

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

1 Chief Executive's engagements

- 1.1 Since the Board meeting in January, I have met and attended events involving a variety of stakeholders and delivery partners including British Soft Drinks Association, Food Standards Agency (FSA), SEPA, Scottish Food and Drink Federation (SFDF), Quality Meat Scotland (QMS), Health and Safety Executive (HSE), National Farmers Union of Scotland, ASDA, Marks and Spencer and ALDI.
- 1.2 On 10 February, the Chair and I attended the FSA event "Food we can trust : Regulating the Future" in Cardiff. It was a very interesting event and it was again apparent that the current LA delivery model is unsustainable. The event focused on 5 core principles and was attended by a wide range of stakeholders from across the UK. As part of our Regulatory Strategy we will be looking to work with the FSA in this area as well as considering the FSA principles and their application to FSS: this is a clear area of not being different for the sake of it, but if there is difference we have a clear rationale on why.
- 1.3 On 18 February, Elspeth, Katherine and I attended the Our Food Future event in London. This event highlighted some of the key challenges around the food environment such as sustainability, food security, affordability, accessibility, availability, price, health, choice and trust. This subsequently led to an interview with the Sunday Times which looked at sustainability of food supply.
- 1.4 On 24 February, there was a joint meeting between SEPA management team and FSS Senior Management Team (SMT). It was clear from this meeting there was a significant amount of common interest and challenge. We agreed a number of areas which we should explore further, including the use of data, laboratory provision in Scotland and some further work on aquaculture. This is in addition to other collaborations on the use of social media analytics and fraud. We are also planning a further joint CEO meeting with both SEPA and HSE where we will look in more detail at tackling fraud and the use of social media analytics.
- 1.5 At the end of February, Elspeth and I were in Berlin to attend the Global Food Safety Conference which had over 900 delegates from all over the world with a real variety of speakers and some interesting insight that was food for thought. Presentations ranged from 3rd party inspection regimes through to genome sequencing for pathogens, food fraud and food security, the use of big data, how Government and private sector compliment, duplicate or differ. Interestingly, the challenges we face are common across developed countries. I also attended a government to government meeting with Rod Ainsworth from FSA (as part of the UK delegation) where the focus was on 3rd party accreditation and the use of Earned Recognition. It also shows the importance of continuing to develop international networks to both challenge our thinking and enable us to learn from others.
- 1.7 On 9 March, I was a panel member at the Food and Drink Federation "Crisis management in the Food and Drink Industry" event. This was a training exercise where the panel went through an incident scenario with the attendees and explain what actions they would take at each stage in time. The audience were given perspectives from FSS, legal, public relations, insurance and a food business operator. This shared experience was helpful in highlighting what we are likely to do

and the reasons for that and this kind of transparency ensures a greater understanding which is important when in the midst of an incident.

2 Engagement with other organisations

- 2.1 Over the past few months, FSS staff have been engaging with other organisations within the Scottish Administration to build relationships and explore options for partnership working. I have already mentioned the joint FSS/SEPA management team meeting; however we have also held positive discussions with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). Subjects of discussion have ranged from potential sharing and subsequent development of SNH's Business Planning tool for use in FSS, to FSS taking part in the tender process for the appointment of Internal Audit services. We have met with other organisations over the past few months including Marine Scotland, Care Inspectorate and Scottish Social Services Council to share knowledge and experience and explore potential for further collaboration where possible.

3 Marketing and Insight

Food in Scotland Tracking Survey

- 3.1 TNS-BMRB have undertaken our first tracking survey, looking at a representative sample of the Scottish public and their attitudes, behaviours and knowledge when it comes to FSS and our areas of interest. A debrief was given on Wednesday 9 March in Pilgrim House. The results will be collated in a report and published at a later date.

Healthy Eating Campaign

- 3.2 Creative development for our new healthy eating marketing campaign is well underway, after initial stages of insight gathering and testing of potential concepts with our target audience. The campaign objectives remains to reduce consumption of 'discretionary' foods and drinks. The chosen creative approach will be shared with the Board in due course. This is a critical piece of work as it will both shape and inform our decisions around how we communicate segmented messages on diet and nutrition without being seen as "nannying".

Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS)

- 3.3 Consumer opinions are being sought in relation to the existing FHIS and potential ways this could be developed in future. This work, being undertaken by the Communications and Marketing team, will feed into the overall development of the scheme and recommendations for moving this forward by the Policy & Evidence Unit.

Education Sector

- 3.4 Food Standards Agency Scotland as was has traditionally undertaken a number of distinct activities with the schools sector to support the Curriculum for Excellence and to deliver key messages to pupils. We are currently reviewing this work, building on the evaluation of the Hygiene, Healthy Eating and Activity in Primary Schools (HHEAPs) programme by engaging with teachers via one-to-one interviews and groups. This review will feed into the development of our plans in this sector moving forward. We have also agreed to support a new post which will be co-funded with SG and NHS

Health Scotland within the Communications and Marketing team to work closely with Policy team to take this forward.

Six Nations Brand Advertising

- 3.5 FSS held a prominent spot at the recent Italy v Scotland rugby match, with LED perimeter adverts being broadcast on ITV and to the watching fans.

4 Operations Meeting

- 4.1 At our recent Operations meeting in Perth which generated a great deal of constructive discussion around the new Scottish Government Terms & Conditions. This was the main focus of the meeting, with additional topics including the Corporate Strategy, an update from Operations, the launch of new Operational Standards and the Staff Survey.

5 Animal Feed Project Update

- 5.1 Earned recognition benefits businesses by reducing the inspection frequency as laid out in the Code of Practice. In order to implement Earned Recognition, it is necessary to reference that change in the Code of Practice and provide detailed guidance on implementation. The scope of the current earned recognition implementation is the feed sector beyond primary production, as we implemented earned recognition for primary production in 2008. The Code and guidance were issued for public consultation on 11 February, with a closing date of 3 March. During this period, we engaged with local authorities at two consultation workshops. Twenty five of the thirty one feed authorities attended. We have now reviewed the comments received at those events and response from industry, and are reviewing the Code and guidance accordingly. The Ministers office requires the Code by 17 March to allow it to be approved before dissolution of Parliament. This work is on track.
- 5.2 Both the Minister for Public Health and the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment have been notified of our intention to centralise feed and the consequential movement of funds from the block grant. The Minister for Public Health has asked for a meeting but no date is yet set.

6 Folic Acid

- 6.1 Scottish Ministers have recently indicated a desire to press ahead with fortification of flour with folic acid. The Minister for Public Health has requested FSS to provide advice on an implementation plan that would set out the process and timescales for this to be taken forward in Scotland. As a necessary preliminary to this, I have requested updated advice from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN). I have also discussed the matter with colleagues in the Welsh Government, the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland. The Board will be kept updated on developments.

7 Incident Management

- 7.1 Since 20 January 2016, 13 incidents have been reported to FSS of which one was routine. FSS has issued 13 Allergy Alert notices and 19 Product Recall information notices to consumers since that date.

8 Corporate Matters

Review of terms and conditions

- 8.1 Negotiations with the Trade Unions have concluded. Management made what they felt to be an affordable and reasonable offer on the proposal to transfer to Scottish Government Main (SGM) bargaining unit terms and conditions of employment. PCS and Prospect have recommended acceptance to their members, whilst Unison has remained neutral and will allow their members to make a decision on the benefits of the offer to them. Individual offers have been made to each member of FSS staff, including compensation to those staff who suffer a detriment. Staff have until 18 March 2016 to decide whether they wish to accept the offer. Those who accept will be employed under SGM terms from 1 April 2016. Those who do not accept the offer will remain on their current FSS terms and conditions of employment. The Board should be aware that this does create an additional pressure of around 3% per year.

People Survey

- 8.2 The FSS Staff People Survey closed on 22 February and the results have been administered independently by TNS-BMRB. The headline results are an overall staff engagement score of 62% which is an improvement on the final survey as FSAS of around 6% from 56% in 2014. This is the highest engagement score since the survey was started. There was some variability in the scores within areas, but a point of note is that the operations engagement score was 58% which is again the best it has ever been. We are currently undertaking more detailed analysis to inform our plans for further improvement and will be producing an infographic with more information.

Geoff Ogle, Chief Executive
Geoff.ogle@fss.scot

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