

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

1 Chief Executive's engagements

- 1.1 I have been continuing my efforts to meet with a variety of stakeholders and delivery partners since the last Board meeting. I have met with a range of Scottish Government (SG) colleagues to talk about diet and nutrition and specifically how FSS might undertake our co-ordination role and provide leadership as well as providing coherence to what is a complex area of policy.
- 1.2 In addition to regular meetings with Food Standards Agency (FSA), Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland, the Scottish Food and Drink Federation, I have also held a number of introductory meetings with a range of partners including the Scottish Government Diet and Obesity Unit, Scottish Government Local Authority Government Division, the Scottish Council for Development and Industry, Association of Public Analysts in Scotland, British Veterinary Association and the National Farmers Union in Scotland.
- 1.3 I have also met with academics Professor Leigh Sparks from Stirling University to discuss food and drink retailing and Professor Susan Jebb from Oxford University to discuss nutrition and how FSS intends to work with the Scottish food industry. With regards to retailers specifically, I met Asda earlier this month and we have agreed the importance of a regular dialogue given their representation in Scotland.
- 1.4 On 25 August, I had the opportunity to accompany Environmental Health Officers based at Edinburgh City Council on food hygiene inspections of two food establishments in Edinburgh. This provided me with first hand insight into these types of inspections from both food business operator and local authority perspectives.

2 Events and Communications

- 2.1 We attended the Dundee Flower and Food Festival event over the weekend of 4, 5 and 6 September. The stand included a new game designed to teach visitors 'shelf-awareness' – ie where in the fridge different foods should be stored, at what temperature, and about 'use by' and 'best before' dates. Visitor numbers were high, particularly by some of our target audiences: families with younger children and older people. Interest in FHIS/Eat Safe was particularly apparent due to local press coverage that week around low hygiene standards.
- 2.2 We will also be attending the Freshers' Fair in Glasgow later in September, where the emphasis will be on encouraging engagement with FSS and our messages digitally and through social media.
- 2.3 A full independent evaluation of the Royal Highland Show – including a post-event follow-up questionnaire to assess to some degree any sustained impact on behaviour and knowledge – has been undertaken on our behalf by TNS-BMRB, and the learning will be taken forward to develop the stand for next year.

3 Marketing and insight

- 3.1 The segmentation study is underway – the communications and marketing team are working on the development of the model with the Union – the new agency procured via the public sector Fully Managed Service framework. The model will segment the Scottish consumers at postcode level, using a number of different data sources from FSA, FSS and the SG.
- 3.2 The brief for a Labelling marketing campaign has been issued to our agencies, with a view to this running in November. The campaign proposition revolves around encouraging consumers to “Look at the Label” for a little longer, armed with the knowledge they need to make an informed choice regarding safety (use by/best before, storage instructions), nutrition (Front of Pack labelling) and allergens information. The campaign will not seek to address issues around authenticity and country of origin labelling as discussions are on-going with SG regarding this area, and given the complexities of this labelling topic, it is likely a separate campaign may be merited at a later stage.
- 3.3 A workshop to kick-start the development of a new, bespoke tracking survey to monitor attitudes, knowledge and claimed behaviours in relation to food safety and diet was undertaken with our contractor TNS-BMRB and with FSS representation from Policy, Regulation, Enforcement, the Senior Management Team and Communications & Marketing at the beginning of the month. The questionnaire is now being developed.
- 3.4 We will take advantage of relevant, cost-effective ad hoc opportunities as they arise to promote and position FSS and our messages. One such opportunity is sponsorship of a five-page editorial spread on the Rugby World Cup in the Scottish Sun which will appear from 14 – 18 September.

4 Website and Social Media update

- 4.1 Between 1 April and 1 September, the website had 37,197 unique visitors and 177,359 page-views – giving an average of close to five pages being viewed in each session. Bounce-rates remain stable and the average time spent on each page also remains constant at around 1 minute 35 seconds. We will be undertaking more in-depth usability testing in the coming months to build on the initial success of the site and render it more interactive and engaging, but these figures tell us people are coming to the site in relatively large numbers and are finding what they’re looking for when they’re there. We would of course like to increase visitor numbers and will be promoting the website url in every piece of communications and marketing activity.
- 4.2 Our social media following continues to build, and the team are working with Consolidated PR to continue to develop content proactively. We are also engaging reactively - for example, there was comment regarding the FSS’s position on the rare burger question, and we had a live twitter feed at our recent LA summit in Cumbernauld.

5 Education

- 5.1 Our new digital interactive resource for schoolchildren in Primary 4-7 (aged between 8 and 12) and teachers, 'Cookin Castle' is due to be launched at Stirling Castle on 22 September. This is an excellent new resource that has had very positive feedback during a pilot, and we will be promoting it towards the end of this month.

6 Diet and Nutrition

- 6.1 On 24 August, the latest estimation of progress towards the Scottish Dietary Goals (interim report) was published on the FSS website.
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/latest-estimation-food-and-nutrient-intakes-interim-report>.
- 6.2 This work is part of the rolling programme to update annual trends in food consumption and nutrient intakes in Scotland using an ongoing robust methodology and data from the [UK Living Costs and Food Survey](#). This interim report adds an additional year's data for 2013 to the estimated food and nutrient intakes presented in the [full report](#) published in May 2015 for 2001 to 2012. These additional results are provisional and will not be finalised until a full update is published in September 2017.
- 6.3 The results show the very slow rate of progress between 2001 and 2013 towards a diet that will improve and support the health of the Scottish population.
- There was no change in intakes of fruit and vegetables, oil rich fish and dietary fibre
 - Intakes of red and processed meat had decreased
 - Energy density had increased
 - There were reductions in both saturated fat and added sugars between 2001 and 2013, however intakes of both appear to have risen since 2011 and remain too high.
- 6.4 Data collection for our Diet and Health Attitudes Survey has concluded and the contractors are currently carrying out the analysis. FSS officials expect to see the preliminary results on 21 September. The final report is due in October.
- 6.5 The Nutrition team is preparing a situation report setting out, in a graphical format, the nature and scope of current diet and health challenges . It will highlight the need for urgent action and present the case for the changes required to help people in Scotland to live longer, healthier lives. It is anticipated that the report will be published late October.
- 6.6 A member of the Diet and Nutrition branch recently undertook training on principles of behaviour change and how these can be applied to a range of practical problems, from supporting change amongst patients and health professionals to planning and supporting change in the population, organisations and communities. The key points will be disseminated to FSS

staff to encourage the application of behaviour change principles in the development of future interventions and campaigns.

- 6.7 On 7 July the Board discussed and agreed the recommendations contained in the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) Carbohydrate and Health Report. The Chair wrote to the Minister of Public Health with the Board's advice to accept the recommendations, and to say that FSS would provide further advice on risk management actions in due course. We expect to bring proposals on revisions to the Scottish Dietary Goals in November and for risk management actions to the Board for discussion before the end of the year.

7 Food Safety and Standards

Local Authority Summit

- 7.1 On 26-27 August, Food Standards Scotland and Society of Chief Environmental Officers in Scotland held a summit on the theme 'delivering a safe food environment for consumers'. It was a great opportunity for our organisation to engage with Local Authorities face to face, to participate in working groups and a Q&A session, listen to key note speakers and improve our understanding of the current challenges. Overall, the anecdotal feedback has been positive and there was a real sense of the need for partnership and collaboration as we move forward and especially with the potential financial challenges local government may face.

Approval of food business establishments

- 7.2 FSS attended a meeting of the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee's Approvals Working Group on the 19 August. This group is taking forward the design and application of a partnership approach with approved establishments in Scotland. Currently, FSS is responsible for the approval of meat plants, cutting plants and slaughterhouses, with Local Authorities (LAs) leading on approval of all other businesses involved in the production of food or animal origin that require approval under EU Regulation 853/2004. The proposal is that the approval process is joint, with LAs retaining the lead for processing applications and inspection of the business and FSS conducting final audit on the business to grant approval. The outcome is expected to provide FSS with reassurance that approved establishments across all categories have a similar acceptable standard.
- 7.3 The working group has a number of work-streams associated with it, including development of a training package; development of a specialist network of officers; development of Standard Operating Procedures and working protocols including guidance; and mapping of establishments to assist in the measurement of resource requirements. FSS is leading on the latter, and is active in all the other workstreams.
- 7.4 With regard to resource mapping, data indicates that Scotland currently has 663 approved establishments across all commodity areas including dairy, live bivalve molluscs, meat product and preparation, fishery products and cold store facilities.

7.5 As an overview:

- All 32 LAs have Approved Establishments
- Aberdeenshire has the most at 90; East Renfrewshire has the least with 1
- The largest category is Fishery Products – 239 in number
- the smallest is Cold Stores - 33 in number
- only 5 LAs have establishments covering the entire approved establishment spectrum (Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Edinburgh City, Dumfries & Galloway and Highland)

Incident management

7.6 Since the last board meeting in June, 40 incidents have been reported to Food Standards Scotland. The majority of these related to Shellfish biotoxin closures where there may have been distribution of product to final consumer. FSS has issued 21 Allergy Alert Notices and 15 Product Recall Information Notices to consumers.

7.7 More recently on 28 August 2015, FSS was notified of an incident involving Double Cream which had recorded 2 presumptive positive for *Listeria Monocytogenes*. As a result of the presumptive result the manufacturer instigated a voluntary precautionary recall on their own branded products. Further investigations identified that this product had been produced and distributed to a number of major retailers as their own branded products. All major retailers supplied with implicated double cream instigated a product recall. Product Recall Information notices were issued by FSS on Saturday 29 August 2015. Investigations into the cause of this failure are on-going between the Local Authority and Food Business Operator.

Operation OPSON

7.8 Operation OPSON is an international initiative co-ordinated by Europol and Interpol. Now in its fifth year, Operation OPSON encourages participating countries from around the world to hold a focused period of activity against counterfeit food and drink.

7.9 As part of this work, FSS is co-ordinating action in Scotland. FSS has been working with partners (Local Authorities, HMRC, Intellectual Property Office, Food Standards Agency) to organise focussed period of action, with a specific focus on vodka.

Hand dived scallops

7.10 The hand- dived scallop sector of the shellfish industry has lobbied FSAS and FSS a number of issues in recent years regarding controls which apply to the sale of whole scallops. There are a number of complex regulatory and policy issues that concern this sector, and the creation of FSS is an opportunity for us to resolve some of these issues given the importance of the industry in Scotland. Scallops – which are filter feeding bivalve molluscs - are likely to accumulate levels of naturally occurring toxins in breach of EU limits particularly during the summer months. However, unlike other species of bivalve mollusc, these risks can be managed effectively if the toxic parts of the scallop are carefully removed before consumption. This process is known as shucking and currently this process can only take place in establishments that are approved under EU food hygiene legislation.

7.11 In 2013, the FSA in Scotland initiated a review on the sale of whole scallops which comprised:

- a report by the Committee on Toxicity (COT) into the efficacy of shucking as a control measure in scallops;
- a feasibility study into alternative models which could allow whole scallops with higher levels of toxin to be placed on the market;
- a review of the scope of EU legislation in this area.

7.12 This work resulted in an affirmation by COT that shucking, if carried out correctly, remains an effective control for shellfish toxins in scallops. The feasibility study, which was based on this assumption, also provided a model framework for the management of restricted sales of whole scallops.

7.13 Whilst the legal review concluded that there is no scope within EU law which would allow scallops over the legal limit to be placed on the retail market other than through approved establishments, FSS have committed to exploring further the recognised flexibility within existing legislation that allows small quantities of primary products (such as shellfish) to be placed on the local market, provided that public health protection can be demonstrated. This initiative will be underpinned by work already carried out as part of the earlier scallop review and the Board will be appraised as this develops. We are keeping FSA colleagues updated.

8 Corporate Matters

Pay Award

8.1 Scottish Ministers gave approval for FSS to link to the FSA pay award for 2015-16. Negotiations between the national unions and FSA resulted in a formal offer and payments were made to staff in August salaries. The pay award is effective from 1 August 2015, and all permanent, temporary and fixed-term employees up to and including Grade 6 are within scope of the award.

Review of terms and conditions

8.2 As part of the transition to FSS, it was agreed that a review of terms and conditions would be conducted to determine the most appropriate way forward for the new organisation as part of the Scottish Administration.

8.3 Following consideration of the various options, the FSS senior management team has decided to open negotiations with the recognised trade unions to seek to harmonise to Scottish Government Main bargaining unit terms and conditions for all FSS staff. An initial meeting with the full-time officials of the three main unions – PCS, Prospect and Unison – was held on 20 August to set out the proposals for harmonisation and to agree a timetable for negotiations which will take place over the coming weeks. The next meeting will take place on 15 September.

Assurance Mapping exercise

8.4 Scottish Government Internal Audit colleagues are making good progress with an Assurance Mapping exercise which they are undertaking as part of their Internal Audit plan for 2015/16. This exercise, the outcome of which will be

discussed at the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee, will help baseline the existing levels of assurance across the whole of FSS's business, whilst highlighting any assurance gaps within FSS, and will feed into the existing FSS Internal Controls Assurance Framework.

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9 September 2015