

Welsh Food Advisory Committee Chair's Report 14 July 2022

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WFAC 22/07/02

For Discussion

Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC) Chairman's report

1. Summary

1.1 This report provides a brief summary of matters considered at the last Board meeting, held on 15 June 2022, and other activities relevant to the FSA remit in Wales.

1.2 Members of the committee are invited to:

- note the Board discussions
- invite the Chair to expand on any issues for further discussion

2. Board Meeting

2.1 The last open Board meeting was held in Newcastle on 15 June 2022. The Board considered the following matters:

- **FSA Response to Ukraine Conflict Supply Chain: Disruption: Ingredient Substitution and Labelling:** This paper provided a consolidated overview of the FSA's response to supply chain disruption arising from the conflict in Ukraine; setting out the provisional tests that the FSA has developed to support decision-making in respect of sunflower oil substitutions and labelling relating to them. It included the proposed approach for a return to the food labelling status quo and associated planning assumptions. I reported WFAC's concerns about guidance being made more readily available for consumers and the importance of best practice.
- **Annual Science Update from FSA's Chief Scientific Adviser:** an annual report giving an overview of the role of the FSA CSA, science within the FSA, and the review of the Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs). I reflected the WFAC's interest in maximising Welsh participation in the scientific work, also reporting that the Committee welcomed the use of workshops with Microbiologists, with Welsh participation, as there is an advantage in devolved nations being involved.
- **Foresight Function and Horizon Scanning – Annual Update to the Board:** an annual update on work to develop and implement the FSA's foresight function. Together with discussion the previous day, this underlined the scale and pace of change facing the food industry and hence the FSA.
- **Food Hypersensitivity (FHS) – update on workstreams and recommended next steps:** This paper updated the Board on the work carried out as part of the Food Hypersensitivity (FHS) Programme and the proposed approach for the next phase. I raised the need to assist smaller businesses and highlighted that income from civil sanctions might be returned to Local Authorities.
- **The Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Bill:** This paper provided an update on the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Bill, announced in the Queen's Speech on 10

May 2022, and outlined the parliamentary process, with its timelines. I reported that WFAC would be taking a deep dive on this subject in July and warned of the risk of divergence on this subject as Welsh Government are yet to finalise a position.

- Household Food Insecurity: This paper summarised the evidence we have about levels of household food insecurity and food affordability, and the impact on consumers and the food system. I told the Board about the Roundtable organised by Welsh Government on 11 May.
- The FSA's International Objectives and Priorities: This paper set out the FSA's international objectives and priorities for the next 12-18 months.

2.2 A [recording of the 15 June meeting](#) is available on the FSA website, along with the minutes of the meeting when published.

2.3 The next Board meeting will be held in Belfast on 14 September 2022.

3. Other meetings

3.1 The day before the 15 June Board meeting, Board members split into three groups for visits to Newcastle University, Greggs and FareShare. I was in the group visiting the University and was briefed on work in high tech fields relating to food and its environmental impacts. Some of this work was carried out jointly with Cardiff University.

3.2 On 16 June, having got back from Newcastle the night before, we had an online ARAC meeting pursuing some issues which had been discussed more broadly by the Board.

3.3 On 5 July, with other WFAC members, I attended a dinner at which Prof Susan Jebb, Chair of FSA, had a private discussion with us along the lines which I envisaged when requesting such an opportunity.

3.4 On 6 July, again with other WFAC members, I attended the event at the Senedd at which the FSA Annual Review of UK Food Standards was launched by Susan and at which Deputy Minister Lynne Neagle also spoke. We were glad to be joined by FSA Chief Executive Emily Miles, Welsh Government officials and many representatives of stakeholder organisations.

Peter Price
Board Member for Wales and Chair of the WFAC