

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE OPEN MEETING OF THE WELSH FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 JULY 2016 AT THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY, SOUTHGATE HOUSE, WOOD STREET, CARDIFF.**

**Present:**

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

Mr T Bennett – Interim Chairman  
Mr R Alexander  
Dr N Barry  
Mrs S Jones  
Mr D Morgan  
Mr D Peace

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

Nina Purcell – Director, FSA in Wales  
Lucy Edwards – Secretariat  
Helen George – Secretariat  
Vicki Reilly – Secretariat  
Steve Wearne – via VC for items 1, 2 and 3  
Jason Feeney and Richard Hoskins – via VC for item 4

**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 of absence were noted from Dr D H Jones.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

2.1 Committee members advised the following declarations of interest:-

- Norma Barry advised that she is a member of the Food and Drink Wales Industry Board.
- David Peace advised that he is non-executive chairman of Hall Mark group and business advisor to a farm-based food business in Monmouthshire.

2.2 All declarations were noted. No members withdrew from discussions.

**3. Minutes of the Last Open Meeting (Paper FSAW 16/05/01)**

3.1 The draft minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 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**

#### **4. Report from Chairman (Paper FSAW 16/07/02)**

4.1 The interim WFAC Chairman presented a written report on the issues raised by the FSA Board Chair at the Board meeting held in May 2016. In commenting on the report, the interim Chairman provided further feedback on the recent positive meetings that he and the Board Chair had with the newly elected Minister with responsibility for Social Services and Public Health in Wales (Rebecca Evans) and the newly elected Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for Environment and Rural Affairs in Wales (Lesley Griffiths). The Chairman informed that both Ministers had commented favourably on the FSA's proposals under the Regulating our Future programme in particular.

#### **5. Director's Update (Paper FSAW 16/07/03)**

5.1 The regular report from the Wales Director, Nina Purcell, informed members of changes in Ministerial responsibilities following the outcome of the May Assembly elections. It also detailed the next steps in relation to the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in Wales including new regulations, due to come into force in November 2016, requiring takeaway food businesses in Wales to publicise their food hygiene rating. In addition, the report highlighted a number of recent successful prosecutions in Wales, including one brought about by Newport City Council which involved the first use of the new sentencing guidelines in Wales for food offences.

5.2 In commenting on the report, the Wales Director informed the Committee of her attendance at the June meeting of Welsh Government's Food and Drink Industry Board where she took the opportunity to update the Committee on the FSA's proposals under the Regulating our Future programme.

#### **6. Update on Development of a Framework for Assessment of Foods Which May Present an Increased Likelihood of Harm (Paper FSAW 16/07/04)**

6.1 WFAC members considered the paper which provided an update on progress in developing a framework for the assessment of foods which may present an increased likelihood of harm. In discussion, members made the following observations:-

- the need for the framework document to capture clear objectives along with monitoring and evaluation criteria; and
- that it welcomed that the development of the framework, and its application, would be informed by an ad hoc working group with members drawn from several FSA scientific advisory committees.

6.2 Overall, the WFAC supported the development of the approach detailed within the paper and, in particular, in developing the revised framework further that *change* should be used as the key criterion to identify and to prioritise foods which might fall in scope for subsequent application under the framework.

## **7. An Update on Burgers Served Less than Thoroughly Cooked in Food Service Outlets (Paper FSAW 16/07/05)**

7.1 Members considered the paper which gave an update on all aspects of the work completed and in progress to implement the FSA's position, as adopted by the Board in September 2015, that the service of burgers that are not thoroughly cooked is unacceptable unless there are a range of controls in place. Members commented positively on the detail of the paper and on the presentation of the status table reporting progress against actions Board decisions.

During a detailed discussion on the paper the WFAC made the following points:-

- that there was continuing concern about the ability of local authority enforcement officers to validate that appropriate controls are in place, in a climate where local authority resources are reducing yet the market for burgers served less than thoroughly cooked is increasing;
- that it noted that feedback from local authorities, including authorities in Wales, has indicated that the enforcement officers have welcomed the revised guidance issued in May 2016, although some still have some outstanding concerns in relation to suppliers and consumer messaging which are indicated in paragraph 4.10 of the paper;
- the importance of clear consumer messaging in what is a complex area given the need to convey the messages on risks about burgers and the difference between cooking at home and eating out;
- that it welcomed the steps put in place to monitor incidence rates and foodborne outbreaks of STEC and the early intelligence being submitted by public health bodies of exceedances for gastrointestinal pathogens;
- continued concern that although an individual may make an informed choice to consume a burger that is less than thoroughly cooked, if health complications

arose this could pose a risk to other individuals, including those who may be vulnerable or elderly; and

- concern about source control within the supply chain. In particular, the low number of establishments which have indicated they have appropriate controls in place. These establishments take into account the microbiological criteria in EU legislation for meat that will not be cooked.

7.2 The WFAC was updated on discussions held with the ACMSF on 30 June in relation to the development of advice on time/temperature combinations to achieve a 4-log reduction in STEC. It noted that for risk assessment purposes, ACMSF guidance remained at a 6-log reduction.

7.3 A number of questions were raised on this paper by stakeholders who attended the meeting. Stakeholders were asked to submit a separate note to the FSA Executive to further elaborate on their concerns.

## **8. Antimicrobial Resistance (Paper FSAW 16/07/06)**

8.1 Members considered the paper which detailed the significant global threat of the emerging resistance of microbes to antimicrobial agents, including those critically important for human therapy. The WFAC noted that counteracting the threat of antibiotic resistance is a priority for the UK Government and the devolved administrations, and that the commitment to an integrated approach at national and international levels through actions set out in the UK Five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy. The WFAC made the following points:-

- the importance of setting outcomes in the Antimicrobial Resistance strategy in order to measure progress. In this context, it welcomed recommendation 3.4<sup>1</sup> of independent Review on Antimicrobial Resistance,<sup>2</sup> published on 19 May 2016, by Lord O'Neill; and
- that it recognised that the rise of antimicrobial resistance is considered to be a global crisis and, mindful of this, the WFAC highlighted the need to ensure that food imported from outside the EU, including foods from third countries, would need to be subject to a robust sampling regime.

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<sup>1</sup> Food producers and retailers to take steps should improve transparency for consumers regarding the use of antibiotics in the meat that we eat, to enable better informed decision-making by customers. As part of this we call on major producers, retailers and regulators to agree standards for 'responsible use', to be used as the basis for an internationally-recognised label, or used by existing certification bodies.

<sup>2</sup> The Review on Antimicrobial Resistance (2016) Tackling drug-resistant infections globally: Final report and recommendations. Available at: <http://amr-review.org/>

8.2 The WFAC concluded its discussions in agreeing the principles set out in the paper in relation to clear roles and responsibilities in executing the FSA's contribution to the UK Strategy on Antimicrobial Resistance.

## **9. Incidents and Resilience Annual Report 2015/16 (Paper FSAW 16/07/07)**

9.1 The WFAC considered the first annual report detailing the work of the FSA's incidents and resilience functions for the period 2015/16. The WFAC was briefed on the four main aspects of the report, which covered the number of incident notifications received and alerts raised, performance of the incidents and resilience functions in the FSA and in Food Standards Scotland, the ongoing programme of continuous improvement and work on preventative measures with industry partners.

In its discussions, the WFAC made the following observations:-

- that both the reactive and proactive work of the incidents and resilience function, and its robust procedures, makes an invaluable contribution to the FSA's strategic commitment to ensuring 'food we can trust';
- that it recognised that responsibility for consumer protection is shared between businesses, the FSA, public health bodies, parts of central and local government and consumers;
- that it is important that the incidents and resilience function continues to be informed by a lessons learnt approach to ensure that robust procedures and standards of operation are in place;
- that it welcomed proposals to undertake a project to review and enhance the effectiveness of product traceability, withdrawal and recall process and noted that a Stakeholder Reference Group was in the process of being established to support this work;
- that membership of the Stakeholder Reference Group would need to ensure appropriate representation from Wales and, in this respect, that it would be useful to have early discussions with the all Wales Food Safety Expert Panel about a possible nomination: and
- in noting proposals for Welsh Government to convene a food pilot incident exercise in 2016/17 that similarly, it would be useful to have early discussions with the all Wales Food Safety Expert Panel.

9.2 In its conclusions, the WFAC welcomed the report and commended the FSA's incidents and resilience function for delivering a number of key pieces of work against a backdrop of over 1,500 incident notifications and an increasing number of recalls and allergy alerts.

## **10. Feedback from Committee Networks**

10.1 No feedback to note.

## **11. Question and Answer Session**

11.1 All issues raised as part of the session are reflected in the comments above.

## **12. Any other Business**

12.1 The Committee noted that the next meeting would be 15 September 2016.

**ACTION POINTS**

Index	Action	By	Status
Para 3.1	Minutes of the May meeting to be translated and placed on website.	31 July 2016	Complete