

Welsh Food Advisory Committee Directors Report 21 October 2021

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Paper FSAW 21/10/03

For discussion

Update from Director

Executive Summary

1. The attached paper signposts to issues introduced by the Chief Executive at the last Board meeting which was held on 15 September 2021. The complete minutes from the Board meeting are available on the FSA's website at www.food.gov.uk. The paper also provides an update on issues of relevance to Wales and forms the basis of the update to the Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC).
2. The Director for FSA in Wales will supplement the information provided in this report with an oral update where necessary.
3. Members are invited to:
 - note the update
 - invite the Director to expand on any issues for further discussion

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Update from Director

1. Summary of Chief Executive's Report to Open Board Meeting 15 September 2021.
 - 1.1. The Board received [the written report \(FSA 21/09/03\) of the Chief Executive \(CE\)](#).

2. Director for Wales' Report on Matters Pertaining to Wales

External Engagement

2.1. I have been involved in the following engagement opportunities since WFAC's last themed meeting on 15 July 2021:

- 27 July – Meeting of RCVS Engagement Group and meeting of SSAFW Covid-19 Recovery Group
- 28 July – Introductory meeting with Victoria Jones, Deputy Director Agriculture – Sustainable

Development Division, Welsh Government

- 7 September – Meeting of the Health Protection Advisory Group and meeting of SSAFW Covid-19 Recovery Group
- 10 September – Introductory meetings with the Chair of the FSA Board and Wales' Chief Veterinary Officer, Christianne Glossop and Chief Medical Officer, Frank Atherton
- 15 September – FSA Board, presenting the annual update from the FSA in Wales
- 24 September – visit to the Food Technology Centre, Anglesey and Holyhead Port with FSA Board Chair
- 1 October – FSA in Wales and Welsh Government Quarterly Liaison meeting
- 11 October – Meeting with Local Authorities comprising the North Wales Food region
- 12 October – Meeting of the Health Protection Advisory Group and meeting with the Local Authorities comprising the South West Wales Food Region
- 19 October – Meeting of SSAFW

Annual Review of Classifications for Shellfish harvesting areas

2.2 The FSA has carried out its annual review of classifications for shellfish harvesting areas in England and Wales, and published the updated list on 1 September 2021. The annual classification review is a routine process which considers E. coli monitoring data results over a fixed period (July 2018 - June 2021 for this review). This determines the classification status for each shellfish harvesting area subject to the results of on-going monitoring. As part of this year's annual review, two additional criteria for handling anomalous results above the Class A threshold have been introduced. These are outlined in the FSA Chief Executive's Report to the Business Committee on 16 June 2021. Classification of shellfish production areas is a fundamental aspect of ensuring public health protection. However, a critical requirement for improvements in the classification status of harvesting areas is improvements in water quality. Changes in protocols are not expected to lead to major changes in classifications awarded for shellfish harvesting areas in England and Wales until water quality improves.

The UK Global Food Safety Incidents and Emergency Response Conference 2021

2.3 On 13-15 October, the FSA and Food Standards Scotland (FSS) held a global joint conference which was delivered virtually in English, French and Spanish. The conference provided a timely and important opportunity to consider food safety incidents and crises, and how globally we respond to challenges which might affect global food safety and food supply. More generally, the conference looked at the role of food systems and regulators in food safety incidents, including the best practice for foodborne illness outbreak management, the use of surveillance techniques and emerging technologies. It considered the role of the food industry in incident resolution and product recalls, as well as best practice in food crime, food defence and food authenticity, and how best to communicate food risks. It also looked at a range of issues including how we achieve harmonisation and use of best practice across differing international regulatory systems, as well as future challenges for industry and regulators. Exploring subjects ranging from how we manage incidents and emergencies as part of broader food systems, to how we can work more closely with INFOSAN, the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the World Health Organization to set high standards and support industry and regulators.

2.4 The conference brought together a diverse and unique network of international regulators, food safety scientists, food laboratory experts and technical experts from across the world. The international panel of speakers and presenters included experienced professionals drawn from across public health, food regulation and the food industry, who lent their authoritative insight to an engaging and informative series of presentations, seminars, workshops and plenary sessions over the three days. The conference will help to ensure that food safety and good incident management practice remain a high priority in a world of shifting global events.

Forward Look for Director for Wales

3.1 Between now and the next themed meeting of the WFAC on 2 February 2022, I have made the following commitments of relevance to the FSA in Wales:

- 2 November – Chair/Deputy Minister Lynne Neagle meeting on regulation of genetic technologies.
- 2 November – Meeting of Health Protection Advisory Group
- 10 November - Meeting with the Local Authorities comprising the South East Wales Food Region
- 23 November - Meeting of RCVS Engagement Group
- 26 November – FSA/WG liaison meeting
- 15 December – SSAFW meeting

Nathan Barnhouse
Director, FSA in Wales
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