

**WFAC 21/02/03
FOR DISCUSSION**

WELSH FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WFAC) DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Summary

1. The attached report from the Director of the FSA in Wales reports on issues of relevance which may be of interest to members of the Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC).
2. The Director for FSA in Wales will supplement the information provided in this report with an oral update where necessary.
3. Members of the Committee are invited to:
 - **note** the update;
 - **invite** the Director to expand on any issues for further discussion.

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1. Funding for the FSA in Wales

1.1 The FSA in Wales was successful in its bid to Welsh Government for additional resources from 21/22 onwards. The bid made was largely in support of EU work, previously undertaken by the Commission or the European Food Safety Authority, which will now fall within the FSA's portfolio. Welsh Government Ministers have agreed to an additional £1.5m for the FSA in Wales from 2021-22 as recurrent funding. The annual budget now increases to £5.1m including £0.490k which is ringfenced for feed law enforcement in Wales. As a consequence of the uplift, the FSA in Wales will now commence a recruitment campaign to secure additional support to undertake the new functions to be undertaken.

2. Business Planning

2.1 Now that the funding position for the FSA in Wales from 21/22 has been finalised we are in a position to finalise the FSA in Wales' Business plan for 21/22. This will reflect our statutory functions, our business as usual work and the new work areas which transfer to the FSA as a result of our exit from the EU. Areas likely to be highlighted in the plan include:

- COVID -19 recovery;
- the delivery of all domestic and UK food and feed legislation, where applicable, in order to improve food safety and food standards;
- ensuring Welsh Ministers consent for UK SIs;
- contributing to the development of the Achieving Business Compliance Programme;
- working with the NFCU on the delivery of a 3-country model that addresses food crime and meets the needs of Welsh consumers and stakeholders;
- the delivery of sampling official controls and surveillance;
- the effective handling of food and feed incidents and environmental emergencies impacting on Wales;
- the effective implementation and operation of the statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) by local authorities in Wales;
- the developing proposals to require the provision of food hygiene ratings by businesses online;
- undertaking a scoping exercise regarding the inclusion of childminders to FHRS;
- all aspects of internal and external corporate and legislative requirements in relation to finance, business risk and performance monitoring;
- the effective discharge of Welsh Food Advisory Committee business and its input into Board deliberations;
- implementing a food supplement strategy and coordinate policy area for FSA;
- delivery of a targeted stakeholder engagement strategy in Wales;
- delivery of food safety and hygiene campaigns in Wales;

- ensuring all relevant workstreams within the food hypersensitivity programme are implemented in Wales and
- ensuring there is legislation in place to support the approval of regulated products in Wales;

3. Welsh Food Law Code of Practice

3.1 Consultation on the Welsh Food Law Code of Practice commenced 18 December 2020. The FSA in Wales has provided a range of support to enable local authorities in Wales to contribute to the consultation. This has included the setting up of webinars on 2 February and 9 February to complement the consultation process. Funding has been provided to local authorities to recruit a temporary co-ordinator to support them in this area and to assist with input into recovery planning. This will also enable local authorities to release professional staff back into assist with the response to COVID - 19.

4. Safe Sustainable Authentic Food Wales (SSAFW)

4.1 The Safe Sustainable Authentic Food Wales group meet on 1 February 2021. Agenda items include an update from Local Authorities in Wales on official food controls and COVID related work. I will provide an oral update on this meeting.

5. Appointment of New Chair of the FSA

5.1 Heather Hancock steps down from chairmanship of the FSA at the end of January. The public appointment exercise, to recruit for her replacement, has commenced and the FSA in Wales is assisting in the advertisement of the post in Wales. Dr Ruth Hussey has been appointed as interim Chair of the Food Standards Agency from 1 February 2021 for up to 3 months, to allow time for the Chair recruitment to conclude.

6. External engagement

6.1 Since the last meeting of WFAC I have carried out the following engagement activity of which members may wish to be aware:

- Attending the Wales Chief Medical Officer's Health Protection Advisory Group (HPAG), fortnightly. HPAG has focused on the Wales COVID-19 response and my participation is to ensure that food safety matters are represented as appropriate.
- A meeting with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). I met with DWP to discuss how to coordinate our work to improve diversity in the FSA in Wales, as well as to understand any further mechanism for increasing engagement with underrepresented groups.
- Supporting the FSA Chair and Wales Board Member at their meeting with the Minister, Eluned Morgan MS.
- Plenary pre-brief with the Minister, Eluned Morgan MS, on the Food and Feed Hygiene and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments and Saving Provision) (Wales) (EU Exit).

- The FSA/FSS four-country working group, fortnightly. This group provides updates on any emerging matters of relevance across the four countries.
- The UK Government in Wales leaders group. This group is intended to strengthen the government leaders' network in Wales and share best practice.
- Attending the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee with the FSA Chief Executive, Emily Miles, on the Food and Feed Safety and Hygiene common framework.

7. Information Sharing

7.1 Since the last meeting of the WFAC, the following information has been shared with members:

- The appointment of Ruth Hussey as interim chair
<https://www.food.gov.uk/news-alerts/news/dr-ruth-hussey-is-appointed-interim-chair-of-the-food-standards-agency-board>
- The January Senedd Election newsletter
- The latest findings of the COVID-19 Consumer Tracker as [published](#).
- Welsh Government's Agriculture White paper and consultation
<https://gov.wales/written-statement-publication-agriculture-wales-white-paper>

Nathan Barnhouse
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27 January 2021