

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE OPEN MEETING OF THE WELSH FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 MARCH 2016 AT THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY, SOUTHGATE HOUSE, WOOD STREET, CARDIFF.**

**Present:**

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

Dr R Salmon - Chairman  
Mr R Alexander  
Dr N Barry  
Dr D H Jones  
Mr David Peace

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

Nina Purcell – Director, FSA in Wales  
Helen George – Secretariat  
Rod Ainsworth and Chris Harvey – via VC for item 1  
Kevin Hargin – via VC for item 2  
Bill Stow and Richard Collier – via VC for item 3

**1. Introduction and Apologies**

1.1 The Chairman welcomed members to the open meeting and notified those present of the guest speakers who would be presenting papers. Apologies for absence were noted from Mrs S Jones and Mr D Morgan.

**2. Minutes of the Last Open Meeting (Paper FSAW 16/03/01)**

2.1 The draft minutes of the meeting held, on 21 January were accepted as a true record of discussions. It was agreed that the final minutes should be translated and placed on the website. **Action: Secretariat**

**3. Report from Chairman (Paper FSAW 16/03/02)**

3.1 The Chairman presented his written report on the issues raised by the Board Chair at the Board meeting held in January 2016. In commenting on the report, in relation to discussions on the safe preparation and the serving of burgers pink or less than thoroughly cooked, the Chairman informed those present that the Chief Executive would be providing an update to the Board at its next meeting. Additionally, the Chairman informed members that the FSA would be consulting on advice for food businesses and local authority enforcement officers on the safe preparation and serving of burgers that are served pink or less than thoroughly cooked. It was agreed that both these documents would be circulated to the Committee. **Action: Secretariat**

#### **4. Director's Update (Paper FSAW 16/03/03)**

4.1 Members were pleased to receive a report from Nina Purcell, Director in Wales. The report is now published in advance with the committee papers on the FSA website. It contained a retrospective account and a forward look of activities in Wales. Members were updated on a number of issues specifically pertaining to Wales including the recent publication of a report for the National Assembly for Wales on the review of the Appeals System of the Statutory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in Wales, and work underway to map and model an approach to support local authorities in Wales in tackling food fraud in a way which protects consumers and complements the establishment of the National Food Crime Unit. The Committee congratulated the FSA in Wales on the launch of a new on-line interactive website (Cookin Castle Wales), developed to support the promotion of good for hygiene practices and healthier eating amongst primary school aged children across Wales. Members also commented favourably on the recent improvements made to the FSA's website enabling consumers to report more easily a food related problem.

#### **5. FSA Innovation Plan (Paper FSAW 16/03/04)**

5.1 The Committee considered the paper which outlined several streams of work which defined the FSA's approach to using and exploiting innovation and new technologies, and explained the proposed approach taken in the development of the FSA's Innovation Plan. In welcoming the plan, members made the following observations:-

- that they recognised that the Innovation Plan had been developed in response to a Westminster initiative (the Westminster Government Productivity Plan) and the FSA's unique position in this regard as both a Government department and a regulator;
- that there was a view that the Innovation Plan has presented the opportunity for the FSA to provide evidence to government, more widely and to consumers on the forward-looking approach that the FSA is taking to innovation and new technologies;
- that it was recognised that the FSA has liaised with other government departments and influenced, in a positive way, their responses;
- that the FSA's Innovation Plan respects a clear statement of approach, welcomed by stakeholders, which will be used to support delivery of the FSA's Strategic Plan to 2020;
- that in recognition of some of the responses to the consultation in relation to the need to help and support small businesses, that the committee welcomed that

this would be an area of particular focus in the FSA's Regulating Our Future programme of work; and

- that it felt that the early establishment of the proposed expert Committee on Innovation in the Food Chain, was very important in promoting the consumer's voice in food sector innovation, which, otherwise, ran the risk of being unduly industry driven.

5.2 The Committee concluded its considerations by supporting the FSA's approach to innovation and new technologies.

## **6. The Campylobacter Programme: Update on Progress and Next Steps (Paper FSAW 16/03/05)**

6.1 Members considered the paper which provided an update on progress being made in the Campylobacter reduction campaign and outlined proposals for the next phase of work to be undertaken. The Committee made the following points:-

- that it welcomed the positive achievements made to date in the Campylobacter reduction campaign, and in particular, the FSA's confidence that the 10% target will be met by the industry as a whole by 2016;
- that it was important that all retailers should commit to regular and synchronous publishing of their Campylobacter data and, in this respect, it welcomed the work being undertaken to seek this undertaking;
- that it noted that it had been proposed that independent quality control of the information coming from the retailers was vital and noted further that the intention appeared to be to entrust this activity to an independent third party rather than use directly FSA and Public Health England facilities;
- that it noted the FSA's intention of using publicity (essentially highlighting those retailers which are unwilling to share their data), as the means of making sure that this happened, rather than, for example, instituting further FSA led surveys or seeking some sort of enforceable legal framework;
- that it welcomed the growing list of interventions being developed and implemented in different combinations by different supply chains from farm to retail;
- that it supported proposals to focus on the contribution that smaller independent producers should make to reducing burden of foodborne illness related to Campylobacter; and
- that it questioned whether progress would be more intelligibly measured by using the actual numbers of laboratory confirmed cases reported to public

health authorities rather than presenting information to the public based on modelled numbers of cases.

6.2 The Committee discussed in particular detail, the need to ensure a situation where there is a high degree of transparency, on the part of the retailers regarding the levels of *Campylobacter* found in chicken. In this respect, members were concerned that the data being published by industry remained robust. The Committee was reassured to learn of proposals to submit the data to an independent body for scrutiny. Subject to the need to put in place such a mechanism of quality control to ensure the validity of data from industry, members concluded that they were content with the proposals that the Board would be asked to adopt.

## **7. The Stow Project Phase 2 (Paper FSAW 16/03/05)**

7.1 Members considered the paper which set out, subject to the successful conclusion of phase 1 (meat officials controls discount reform), the scope for phase 2 of the programme focussing on developing a sustainable funding model for meat official controls. In its considerations of the overall objective, the Committee suggested an alternative description for the overall purpose of the project as - to develop a sustainable funding model which takes account of the following:-

- agreement on the principles to underpin the sustainable funding model;
- consideration of the outcomes of the FSA's review of existing regulations and international best practice; and
- an assessment of technological advancements.

7.2 The Committee discussed the terms of reference for Phase 2 of the Steering Group on Meat Charging. In terms of membership of the group, it was noted with concern, that the FSA has been unsuccessful, to date, in securing both a consumer representative member and a representative of either of the Farmers' Union of Wales, the National Farming Union Cymru or Hybu Cig Cymru (Meat Promotion Wales). In this respect, members appreciated the efforts being made to address this. Subject to the observations above, the Committee welcomed and appreciated the opportunity to consider the proposed scope of phase 2 and expressed its appreciation of the work that this had required, particularly on the part of the project board's independent chair. The committee noted the full items that the FSA Board would be asked to agree, at its forthcoming meeting and had no difficulty overall with these.

## **8. Feedback from Committee Networks**

8.1 A member reported that a chair and 2 vice chairs have been appointed to the Welsh Food Government Industry Board.

## 9. Question and Answer Session

9.1 All questions raised by stakeholders who attended the meeting are reflected in the discussions above.

## 10. Any other Business

10.1 A member enquired about the current position in relation to the FSA's recommendation in 2014 for the mandatory fortification of bread or flour with folic acid, to reduce the risk of neural tube defects in foetuses. Members were aware of recent progress being made with this in Scotland. It was agreed that an update would be sought from Welsh Government, who have policy responsibility for this area of work in Wales. **Action: Secretariat**

10.2 A member enquired about the increased number of food hazard warnings being issued by the Agency. The Committee was informed that there had been an increase in the number of warnings issued in Wales as a consequence of a recent change in policy in relation to the issue of allergy notifications in Wales. It was agreed that enquiries would be made to establish whether there were other reasons for any increase. **Action: Secretariat**

10.3 The Committee noted that the next meeting would be 12 May 2016.

**ACTION POINTS**

Index	Action	By	Status
Para 2.1	Minutes of the January meeting to be translated and placed on website. Actioner: Secretariat	31 March 2016	Complete
Para 3.2	Circulate update and draft guidance on the safe preparation and service of burgers that are served pink or less than thoroughly cooked. Actioner: Secretariat	31 March 2016	Complete
Para 10.1	Seek update from Welsh Government in relation to its position on the mandatory fortification of bread or flour with folic acid. Actioner: Secretariat	31 March 2016	Complete
Para 10.2	To establish whether there has been an increase in the amount of food hazard warnings issued. Actioner: Secretariat	31 March 2016	Complete