

Welsh Food Advisory Committee Chair's Report – May 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 Manchester on 22 March 2023](#). The Board considered the following matters:

- [Strategic Risk Management \(FSA Paper 23/03/04\)](#): This paper reflected on the FSA's strategic, corporate and management approaches to risk, including identifying which responsibilities lie at Board, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) or Executive level, and provided the Board with an overview of the strategic risks being managed. I advised that WFAC were content with the approach and that it's reassuring that divergence is seen as a potential risk and the FSA is adopting a strategic approach.
- [The Genetic Technology \(Precision Breeding\) Bill \(FSA Paper 23/03/05\)](#): This paper set out considerations and current thinking around the traceability of precision bred food/feed and provided an update on progress and an indicative timescale for delivery of the new regulatory framework. I raised mandatory labelling and concerns around divergence.
- [Achieving Business Compliance Programme \(FSA Paper 23/03/06\)](#): This paper provided a comprehensive update on the Achieving Business Compliance Programme. I raised the issue of a decline in LA resource and advised that WFAC welcomed the combination approach of joining hygiene and standards inspections together, emphasising the need for correct training. I also mentioned that the committee is pleased to hear that the pilot on the new delivery model will begin in Wales in May.
- [Three-Year Corporate Plan \(FSA Paper 23/03/07\)](#): This paper set out the FSA's corporate objectives for the next three years and describes how the FSA will continue to deliver the strategy 'Food you can trust' published last year. I commented that the paper clearly shows how the three-nation approach is working in setting this corporate plan and welcomed the considerations of the Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act. I raised the potential issue of public analysis and laboratory capacity in Wales.
- [Risk Analysis and Regulated Products Update \(FSA Paper 23/03/08\)](#): This paper provided an update to the FSA Board about the progress of issues in the Risk Analysis Process and

Regulated Products Service (RPS). I raised that the committee encourages innovative development of new products and new materials in a sustainable way. I also highlighted the importance of stakeholder engagement as there are many innovative businesses and centres within Wales that could input into discussions.

- [Annual Report from the Chair of the Science Council \(FSA Paper 23/03/09\)](#): This report provided an overview of the work of the Science Council over the past year and reflected on its successes and challenges as well as providing a forward look into the future activities. I requested that committee members be informed of the open plenary meetings of the Science Council.
- [Report from the Chair of the Welsh Food Advisory Committee \(FSA Paper 23/03/10\)](#): This report provided an overview of the activities of the Welsh Food Advisory Committee since September 2021.

2.2 A [recording of the 22 March Board 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 on [21 June 2023 in Belfast](#).

3. Other meetings

3.1 My last written report to the Committee was at its themed meeting on 9 February. Since then, I have been involved in the following:

- On 10 February, the Board held an extended online KIT session to discuss the Precision Breeding Bill, Operational Modernisation, and other hot topics.
- On 3 March, I discussed online the functioning of the two Advisory Committees with the Board Chair, my Northern Ireland counterpart and Anjali Juneja, with a view to proposals being put to the June Board meeting.
- On 13 March, the newly re-constituted Business Committee – no longer simply an extension of Board meetings – met online for the first time (with my participation). Whereas the Audit Committee's primary focus is rooted in past results, the Business Committee will be examining in depth current operations and looking more to the future.
- The day before the 22 March meeting, Board members split into three groups for visits to key food players. I was in the group visiting the HQ of the Co-op, where we had a very useful meeting with the Chief Exec and leading officials. We learnt about their operations – some distinctive to the Co-op brand and others common to large food businesses.
- On 30-31 March, on a visit to meet the current Swedish Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers and Swedish parliamentarians, I had an opportunity to raise food topics and also to visit the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, which receives daily reports on food-borne and other infectious diseases from member states and discusses the latest findings daily online at 11.30. Those meetings result in EU-wide warnings reflecting the scale and degree of urgency.
- On 14 April, the Board held an online KIT session to discuss key developing issues.
- On 20 April, as a regular observer, I attended a meeting of Safe Sustainable Authentic Food Wales (SSAFW), in which many representatives of stakeholder organisations participated.
- On 27 April, with WFAC members Helen Taylor, John Williams and Georgia Taylor, I attended the IFST conference at Cardiff Met, about which WFAC will receive a separate report.