

**PAPER FOR DISCUSSION
MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING ON 6 JULY 2016**

Executive Summary

Attached are the minutes of the 6 July NIFAC open meeting.

Members are invited to:

- Agree minutes as a true record of proceedings.

FSA Northern Ireland

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REF NIFAC MINUTES 4/16

**OPEN MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND FOOD ADVISORY
COMMITTEE (NIFAC) ON 6 JULY 2016, 10.00AM, AT THE FSA OFFICES,
BELFAST.**

Those present:	FSA
<p><u>NIFAC members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Henrietta Campbell – Chairman.• Aodhan O’Donnell.• Christine Kennedy.• Phelim O’Neill.• Colin Reid.• Elizabeth Mitchell.• Brian Smyth. <p><u>Apologies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• David Lindsay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Michael Jackson –NI Head of Local Authority Policy and Delivery.• Roberta Ferson – NI Head of Finance, Business Support and Communications.• 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">• Nick Laverty – Hygiene Delivery Branch.• Javier Dominguez – Food Safety Policy team.• Paul Cook – Head Of Microbiological Risk Assessment.• Jason Feeney – Chief Operating Officer.• Richard Hoskin – Head Of Incidents & Resilience. <p><u>Apologies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maria Jennings – Director for Northern Ireland and Organisational Development.

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. It was explained that NIFAC member David Lindsay would not be able to attend the meeting and had passed on his apologies. This would have been the last meeting within David Lindsay's appointment. The Chair paid tribute to his contribution throughout his appointment. These sentiments were echoed by the Committee.
- 1.2. It was also explained that this would be the final NIFAC meeting within the Chair's term of appointment. The process of appointing a new Chair is underway and is expected to be completed soon though, as the appointment requires the approval of the Ministers with Health responsibilities in Westminster as well as the devolved administrations, the process can take some time to complete.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 11 May 2016.

- 2.1. The Chair asked if there were any comments on the minutes of NIFAC's open meeting on 11 May. The Secretariat explained that an error had been detected and rectified at heading 2 of the minute as included in the papers. No other amendments had been suggested previously by NIFAC members. No further 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 11 May 2016.

3. Chair's Report and Director's Update

- 3.1. Michael Jackson updated the Committee on items from the Director's report contained in the meeting papers, including:
 - Multi-Agency Livestock Meeting;
 - Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS);
 - Local Authority Liaison; and
 - Programme for Government Engagement.
- 3.2. On the Multi-Agency Livestock Meeting, it was explained that the FSA in NI had been working closely with partner organisations to counter criminality. Officials had also been working closely with their counterparts in the Republic of Ireland to ensure that issues of interpretation are dealt with consistently.
- 3.3. It was explained that there is a target of October for the implementation of the statutory scheme for food hygiene ratings. This would be contingent on the secondary legislation being in place.

- 3.4. On the Local Authority Liaison item, it was explained that there were new working arrangements in place for working with District Councils as a consequence of Local Government Reform.
- 3.5. It was explained that the new Programme for Government represents a new approach in Northern Ireland. There will be a challenge for non-ministerial departments to ensure that they are adequately represented. It was queried whether NIFAC should provide a response to the consultation on the delivery plan for the Programme for Government. Michael Jackson suggested this would be appropriate and that as the next meeting would fall within the consultation period, this should be included on the agenda.

Action Point – Secretariat to ensure that Programme for Government consultation response is on the agenda for the NIFAC Open meeting in September.

4. Update on development of a framework for assessment of foods which may present an increased likelihood of harm. & An update on burgers served less than thoroughly cooked in food service outlets.

4.1. The Chair welcomed Nick Laverty and Patrick Miller of the FSA's Hygiene Delivery Branch, to introduce the above papers, by video link from the FSA's office at Aviation House in London with the FSA's Head Of Microbiological Risk Assessment, Paul Cook, joining the meeting by teleconference. The paper covered:

- the risky foods ad-hoc advisory group;
- the time-table for presentation of the final framework;
- the use of change as a driver for the framework;
- clarification of the approach taken with rare-burgers;
- the position previously agreed with the FSA Board; and
- providing an update as well as seeking comments on the message to consumers.

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

- It was encouraging to hear the membership of the ad-hoc expert advisory group. The membership gives confidence that the expertise and experience required is there.
- If change is to be the driver for the application of the framework, it will be key, not only to be clear about what will be considered to constitute a change, but also to examine how we will know that change has occurred.
- Applied to the serving of burgers less than well done, this raises particular complexities for a regulator seeking to balance consumer choice with maintaining an awareness of the risks consumers are being

asked to consider. This complexity means that the FSA needs to communicate 3 separate messages on burgers. Firstly, when cooking at home, the FSA must advise consumers to ensure burgers are cooked thoroughly. Secondly, when eating in an establishment, which has an advisory statement about their burgers and measures in place to minimise risks. Thirdly, there will need to be a message about how consumers should expect their burger to be cooked when eating in an establishment that has no such plan for minimising risks. This will present a considerable communications challenge for the FSA and it is good to hear that a communications plan has been agreed. Where controls are in place, consumers should know.

- It is reassuring to note that, where businesses are being made aware of the measures they will need to have in place in order to safely offer burgers less than thoroughly cooked, they often reassess the value of offering this choice. Anecdotal evidence from around the table at the meeting suggested that restaurants will often refuse customers the option where it is requested and the establishment is not equipped to provide it safely. This is encouraging.
- The proposals for an enhanced review of PHE epidemiological evidence, including the mining of the STEC enhanced surveillance system, is welcomed and similar arrangements should be considered for NI through the Public Health Agency. However, it is recognised that the level of reported cases of STEC in NI is significantly lower than in England, many of which are not associated with food and, as VTEC tends to peak in NI during the 3rd quarter of the year, caution is advised should early figures from the new system of monitoring, to be in place by September 2016, appear optimistic.
- Though currently not a common feature of establishments that cater for customers seeking burgers less than thoroughly cooked, for the purposes of future proofing the policy on consumer messaging, it may be beneficial to consider challenges posed by such food when ordered remotely, whether by phone or over the internet.
- There will also be a challenge for Local Authorities to regulate and this will need care given existing pressures on local government.
- There has clearly been a huge amount of work done to get this point and the FSA is to be congratulated.

4.3. The Chair thanked Nick Laverty, Patrick Miller and Paul Cook for bringing this paper to NIFAC for consideration.

5. Antimicrobial resistance.

5.1. The Chair welcomed Javier Dominguez of the FSA's Food Safety Policy team to the meeting to introduce this item by video link from the FSA's office at Aviation House. The presentation covered:

- the significance of the threat posed by antimicrobial resistance;
- the O'Neill report;
- increasing concerns about the use of antibiotics in agriculture and livestock; and
- the role for the FSA.

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

- This paper is welcome and is the first paper on this topic to be considered in a long time. It is not entirely clear what the FSA's role is in tackling the problem of antimicrobial resistance and, in particular, where the FSA will lead. It was reassuring to hear that the Department for Health in Northern Ireland hosts an expert group on the issue including representatives from the FSA as well as DAERA.
- The problem of antimicrobial resistance is well known and it behoves all sectors to do what is needed to ensure the public's safety. There has been an increase, in the United States, of producers certifying poultry as antibiotic free and it is interesting to hear about research being carried out both in academia as well as by industry in Northern Ireland. Regulations can help to protect individual consumers, while movements such as 'no antibiotics ever' in the US concern how food is produced more widely.
- NIFAC endorses the aspirations of the paper. The next step would include a delivery plan and NIFAC look forward to seeing how this will develop.

5.3. The Chair thanked Javier Dominguez for this update.

6. Update from the FSA in NI Operational Policy and Delivery Team.

6.1. The Chair welcomed Kirsten Dunbar, the FSA in NI's Head of the Operational Policy and Delivery team to the meeting to deliver an update on the work of the team in NI. The presentation covered:

- the staff within the Operational Policy and Delivery team;
- the team's responsibilities;
- work around residues, stakeholder engagement and zoonoses;
- responsibility for various workstreams ;

- key Performance Indicators;
- dairy hygiene work and the expansion in the sales of raw drinking milk; and
- upcoming work;

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

- This was an extremely impressive presentation. NIFAC frequently becomes aware of the work of individual teams as the result of a discrete piece of work and the day-to-day work of officials within the NI office can frequently go unrecognised. It is clear from this presentation that a significant amount of work is carried out as a matter of routine.

6.3. The Chair thanked Kirsten Dunbar for bringing this item to the Committee.

7. Annual Report on the handling of incidents covering the period up to the end of March 2016.

7.1. The Chair welcomed Jason Feeney, the FSA's Chief Operating Officer and Richard Hoskin, the FSA's Head Of Incidents & Resilience to the meeting to introduce the above paper by video link from the FSA's office at Foss House in York. The presentation covered:

- a reminder of the resilience function and the 24 hour incident response capability;
- the responsibility to ensure participation in UK government resilience matters;
- the 3 nation approach;
- numbers of notifications and recalls 2015/16;
- exercise Prometheus;
- new drill and exercise plan; and
- collaborative work with industry to mitigate herb and spice recalls.

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

- This was a helpful paper and it was good to see a structured process for capturing the lessons learnt from previous incidents. It is also encouraging to hear evidence of the close working relationship between the incidents teams in the 3 nations and the approach to devolution throughout this paper is to be commended.
- The importance of this work, and the fact that however many incidents are averted, we are only ever one incident away from reputational damage should it be mishandled, comes through strongly in the paper and the resilience and strength of the organisation is well presented.

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

8. Eatwell Plate Refresh.

8.1. The Chair welcomed Joanne Casey, of the FSA in NI's Standards and Dietary Health team to the meeting to deliver a presentation, requested at the previous NIFAC meeting, on the refresh of the Eatwell Guide. The presentation covered:

- the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) Carbohydrate and Health Report July 2015;
- the change from the 'Eatwell Plate' to the 'Eatwell Guide';
- other changes;
- portion size;
- the sections of the guide;
- information from the National Diet and Nutrition Survey and Kantar Worldpanel;
- sources of added sugar for children in NI aged 11-18.
- hydration;
- front of pack labelling; and
- key recommendations.

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

- This was an excellent presentation conveying some quite concerning statistics around nutrition in Northern Ireland, particularly for younger people.
- The guide would be particularly useful for schools and it is good to hear about engagement with the Home Economics teachers' conference and other activities to ensure a widespread distribution.

8.3. The Chair thanked Joanne Casey for bringing this item to the Committee.

Any Other Business

8.4. This meeting represented the last Open meeting of NIFAC within the tenure of Henrietta Campbell's Chairmanship. NIFAC members paid tribute to the Chair as a vociferous champion of food issues pertinent to Northern Ireland's consumers and a powerful voice for the Committee within the FSA Board whose Chairmanship had established a collegiate and effective working relationship between members and with the FSA effective.

8.5. No further business was raised and the meeting was closed. The next Open meeting will be held on 14 September.

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 11 May 2016.	Secretariat	14/9//2016
2.	To ensure that Programme for Government consultation response is on the agenda for the NIFAC Open meeting in September.	Secretariat	14/9//2016