

Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee (NIFAC) Minutes of the Open Meeting on 28th June 2022

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Executive Summary

Attached are the minutes of the 28th June 2022 NIFAC meeting.

Members are invited to:

1. Agree the minutes as a true record of proceedings. Contact: Jayne McGlaughlin (Jayne.McGlaughlin@food.gov.uk)

Open Meeting of the Northern Ireland Food Advisory of the Northern Ireland Food Advisory committee (NIFAC) on Tuesday 28th June in Belfast Office and Visa Microsoft Teams

Those present:

NIFAC Members

- Colm McKenna
- Ellen Finlay
- Fiona Hanna
- Greg Irwin
- Cathal McDonnell
- Lynne McMullan
- Ciaran McCartan

Apologies

- Lorraine Crawford

FSA Executive

- Maria Jennings – Director for Regulatory Compliance, People and Northern Ireland
- Andy Cole – Deputy Director Northern Ireland
- Sharon Gilmore – Head of Standards and Dietary Health
- Roberta Ferson – Head of Corporate Services and Strategic Engagement
- Firth Piracha – Head of Food Safety Policy and Delivery

FSA Presenters

- Craig Leeman – Acting Head of Incidents
- Joanna Brown – Senior Incidents Investigator
- James O'Neill – Incidents Investigator
- Matthew Cooper – Receipt and Management Lead
- Anne Gravett – Head of Stakeholder Engagement
- Sofie Schon – Stakeholder Engagement Lead

1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1 The Chair welcomed all NIFAC members, presenters, and guest speakers to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 26th April 2022.

2.1 The Chair asked if there were any comments on the minutes of NIFAC's meeting on 26th April 2022. No issues were raised.

3. Introduction to Incidents

3.1 The Chair invited Craig Leeman to present to the Committee.

3.2 Craig presented an overview of the Incidents team in Northern Ireland which included:

- Role of the FSA
- Role of CPT / Who are we?
- What is an Incident?

- Key Legislation & Guidance
- Types of Incidents and Notifiers
- Incident Process
- Competent Authority Actions
- Risk Analysis
- Escalation
- SIOG/IMCG – How it works
- NI Incident Trending
- Receipt and Management of Signals
- Stakeholder Engagement

3.3 The Committee thanked Craig for a detailed overview and informative introduction to the Incidents team and their role in Northern Ireland.

4.0 Incident Notifications and Handling Process

4.1 The Chair invited Joanna Brown to present to the Committee.

4.2 Joanna provided an overview including:

- What is a food / feed incident?
- Key legislation and guidance with respect to incident response
- Types of incident notifiers
- Incident process summary
- Competent authority actions

4.3 The Committee thanked Joanna for her detailed presentation and the work the team has done to date.

4.4 Members discussed in detail the increase in new food businesses since the pandemic and ways to encourage compliance, especially food businesses selling produce online and from home premises.

5.0 Risk Analysis

5.1 The Chair invited Craig Leeman to present to the Committee.

5.2 Craig provided an update on risk analysis, including risk assessment, risk management and risk communication. He also updated the Committee on incident management plans and escalation process, including level of incident response.

5.3 The Committee thanked Craig for his informative presentation. No questions were raised.

6.0 Incident trends in Northern Ireland

6.1 The Chair invited James O'Neill to present to the Committee.

6.2 James presented an overview of incidents trending based on statistics captured in Northern Ireland.

6.3 The Committee thanked James for presenting the data highlighting spikes in incidents over the last reporting year and the causes for these.

7.0 Receipt and Management

7.1 The Chair invited Matthew Cooper to present to the Committee.

7.2 Matthew provided a synopsis of work carried out by the team including;

- UK post EU and areas of focus
- Food and feed incident handling and response
- Signal prioritisation dashboard
- International data to identify risks
- Risk signals and trends
- Complex signals and emerging risks
- Case studies

7.3 The Committee thanked Matthew for his presentation and no questions were raised.

8.0 Stakeholder Engagement

8.1 The Chair invited Sofie Schon to present to the Committee.

8.2 Sofie introduced the FSA Stakeholder Engagement team, including summarising the communication of incidents via INFOSAN and RASFF systems.

8.3 The Committee thanked Sofie for her presentation. There then followed a brief discussion around engagement and the importance of developing working relationships, especially with FSAI and Food Standards Scotland. Members were encouraged to hear that as part of transition measures all parties have been meeting on a weekly basis.

9.0 Chair's Update and Director's Report

9.1 Members congratulated the FSA and in particular, Northern Ireland's Consumer Protection and Dietary Health teams for their continued involvement in the work around the Ukraine crisis and sunflower oil incident.

9.2 The Committee discussed the successful laying and publication of the Annual Report on Food Standards which took place in the Stormont Hotel on 23rd June. Members commented on how positive it was to see the FSA engage with key stakeholders about the report findings and the new FSA Strategy.

9.3 Maria and the Committee thanked Colm for his time as Chair of NIFAC and wished him well for the future.

10.0 Any Other Business

10.1 No further business was raised, and the meeting was closed.