



Meeting of the Northern Ireland Food Advisory Committee On 6 March at the FSA Offices, Belfast



**MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON 6 MARCH– FSA OFFICES, BELFAST.**

Agenda

1. 10.30 AM – Welcome and Introductions
2. 10.35 AM – Minutes of the Meeting of 29 November 2018
3. 10.40 AM – Chair's Update and Director's Report
4. 11.00 AM – The FSA and Animal Feed - **Gerard Smyth**
5. 11.20 AM – DAERA perspective - **Stephen Nixon**
6. 11.40 AM – NIGTA perspective - **Robin Irvine**
7. 12.00 PM – NIFAC Panel Discussion
8. 1.00 PM – AoB
9. 1.00 PM – **Close/Lunch**

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Paper for information
Update from Director for Regulatory Compliance, People and NI to NIFAC
6 March 2019.

Executive Summary

Attached is the FSA in NI Director's update to the Committee for March 2019. This report covers the period from 29 November to 27 February 2019.

- No action by members is necessary.

FSA Northern Ireland

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Food Is Safe

Feed Bilateral Meeting

FSA and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) feed officials met with officials from Ireland's Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) on 5 Dec. The main topic of interest was the UK's exit from the EU. Discussion included the Third Country Representative requirement for feed businesses exporting feed to the EU and the five-day notification requirement for business exporting feed into Ireland (as per their domestic S.I. No. 432 of 2009).

Feed Stakeholder Meeting

FSA in NI held a very well attended feed stakeholder meeting on 6 December, the large attendance being prompted by the uncertainty around EU Exit. Stakeholders were particularly interested in issues concerning cross border trade in feed post EU exit. There was extensive discussion around the requirement for third country representatives and the 5-day notification requirement for feed exports into Ireland. Robin Irvine from the Northern Ireland Grain Trade Association (NIGTA) updated the meeting on Food Fortress, now established for 4 years, covering 4-5 million tonnes of feed and all NI feed manufacturers.

Feed Threat Assessment Workshop 12 December

A representative from the Operational Policy and Delivery team attended a feed threat assessment workshop arranged by FSA colleagues in London. Participants included policy colleagues and key industry stakeholders. There was very useful input from all parties and the information collected will be used to inform the National Enforcement Priorities for animal feed for 2019/20.

Consultation – Provision of Allergen Information on Pre-Packed for Direct Sale.

Defra, FSA, Food Standards Scotland (FSS) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) are working together to review the current legal framework for allergen information for foods that are pre-packed for direct sale. A number of non-regulatory and regulatory policy options have been developed for consideration to improve the provision of allergen information for consumers. The four country formal [consultation](#) was launched on 25 January and is inviting responses from businesses and consumer groups, enforcement authorities and members of the public. A stakeholder meeting was held on 28 February in FSA in NI offices to provide further context and to encourage responses to the consultation.

Shellfish Stakeholder Working Group (SSWG) and DASSHH Project

The FSA in NI is contributing to the industry led project on Developing Assurance for Shellfish Safety and Human Health (DASSH). The Shellfish Stakeholders Working Group (SSWG) is the governance oversight of this project and the FSA in NI sits on this group with colleagues in FSA. This is a collaborative and multidisciplinary group exploring an innovative risk-based approach to shellfish production. The group will consider the variable environmental factors that may influence levels of contamination in shellfish in production areas. Belfast Lough is now one of three shellfish production areas included in the project outline.

FSA in NI held a meeting on 10 January to discuss the delivery of the NI element of this project. This meeting gained support and attendance from Seafish, Bangor University, the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, AFBI, DAERA and The Aquaculture Initiative. This was an opportunity to establish how we can integrate the body of work already undertaken in Belfast Lough into the wider UK project. The discussions and presentations from a diverse range of experts made significant strides in this project and we hope that emerging relationships will long outlast this project. Strong contributions by all signal a welcome commitment and highlights the integral role NI will play in the wider project.

FSA in NI attended a subsequent meeting of the SSWG on 17 January in London to discuss the wider DASSH project.

Shellfish and Water Quality Workshop

The FSA in NI attended a water quality and shellfish workshop on 13 and 14 February in Bangor University, Wales. This workshop was hosted by The Shellfish Centre, which is a research and innovation initiative supporting development of the shellfish sector. The Centre collaborates with businesses to deliver science to support growth. The focus of the workshop was on shellfish aquaculture and the related supply chain. The Shellfish Centre undertakes research within a series of well-defined collaborative projects with industrial and other external partners.

The overall aim of the workshop is to identify water quality issues that are most pressing/relevant to the shellfish sector and then to scope potential research topics that can address these priorities. Selected research projects may then be developed and delivered by the Shellfish Centre and its industry partners, or wider collaborations.

This workshop presented an overview of current shellfish related projects and research. This led to identification of potential cross cutting issues and solutions. FSA in NI supports this unified approach to research and would like to be kept informed on how such research may shape shellfish regulation and policy going forward.

Annual Shellfish Classification review

January marked the annual review of shellfish beds within NI. This body of work involves the review and analysis of microbiological results spanning back three years and will establish the new/updated classification for each shellfish bed within NI. The review indicated a generally stable classification set in comparison to previous years with only one bed being subject to change. Unfortunately, this change was in our one remaining A classification bed, however the FSA in NI in collaboration with CEFAS established a seasonal trend within this bed and issued a seasonal classification. This allowed the bed to remain Class A for 8 months of the year and Class B for the remaining 4 months. This seasonal classification will minimise burden on industry while maintaining public health protection.

Gathering and Using Science, Evidence and Information

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme - Consumer Focus Groups

Two consumer focus groups were held in Northern Ireland in December and January to explore consumers' views on potential changes and impacts to the food hygiene rating scheme (FHRS) as a result of some work on the Regulating Our Future (ROF) programme. The focus was on primary authority national inspection strategy and segmentation and the workshops provided an opportunity to gather consumer views and perceptions. The two consumer focus groups were part of a larger piece of research consisting of seven focus groups and 27 food business operator interviews across NI, Wales and England. The findings will be published in March.

Eating Well Choosing Better Steering group

The Eating Well Choosing Better (EWCB) programme supports small and medium sized businesses with food product improvement and providing smaller portion sizes to increase the availability of healthier products to help consumers make healthy choices. The Standards and Dietary Health team held their biannual EWCB Steering group meeting on 15 January. It was a very well attended meeting with members from Lidl, Musgrave, Compass, Irwin's Bakery, College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprises, Public Health England, Departments of Health in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The FSA updated all members on the current work of the Standards and Dietary Health team including a new tiered approach to Calorie Wise and the launch of scone report which analysed the nutritional content of scones available across Northern Ireland. All members then provided a brief update to the group on their current nutrition related work.

Scone Report

The FSA in NI and district councils issued a joint press release on 12 February 2019 in relation to their report on the Nutritional Content of Scones https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/nutritional-content-of-scones-report_0.pdf

The report was produced by FSA in NI following a district council survey of plain, fruit and luxury scones sold in 57 independent coffee shops across NI. The

samples were sent for analysis to determine the nutritional content per portion and per 100g. Key findings in the report included:

- The range of calories varied widely from 154kcal to 756kcal.
- The portion sizes of scones ranged from 44g to 233g.
- The largest scone was a fruit scone which weighed 233g. It contained the highest number of calories (756kcal) and the most sugar (39g).
- Generally, as portion size increased, the number of calories also increased.
- The average scone provided 20g of sugar (5 sugar cubes).
- The range of sugar per scone varied between 3.1g to 39.2g.
- The scone with the highest fat was a raspberry and white chocolate scone (22g). This scone also contained the most saturated fat (14g).
- The range of fat per scone varied between 3.4g to 22.7g.
- The average scone provided 1.9g of salt.
- The range of salt varied between 0.54g to 5.01g per scone.

The press release was included in all the NI daily newspapers on 12 February with excellent coverage in many national newspapers on 13 February. FSA in NI also participated in an interview on the report with a local radio station U105. The news coverage was also picked up by some bakery trading magazines.

Food Poverty Indicator Subgroup

The Food Poverty Indicator subgroup is chaired by FSA in NI and has representation from Department of Health, Safefood, NISRA and the Economic and Social Research Institute. The group reviewed existing food poverty indicators in NI (four EU SILC questions collected through the NI Health Survey) and compared these to indicators used in Ireland, the UK and other countries. Due to increasing pressure to collect statistics on other health related topics, the NI Health Survey may only be able to accommodate the current EU SILC questions every two years from 2019/20 onwards. The group are currently exploring the use of the Family Resources Survey, operated by the Department of Communities, to host additional food poverty questions.

Strategic Surveillance and Predictive Analytics

The FSA in NI attended a meeting on 6 February between the FSA's Strategic Surveillance Team and QUB staff undertaking similar work in the world of predictive analytics. This is exciting and innovative work that seeks to utilise the availability of "big data" and the growing ability to analyse this data. This work will ultimately result in earlier risk identification, efficient resource targeting and faster risk mitigation. The collaboration between the FSA and Queen's University gives this type of forward thinking analytics great potential to inform how we tackle food safety in the future.

Empowering Consumers

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme - on-line display

We have been working with stakeholders to voluntarily progress online display of food hygiene ratings. Mandatory online display will be required in due course,

however in the interim we have been working with Just Eat (the online aggregator providing the platform for numerous food establishment to sell their food online) to progress online display. Just eat is currently running a pilot that went live in January and sees all NI establishments on Just Eat profile displaying their food hygiene rating. We will continue to work with Just Eat during the pilot so that feedback can be used to develop future FHRS policy.

Calorie Wise

The FSA in NI received funding for a new temporary post to provide catering businesses with individual support in implementing Calorie Wise in a wide range of businesses in five council areas. The FSA in NI delivered two additional Calorie Wise workshops in partnership with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council during January 2019.

Minimum Nutritional Standards in District Councils

The FSA in NI is seeking to pilot implementation of the Minimum Nutritional Standards initially with two/three District Councils in NI. There has been discussion with four councils expressing interest in the project. So far, Belfast City Council and Fermanagh and Omagh Council have agreed to pilot the standards. Close links have been established with the post holder implementing the standards in Health and Social Care settings to facilitate shared learning and develop flexible tools and resources that can be used across different settings.

Aligning Incentives

ROF

A ROF and Food Standards Delivery update event was held for district councils in NI on Friday 1 February. The event provided district councils with an update on the FSA food standards delivery review, including the FSA Board's decision for a comprehensive redesign of the existing system and the four key areas which the review will cover (people, reporting and oversight, intelligence-led working and changing business behaviour). It also provided the district councils with an opportunity to influence the review and provide input to help design and develop the future delivery model.

Register a Food Business – Digital Service

The new digital registration service for food businesses has been piloted by ten LAs across England, Wales and NI with the involvement of two councils in NI. To date over 220 registrations have been made using the new service, providing valuable feedback which will be used to drive continuous improvement. The pilot councils in NI are now working with their information management providers to ensure that the new digital service can connect with their systems.

Being the Best Organisation We Can Be

Allergens Webinar

Representatives from the FSA in NI delivered a live webinar on allergens to GCSE and GCE teachers from several secondary schools across NI on 5 February. The

live webinar included information on the difference between allergy and intolerance, theories for the increase in allergens prevalence, legislative requirements, role of the FBO, FSA and consumers and the “easytoASK” campaigns. The webinar was recorded by CCEA for use as a future teaching resource.

Audit – Ards and North Down Borough Council

An audit was conducted from 11 to 13 December at Ards and North Down Borough Council focusing on Organisation and Management systems for the delivery of Official Controls.

Food Hygiene Focus Group meeting

The Food Hygiene Focus group includes representatives from Environmental Health and Trading Standards enforcement colleagues across England, Wales and NI. A representative from FSA in NI attended a meeting of the group in January. This group provide a valuable opportunity to update colleagues on current work within the FSA and to seek views on new and upcoming policy areas.

Legislation

Miscellaneous Amendments and Revocations Regulations

The Food (Miscellaneous Amendments and Revocations) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 came into operation on 11 February.

The Regulations draw food business operators’ and enforcement authorities’ attention to an amendment made to Directive 2001/112/EC relating to fruit juices and similar products by Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1040/2014, and to the requirements of Regulation No 2017/2158 on acrylamide.

The Regulations also make other miscellaneous amendments and revocations to domestic Northern Ireland legislation to ensure the accuracy and currency of the statute book in Northern Ireland in relation to food and feed before the UK exits the EU.

Information and Compositional Requirements Regulations

The Food Safety (Information and Compositional Requirements) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 were made on Tuesday 29 January 2019 and came into operation on 22 February 2019. The rule provides the enforcement regime for Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 2016/128 on foods for special medical purposes (FSMP) and the offences and penalties for breaching these new EU on FSMP, other than those for infants. It also amends the Medical Food Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 (S.R. 2000/187) to exclude FSMP, other than FSMP for infants, from the current statutory regime as well as making

provision for a transitional period for using up current stocks of FSMP, provided the products comply with the current requirements.

EU Exit

EU exit – DAERA Trade Transition Project Meeting

DAERA held a stakeholder event at the end of November to discuss their trade transition project. This project considers issues in relation to export controls and the event provided an opportunity to update stakeholders on progress with the project and on specific export issues post leaving the EU. The FSA in NI was invited to present at this event, which gave us an opportunity to update stakeholders, including industry representatives and enforcement colleagues, on import planning for when the UK leaves the EU and to answer some key industry concerns.

EU Exit – Imported Food Training

In preparation for EU exit, the FSA has been working with stakeholders to develop a number of training modules for enforcement authorities delivering imported food controls. The first course, an introduction to imported food legislation and enforcement was delivered on the 16 and 17 January to district council enforcement officers in Northern Ireland. We are currently developing four other imported food training courses. We continue to work with the Import/Export and Port Health sub-group to raise the awareness of imported food inland with our district councils and intend to take forward project work that will capitalise upon and reinforce the imported food training.

EU Exit Legislation

FSA in NI continues to work with FSA colleagues and other Government Departments, including Defra, DHSC, DAERA, the Department of Health as well as with legal advisors from the Departmental Solicitors' Office to ensure the retained EU law (UK Acquis) and the Northern Ireland domestic legislation remain fully operable after the UK's exit from the EU.

Very good progress has been made in relation to legislation required to amend the retained EU law and Northern Ireland domestic legislation as detailed below:

UK-wide Statutory Instruments

- FSA

The 15 UK-wide FSA Statutory Instruments (SI) amending the retained EU law covering food and feed hygiene and safety policy have been laid before

Parliament. The majority of these SIs will now be subject to debate, possibly in March.

The FSA has recently published guidance on health and identification marks for industry. The guidance can be viewed at the link below:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/health-marks-update-feb-19-final.pdf>

- DHSC

The UK-wide SI – the Nutrition (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 has been laid before Parliament and the first debate at the House of Commons is scheduled for 28 February 2019. This SI will make the necessary amendments to ensure that certain EU legislation relating to nutrition will continue to function effectively in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal in place.

- Defra

The two UK-wide SIs, namely the Food (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 which amend retained EU law relating to food labelling have been laid before Parliament.

Defra recently published guidance on food labelling changes after Brexit. This advice is for food producers, manufacturers, retailers and suppliers on the changes required to food labels if the UK leaves the EU without a deal. The guidance can be viewed at the below link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/food-labelling-changes-after-brexit>

The rules for what must be indicated on food labels will change for some food and drink products if the UK leaves the EU without a deal on 29 March 2019. Some of the new rules will come into effect from exit day. For others, businesses will have longer to update their food labels.

The UK government is aiming wherever possible to allow a transition period for labelling changes in relation to goods produced or imported and placed on the UK market after exit day.

Northern Ireland specific EU Exit legislation

The Nutrition (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 has now been cleared by sifting committees in Parliament as a negative statutory instrument and will come into force on Exit day. This instrument makes minor and technical amendments to ensure that Northern Ireland domestic legislation relating

to nutrition, composition and labelling continues to operate effectively after the UK's exit from the EU.

The Food (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 has also been cleared by sifting committees in Parliament as a negative statutory instrument and will come into force on Exit day. This instrument has made minor, technical amendments to ensure that the Northern Ireland domestic legislation relating to food compositional standards and labelling continues to operate effectively after the UK leaves the EU.

Food and Feed Hygiene and Safety (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 was laid on 11 February before the sifting committees in Parliament. This instrument will make minor, technical amendments to ensure that Northern Ireland domestic legislation in relation to food and feed hygiene and safety continues to operate effectively after the UK leaves the EU.

The Regulated Products (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 was also laid on 11th February before the sifting committees in Parliament. This instrument will make a number of minor, technical amendments to ensure that Northern Ireland domestic legislation in relation to regulated products continues to operate effectively and corrects deficiencies arising from the withdrawal of the UK from the EU.

M Jennings
Director for NI and Organisational Development.

NIFAC Discussion

Animal Feed

Executive Summary

This is the first of NIFAC's themed meetings to take place in the Committee's new way of considering issues and advising the FSA. At their meeting, planned for June 2019, the FSA Board will be considering a paper on Animal Feed. The delivery model for feed was modernised prior to the Regulating Our Future (ROF) programme and the FSA now have an approach to feed controls already largely compatible with ROF principles. The Board paper in June will seek to explain the new model with a view to strengthening the new feed model.

To give some background on the FSA's approach to Animal Feed, Gerard Smyth (FSA in NI Senior Advisor in Primary Production) will give a brief presentation and introduce two further speakers, Stephen Nixon of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and Robin Irvine of the Northern Ireland Grain Trade Association to allow NIFAC members to hear those perspectives. There will then be a panel discussion to allow NIFAC members to ask questions of the speakers to help inform the Committee's advice to the FSA on this issue.

Members are invited to:

- Consider the content of the presentations.
- Comment and give advice.

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