

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE SCOTTISH FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Executive Summary

1. The attached report provides an update on issues emanating from the Scottish Food Advisory Committee.
2. The Board is invited to **note** the report by the Chair of the Scottish Food Advisory Committee. **No action** is required.

Food Standards Agency Scotland

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SFAC Meetings

1. SFAC held their Open meeting on Wednesday 2 July in the Apex City Hotel, Edinburgh.
2. Main topics for discussions were:

FSA consultation 'Scores on the Doors' (SOTD) Scheme on Hygiene Standards in Food Businesses

3. The Chair welcomed Peter Midgley, Head of Food Law Enforcement Branch, FSAS and Moyra Burns, Chair of Food Hygiene Information Scheme steering group. Together they gave background information and objectives of the consultation and details of the procedures already in place within pilot areas of the Scottish scheme.
4. Members held a detailed discussion and raised the following points:
 - Gradations of fail should not be used within a national scheme;
 - The star system would cause complexity and confusion for the consumer and could be seen as a disadvantage to some food businesses;
 - The quality of compliance should not be the objective of the national scheme;
 - Gold plating should not occur;
 - Gold plating should not be used, as the quality of compliance should not be the objective of the national scheme;
 - There was doubt with some members over the use of 'fail' as opposed to 'improvement required';
 - The national scheme should be rolled out across all Local Authorities throughout the UK;
 - Regardless of the model chosen for a national scheme it would need to be a simple design;
 - The national scheme should apply to retail outlets and include the exemptions of some businesses, which was already in place within the Scottish scheme;

- The award of the scheme should be displayed in the window of the premise. Information should also be available through the website of the Local Authority or by contacting the appropriate Local Authority direct;
 - There was agreement for businesses to request a re-inspection of minor non-compliance 7 days after compliance had been met;
 - A star system could result in a large amount of re-inspections and a possible higher financial impact than that shown in the consultation document; and
 - Businesses should have a right of an independent appeal against the decision of the score/result of inspection which had been given.
5. Members favoured a 'pass/improvement required (two-tier) scheme based on the one currently being piloted in Scotland, as their preferred choice of national scheme. They also agreed a sub group should be set up to respond to the supplementary questions within the consultation. This group would then meet and forward their responses to the Secretariat who would in turn seek agreement from the whole Committee before formally submitting their response to the consultation to FSAS. This would be finalised by 15 August 2008.

Choosing the Right Ingredients - The Future for Food in Scotland

6. Lydia Wilkie provided the Committee with an update of the National Food Policy conversation announcement which was made by Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretariat for Rural Affairs & the Environment.
7. Lydia stated the Agency had major involvement with the National food policy and emphasised the recurring themes within diet & nutrition and health promotion and the public health slant the document portrayed. FSAS would be involved in some of the themes as they are taken forward, particularly food labelling however details of these were not fully available. FSAS were also involved in the development of the Cabinet Office food policy to ensure a consistent approach. Other organisations including Scotland Food and Drink would also be involved in these themes. FSAS had also been involved with initial meetings for scoping public health improvement issues in relation to the Commonwealth Games, which will be held in Glasgow in 2014. This will also link to the developments with FSA UK for the Olympics in 2012. The Agency asked the Committee to be involved with future developments.
8. The Chair thanked Lydia for the update and welcomed the opportunity for the Committee to be fully engaged in the roll out of the policy.

Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) Charging Regime Update

9. Elspeth MacDonald, Head of Animal Food Chain & Novel Foods Branch, FSAS gave a brief update on the MHS proposals which would be presented to the FSA Board at their meeting in July. Members of the Committee could not pass comment on this until further information on the impact to Scotland and agreement from Ministers was established. They agreed a sub group should be established to work on the consultation once this was issued.

MEETING WITH OTHERS

10. The Chair, Deputy Chair and members attended various events at the Royal Highland Show which is Scotland's premier agricultural event attracting over 150,000 people in 2007. It ran from Thursday 19 – Sunday 22 June at Ingliston, near Edinburgh. There were a wide range of attractions and trade stands. The FSA stand was located in the Food and Drink Hall. The interactive kitchen set includes a hand-washing unit, touch screen microwave/game, cooker and fridge - all highlighting key hygiene and nutrition messages. The Cooking Bus was also on site. The Food Standards Agency Cooking Bus has been developed in partnership with the Focus on Food Campaign to get across healthy eating and food safety messages to school children in an engaging way. For 42 weeks a year it sets out to different destinations around the country where its two teachers work with school staff to inspire children and highlight the importance of food education, while supporting the national curriculum, teachers' own work objectives, and Government health messages.
11. Members of the Committee attended a stakeholder meeting in Glasgow to discuss 'Scores on the Doors' this event attracted over 70 major Scottish stakeholders.
12. Deputy Chair, Bill Reilly, chaired the Review of FSA Foodborne Research Programme at the University of Warrick, Coventry from 23 – 25 June.

FUTURE SFAC OPEN MEETINGS

DATE	LOCATION	POTENTIAL TOPICS
3 September 2008	Aberdeen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FSAS Communications Plan 09/10• FSAS Diet & Nutrition Agenda• MHS consultation
29 October 2008	Dundee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EU Labelling Update• SFELC Update