

# Minutes of the themed meeting of the Welsh Food Advisory Committee held on 4 November 2025

## Present:

### Welsh Food Advisory Committee (WFAC) Members Attending:

- Dr Rhian Hayward, MBE, Chair
- Dave Holland
- Georgia Taylor
- Helen Taylor
- Jessica Williams
- John Richards

### Food Standards Agency (FSA) Officials Attending:

- Sian Bowsley – Director for FSA in Wales
- Sioned Fidler – Head of Communications, Welsh Language and Business Support
- Lucy Edwards – Senior Business Manager
- Christie O'Keefe - Business Manager
- Owen Lewis – Head of Policy
- Jonathan Davies – Head of Strategy
- Sarah Aza – Head of Delivery

## Presenters:

- Delyth Murray-Lines, Head of Hygiene Policy, FSA in Wales
- Neil Arbery, Head of Local Authority Partnerships, FSA in Wales
- James McCulloch, Agricultural Industries Confederation
- Simon Williams, Agricultural Industries Confederation
- Jacqui Thomas, Powys County Council
- Gareth Walters, Monmouthshire County Council

## **1. Introductions, apologies and minutes of the last meeting**

1.1 The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Apologies were noted from John Williams and Ifan Lloyd. The minutes of the July 2025 meeting were agreed.

## **2. Declaration of interests**

2.1 No new interests declared.

## **3. Animal Feed**

3.1 **Delyth Murray-Lines, Head of Hygiene Policy, FSA in Wales** – The presentation outlined the FSA's responsibility for feed safety and standards and the importance of feed as a critical part of the food chain and Welsh agricultural economy. Delyth explained that safe, traceable and properly regulated feed underpins both animal and human health, and set out the FSA's role as the Central Competent Authority across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Summarising the key pieces of legislation governing feed hygiene, marketing, labelling, traceability, additives and official controls, highlighting how these regulations safeguard food safety and environmental protection. The presentation also explained the division of responsibilities across government, including local authorities as delivery partners. The presentation concluded with an overview of emerging technologies—such as insects in feed and cell-cultivated feed materials—describing regulatory constraints, cross-government policy considerations, and the need for robust oversight to ensure safety as the industry evolves. Committee members discussed whether safe, treated food waste could play a bigger role in insect farming in future.

3.2 **James McCulloch, Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC)** - the presentation provided an overview of the work of the AIC, the main trade association representing the UK's agri-supply industry. James outlined AIC's structure, leadership and guiding principles, which focus on competitiveness, productivity and environmental improvement across agriculture. Explaining how AIC supports farmers and the wider food chain by providing policy influence, technical guidance, and trade assurance schemes that help maintain high feed and food safety standards. The presentation also highlighted the importance of agri-supply inputs—such as feed

materials and additives—and how global events like pandemics, conflict and climate change can disrupt supply chains. Key statistics showed the scale of AIC's role, including its extensive membership, its market coverage, and the thousands of professional farm advisers who operate across the UK. James advised of the AIC's policy priorities in Wales, including working with Welsh Government on agricultural policy, net zero objectives, water quality targets and future farm support schemes. He outlined current and emerging policy opportunities, such as improving feed material availability, developing novel proteins, reforming regulations and strengthening the UK's fermentation and feed additive sectors. James also gave an overview of how AIC manages risk within the feed supply chain and the types of developments that could support more resilient, sustainable feed production in the future.

**3.3 Neil Arbery, Head of Local Authority Partnerships** - the presentation detailed how animal feed inspections and enforcement are delivered in Wales, highlighting the roles of the Food Standards Agency (FSA), local authorities and industry partners. Describing the history behind the current system, noting that earlier audits identified serious weaknesses in how feed controls were being carried out, which led to the creation of a new regional delivery model in 2015. Neil explained that under this model, Wales is split into six regions, each led by a Regional Lead Feed Officer who coordinates inspections and ensures a consistent, risk-based approach. The presentation also outlined the challenges local authorities face, including limited staffing, an ageing workforce, rising inspection costs and a static budget. Neil informed that data shows trends such as the decline in the number of feed businesses, differences in compliance levels between farms and higher-risk premises, and how changes in reporting guidance created variations in Wales' compliance statistics compared with England. Noting that the system has improved but continues to face significant pressures that affect the delivery of feed controls.

**3.4 Jacqui Thomas, Powys County Council and Gareth Walters, Monmouthshire County Council** - described how regional teams in Wales help deliver animal feed inspections and enforcement, explaining the roles of local authorities, Regional Lead Feed Officers (RLFOs) and the wider governance structure. They outlined how the regional model works in practice, with each region agreeing a programme of work with the FSA and reporting progress through quarterly returns. Explaining how RLFOs play a key role by sharing best practice, providing training, supporting consistency, and helping solve operational challenges across Wales. They highlighted both the strengths of the model—such as better coordination, clearer processes and shared expertise—and the ongoing challenges, including maintaining accurate data, adapting to regulatory changes, managing resources, and keeping the system resilient in a changing environment. The presentation finished by explaining how the Animal Feed

Governance Group oversees delivery, monitors performance and identifies improvements, and by setting out future objectives such as strengthening the regional model, improving intelligence use, and updating the Feed Code of Practice.

**3.5 Simon Williams, AIC** - Simon explained how the Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC) supports feed and food safety through its trade assurance schemes and earned recognition arrangements. Simon informed of how AIC runs industry-led assurance schemes that cover feed materials, crop supply chains and feed manufacturing, supported by independent audits and clear rules for identifying and correcting non-compliances. Outlining how certification works in practice—from application and audit through to corrective actions and approval—and explaining the roles of certification bodies and trained auditors. He also highlighted the scale and impact of these schemes, showing high market coverage, low levels of feed safety incidents, and strong recognition by UK governments and EU schemes. Demonstrating how the AIC assurance provides confidence that feed businesses are operating safely, legally and consistently, while reducing the need for duplicate regulatory inspections.

**3.6 Committee discussion** - The meeting underscored the importance of animal feed to Wales' food supply, the need for consistent UK-wide standards, and the ongoing pressures on inspection and regulatory systems. It also highlighted significant opportunities in innovation—such as insect protein and biotechnology—and emphasised the need for collaboration between government, industry and regulators to support safe, sustainable animal feed production. Committee members explored topics including:

- Whether feed alerts are included within national food alerts.
- The potential for more sustainable feed ingredients.
- The impact of UK-wide regulatory delays on innovation.
- How industry, regulators and local authorities can work together more effectively.
- The importance of consistent standards across the UK nations.

3.7. Online participants raised questions about feed additive approval delays, pet-food labelling, and the possible reclassification of certain food wastes to allow sustainable insect farming.

#### **4. Chair's update**

4.1 The Chair gave an oral update on the September Board meeting in Belfast. The Chair also informed that Lindsay Horth will be joining the committee from the 1 December 2025.

#### **5. Directors report (Paper 25/11/02)**

5.1 The Director gave an oral update on the report which included Ministerial engagement, the WG review of the FSA in Wales and SPS.

#### **6. Any other business**

6.1 Members noted that the next themed meeting would be on 5 February 2026.

The Chair closed the meeting.