from the FSA's office at Aviation House in London.

The full paper can be found on the FSA website through the link below:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/fsa160905.pdf>

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

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## **PAPER FOR DISCUSSION**

### **Update from the FSA in NI Standards and Dietary Health Team**

#### **Executive Summary**

Sharon Gilmore, the FSA in NI's Head of Standards and Dietary Health, will deliver a presentation on the work of this team. This is the fourth update of a series where the various teams within the FSA in NI will take turns to provide updates to NIFAC about key activities and work carried out by that team. A handout containing the slides to accompany this presentation will be tabled at the meeting.

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

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