

Welsh Food Advisory Committee Chair's Report – February 2023

Report by Peter Price, Board Member for Wales and Chair of the Welsh Food Advisory Committee

1. Summary

1.1 This report provides a brief summary of matters considered at the last Board meeting, 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 full Board meeting was held in London on 7 December 2022. The Board considered the following matters:

Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill:

This paper provided an update on progress of the UK Government's Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill, and the FSA's programme of work until 2026 relating to delivery of the Bill and associated reforms. I commented on the need for labelling and compositional requirements to be aligned in GB and noted that the FSA approach to four-country working is much appreciated in Wales to ensure the minimisation of disparities.

In Year Prioritisation:

This paper provided an update on a series of essential changes to the FSA's workplan for this year that will create capacity to deliver additional demands, without compromising statutory duties. I commented on the additional pressures on staff in Wales, including in responding to the anticipated Welsh Government review of the functions of the FSA in Wales, adding that the FSA's approach to devolved administration is very beneficial especially in relation to priority work areas such as Precision Breeding and Retained EU Law.

Operational Transformation Programme and Future Scope:

This paper provided an update on the FSA's Operational Transformation Programme (OTP), focusing on programme progress and deliverables 2022/23; stakeholder research into the implications of new legislation and regulatory divergence in the delivery of Official Controls for meat and animal by-products; and future organisational structure and scope of the programme. I highlighted the differing landscape in Wales, explaining the high number of smaller abattoirs and advised that these should be taken into consideration, especially when seeking stakeholder views.

FSA Science Update:

This paper gave an annual update on the development of the FSA's science, including evidence and research capability; a review of achievements and the progress made since the last update; and a summary of our future plans. I emphasised that horizon scanning is extremely important, as is raising the visibility of the Science work that the FSA is undertaking and taking the opportunities to work with partners in the Scientific fields. I also highlighted Welsh involvement but drew attention to the lack of Wales PhD students funded by the FSA. I asked that consideration be given to partnering with Welsh Government's Ser Cymru programme.

Annual Governance Report:

This paper presented the proposed responses of the Board Effectiveness Review Working Group to the review's recommendations; proposed changes to the Business Committee's and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's Terms of Reference; proposed changes to the Standing Orders for FSA Board Meetings; and an automated online system for accepting public questions.

Report from the Chair of the Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee:

This paper reported on the activity of the Committee from the period September 2021 to November 2022.

2.2 A recording of the [7 December Board meeting is available on the FSA website](#), along with the minutes of the meeting when published.

2.1 The next Board meeting will be held on 22 March 2023 in Manchester.

3. Other meetings

3.1 My last written report to the Committee was at its themed meeting on 20 October. Since then:

- On 11 November, the Board held another KIT and Coffee event at which we had an update on key topics and then met informally with staff from the Communications Team to discuss their field of work.
- On 22 November, I attended a meeting of ARAC (Audit and Risk Assurance Committee).
- On 24 November, Susan Jebb, Nathan Barnhouse and I met with Vaughan Gething, Minister for Economy, and Lynne Neagle, Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing to discuss the future Borders Target Operating Model.
- On 30 November, I met with Anthony Harbinson, the new Chair of our Northern Ireland equivalent - NIFAC – to whom I am acting a 'Board buddy'.
- On 17 January, I attended online a meeting of NIFAC, where the main topic was the Food Standards Delivery Model.
- I have also had online meetings with members of the executive team.

3.2 The Board held a two-day Retreat in York on 23-24 January to enable the senior Executive team to brief Board members on the fast-moving latest developments and share their ideas about changes in key programmes ahead of formulating papers for the March Board meeting.