

**PAPER FOR DISCUSSION
MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Executive Summary

Attached are the minutes of the 12 September NIFAC open meeting.

Members are invited to:

- Agree minutes as a true record of proceedings.

FSA Northern Ireland

Contact: Seth Chanas

Tel: 028 9041 7762

Email: seth.chanas@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

REF NIFAC MINUTES 5/16
OPEN MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND FOOD ADVISORY
COMMITTEE (NIFAC) ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2016, 10.00AM, AT THE FSA
OFFICES, BELFAST.

Those present:	FSA
<p><u>NIFAC members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colm McKenna – Chairman. • Aodhan O’Donnell. • Christine Kennedy. • Phelim O’Neill. • Colin Reid. • Elizabeth Mitchell. • Brian Smyth. <p><u>External attendees</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tristen Kelso – Stratagem NI. • Quintin Oliver – Stratagem NI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Jennings – Director for Northern Ireland and Organisational Development. • Michael Jackson –NI Head of Local Authority Policy and Delivery. • Seth Chanas – NIFAC Secretariat. • Kirsten Dunbar – NI Head of Operational Policy and Delivery. • Joanne Casey – NI Standards and Dietary Health team. <p><u>By Video/Teleconference</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jason Feeney – Chief Operating Officer. • Nina Purcell – Director of Wales and Local Delivery. • Ely Mirzahosseinkhan – Consumer Engagement Manager.

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1. This is the first meeting of NIFAC within the Chairmanship of Colm McKenna. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and explained that there were no apologies from NIFAC members or executive.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 6 July 2016.

2.1. The Chair asked if there were any comments on the minutes of NIFAC’s open meeting on 6 July. No changes were requested and the Secretariat agreed to arrange for the publication of the minute.

Action Point – Secretariat to make arrangements for publication of the minutes of the NIFAC meeting on 6 July 2016.

3. Chair’s Report and Director’s Update

- 3.1. As the Chair had been in post for a short period of time, he informed the Committee that future updates would likely be more substantial. He provided NIFAC with a brief summary of his background and other Chairmanships held.
- 3.2. Maria Jennings updated the Committee on items from the Director’s report contained in the meeting papers, including:
 - Reporting of Incidents.
 - BSE Negligible Risk Status.
 - FHRS.
 - LMC Quality Approved scheme for Beef and Lamb.
 - Programme for Government.
- 3.3. On reporting of incidents, it was asked whether it would be possible to include an improved geographical breakdown of incidents. Maria Jennings explained that this could be done for future reports.

Action Point – Maria Jennings to seek to include more detailed geographic breakdown of incidents for future reports.

- 3.4. It was explained that the Republic of Ireland had been successful in achieving negligible risk status for BSE. NI is hopeful of achieving a similar status but is applying as a region. Negligible risk status is normally granted on a national basis.
- 3.5. Maria Jennings explained that we are on course for the planned 7 October implementation of the mandatory display of food hygiene ratings under the FHRS scheme. There will be an accompanying campaign following mandation informing consumers that they should expect to see it. This will likely take place before Christmas 2016.
- 3.6. The Committee was informed that LMC quality approved scheme for beef and lamb can now become part of the inspection regime.
- 3.7. Maria Jennings explained that the FSA in NI had been talking to Permanent Secretaries from various Executive departments over the role the FSA can play in implementing the new Programme for Government. NIFAC will hear more about the implications for the FSA and NIFAC with the presentation from Stratagem NI later in the meeting.

4. Animal Welfare.

4.1. The Chair welcomed Jason Feeney the FSA's Chief Operating Officer, by video link from the FSA's office at Foss House in York. The paper covered:

- the background to the paper, clarifying roles and responsibilities around animal welfare;
- incidents including the footage from Simply Halal;
- the focus of the FSA's systemic response;
- a forward look; and
- areas for the Board's consideration.

4.2. There then followed a discussion, during which the following points were made:

- This is a good paper and should be a good news story for consumers, demonstrating the seriousness with which the FSA is treating the issue of animal welfare. This is an issue that holds importance for citizens across England, Wales and Northern Ireland whether consumers of meat and animal products or not. This paper presents an opportunity to raise the profile of this area of work.
- The Committee noted that, in Northern Ireland, the policy, delivery and enforcement of animal welfare issues is the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and they hold the NI specific figures related to animal welfare. If the FSA is moving towards a position of disclosure around the figures, it will be important that Northern Ireland is not left out. Northern Ireland citizens will want this information. It will be key to consider discussions with DAERA around the publication of these figures.
- The paper raises the issue of intelligence gathered from behavioural economics in the meat industry. It will be interesting to hear more about the impacts of this approach in England and Wales to see what lessons could be learned for the meat industry in Northern Ireland and how the intelligence gathered to date has been applied.
- Consideration should also be given to false impressions of high standards of animal welfare that could be created by the use of terms such as free-range. The animals involved in the production of a product may be free-range but there will be a communications challenge to ensure that consumers are aware of the limits this claim has for welfare standards.

4.3. The Chair thanked Jason Feeney for bringing this paper to NIFAC for consideration.

5. Regulating Our Future Programme Update.

5.1. The Chair welcomed Nina Purcell, FSA Director of Wales and Local Delivery, to introduce this paper by video link from the FSA's office at Southgate House in Cardiff. The presentation covered:

- the background to Regulating Our Future;
- the Hothouse events;
- stakeholder engagement and insight;
- work to align business as usual with the Regulating our Future; and
- risks.

5.2. There then followed a discussion, during which the following points were made:

- NIFAC noted that this area is one that is likely to experience a significant impact from the UK's exit from the European Union and were reassured to hear that a detailed impact assessment on the ramifications of this for the Regulating Our Future programme has been carried out, acknowledging that contingency planning is necessarily speculative without more detailed knowledge of the Government strategy for EU withdrawal.
- While it is early to judge the efficacy of the Hothouse events, the first results show promise in identifying where improvements in the regulatory system can be made. The early focus on large, multi-outlet businesses will give an early indication of the number of inspections businesses are subject to when operating across the UK. This could allow for a better appraisal of the value of these inspections.
- The Committee expressed support for the direction of travel but also emphasised the risks involved in ensuring resource availability for what is a significant change in model for the FSA. The proliferation of external expert groups set up to deliver the programme since NIFAC's previous update on the programme in May appears to evidence the scale of the programme.

5.3. The Chair thanked Nina Purcell for this update.

6. Programme for Government.

6.1. The Chair welcomed Quintin Oliver and Tristen Kelso of Stratagem NI to the meeting to deliver a presentation setting out an overview of the new Northern Ireland Executive's Program for Government (PfG) approach, considering implications for the FSA. The presentation covered:

- the Towards Wellbeing Framework;

- how the PfG should work in practice;
- the outcomes pyramid;
- the 14 draft outcomes;
- the 42 draft indicators;
- the PfG timeline;
- issues for the FSA and for NIFAC;
- the wider context; and
- roles and responsibilities.

6.2. There then followed a discussion, during which the following comments were made:

- NIFAC noted that this is the largest change in public sector culture in Northern Ireland since the foundation of the present devolved administration and it will be key to examine thoroughly how a similar, outcomes based approach has worked in Scotland and, importantly, where it has fallen short to ensure that similar mistakes can be avoided in Northern Ireland.
- The FSA should also seek to ensure that the language we use reflects that of the PfG to highlight to the Executive the role of the FSA in delivering the indicators for those outcomes where the FSA's policies will have an impact. The FSA in NI receives its funding through the NI Department of Finance and it will be important to be able to demonstrate to them the value the FSA already brings in delivering the PfG.

6.3. The Chair thanked Quintin Oliver and Tristen Kelso for bringing this item to the Committee.

7. The Consumer Interest In The Food System.

7.1. The Chair welcomed Ely Mirzahosseinkhan, FSA Consumer Engagement Manager to the meeting to introduce a paper by video link from the FSA's office at Aviation House in London. The presentation covered:

- the prioritisation of issues;
- supporting the Board's decision making;
- building a listening culture;
- the direct involvement with citizens; and
- the difference in considering citizens as opposed to consumers.

7.2. There then followed a discussion, during which the following points were made:

- This is a good paper and the Annexes in particular are impressive, giving good visual representations of the issues.

- Many of the issues faced by the FSA in terms of consumer insight will inevitably be faced by other regulators across a range of sectors. NIFAC advises continued engagement with other regulators to see where information sharing can benefit the FSA.
- NIFAC also supports the suggestion in the paper of an enhanced role for the members of the FSA Board as well as members of NIFAC and WFAC in engaging with consumers. NIFAC members would also be keen to hear about upcoming citizen's group events.
- The work highlights the fact that there is no such thing as the typical consumer and that local data is essential.

7.3. The Chair thanked Ely Mirzahosseinkhan for assisting with the Committee's consideration of this paper.

8. Update from the FSA in NI Standards and Dietary Health Team.

8.1. The Chair welcomed Sharon Gilmore, the FSA in NI's Head of Standards and Dietary Health to the meeting to deliver a presentation on the work of this team. This was the fourth update of a series where the various teams within the FSA in NI take turns to provide updates to NIFAC about key activities and work carried out by that team. The presentation covered:

- the members of the Standards and Dietary Health Team;
- responsibilities of the team and the link to the FSA strategy 2015-2020;
- work on Food standards and partner organisations;
- standards enforcement and priorities;
- consumer insight;
- dietary health policy;
- NI specific evidence;
- work with the NI District Councils; and
- Successes and challenges.

8.2. There then followed a discussion, during which the following points were made:

- This was an excellent presentation and the whole team is to be congratulated for the scope and scale of the work carried out in Standards and Dietary Health. This is a particularly important area for the FSA with Northern Ireland as the only region where the FSA retains a dietary health responsibility.

8.3. The Chair thanked Sharon Gilmore for bringing this item to the Committee.

Any Other Business

8.4. No further business was raised and the meeting was closed. The next Open meeting will be held on 16 November.

TABLE OF ACTION POINTS

No	Action	To be actioned by	To be completed by
1.	To make arrangements for publication of the minutes of the NIFAC meeting on 6 July 2016.	Secretariat	16/11/2016
2.	To seek to include more detailed geographic breakdown of incidents for future reports.	Director	