

Welsh Food Advisory Committee Chairs Report 21 October 2021

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WFAC 21/10/02
FOR DISCUSSION

WELSH FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE (WFAC) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Executive Summary

1. The attached report provides a brief summary of matters considered at the last Board meeting, held on 15 September 2021, and other activities relevant to the FSA remit in Wales.
2. Members of the Committee are invited to:
 - note the Board discussions
 - invite the Chair to expand on any issues for further discussion.

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WFAC CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – OCTOBER 2021

1. Board Meetings

1.1 The last open Board meeting was held on 15 September 2021, following preparatory discussions on relevant topics the previous day. At this meeting the Board considered the following matters:

- FSA/FSS Annual Food Standards Report: This paper set out proposals on scope and approach for a joint Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Food Standards Scotland (FSS) annual report on food standards, with plans for publication and engagement.
- Operational Transformation Programme: Public Consultation on the Future Delivery Model: This paper gave an update on the Operational Transformation Programme (OTP) paper presented to the FSA Board on 26 May 2021 and followed a period of public consultation on the Future Delivery Model proposals.
- Genome Editing - Update: This paper set out the FSA's focus in this area, the key strategic questions to be considered, and began to distil the policy options on which the Board may need to make decisions in the future.
- Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC) Chair and Director Wales Report: This paper was a joint report from the WFAC Chair and the Director of the FSA in Wales. It outlined key activities of the Food Standards Agency in Wales, notably in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and

ensuring that the FSA has in place suitable arrangements for the continuing EU Exit effects. The Director highlighted those key activities and I reported on the operations of the Committee.

- Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee (NIFAC) Chair and Director Northern Ireland Report: This paper similarly outlined the key work carried out by the FSA in Northern Ireland (NI) in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and in ensuring that the FSA has in place suitable arrangements post-EU Exit to fulfil the requirements of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. It also included an update on the progress of the FSA's programme of work in NI, highlights from the NIFAC discussions and key upcoming priorities for the FSA in NI.
- Annual Governance Report: The paper detailed the Governance arrangements for the Board and its Committees.
- Annual Report to the FSA Board from the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee: The paper provided a summary of the work undertaken by the ARAC during 2020/21.

1.2 A video of the 15 September meeting is at: <https://youtu.be/p9jKwShKWF8> and the minutes of the meeting, when available, will be posted on: <https://www.food.gov.uk/about-us/our-board#meetings>.

1.3 The WFAC had held a business meeting on 9 September 2021 to consider these Board papers and my contributions during the Board meeting included reporting our conclusions.

2. Other Meetings

2.1 On 21 September, the Board held two 1-hour online sessions. During the first, we had a broad strategic discussion and update. The second session was the latest in a series of staff 'coffee' events, at which Board members and a range of specialist staff have an informal exchange to give us their angles on their branch of the work. This time, it was our Regulated Products staff. After a brief intro, we break up into groups, typically comprised of two Board members and four staff, then the Board members come back together and discuss what they have been told. The series is providing very useful insights.

2.2 On 11 and 12 October 2021, I attended the Board retreat, which was an opportunity for Board members to look ahead, considering strategic issues which are currently at a developmental stage. The interchange with relevant staff enabled Board members to better understand the issues and to give a steer about their priorities.

2.3 The UK Global Food Safety Incidents and Emergency Response Conference 2021, organised by FSA and FSS jointly, took place from 13-15 October. Colm McKenna, Chair of the NIFAC, and I explained the role of the advisory committees and then talked about specific food safety challenges in Wales and Northern Ireland.

I described the development of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) in Wales and its leading-edge achievement in public recognition and raising standards. I then outlined the new allergen labelling law and the extensive preparatory work carried out, all set within the FSA's wider work on food hypersensitivity – a priority for the FSA.

2.4 On 19 October, I will be attending the Safe and Sustainable Foods Wales (SSAFW) meeting as a participating observer.

2.5 The next Board meeting will be held in Cardiff on Wednesday 8 December 2021. Plans are being made for Board members to make relevant visits the previous day, concluding with a reception to which WFAC members would be invited.

Peter Price

Board Member for Wales and Chair of the WFAC