

Welsh Food Advisory Committee Director's Report – October 2022

Report by Nathan Barnhouse, Director of FSA in Wales.

1. Summary

1.1 This report provides a brief summary of subjects introduced by the Chief Executive at the last Board meeting, held on 26 September 2022, and other activities relevant to the FSA remit in Wales.

1.2 Members of the committee are invited to:

- note the update
- invite the Director to expand on any issues for further discussion

2. Chief Executive's Report to the Board

2.2 The Board received the [Chief Executive's Report](#).

3. FSA in Wales Senior External Engagement

3.1 Since the last WFAC themed meeting on 14 July, senior management have been involved in the following external engagement opportunities:

- 18 July – Accompanied the Chair, Susan Jebb at the Royal Welsh show, attending various meeting and events.
- 26 July – Chair, Susan Jebb, meeting with the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Lynne Neagle.
- 16 August – The latest FSA/Welsh Government quarterly liaison meeting was an opportunity to discuss developments in relation to precision breeding and mandation of online FHRS display.?
- 6 September – Chief Medical Officer's Health Protection Advisory Group meeting.
- 12 September – Regulators Network for Wales meeting
- 27 September – Safe Sustainable Authentic Food Wales (SSAFW) meeting – the meeting covered an update on Welsh Government's Healthy Food Environment consultation, a presentation on FSA's Food and You 2 Consumer survey and an update from the SSAFW subgroup.
- 11 October – Environmental Health Wales meeting – delivered a presentation on the key priorities and future work plans of the FSA.

3.2 External engagement forward look:

- 24-28 October – Trading Standards Wales Week – FSA contribution during this week to be confirmed.
- 27 October – FSA in Wales/Welsh Government quarterly liaison meeting.
- 1 November – Chief Medical Officer's Health Protection Advisory Group meeting.
- 16 November – Changing Food Landscape: UKAFP Annual Conference – Nathan Barnhouse and the FSA's Chief Scientific Adviser, Robin May, will be delivering a presentation and have a stand at this event.
- 24 November – Trading Standards Wales Business Planning meeting.

4. Matters of interest to WFAC pertaining to FSA in Wales

4.1 Royal Welsh Show 2022?— Over the 4-day event, staff and WFAC members engaged with around 750 people. It is worth noting that the first two days of the Royal Welsh were amongst the hottest ever recorded in the UK, with temperatures on the showground in Llanellwedd reaching 38 degrees. This undoubtedly affected visitor numbers, particularly as the Monday is traditionally one of the show's busiest days. There is certainly value in having a presence through the stand at these events, and also as an opportunity to engage with a range of stakeholders. The FSA Chair and I attended meetings with Hybu Cig Cymru, NFU Cymru, Food Innovation Wales centres and a variety of Welsh food producers to hear more about their work. The FSA Chair reported that it was a great way to meet key stakeholders and maintain working relationships, which are vital for working together in future.

4.2 National Eisteddfod 2022?—Over the 8-day event in Tregaron staff and WFAC members welcomed over 2100 visitors to the stand, with many taking home a souvenir FSA tea towel to remind consumers of the 4C's. Highlights included Dr Ruth Hussey, Deputy Chair of the FSA's Board being admitted to the Gorsedd of the Bards for her contributions to public health in Wales.

4.3 Attending Wales Service for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth – On Friday 16 September, I attended on behalf of the FSA, the service of prayer and remembrance for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Llandaff Cathedral, in the presence of His Majesty King Charles III and the Queen Consort. I was immensely proud that the FSA was invited to this occasion of national remembrance: not only so that we could be a part of it, but also because it shows that we are seen to be an integral part of the broader public sector in Wales.

4.4 Directorate change – In response to the greater responsibilities we have inherited since leaving the EU, FSA wide Directorate changes are being implemented as we evolve and respond to this change. Wales, along with Northern Ireland (NI), will move to the UK and International Affairs (IUK) directorate on 1 December 2022 so that the FSA's devolution policy work is sited in the same directorate as the Wales and NI offices. As such, this will be Julie Pierce's last WFAC meeting as the Director for Wales.

4.5 Precision breeding – We are continuing to engage with Welsh Government officials as the Precision Breeding Bill moves through UK Parliament with a workshop between officials planned. Consumer research is now in phase two with qualitative workshops underway, findings are planned to be reported by the end of the year.

4.6 Retained EU Law (REUL) Bill – The FSA is responsible for 113 pieces on food safety in England and Wales, plus 39 additional pieces in Wales where we have wider responsibilities. The Bill is an opportunity for us to look at the legislation that we work with and identify areas where we can simplify or amend it. This will help us deliver in line with our guiding principles, such as being risk based and proportionate. Throughout this, we will not compromise food safety or standards. We will also continue to emphasise the value of regulation to support business, to support trade, to encourage innovation, investment and growth. The current timeframe presented by the Government is stretching and the FSA Board is concerned about the scale of the work needed.

We are working closely with each government so that people and businesses can be sure that UK food continues to be amongst the safest and highest quality food in the world.

5. Consultations

5.1 Live Consultations:

- [Consultation on Amending the Bread and Flour Regulations 1998 and the Bread and Flour Regulations \(Northern Ireland 1998\)](#) – This consultation is to gather views on proposed amendments to the rules on the composition of Bread and Flour products.

Date launched: 01 September 2022.

Closing date: 23 November 2022

- [Consultation on applications for eight genetically modified organisms \(GMOs\) for food and feed uses and for the change of authorisation holder for fifty-one authorised GMOs](#) – This consultation is seeking stakeholders' views in relation to regulated product applications for eight genetically modified organisms (GMOs) for food and feed uses, which have been submitted for authorisation, and for the change of authorisation holder for fifty-one authorised GMOs.

Date launched: 12 October 2022

Closing date: 06 December 2022

- Consultation on applications for authorisation of miscellaneous regulated products: two novel foods, one food additive and one flavouring

Publication date: Monday 17 October. This consultation is open for 8 weeks

5.2 Forward look:

- Precision Breeding (PB) workshop – As noted above, we are planning a workshop with Welsh Government (WG) to help us understand their priorities and interests in relation to PB and to update WG on the FSA's role in the Bill and future regulatory framework.