

**Open Meeting of the  
Northern Ireland Food  
Advisory Committee On 28  
November at the FSA  
Offices, Belfast**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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## Agenda

1.	1.45 PM	–	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>
2.	1.50 PM	–	Minutes of the Open meeting of 13 June 2018
3.	1.55 PM	–	Chair's report and Director's Update
4.	2.10 PM	–	Allergens update - <b>Louise Connolly</b>
5.	2.40 PM	–	Incident Management post EU exit - <b>Philip Randles</b>
6.	3.10 PM	–	Regulating Our Future - Review of Delivery of Food Standards Official Controls and Next Steps – <b>Michael Jackson</b>
7.	3.40 PM	–	Progress and Future Direction of Social Science in the FSA - <b>Michelle Patel</b>
8.	4.10 PM	–	Raw Drinking Milk (RDM) Triggers for Review - <b>Michael Wight</b>
9.	4.40 PM	–	EU Exit Update - <b>Rod Ainsworth</b>
10.	4.55 PM	–	AOB
11.	5.00 PM	–	<b>Close</b>

**PAPER FOR DISCUSSION  
MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING ON 11 September 2018**

**Executive Summary**

Attached are the minutes of the 11 September 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 3/18**  
**OPEN MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND FOOD ADVISORY**  
**COMMITTEE (NIFAC) ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2018, 12.50PM, AT THE FSA**  
**OFFICES, BELFAST.**

<b>Those present:</b>	<b>FSA Executive</b>
<p><u>NIFAC members</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colm McKenna – Chairman</li> <li>• Christine Kennedy</li> <li>• Elizabeth Mitchell</li> <li>• Lorraine Crawford</li> <li>• Sara McCracken</li> <li>• Fiona Hanna</li> <li>• Aodhan O'Donnell</li> </ul> <p><u>Apologies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phelim O'Neill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seth Chanas – NIFAC Secretariat</li> <li>• Maria Jennings – FSA Director for NI, People and Organisational Change</li> <li>• Sharon Gilmore – FSA in NI Head Standards and Dietary Health</li> </ul> <p><u>By Video/Teleconference</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Julia Williams – Animal Welfare &amp; Delivery Assurance Lead</li> <li>• Philip Randles – Acting Head of Incidents &amp; Resilience Unit</li> <li>• Michael Jackson – Head of Standards &amp; Assurance</li> <li>• Sharon Gilmore – Head of Standards and Dietary Health in NI</li> <li>• Paul Cook – Head of Microbiological Risk Assessment</li> <li>• Michael Wight – Interim Director of Policy</li> </ul>

**1. Welcome and introductions**

1.1. The Chair welcomed all NIFAC members to the meeting, noting apologies from NIFAC member Phelim O'Neill.

**2. Minutes of the meeting of 3 March 2018.**

2.1. The Chair asked if there were any comments on the minutes of NIFAC's open meeting on 13 June. No issues were raised and the Secretariat agreed to publish the minutes.

**Action Point 1 - Secretariat to arrange for the publication of the minutes of the 13 June NIFAC Open meeting.**

**3. Chair's Report and Director's Update**

- 3.1. The Chair updated the Committee on discussions at the Board's Open meeting in June explaining that the review of the FACs had been discussed and approved. Implementation will now need to be considered and will be considered at a future closed session meeting.
- 3.2. He also informed the Committee about the FSA Chair's recent visit to Northern Ireland. The aim of the visit was to hold discussions with the Permanent Secretaries of various key departments. Unfortunately, some of the Permanent Secretaries had to cancel but she was able to hold discussions with Noel Lavery, Permanent Secretary for the Department for the Economy.
- 3.3. The Director explained that her report had been included within the papers and highlighted the following items:
  - FSA and Food Standards Scotland (FSS) Review of Cutting Plants and Coldstores;
  - Regulating Our Future – Business start-up and enhanced registration;
  - EU Exit; and
  - Conferences
- 3.4. On the FSA/FSS review of cutting plants and coldstores the Director noted that the review included a helpful and well-attended event to improve the way in which cutting plants and coldstores are regulated.
- 3.5. She explained that the enhanced registration system was now starting with East Antrim Council having gone live on the 10 September. She explained that it was hoped that there would be full coverage soon.
- 3.6. The Director drew attention to the updates in her report around EU exit including the import workshop, the re-badging process, work around common frameworks and legislative work.
- 3.7. She then mentioned the range of conferences mentioned in the report, highlighting the World Health Organisation Healthy Cities conference, where the Dietary Health team will be further highlighting the Calorie Wise scheme.

**4. Animal Welfare**

- 4.1. The Chair welcomed Julia Williams, the FSA's Animal Welfare & Delivery Assurance Lead, to the meeting by video link to introduce this item on a paper due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board, which

gives an update on FSA activities to drive improvements under the “Deter, Prevent, Detect, Enforce” animal welfare programme in slaughterhouses in England and Wales. The presentation covered:

- the work taken place in the preceding 12 months focussing on non-stun slaughter;
- work with the poultry industry;
- the focus on injuries apparent on arrival at abattoir;
- stakeholder engagement;
- the difficulties presented by camera placement for gas and water stunning;
- the 5 November compliance deadline; and
- the position in NI and Wales.

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

- It is reassuring to hear the measures that the FSA has been taking to ensure that all premises are aware of their obligations following the 5 November deadline and also aware of the implications of failure to comply after that date.
- It is encouraging to hear that DAERA are kept apprised of the legislation in England and Wales through the Veterinary Technical Portfolio Group and has been proactive in discussing and considering the aptitude of the requirements of that legislation for NI slaughterhouses.

4.3. The Chair thanked Julia Williams for bringing this paper to NIFAC for consideration.

## **5. Annual Incidents and Resilience Report**

5.1. The Chair then welcomed Philip Randles, the FSA’s Acting Head of Incidents & Resilience Unit, by video link to introduce an item on a paper due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board providing the annual report ending March 2018 of the FSA’s incidents and resilience function. The presentation covered:

- an overview of the work of the team and future, planned activity;
- the 4 nations approach;
- numbers of incidents and the increase on the previous year;
- incident preparedness;
- the recalls process;
- EU exit and response capability;
- Possible continued access to the RASSF network; and
- a description of the Infosan system;

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

- While the UK position to negotiate full access to the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) network is supported, there is confidence given by the increase in engagement with the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), to provide a channel for communicating food safety issues should access to RASFF be lost following the UK's exit from the EU.
- The relationship with Food Standards Scotland (FSS) and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) will also be key considerations and it is welcomed that cooperation with these bodies is regular and constructive. The principle that the best route for engagement with FSAI is through the FSA's team in NI is also endorsed.
- The detail given in the paper and the discussion of the relationships the FSA has established gave a clear indication of the way in which the FSA has matured in dealing with incidents and how lessons from previous incidents been incorporated into practice.
- The difference between the remit of the NFCU and that of the Incidents and Resilience Unit, which focusses on food safety issues, is noted but there will inevitably be a significant area of overlap and food crime can quickly lead to food safety issues through unscrupulous operators.

5.3. The Chair thanked Philip Randles for this update.

## **6. Regulating Our Future – Assurance Framework for Primary Authority National Inspection Strategies and Impact for FSA Structure**

6.1. The Chair welcomed Michael Jackson, the FSA's Head of Standards & Assurance, to present, by video link, this item on a paper due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board giving an update on progress made to explore Primary Authority national inspection strategies (NIS). The presentation covered:

- the three substantive areas covered by the report;
- the focus on the delivery model;
- pathfinder trials for delivery of NIS;
- the impact of issues related to regulatory assurance; and
- future activities.

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

- Although modernisation of the delivery model, particularly with regard to assurance, should not be constrained by the current operation of the



Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), the introduction of NIS will result in some premises being inspected less frequently affording fewer opportunities to refresh ratings through LA inspections. There will be a challenge in marrying the two processes and ensuring that FHRS is protected. This will be especially challenging in NI as the Food Hygiene Rating Act only allows for a rating to be derived through an inspection carried out by a District Council.

- The position for NIS in Northern Ireland is distinctly different from England and Wales as the legislation under which Primary Authority operates does not relate to the food safety regulatory function. It was good to hear that the Environmental Health NI group may consider revisiting their Statement of Intent in relation to the operation of Primary Authority in Northern Ireland. NIFAC also endorsed the FSA's approach to considering the barriers and challenges to implementing a form of NIS for the NI Councils to allow them to consider businesses operating multiple establishments in NI as single entities rather than as a number of outlets.

6.3. The Chair thanked Michael Jackson for bringing this item to the Committee.

## **7. Standards and Dietary Health Update – Partnership Working**

7.1. The Chair welcomed Sharon Gilmore, the FSA in NI's Head of Standards and Dietary Health, to the meeting to present an update on Partnership Working as part of a series of presentations from the FSA in NI's Standards and Dietary Health team. The presentation covered:

- the strategic context;
- the positive change in attitude of NI Councils;
- the Fitter Future for All framework and the role of the Councils and the Health and Wellbeing sub-group;
- the governance structure;
- the Calorie Wise scheme;
- work with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust;
- reformulation opportunities;
- opportunities for community-based collaboration; and
- minimum nutrition standards.

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

- This was an extremely interesting presentation and the FSA in NI's approach to engaging with the District Councils is commended. To further progress engagement and the inclusion of the FSA dietary health policy into the Community Plans, it is recommended that a lead Council should be sought, to hold up as an exemplar to the others.

- It was good to hear the Peas Please initiative mentioned, which NIFAC heard about at a previous meeting. As the project is still seeking a partner organisation it is recommended that Food NI and Mash Direct may make potential partners for this project if approached.

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

## **8. Update on The FSA's Science Activities on Antimicrobial Resistance Including the Report of The ACMSF Task and Finish Group**

8.1. The Chair welcomed Paul Cook, the FSA's Head of Microbiological Risk Assessment, to the meeting by video link from the FSA's Office at Clive House in London, to introduce an item on a paper due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board. The presentation covered:

- previous Board discussions on AMR;
- work taking place across government; and
- the two major sections of the paper – the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food and the activities of the FSA.

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

- It is reassuring to hear that the FSA are promoting the seriousness of the issue and the FSA Director Science and Policy Steve Wearne's position on Codex had been beneficial in ensuring that this issue remained on the agenda internationally. It is also welcome to hear about the role of the Chief Medical Officer in maintaining momentum on this issue.
- The challenges of securing the funding for the necessary work is noted. Retailers, who are also concerned about antimicrobial resistance, have also undertaken research projects, often in partnership with academia and it is good to learn that the FSA is exploring these avenues to get necessary data. The balance between moving fast enough and undermining public confidence is noted, and the importance of simple hand-hygiene and cross contamination protection methods in food preparation to reduce microbial counts and the implications of antimicrobial resistance for the importance of food hygiene is emphasised.

8.3. The Chair thanked Paul Cook for bringing this item to the Committee.

## **9. Risk Analysis: Process, Governance, Communication**

9.1. The Chair welcomed Michael Wight, the FSA's Interim Director of Policy, to the meeting by video link to introduce this item on a paper due to be discussed at the upcoming meeting of the FSA Board setting out how elements of an effective regulatory regime are being further developed in preparation for EU Exit. The presentation covered:

- the risk analysis process;
- current mechanisms for determining risk involving the EU;
- the principle on which the FSA's capacity for risk analysis will operate following EU exit;
- potential challenges; and
- recruitment and restructuring of the Scientific Advisory Committees.

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

- Access to the information coming out from EFSA and other European institutions will be key to avoid unnecessary expense and duplication of gathering this evidence independently. The approach outlined of seeking to maintain a watching brief on EFSA evidence is endorsed.
- Capacity comes out in the paper as a key risk and it is welcome to hear about the high number of applicants the FSA had received in being able to meet this challenge bearing in mind that the quality of the applicants is always the key to successfully fulfilling capacity requirements. There will be an ongoing question about where the FSA will continue to get evidence on Standards and Dietary Health to fulfil its remit in Northern Ireland.

9.3. The Chair thanked Michael White for this update.

### **Any Other Business**

9.4. No further business was raised and the meeting was closed. The next Open meeting will be held on 28 November.

### **ACTION POINTS**

Action Point 1 - Secretariat to arrange for the publication of the minutes of the 13 June NIFAC Open meeting.

**PAPER FOR INFORMATION**

**Update from Director for NI, People and Organisational Change to NIFAC  
28 November 2018.**

**Executive Summary**

Attached is the FSA in NI Director's update to the Committee for November 2018. This report covers the period from 31 August 2018 to 21 November.

- No action by members is necessary.

FSA Northern Ireland

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## **Food Is Safe**

### **Safe Catering Guide**

The FSA in NI have set up a consultative group to deliver the recommendations outlined within the evaluation of the Safe Catering Guide, which was prepared by BMG Research on behalf of the FSA.

This group will provide a platform for sharing ideas across a range of stakeholders including Councils, Industry and the Education Authority. This diverse group will ensure sure any developments are fit for purpose and represent all.

Consultative Group Objectives:

- Develop content to reflect the recognised risk associated with Allergens
- Develop content to reflect the new acrylamide requirements
- Review current content to ensure it is “user friendly”

It is expected the consultative group will meet on three occasions. The initial meeting will occur late November followed by two meetings the new year.

### **Shellfish Stakeholder Working Group**

The FSA in NI are now members of the Shellfish Stakeholders Working Group (SSWG) alongside our colleagues in the wider 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. Members of SSWG have agreed to meet with interested parties in Belfast to discuss the NI element of this project and outline next steps. This is a welcome commitment from the SSWG and highlights the integral part NI will play in the wider project.

### **Aquaculture Security QUB**

The FSA in NI attended a forum on 9 November at Queen’s University Belfast (QUB) to discuss a research project on Aquaculture Security. This project was an evaluation of the current and emerging threats to the sector in Northern Ireland and sought to understand the challenges and opportunities which exist from the Stakeholders Perspective. The research involved interviews with different farmers and governing bodies including the FSA in NI. In general, the research highlighted a number of challenges within the Aquaculture Industry including environmental, regulatory and political factors. Although the potential impact of micro, chemical and toxin contamination was considered, the implementation of regulatory controls, monitoring plans and associated actions were seen in a positive light and ensure customers and potential new markets can have confidence in the produce. The forum was well attended with representation from industry, DAERA, the Aquaculture Initiative, AFBI, Crown Estate, QUB and FSA in NI. The presented research and forum outcomes will be considered and recommendations will be shared. The FSA in NI are keen to collaborate and contribute with the various stakeholders where needed.

### **Shellfish Bed Closures**

The Food Standards Agency's biotoxin monitoring programme identified high biotoxin levels in two Shellfish Beds in August 2018. The FSA alongside our District Council delivery partners had both beds closed to ensure no potentially contaminated product reached the consumer. An increased sampling frequency was initiated to investigate the incident and monitor the levels of biotoxin in the shellfish. The investigations and evidence identified that only mussels were affected and oysters from the same bed remained unaffected. Following a review of all available evidence, and in line with regulatory flexibilities, one bed was opened for oyster harvesting. This alleviated unnecessary burden on industry whilst maintaining protection of public health. Both mussels and oysters continued to be subject to increased sampling frequencies as part of the investigation and both beds were opened in early November. This biotoxin incident highlights the effective controls in place to flag exceedance prior to product being made available to the consumer, therefore mitigating any health risk and associated withdrawal/recall.

### **Review of Approvals and Meeting of the FSA in NI Approvals Forum**

FSA in NI and district councils commenced a review of the approval process for food establishments earlier this year to ensure there was consistency of application across the eleven council areas and if necessary to agree an action plan for continuous improvement. Review of approvals phase two has now progressed with councils completing internal reviews and inter-authority verification audits. Results are being collated and a report will be written up by FSA staff in the next three to six months. Recommendations will follow and inform phase three of the review.

The NI Approvals Forum met on 11 October when members discussed progress with the review and agreed as an immediate measure to use a new template form for notifying the FSA regarding approvals. This form will be used by Northern Ireland Councils when notifying the FSA in NI regarding Approvals. The form was created to aide consistency and reduce administrative burden for all parties involved in the notification process. It is hoped the form will provide a standardised approach and will be mutually beneficial for both the FSA and Councils. It will also support the accurate and timely updating of published approved premises lists.

### **Review of Cutting Plants and Coldstores**

The FSA in NI continue to be closely involved in the Review of Cutting Plants and Coldstores. Following the issue of the detailed report and board paper that was discussed at the joint FSA/Food Standards Scotland (FSS) Board meeting in October, the list of recommendations is now being considered for allocation to relevant workstream leads for development so that the implementation phase can progress.

### **Strategic Review of Official Controls – Meat, Milk and Wine**

Now that the Review of Cutting Plants and Coldstores has entered the implementation phase, work on the review has resumed with the involvement of the FSA in NI. An internal FSA workshop has been held at which a long list of potential improvements has been suggested. Project leaders, in collaboration with

Deloitte are now documenting the output from the workshop from which a list of recommendations will be generated

### **Ageing of Sheep and SRM Controls**

Work continues on the development of an alternative method of ageing sheep in relation to determining the requirement to remove spinal cord from sheep carcasses. The National Farmers Union/National Sheep Association proposal to use a cut-off date has been assessed by APHA using the current method (dentition checking) as a baseline. The results from the APHA model suggests that changing to a date-based cut-off for aging sheep would slightly increase the estimated infectivity entering the food chain and category 3 materials. More discussion is needed before implementation of an alternative method can be fully accepted in NI.

### **Standardisation Exercise (Pig Trotters and Heads)**

Following recent issues with the production of pig trotters and heads for human consumption, a standardisation exercise was arranged in Karro Cookstown, which was attended by FSA in NI, DAERA and Defra. Hygiene standards were agreed and have now been rolled out across UK pig slaughterhouses. This was a good example of collaborative working where EU requirements and trade requirements were clearly established and met.

### **Inward Visit by Chinese Authorities Regarding Avian Influenza**

The FSA in NI attended and presented at the opening meeting of a recent inward visit by Chinese authorities looking at Avian Influenza (AI) controls in the UK. Although the public health implications of AI are limited, it was an excellent opportunity to explain the NI landscape regarding the delivery of food safety official controls.

### **Beef Labelling and Country of Origin Report**

The FSA has compiled a report on behalf of the NI Food Standards and Food Fraud subgroup on the findings of a beef labelling and country of origin survey. The report summarises the findings of a three months survey undertaken by all 11 district councils as part of their planned food standards inspection of butchers' premises in their area. The main findings of the report include:

- Less than half (43%) of the premises surveyed were reported as compliant with the overall beef labelling requirements despite a significant percentage of premises reporting to have systems in place to record the information and provide it to the consumer. The verification and enforcement of beef labelling requirements in butchery premises is therefore still an area which requires attention across all council areas. Noncompliance identified at the time of inspection was followed up with either verbal or written warnings.
- There are no significant issues with the labelling of meat other than beef at the point of intake.
- The low level of voluntary claims used on meat other than beef indicates that this is not a significant issue for NI butchers, however this may change when the UK exits Europe.

- It can be concluded from the overall findings on compliance with the country of origin that a significant proportion of businesses are compliant (66%), however more verification and enforcement of traceability issues needs to be undertaken by the DCs to prevent an increase in noncompliance.

## **Gathering and Using Science, Evidence and Information**

### **Innovation Lab Workshop**

In June 2017, the Food Standards Agency, **safefood** and the Public Health Agency launched Minimum Nutritional Standards for Catering in Health and Social Care settings for staff and visitors across all catering facilities, retail outlets and vending.

With the launch of the standards, the Innovation Lab is leading on a project utilising behaviour change techniques to encourage staff and visitors to purchase healthier food options. Phase one of the project to provide insight data is now complete. During this phase a review of interventions, baseline audit of HSC catering restaurants and surveys/focus groups with over 500 canteen users were conducted.

Phase two of the project, Intervention Design began in September 2018. A workshop was held on 16th October 2018 with key stakeholders to discuss the data collected to date with the aim of designing an intervention to encourage customers to choose healthier foods and to discuss potential trial sites.

### **Food Poverty Conference**

In Northern Ireland, the FSA in partnership with **safefood** delivered their fourth all island annual food poverty network conference called 'Food for Thought' on 18 September, in Belfast. With over 110 registered attendees, the event brought together a wide range of organisations throughout the island of Ireland including representatives from District Councils, academia, charities, other government departments and industry with a common interest in reducing food poverty.

The guest speakers described current food security research in NI and highlighted the work delivered throughout the island of Ireland on social supermarkets as a new approach to tackling food poverty. The event also looked at the challenges facing homeless families in emergency accommodation regarding food access and nutritional health and the importance of engaging homeless individuals in discussions about their food experiences. A number of themes emerged including that young adults are more likely to live in food insecurity than our older population in NI and the importance of collaboration and sharing of insights and lessons learned across the island. The presentations will be shared with wider organisations through our Food Poverty Network newsletter and potential opportunities to explore the insights further, are being taken forward through the Food Poverty Network. The newsletter is available at [www.safefood.eu/foodpovertynetwork](http://www.safefood.eu/foodpovertynetwork)



### **Publication of Food and You Food Security Research**

The Standards and Dietary Health team published and presented a report at the Food Poverty conference on 18 September on a secondary analysis of the FSA Food and You consumer attitude survey on food security, food purchasing and nutritional intake in NI. The findings in the report note which households experience food security, how awareness of healthy eating recommendations depends on different levels of food security and how food purchasing and dietary intake varies by food security levels. The report is available at <https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/food-security-food-purchasing-and-nutritional-intake-in-ni-final.pdf>.

### **Review of Allergy Labelling**

The FSA in NI continue to engage in weekly meetings with Defra, FSS and other FSA colleagues to discuss the UK wide review of allergen labelling legislation following the inquest into the allergy related death of Natasha Ednan-Laperouse. The aim is to complete the review by mid-December and issue a formal consultation early January 2019. A first draft of the consultation document is due the week commencing 19 November 2019.

### **Regulating Our Future**

On 6 November 2018, the FSA in NI participated in a Food Standards Delivery Review workshop with FSA Regulating Our Future (ROF) colleagues to discuss the baseline assessment of the delivery of food standards official controls across England, Wales and NI, and the next steps, using the findings of the survey and our various stakeholder engagement activities, to help direct these. The workshop focussed on how these findings may impact hygiene and primary production as well as how we can ensure that we have a consistent approach to any changes to the current delivery model. The workshop also looked at what elements /principles we needed to consider in the development of a new delivery model including how the new approach to guiding official controls activities could be described.

### **Social Science Symposium**

On Tuesday 13 November we held the FSA's Symposium of Social Science in Lagan Valley Lisburn, part of the ESRC's annual Festival of Social Science. This was the first time the event had been hosted in Northern Ireland. The event showcased the breadth of social science in the FSA and included our latest research on consumer perceptions of reformulation, dealing with food crime as well as discussing how we are applying innovative methodologies and behavioural change techniques in the agency. Professor Moira Dean, Professor of Consumer Psychology and Food Security from Queens University attended as the key note speaker. Over 60 attendees participated in the symposium with representation from sectors such as academia, Department of Health, industry and local councils.

### **Empowering Consumers**

#### **#EasytoASK Campaign**

In August 2018, the Food Standards Agency, in partnership with Allergy UK (AUK) and Anaphylaxis Campaign (AC), carried out a survey to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by young people living with food allergies and/or intolerances and their experiences of managing their condition especially

when eating out. A total of 2,599 young people (16 to 24-year olds) took part with 5% of respondents from Northern Ireland.

Key findings:

- Over half of young people (60%) with a food allergy or intolerance have avoided eating out in the last six months due to their condition
- While 67% of respondents reported being aware of the legal requirement of food businesses to provide information on the top 14 allergens, only 14% felt extremely confident asking for allergen information when dining out and 14% reported feeling not at all confident

Based on this research and ongoing activity, the FSA, AUK and the AC, launched *easy to ASK*, a campaign to:

- empower young consumers to ask about allergens when eating out so they can make safe choices and to build their confidence living with a food allergy or intolerance
- remind food businesses to be up front about providing accurate allergen information to young customers and to ask if they have any food allergies – doing so could save a life.

The easy to ASK campaign encouraged both audiences to follow the simple mnemonic: **A**lways ask about allergens - **S**peak up - **K**eeP safe

Media:

- Media coverage resulted in a total potential reach of 3,934,445 people
- 11 pieces of broadcast, print or online coverage secured
- 5 pieces of broadcast coverage vs 1-2 KPI consisting of three live interviews with Niamh Gorman (local case study) and Louise Connelly, FSA Policy Adviser
- 6 pieces of national online and print coverage vs 3 KPI Print coverage
- Consumers had an opportunity to see (OTS) media coverage 2.1 times
- 100% positive media coverage
- 100% coverage included two or more key messages

Successful media partnership with Cool FM :

- On air reach: 312,000
- Competition entries: 2,043 vs >100 entry KPI
- Facebook post: 49,404 reach

We were informed by the radio station that this was one of the highest entered competitions Cool FM has ever ran!

### **Engagement with Young Consumers and Businesses**

Promotional stands were organised at various events to target young consumers and businesses. During our attendance we engaged with around 1500 people at: major university sites across NI during Freshers Week 2018 including Queens University, St Mary's University College, Stranmillis University College and the Ulster University campuses; and

- the annual Gluten Free Ireland event in Belfast’s Stormont Hotel and the Hospitality Exchange conference

### **Safefood Advisory Committee**

Louise Connolly delivered a presentation on the FSA “Easy to ASK” campaign to the **safefood** Advisory Committee at their meeting on 9 November. The presentation outlined the FSA’s thinking behind the campaign and what the FSA hopes to achieve from the campaign in the longer term.

Louise Connolly has also engaged with electoral representatives from the DUP, SDLP and Sinn Fein to raise an awareness of the Easy to ASK campaign amongst our elected members and encourage the sharing of the campaign by elected members with the consumers in the constituency that they represent.

### **Calorie Wise Consultation**

Following feedback from EHOs and small businesses, a proposal was put forward to introduce a silver tier to the Calorie Wise scheme. The silver tier would allow businesses to calorie label 30% of their menu items instead of all their menu items as required by the existing scheme. The existing scheme criteria would then become the gold tier. EHOs from each council undertook a consultation with a minimum of five catering businesses on the new proposals. FSA consulted with the head office of a number of chain restaurants, supermarkets, contract caterers and wholesalers. The results of the consultation showed a very positive response to the silver tier with 83% of businesses saying that they were either likely or very likely to participate on the silver tier, and 93% of businesses stating that the silver tier criteria was achievable. Encouragingly, 38% of businesses still stated they were likely or very likely to participate in the gold tier with many stating that they were actively working towards the gold tier. As a result of the consultation, the existing Calorie Wise logo has been amended slightly to incorporate the silver and gold tiers.



### **Environmental Health Officer Eatwell Training**

The FSA organised one day nutrition training for 26 Environmental Health Officers at Castlereagh Council Offices. The training was delivered by dietitian Jennifer McBratney and focused on healthy catering using the Eat Well Guide. The purpose of the training was to enable EHOs to advise caterers on preparing healthier options. The training involved practical activities using a variety of menus. EHOs were also signposted to resources to support businesses introducing healthier menus.

### **World Healthy Cities conference**

The FSA attended the International Healthy Cities Conference held in Belfast from 1-4 October. The Standards and Dietary Health Team submitted a poster

presentation on the Calorie Wise scheme which was accepted and displayed throughout the conference.

### **Public Health England industry engagement meetings**

Two representatives from the Standards and Dietary Health team attended Public Health England's (PHE's) stakeholder forum on their calorie reduction programme in London. PHE presented their calorie reduction targets for all categories of foods sold at retail and the out of home sector and invited comments from industry on these targets. PHE are currently consulting with industry on mandatory calorie labelling for the out of home sector. The consultation closes on 7 December 2018.

### **Retail update**

The Standards and Dietary Health team held a Retail update meeting on 14 November. At this meeting various retailers were in attendance such as Lidl, Musgrave, Marks and Spencer's, Asda and Henderson's. Our colleagues from Department of Health presented their current review of the outcomes in the Northern Ireland obesity prevention strategy – A Fitter Future for All 2012 – to 2022. This provided an opportunity for the retailers to discuss the outcomes and give their feedback on the development of the revised outcomes and to have one-to-one discussions.

Members from the Standards and Dietary Health team then presented on their policy areas such as Eating Well Choosing Better, Calorie Wise, Dietary Health surveillance and evidence.

### **Aligning Incentives**

#### **Development of the food business online registration system**

In my last update I provided an overview of development of the digital online food business registration system. Since my last update, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (alongside other LAs in the UK) are now involved in piloting the new service when FBOs register food businesses in that area. On 7 November there had been 48 live registrations to date. This testing period of the system is enabling the service to be developed in response to council and food business feedback. For example the latest development of the system has recently enabled the ability for a council to download and save a pdf version of the registration form. We are continuing to engage with all the LA management information system IT providers as their systems will need to work with the new online service.

#### **Changing Food Regulation: 'What We've Done and Where We Go Next'**

We published a paper for stakeholders entitled 'Changing Food Regulation: What we've done, where we go next'. This paper summarises what difference the delivery of the Regulating Our Future programme will make to consumers, local authorities, other food law enforcement bodies, and businesses. We describe the progress made on delivering National Inspection Strategies and Enhanced Registration; how our work on regulating private assurance is progressing; the approach we are taking to designing a sustainable funding model for the new regime; and our renewed efforts to make it mandatory to display Food Hygiene Ratings at food premises in England. The paper can be accessed at:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/changing-food-regulation-what-weve-done-where-we-go-next.pdf>

## **Being the Best Organisation We Can Be**

### **Food Sampling Training**

The FSA in NI attended and funded a training course for district council EHOs at Loughry on 26 October 2018 on food sampling. The training covered the legislative requirements and practical considerations pertaining to both chemical and microbiological sampling and provided EHOs with insight into the role which the public analyst and NI public Health Laboratories (NIPHLs) undertake for district councils with regards to official control food samples. The course also identified best practice which EHOs should follow when undertaking food sampling.

### **Smarter Communications NI**

Earlier this year the FSA moved all LA communications onto a communications platform called Smarter Communications. The platform has three core functions – to provide LAs with FSA communications; to upload key resources such as the Food Law Code of Practice and other guidance and to provide an area for communities to discuss and share information. In NI we recently migrated our communications from an older platform to the recently developed newer platform. This means that all England, Wales and NI users are now using same platform. Users can access communications specific to their country but also have the option of accessing information relevant to England and Wales. There have also been a number of functionality improvements set-up for our own communication process with stakeholders, which includes a scheduler – this will ensure all stakeholders across England, Wales and NI should receive communications at the same time and also where necessary with consistent messaging. This work has been very much joined up across the three countries and in conjunction with our district councils.

### **Balanced Score Card**

On 9 October colleagues from FSA England along with members of the Local Authority and Policy team attended a meeting of the food managers group in NI to present development of a performance tool entitled the Balance Score Card (BSC). The BSC is being developed to assist in the monitoring of LA performance. It will allow us to modernise our reporting of the Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System (LAEMS) data, enabling benchmarking against other LAs, helping LAs view data trends and assisting them in the development of their own service plans. The tool will use data from the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and existing LAEMS data, and over time other relevant internal and external data sources. The intention of the BSC is to provide more rounded and up-to date information of LA performance in delivering official controls. Data will be presented through a range of visual tools, including interactive mapping, allowing a more detailed analysis of LAEMS data, making it easier to view and understand performance on a national basis. The BSC will also make it easier for LAs to benchmark their performance against other similar authorities, which may provide a driver for service

improvement. We will continue to work with colleagues in the district councils to develop the BSC.

### **Food Supplements**

On 19 September representatives from FSA in NI and FSA Wales delivered a workshop on food supplements to EHOs to aid their knowledge and understanding of this technically complex area and encourage consistent enforcement by EHOs when dealing with establishments placing noncompliant products on the market.

### **EU Exit - Imported Food Training**

In preparing to exit the EU we are developing training to assist enforcement officers to increase their competency in relation to imported food control checks. We have been identified several specific training needs and have been working closely with inland and port health officers in the identification and development of training. The first two courses will be coming on line in the new year, including a course covering legislation and enforcement and a second course providing an introduction to imported food and feed controls. Three further courses are still in development covering issues around sampling imported foods; products of animal origin (POAO) and high-risk food not of animal origin (FNAO)

### **Legislation**

#### **Food Law Code of Practice (NI) consultation 2018**

The consultation of the NI Food Law Code of Practice closed at the end of September. The consultation sought comments on the digital service for enhanced registration and proposed some changes to the food hygiene intervention risk rating scheme. In total we received 14 responses from district councils, the NI Food Managers group, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (NI), the Government Chemist and the Food and Drink Federation.

Overall the responses were very well considered and are providing us with useful feedback to help shape and direct our proposed policy. The integrity of the mandatory Food Hygiene Rating Scheme in Northern Ireland was carefully considered throughout each of the NI district council responses and was very much at the forefront of many of their issues raised.

A cross-organisation meeting was held in Belfast on Thursday 8 of November with representation from FSA England Wales and Northern Ireland to discuss all UK comments to the consultation and we are working on a UK response to the consultation.

#### **Materials and articles regulations made**

The Materials and Articles in Contact with Food (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018 and come into operation on 29th November they amend the Materials and Articles in Contact with Food Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 to provide for the enforcement of Commission Regulation (EU) No. 2018/213 on the use of bisphenol A in varnishes and coatings intended to come into contact with food and amending Regulation (EU) No. 10/2011 as regards the use of that substance in plastic food contact materials.

## **Current consultations**

A consultation on the Food Safety (Information and Compositional Requirements) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 has recently ended. We received no responses to this consultation and are moving ahead with finalising the regulations.

## **EU Exit**

### **Engagement with Enforcement Authorities**

FSA in NI continue to work closely with our key delivery partners, DAERA and the district councils. We meet with the district councils through a range of forums including the NI Food Managers group and associated sub groups and Environmental Health NI representing the Heads of Service in the 11 councils. We have been engaging specifically with Belfast Port Health, as NI's only Border Inspection Post authorised for import official control checks on food for human consumption.

We have facilitated the establishment of a NI EU exit competent authority Border Delivery Group forum. The group met for the second time on 14 November. This group is attended by representatives from all district councils, DAERA colleagues and includes representation from the UK Border Delivery Group. At the meeting on 14 November representatives from Defra provided an update on the Import Notification System that will replace the EU system Traces. DAERA colleagues also provided an update on plans to enhance the current export health certification system through their Trade Transition Project.

### **Engagement with Industry**

Newry Mourne and Down District Council held an EU Exit update event for their food industry in September. We attended the event and presented on key information contained within the technical notices. Following on from this event we have been requested to help support other Councils with similar stakeholder engagement events in their areas.

On 12 October the FSA published three further Technical Notices providing advice to industry relating to the following:

1. Health marks on meat, fish and dairy products if there is no agreement with the EU.
2. Importing high-risk food and animal feed if there's no agreement with the EU.
3. Exporting GM food and animal feed products if there's no agreement with the EU.

A discussion was held on this date with representatives of the Food Industry Liaison Group and no contentious issues were raised.

We attended the second meeting of the wider cross government NI Border Delivery Group meeting on 7 November. This group has been established by DfE and was attended by key stakeholders from industry including port operators from our major ports (Belfast, Belfast International Airport, Foyle, Larne & Warrenpoint).

The Operational Policy & Delivery (OP&D) team continue to engage on animal feed issues and a team member attended the Barnett-Hall conference on 18 October. This was an opportunity connect with key feed stakeholders and to hear some of their concerns ahead of EU Exit. The conference included some excellent presentations on world feed trade with a very interesting and relevant talk on EU exit and the Animal Feed Sector by Professor Michael Wallace, Chair of Agriculture and Food Economics, University College Dublin (UCD) School of Agriculture and Food Science.

OP&D also attended a North-South feeds meeting with DAERA and DAFM on 19 October. EU Exit was high on the agenda and issues around cross border feed trade post EU Exit were raised, with specific reference to the requirement for Third Country Representatives.

The FSA in NI Retail Forum on the 14 November also provided an excellent opportunity to update representatives from NI retailers and a number of UK retailers on FSAs plans for EU Exit and listen to their concerns.

### **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 and the Northern Ireland Assembly, to ensure that the UK acquis is fully operable post the UK's exit from the EU. This work includes the necessary transfer of EU retained law and the associated NI domestic legislation fixes.

### **Consultations**

A 4-week consultation on the proposed Food (Miscellaneous Amendments etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018 was launched on 15 November 2018 and closes on the 13 December 2018. The Regulations are considered necessary to 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 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.

FSA in NI also intends to launch a consultation on the content of four Statutory Instruments regarding EU Exit technical fixes to NI implementing legislation week commencing 19 November 2018.

M Jennings  
Director for NI and Organisational Development.



**PAPER FOR INFORMATION**  
**Allergens Update**

**Executive Summary**

Louise Connolly will deliver a presentation giving an update on the work of the FSA in NI's Standards and Dietary Health team around allergens. Slides accompanying this item will be tabled for members at the meeting.

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland

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## **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT POST EU EXIT**

### **Report by Philip Randles, Acting Head of Incidents & Resilience Unit**

For further information, please contact:

Philip Randles, Tel: 020 7276 8735, Email: [philip.randles@food.gov.uk](mailto:philip.randles@food.gov.uk)

This paper will be presented by teleconference.

The full paper is available on the FSA website here:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fsa-18-12-06-incident-management-post-eu-exit-final.pdf>

## **REGULATING OUR FUTURE – REVIEW OF DELIVERY OF FOOD STANDARDS OFFICIAL CONTROLS AND NEXT STEPS**

Report by Maria Jennings, Director for Regulatory Compliance, People and NI

For further information contact Michael Jackson 0777 5703141 (Tel)

Email: [Michael.Jackson@food.gov.uk](mailto:Michael.Jackson@food.gov.uk)

The full paper is available on the FSA website here:

[https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fsa-18-12-08-review-of-delivery-food-standards-final\\_0.pdf](https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fsa-18-12-08-review-of-delivery-food-standards-final_0.pdf)

## **PROGRESS AND FUTURE DIRECTION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE IN THE FSA**

### **Report by Michelle Patel**

For further information contact Michelle Patel – [michelle.patel@food.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.patel@food.gov.uk) – 0207 2768446

This paper will be presented by teleconference.

The full paper is available on the FSA website here:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fsa-18-12-12-progress-and-future-direction-of-social-science-in-the-fsa.pdf>

Annex:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fsa-18-12-12-annex-a-progress-and-future-social-science.pdf>

## **RAW DRINKING MILK (RDM) TRIGGERS FOR REVIEW**

Report by: SRO Michael Wight

For further information contact: Kevin Hargin, Stuart Armstrong

This paper will be presented by teleconference.

The full paper is available on the FSA website here:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fsa-18-12-13-rdm-triggers-final.pdf>

## **PAPER FOR INFORMATION**

### **EU Exit Update**

#### **Executive Summary**

Rod Ainsworth, the FSA's Director of Strategy, Legal and Governance will deliver an update, by teleconference, giving an overview of the FSA's preparations ahead of the UK's exit from the EU.

Members are invited to:

- Consider the presentation.
- Comment and give advice.

Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland

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