

## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

### **1 Chief Executive's engagements**

1.1 Since the last Board meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May, I held a joint meeting with Ross Finnie, FSS Chair and the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) Heather Hancock, Chair and Jason Feeney Chief Executive Officer (CEO). We discussed a number of topics of mutual interest, including Brexit; food crime; data sharing with industry and the FSA Regulating our Future programme.

1.2 At the beginning of June, myself, the Deputy Chief Executive and members of the Communications and Marketing team attended the Marketing Society Awards where FSS was successful in three awards categories. FSS received gold awards in the Media and Food & Drink categories for the summer food safety campaign "Pink Chicken" and the Healthy Eating campaign was awarded a silver award for marketing planning and insight. A real achievement for our second year and a real team effort across a number of branches.

1.3 Towards the end of June, the Chair and I, accompanied the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Operations attended the Royal Highland Show. Over the course of two days we engaged with a number of stakeholders including major retailers, Quality Meat Scotland; Agricultural Industries Confederation; McDonald's; National Farmers Union of Scotland; National Sheep Association; Scottish Beef Association; Scottish Food Commission; Scotland Food and Drink; Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; and representatives of SEFARI (which includes the Moredun Research Institute, Scottish Rural University College, the James Hutton Institute, the Rowett Institute and Biomathematics/Statistics Scotland).

1.4 I attended a number of stakeholder events including the Scotland Food and Drink Excellence Awards; United Kingdom Accreditation Service and British Standards Institute Annual Reception and the Scottish Retail Consortium parliamentary reception.

1.5 I have met with stakeholders including Animal and Plant Health Agency; Food and Drink Federation and Food and Drink Federation Scotland; Health Protection Scotland; Marine Scotland Science and also a representative from the Scottish Parliament Information Centre.

1.6 At the end of July, Ian McWatt the Director of Operations and I visited two meat plants Quality Pork Products at Brechin and 2 Sisters Poultry plant at Coupar Angus to meet with the food business operators. Ian also visited two other meat plants, ABP Perth and Highland Game.

### **2 Deputy Chief Executive's engagements**

2.1 Elspeth MacDonald, Deputy Chief Executive attended a Cross-Party Group on Cancer held at the Scottish Parliament on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017. The Minister for Public Health and Sport Aileen Campbell was in attendance to talk about the Scottish Government's diet and obesity strategy.

2.2 On the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2017, Elspeth met with Dr Pamela Byrne, Chief Executive Officer of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) to discuss our strategies and the wider landscape which we operate and the future challenges which will arise for FSS and FSAI. A significant outcome from this meeting to report was that officials from FSS and FSAI

agreed and signed an information-sharing agreement between the two organisations in relation to food crime. Both agreed that there was a lot of issues of shared interest and there would be benefit from continued closer working.

### **3 International engagement**

3.1 During May, FSS hosted a visit from senior officials from the Bosnian and Herzegovina Food Safety Authority, Veterinary Office and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and also a visit from the Deputy Director-General and colleagues from Zhejiang Province Food and Drug Administration in China.

### **4 Annual Report of UK Food Incidents 2016/17**

4.1 On the 26<sup>th</sup> July 2017, Food Standards Scotland (FSS) & Food Standards Agency (FSA) jointly published the Annual Report of UK Food Incidents<sup>1</sup>. These incidents include concerns about possible threats to the safety, quality or integrity of food and feed, as well as actual and confirmed threats. The report shows that in 2016/17, FSS and the FSA were notified of and investigated 2,265 food, feed and environmental contamination incidents in the UK. This is a significant rise from 2015/16 figures (1,514 incidents).

4.2 Although figures relating to Scottish incidents indicates a decrease in numbers, in real terms, incidents have in fact increased steadily since 2015/16. The discrepancy is due to a decision not to include certain Shellfish biotoxins / *E.coli* incidents where harvested product has not been placed on the market.

4.3 The five largest contributors to the total number of recorded incidents in 2016/17 were:

- Not determined / other (15%)
- Pathogenic micro-organisms (14%)
- Residues of veterinary medicinal products (9%)
- Allergens (8%)
- Chemical contamination (other) (6%)

4.4 In 2016/17, 83% of the 331 notifications in the 'Not determined / other' category related to the discovery of clandestine travellers in vehicles carrying food or feed consignments which have entered the UK. Their presence within freight vehicles presents a potential risk of contamination of incoming food loads. It should be noted that during the period, the number of clandestine travellers incidents in Scotland has been minimal.

### **5 Quarterly Incidents Report**

5.1 On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 2017, we published a summary<sup>2</sup> of product recalls between April - June 2017. Over this three month period, 24 food recall notices were issued including 14 related to allergens. This publication explains the details of the incident, the level of risk to consumers and what action we, industry and/or local authorities took.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/downloads/annualreportofincidents2017.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/downloads/Quarterly\\_Incidents\\_Report\\_-\\_April-June\\_2017.pdf](http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/downloads/Quarterly_Incidents_Report_-_April-June_2017.pdf)

## **6 Animal Feed**

6.1 Scottish Government Legal Directorate is currently working to finalise a draft Scottish Statutory Instrument (SSI) which will be issued for consultation. The SSI is designed to transfer competence from local authorities to FSS through an extensive amendment to secondary legislation. Consultation will take 12 weeks and a minimum of a further 10 weeks will be required for analysis and to action responses, styling and laying before Parliament, before it comes into force.

6.2 We have been working with the representatives from the local authorities which intend to operate regionally across Scotland ("regional authorities") to develop the centralised model of delivery, and in particular, the terms of the Service Level Agreements (SLAs). Once the generic SLA template has been redrafted to accommodate comments from the regional authorities, it shall be shared with Scottish Government Legal Directorate and SOLAR (Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators in Scotland), prior to submission for consideration by the individual regional authorities.

6.3 The regional authorities have indicated that Committee agreement of the SLAs is unlikely to take place until after the SSI has been laid in Parliament. Once the new SSI comes into force, Local Authorities will no longer be competent to deliver this function. Therefore, in order to ensure there is no gap in the competence to deliver feed official controls, it is necessary to ensure that the SSI comes into force after the SLAs have been agreed.

## **7 Communications and Marketing**

### **7.1 Incident Communications**

7.1.1 We are currently updating our Incident Communications strategy and plans for a non-routine incident, and these will be published as part of the updated Non-Routine Incident Management Plan in due course. We also held an annual review meeting with Health Protection Scotland where communications for non-routine incidents was also discussed.

### **7.2 Food in Scotland Consumer Tracking Survey**

7.2.1 The fieldwork for wave 4 of our Food in Scotland consumer tracking survey is now complete, with a full results debrief from our independent research agency, TNS, due at the beginning of September 2017. Topline results indicate that awareness of FSS and trust in the organisation remain largely static, since wave 3 was conducted 6 months ago.

### **7.3 Marketing Campaigns**

7.3.1 The Summer Food Safety Campaign 'Pink Chicken' is currently re-running and results will be collated for evaluation once it is complete at the end of August. A summary of these results will be provided to the Board in due course.

## 7.4 Events

7.4.1 We attended the Edinburgh International Science Festival in April and the Royal Highland Show and Taste of Grampian in June. An evaluation of these events is being collated and topline results will be shared with the Board in due course.

## 7.5 FSS Website

7.5.1 The refreshed FSS website launched in July 2017. We will shortly be engaging with key stakeholders to assess the new user experience. Initial results, when comparing the three weeks prior to launch and the three weeks after, show that site visits have more than doubled from 24,375 to 55,083. The site exit rate has reduced by 10% too – meaning that after landing on our most popular pages, users are increasingly clicking through to other areas of our website.

## 8. Brexit

8.1 Work related to Brexit is increasing following the publication of the UK Government's EU (Withdrawal) Bill. We have invested resources in assessing the implications of the Bill for FSS, and more officials' time is being spent working with Scottish Government (SG) colleagues, providing input to the lead SG teams and working on subject-specific issues where we have shared or related interests. As the work relating to domestic food and feed law increases, we are anticipating a significant increase in both time and resource requirements going forward and we will continue to work closely with SG officials. We anticipate bringing a more detailed paper on Brexit to the Board at the November 2017 meeting.

## 9. Errington Cheese Incident

9.1 There is little to report with regards to this incident as the case progresses through the Sheriff's court. In the meantime, we are reviewing the lessons learned from the incident; and are working with the Specialist Cheesemaker's Association (SCA) and the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee (SFELC) to identify where there is a need to strengthen the support available to businesses in the safe production of unpasteurised cheese.

9.2 In parallel, we have also commissioned a scientific review of microbiological controls in unpasteurised cheese production which will inform future guidance in this area.

Geoff Ogle, Chief Executive  
[Geoff.ogle@fss.scot](mailto:Geoff.ogle@fss.scot)

10<sup>th</sup> August 2017