

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

1 Chief Executive's engagements

1.1 On the 18th of September, Elspeth MacDonald, Deputy Chief Executive and I met with Scottish Government officials and Agriculture representatives from the French Embassy in Edinburgh. This was an initial meeting to start developing a relationship which is important for general co-operation but also given the size of Scottish exports to France.

1.2 At the beginning of October, Ron McNaughton, Head of Food Crime and Incidents Unit and I met with HM Revenue and Customs to talk about we might collaborate more with them to help tackle food fraud and how we work together and share information. Norval Strachan, Chief Scientific Adviser, Jacqui McElhiney, Head of Food Protection Science and Surveillance, Katherine Goodwin, Head of Communications and Marketing and myself met with Health Protection Scotland officials for the annual review meeting.

1.3 On the 15th and 16th of October, Elspeth and I visited Brussels to meet with officials from the European Commission, Members of the European Parliament and staff from Scottish Government (SG) to gain a deeper understanding of the some of the practical issues about Brexit. The visit began with a discussion with UKREP. We met with Commission officials but did not talk about Brexit with them, instead discussing other current issues such as nutritional labelling.

1.4 Over the course of the past few months, I have met with officials from Cabinet Office, Defra, Department of Health, the Chief Executive of Food and Drink Federation Scotland and representatives from McDonalds. On the 26th October, Jason Feeney, FSA Chief Executive Officer and I met with representatives from ASDA in Leeds.

1.5 At the end of October, I was invited by the Korean Governors to meet them and attend the Busan International Seafood and Fisheries EXPO in South Korea. This exposition is the largest leading seafood & fisheries exhibition in Korea, featuring over 400 exhibitors from 20 countries and is one of the top 3 Seafood & Fisheries trade fairs in Asia and has been running for 16 years. Korea is the biggest consumer of seafood per person. Korea's main competitors for salmon are Norway and Alaska, United States of America.

1.6 There was a strong emphasis on food safety and in particular the impact on children. For example, a sample of all school meals are frozen so that if there's an outbreak, they've the ability to sample the food that was prepared. They take a risk based approach and like us on imports, inspections are driven by country of origin, product and previous experience of the business. Hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) is required for all exporting businesses, but businesses focussing solely on the internal market are not required to have a HACCP plan, although they are expected to show safe production. This is in contrast to consumer attitudes here where there is a clear expectation of no differentiation. Korea is keen to make and strengthen its connections with other countries.

1.7 On the 6th November 2018, the Chair, Ross Finnie, Heather Peace, Head of Public Health Nutrition and myself met with Mr Joe FitzPatrick, the Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing at the Scottish Parliament to discuss the Out of Home consultation which is being launched on 22nd November. We're expecting some level of interest due to the SG's recent consultation on restricting junk food promotions and a debate in the Scottish Parliament on obesity takes place on 15th November 2018.

1.8 On the 7th November 2018, the Chair and I met with Brian Whittle, Conservative Member of Scottish Parliament (MSP) for South Scotland at the Scottish Parliament to discuss the Errington Cheese Ltd court case. The meeting was very constructive and we agreed that there was merit in more direct dialogue to discuss concerns. He also reinforced his view that our focus must be on public health protection. That night, I attended a Parliamentary reception to celebrate the Austrian Presidency of the EU, which was hosted by Joan McAlpine, the Scottish National Party (SNP) MSP for South Scotland, and is the Convenor of the Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee

2 Errington Cheese Limited

2.1 Errington Cheese Ltd (ECL) petitioned for a judicial review of the Sheriff's decision to condemn four batches of cheese which were declared unsafe to eat.

2.2 The petition was unopposed and was unexpectedly granted without any consideration of its merits.

2.3 This means that the court has decided to release cheeses with confirmed pathogens with scientific evidence that the Shiga Toxin-producing E.coli (STEC), based on current international scientific opinion would be considered a potential risk to public health. We're now considering next steps with the SG's legal team and we plan to have a private session with the Board.

3 Joint Food Standards Scotland and Food Standards Agency Board Meeting

3.1 As Board members will be aware, the first joint Board meeting with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) was held on 17th October 2018 in Edinburgh. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and agree the Meat Cutting Plants and Cold Stores Review. Both of the Boards fully endorsed the Meat Cutting Plants and Cold Stores Review recommendations for their respective countries.

3.2 Both Food Standards Scotland (FSS) and FSA Boards were unanimous in welcoming the Review for consumers and commended the recommendations for being targeted not just at the regulators, but the industry too.

3.3 Improving food business management culture, attitudes and behaviours will be key in successfully implementing these recommendations to ensure food safety and food standards in the UK meat sector remain world class.

3.4 We'll continue to provide updates on the implementation of the Review as we work closely with the FSA on a common UK approach, and will develop our own detailed implementation plans under the FSS Regulatory Strategy programme, which will be subject to oversight by the FSS Board.

4 Corporate Services

4.1 Scottish Government Shared Services

4.1.1 The Board will be aware that our internal Corporate Services function is supplemented by shared services provided by the Scottish Government (SG). The SG's Human Resources (HR) Shared Service provides transactional HR support to FSS with regards to payroll, pensions and recruitment. Over the last few months, we have experienced several issues with the SG HR shared service, primarily around payroll, which has resulted in

incorrect payments being made to our staff. Once FSS HR staff have become aware of any issues, we have been able to resolve these in a timely manner with SG, to ensure our staff receive what is owed to them.

4.1.2 We recognise that SG HR are under significant resource pressure, but as FSS are a paying customer of the shared service provision and as such we have raised a formal complaint with regards to the level of service our staff are receiving. Additionally, we have also raised the matter with the Audit and Risk Committee and our internal and external auditors, with a view to permanently resolving this issue. We will continue to keep both ARC and the Board updated on this matter as appropriate.

4.2 FSS Staff Engagement Survey 2018

4.2.1 The annual FSS staff engagement survey commenced on 1st October 2018 and ended on 31st October 2018 with a 79.7% response rate which is down on last year's 91%. The Senior Management Team will analyse the results carefully to determine what is working well and where staff are identifying areas for improvement.

5 Incident Update 2017/2018

5.1 In total, the Scottish Food Crime & Incidents Unit (SFCIU) were notified of and investigated 134 incidents in Scotland during 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018. Of these incidents, 120 were FSS led with the other 14 incidents led by FSA. There was a slight increase in the number of incidents managed by FSS compared to the previous year which was 111, however, this was mainly due to FSS using its new incident management System (CLIO) to record and manage incidents which is separate to the MEMEX system used by the FSA to manage incidents. FSS now records FSA led incidents on CLIO to ensure that FSS has a full audit log of all actions taken during any incident that FSS has involvement in.

5.2 FSS issued 108 alerts (68 Allergy Alerts, 38 Product Recall Information Notices and 2 Food Alerts for Action). Allergen alerts, which are aimed at removing products from sale directly to consumers, are the most significant and more work needs to be focused on looking at the causes and reasons for allergen alerts to reduce their occurrence. Of course primary responsibility for food safety and compliance rests with businesses but given the recent publicity on the unfortunate deaths of two teenagers because of poor allergen controls and consumer information, the risks are significant and this level of recall should be coming down as businesses become more familiar with legal requirements. In terms of allergen incidents, these have increased to 21 with the issues identified as labelling error (5), undeclared allergenic ingredients (11) and false claims (5). In 2015/16 there were 11 incidents and 10 in 2016/17.

5.3 Allergen control been prioritised as part of our Tactical Tasking process and a cross office project has recently been initiated to develop a strategy for ensuring consistency of approach with respect to allergen management across the whole food chain and communication of the risks.

6 CLIO Pilot Study

6.1 In August 2018, FSS began a pilot study involving four local authorities (Aberdeen City Council; South Ayrshire Council; Dundee City Council and West Dunbartonshire) for the roll out of our new incident management system CLIO. This study will determine the feasibility and best methods for training the 32 Scottish local authorities in use of the system.

6.2 The pilot training was completed on 7th November 2018, and it is intended to develop and implement a plan to ensure that all other local authorities are trained on use of the system. This will allow for all communications relating to incidents to be entered directly onto the system. Having external partners, such as local authorities, trained to use the system will further improve the effectiveness of incident response in Scotland.

6.3 Throughout 2017/18, FSS has continued to work with FSA and other stakeholders to review the effectiveness of the food withdrawal/recall system operating in the UK. Following the completion of the research phase, the outcomes and recommendations were presented to the FSS Board in September 2017 and were approved. FSS and FSA are on track to deliver on the recommendations.

7 Communications and Marketing

7.1 FSS wins a Gold Award for Pink Chicken Campaign

7.1.1 On the 4th of October, the FSS 2017 summer food safety campaign, Pink Chicken won a Gold Award at the 2018 Chartered Institute for Public Relations (CIPR) PRide Awards for best use of social media. This is good news and worth recognising the efforts of all staff involved which included staff from a range of disciplines ranging from scientific expertise to communications and marketing expertise.

7.2 Wave 6 - Food in Scotland Consumer Tracking Survey

7.2.1 The results published on the 25th October 2018 of the latest wave of the Food in Scotland consumer tracking [survey](#), show that healthy eating is an increasingly significant concern for people in Scotland. The survey revealed that two in five people's top concern when it comes to food was making sure they and their families eat a healthy balanced diet. This is an increase of 8% since the start of the tracking survey in 2015. Nearly half (49%) also agreed that affordability is a barrier to healthy eating.

7.2.2 Despite more than half (58%) regarding their own diets as being healthy, nine in ten respondents indicated they were more concerned about the levels of salt, sugary, fat and saturated fat found in food. 52% of respondents said they are 'concerned a lot' about consuming unnecessary sugar, which is an increase of 8% from the previous wave of the survey in December 2017, and the highest figure recorded to date.

7.2.3 The latest tracker results show that awareness of FSS is 63%, a 4% increase from Wave Five. This is an impressive 19% higher than it was back in Wave One in 2015. Trust in FSS amongst those who have heard of the organisation has risen to 81%, compared to 70% in December 2015. The report can be viewed [here](#). The increase from the previous tracker from 76% is also during the period where the Errington Cheese issues have been prominent in particular newspapers too. We shouldn't be complacent however and it remains important that we continue to communicate that our primary focus will always be on protection of public health.

7.3 Year of Young People 2018

7.3.1 As part of our commitment to supporting young people during the [Year of Young People 2018](#) and beyond, FSS has been undertaking a variety of activities focused on younger people throughout 2018, which can be viewed at the [YOYP page](#) on the FSS website. There has been an increased focus on these activities in recent months, with a

partnership with YoungScot with a microsite on their website, [Young Scot](#) with a 'Fresher's Food Fails' competition and a campaign based on our existing Kitchen Crimes creative.

7.4 Student Roadshows

7.4.1 During September 2018, FSS embarked on a number of student roadshows visiting ten universities and colleges across Scotland. This is the most venues we've visited on our annual Fresher's Week roadshow. Hundreds of students visited our stand to find out more about healthy eating and food safety and to 'check their criminal record' by playing our 20 'kitchen crimes' digital quiz and to visit our [kitchen crimes](#) page for more information.

7.5 Education Resources

7.5.1 On the 19th and 20th September, FSS had a stand at the Scottish Learning Festival in Glasgow, to share our range of educational resources with schools and teachers. These resources are aligned with the Health and Wellbeing area of Curriculum for Excellence and include a variety of interactive and downloadable resources.

7.5.2 We have been working with our creative agency, The Union, on promotion of the [education resources](#) with the aim of increasing their use in classrooms in Scotland. This has led to the development of a new creative that gives more of an overarching 'idea' to house the resources under one banner, along with clear and simple messaging.



7.5.3 From a survey of 144 teachers we undertook at the Scottish Learning Festival this September, we have gained new insight into where and what teachers are looking for in terms of healthy eating and food safety online resources. This insight has focused our campaign on Google Ads, social media and YouTube. From the survey we also learned that primary school teachers search for food education materials only a few times of year – meaning that there will always be teachers looking for these resources. For this reason our resources will now be promoted throughout the year.

7.5.4 The Communications and Marketing team will be continually monitoring performance of the marketing campaign through Google Analytics and our media agency, Republic of Media, to ensure their optimisation and delivery of value for money.

7.5.5 We understand that others are also involved in delivering healthy eating and food safety messages to schools, such as Local Authorities and NHS Dieticians. We are working with them by offering support through our resources and encouraging consistency of message delivery to children across Scotland.

7.6 Scottish Food Crime Hotline

7.6.1 The Communications and Marketing team have developed a strategy to promote the Scottish Food Crime Hotline with the Scottish Food Crime and Incidents Unit (SFCIU). This activity is in development and more information will be provided in the next Chief Executive's report, however as a first step, filming has been underway with a production company for a BBC daytime TV series 'Defenders UK' which will feature Ian McWatt, Director of Operations and Ron McNaughton Head of Food Crime and Incidents Unit.

7.6.2 The objectives of the strategy are:

- To increase the number of calls to the hotline, leading to an increased volume of actionable intelligence for SFCIU to act upon.
- To increase industry and public awareness of food fraud and crime and what it actually is.
- To increase industry and public awareness of the SFCIU and the work that they do to protect the integrity of the Scottish food and drink industry.

7.7 Kitchen Crimes Campaign

7.7.1 The food safety campaign which ran in January 2018, [Kitchen Crimes](#), will re-run in January 2019. The first outing of the campaign showed some very promising results, we have strong evidence to suggest our target audience are less complacent about the impact of their domestic food safety behaviours, and significant levels of claimed action as a result of seeing the campaign:

- 61% disagreed with the statement that "no one gets very ill from food they have prepared in their own kitchen."
- 57% of respondents reported they have a better understanding of what can cause food poisoning in the home as a result of the campaign.
- Of 17 of the 'Kitchen Crimes' featured, 15 saw a fall in the number of people guilty of them.
- 81% of those who recognised the campaign reported that they were motivated to take action as a result of the campaign.

7.8 No to Upsizing Campaign

7.8.1 The healthy eating campaign which ran in June 2018, [No To Upsizing](#), will re-run in March 2019 following the closure of the Out of Home consultation.

Geoff Ogle, Chief Executive

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16th November 2018