

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FOOD STANDARDS SCOTLAND (FSS) BOARD HELD ON 15 JUNE 2015 FROM 10.30 TO 14.45 AT PILGRIM HOUSE, ABERDEEN**Present:****FSS Board**

Ross Finnie, Chair
George Brechin
Marieke Dwarshuis
Heather Kelman
Carrie Ruxton
Sue Walker
Anne Maree Wallace
Louise Welsh

FSS Executive

Geoff Ogle, Chief Executive
Elspeth Macdonald, Deputy Chief Executive
Ian McWatt, Director of Operations
Karen McCallum-Smith, Head of Private Office
Hazel Stead, Board Secretary

External

Mark Thomson, Kantar
Cathy Capelin, Kantar

1 Introduction and Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence.
- 1.2 The Chair added an item to the agenda to be discussed after the Chief Executive's Report – Appointing the Audit and Risk Committee.

2 Minutes and Actions arising - 15/06/01

- 2.1 The minutes were accepted by the Board as an accurate record of the meeting held on 22 April 2015.
- 2.2 The Chair has agreed with the Head of Private Office that a tracking sheet for recording actions arising is to be included in future board papers, to enable the Board to monitor actions arising in future.
- 2.3 Work continues on Diet and Nutrition strategy development and an update will be provided to the Board in due course.
- 2.4 The Food Hygiene Information Scheme review is under way, and an update to the Board is expected towards the end of 2015.

3 Chair's Report

- 3.1 In response to feedback on the Code of Governance, the Chair acknowledged that the Scheme of Delegation only shows the relationship between the Board and the Chief Executive and vice versa. It does not indicate levels of authority which sit below that, which the Board, through the Audit and Risk Committee will be made aware of. The Chair advised that an internal controls document is being drafted by the Executive which will include detail on the Scheme of Delegation, and the Board, through the Audit and Risk Committee will be kept sighted on this, to provide assurance that appropriate delegation has been put in place.
- 3.2 The Chair referred to the Model Publication Scheme and other necessary governance documents. Draft documents are in hand, and are expected to be brought to the September Board for adoption. It was accepted there was a potential vulnerability if nothing was in place until September.
- 3.3 The Chair then moved onto to Performance Indicators for the Board, and how these linked through Strategic and Corporate Planning to the Chief Executive and his staff.

3.4 The Chair confirmed he had agreed the Chief Executive's objectives for the coming year have been agreed and these can be circulated to the Board.

ACTION 2015/01: Executive

3.5 The Board:

- **agreed** to authorise the Chair and the Chief Executive to publish draft governance documents pending the September meeting.

ACTION 2015/02: Executive

4 Chief Executive's Report – 15/06/02

4.1 The Chief Executive (CE) made a few observations in relation to his report which had been circulated.

4.2 Recruitment is currently ongoing for the positions of Chief Scientific Advisor and Head of Policy. Ron McNaughton who is a retired Detective Chief Inspector has been appointed to work on food crime capability and develop the range of systems which need to be put in place for FSS. Partnership working and the sharing of information and intelligence would be critical to our success in this area and we had already had very useful discussions with Police Scotland on the opportunity to work together.

4.3 A number of "snagging and defects" in provision of financial and procurement systems for FSS have been identified and staff continue to work closely with Scottish Government to resolve these. These have taken up more time than anticipated but we hope to resolve most of these issues shortly.

4.4 Preparations for Royal Highland Show are underway and a new stand is to be unveiled. The CE took part in publicity for this event with children from Leith Primary School which focused on the 4 C's - (Cooking, Cleaning, Chilling and Cross-contamination) and he also took part in a Radio interview on Friday 12 June 2015 to support the campaign.

4.5 The CE attended the recent Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) Board Meeting with Louise Welsh present in her capacity as a Board member of QMS. The CE had also met with SEPA, and noted that such meetings provided useful opportunities to work with others.

4.6 The CE noted the busy workload of FSS and business as usual continues alongside significant pieces of work such as the Incident Management Plan, Surveillance strategy and Sampling programmes.

4.7 The CE informed the meeting of a suspect Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) case recently reported on a farm in the Republic of Ireland. The animal was not presented for slaughter and did not enter the food chain. FSS is in close touch with authorities in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and the FSS CE and Director of Operations have discussed the matter with the Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) Scotland.

4.8 A point was raised on the impact of recent and potential future relaxations in BSE controls and whether this animal would have ended up in the food chain under the new rules. The Director of Operations confirmed that the rules in place are informed by a number of European Scientific Committees. The Scientific evidence available at present confirms the set of tissues which must be removed before the carcass is passed fit for human consumption.

4.9 In discussion, the following points were made:

- (a) The Chief Scientific Advisor will be a part-time, fixed term executive post.
- (b) FSS staff involved in the Taste of Grampian event should be commended.

- (c) The Board would welcome a fortnightly email update on current FSS matters.
- (d) The CE will share significant or strategic FSS Memorandums of Understandings (MOU's) with the Board.
- (e) The Scottish Government Regulatory Review Group meeting was held recently and those in attendance found it to be helpful and an ideal opportunity to share information and reflect on experiences.
- (f) While the World Class Surveillance System recommendations list focussed on process improvements, we should also look to demonstrate outcomes.
- (g) The CE explained the relationship between meat hygiene charging and the FSS operating budget, and confirmed that a presentation on meat hygiene charging will be given to the Audit and Risk Committee.
- (h) The CE confirmed that FSS staff are involved in attending Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee (SFELC) meetings and are able to feedback any relevant issues to the Board. The minutes of these meetings can be shared with Board members. The Chair had also agreed to invite the SFELC Chair to present to the Board at a future meeting.

The Board:

- **agreed** that a fortnightly FSS update and SFELC minutes to be circulated to the Board
- **agreed** that FSS significant or strategic FSS MOU's to be shared with the Board and a statement of clarification of the Board's involvement in these documents should be drafted

5 Appointing the Audit and Risk Committee

- 5.1 The Chair advised he had invited the following members to join the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) - Sue Walker as Chair, George Brechin, Marieke Dwarshuis, and Anne Maree Wallace. An inaugural ARC meeting will be arranged as soon as possible.

6 Presentations and Papers

- 6.1 The Chair welcomed Mark and Cathy from Kantar to the table to present their powerpoint presentation "Shoppers – Everything is changing". The presentation and ensuing discussion provided a useful insight into the emerging trends and motivations underlying consumers' food purchases and the food retail environment.

7 Developing the FSS Strategy – 15/06/03

- 7.1 The Chair thanked Elspeth for preparing this paper for discussion, and emphasised that this was a starting point. Elspeth explained that the purpose of the paper was to seek the Board's view on proposals for developing the FSS Strategy and Corporate plan on the basis of a set of principles. The Board's views were sought on the strategic outcomes required to deliver the Vision, and on the underpinning initiatives required to deliver those strategic outcomes. The Executive would continue to engage the Board, stakeholders and the public in developing the strategy. The CE noted that in the interim, the CE's objectives had been translated into initiatives, for which a timeline and mechanics for monitoring and reporting were being developed. The initiatives that had been identified by the Executive were seen as necessary for the organisation and were highly likely to support the delivery of the Board's strategy.

- 7.2 In discussion, the Board made a number of comments and suggestions on the proposals, and the following key points were made:
- (a) The paper envisages the Strategy and Corporate Plan covering the same time period. Strategic planning should be longer-term, given the outcomes that FSS seeks.
 - (b) Sustainability and growth cannot be achieved without stability within the organisation.
 - (c) It is important to recognise that not all available evidence is sound and sometimes evidence is not available and decisions will have to be made in its absence, or where the evidence is less robust than would be ideal.
 - (d) FSS should be clear on its contribution to the Scottish Government's purpose and objectives and how it fits into the bigger picture in Scotland.
 - (f) It is important to distinguish between objectives (what we seek to do) and outcomes (what we seek to achieve by what we do).
 - (g) A baseline is needed in order to measure progress, together with outcomes structured in a way that is measurable.
 - (h) The Board should be kept sighted on the engagement phase of strategy development, and could have a role in this.

The Board:

- **noted** that the paper represented an early stage of strategy development;
- **agreed** with the direction of travel;
- **agreed** that the Executive should further develop their proposals, taking into account the Board's comments; and
- **looked forward** to discussing progress on strategy development further at their September meeting.

8 Video - FSS

- 8.1 Katherine Goodwin presented a short video to promote the work of FSS which will be launched at the Royal Highland Show. The Board expressed the view that the video was very effective in presenting the FSS's core responsibilities.

9 Campylobacter – 15/06/04

- 9.1 The Chair welcomed Jacqui McElhiney to the table to make a powerpoint presentation on Campylobacter which provided background and evidence on Campylobacter infection in Scotland, the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) strategy for reducing Campylobacter in UK produced chicken, including the Acting on Campylobacter Together campaign. FSS will be regularly updated on progress in delivering Campylobacter reduction across the UK, with the next update provided at the Board meeting in September.

- 9.2 In discussion the following points were made:

- (a) Interventions for reducing Campylobacter levels at the end of processing were being developed to take account of UK market preference for fresh chicken and to ensure the quality of meat was retained. End of line treatments based on steam or blast chilling were currently being trialled by industry which had the potential to reduce the levels of Campylobacter whilst still allowing chicken to be defined as fresh.

- (b) FSS will continue to work closely with the FSA to ensure that advice on Campylobacter control is being promoted throughout the food chain, including the catering sector. This will include work being taken forward in Scotland to ensure organisations responsible for procuring food for the public sector take account of Campylobacter risks in their food safety and hygiene management.
- (c) FSS funded research has demonstrated a statistical link between private water supplies and human Campylobacteriosis in Scotland. This has demonstrated the need to work closely with other government organisations to ensure non-foodborne transmission routes of Campylobacter are addressed;
- (d) Research to date has not provided any firm evidence that there is a significant difference between Campylobacter incidence in free-range, organic chicken compared to housed or non-organic chicken.
- (e) There is scope to go further in Scotland in terms of targeting efforts to change consumer behaviour in how they handle chicken.

The Board:

- **noted** the profile of Campylobacter infection in Scotland and progress being made at a UK level to reduce levels of contamination in the poultry production chain;
- **agreed** that reducing incidence of foodborne Campylobacteriosis in Scotland as a strategic priority for FSS and that it should take the lead role in co-ordinating activities in this area across Scottish Government
- **agreed** that FSS should work with FSA to agree how they can most effectively collaborate to optimise the impact on public health in Scotland.

10 Question and Answers

10.1 The following points were raised by members of the public:

- (a) In relation to delivery of official controls, FSS currently employs meat inspectors, what is the strategy for the future? Are discussions with industry planned to be held with control bodies?

The Chair explained that the Board was discussing high level strategy. Once the strategy has been formalised it will be for FSS to decide the best way to deliver those controls.

- (b) In relation to campylobacter, it was noted that some retailers are reluctant to use bags at the checkout to separate raw meat and poultry for consumers, and that this could present a potential cross-contamination risk.

The CE confirmed this has previously been highlighted as a potential food safety risk and has been raised by, for example the Welsh Food Advisory Committee. He suggested this could be raised with retailers in Scotland, but it is not clear whether FSS could compel them to provide bags for this purpose.

- (c) Undercooked chicken liver pate and undercooked burgers are now appearing on restaurant menus and these types of products can create more health risks for consumers.

The CE explained that this is a choice that consumers can make and FSS can provide clear advice to consumers who purchase these products. It was noted that FSS already issues advice on safe preparation of chicken liver pate.

10.2 There were no further questions and the Chair closed the meeting.

11 Date of Next Meeting

11.1 The date of next meeting of the Board will be on 16 September 2015 at Pilgrim House, Aberdeen.

Hazel Stead
Board Secretary
04 September 2015