

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FOOD STANDARDS SCOTLAND (FSS) BOARD HELD ON 09 DECEMBER 2015 FROM 09.10 TO 10.20 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
Peter Midgley, Director of Policy and Evidence
Karen McCallum-Smith, Head of Private Office
Garry Mournian, Head of Corporate Services
Hazel Stead, Board Secretary

1 Introduction, Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to this Food Standards Scotland (FSS) Board meeting and explained the purpose of this short meeting which was to table and discuss two papers.
- 1.2 The Chair wished to thank Heather Kelman for ably deputising as Chair recently in his absence.
- 1.3 There were no apologies for absence.

2 Chair's Report, Declaration of Conflict of Interest

- 2.1 The Chair invited board members to declare conflicts of interest. Carrie Ruxton declared that she had worked for three companies: Association of Cereal Food Manufacturers, Ferrero and Innocent which could be considered as sources of products containing free sugars or fibre. On 07 December 2015, she had attended and was a panel member at the Sugar Reduction Summit held in London and confirmed her attendance was not funded by industry.
- 2.2 The Chair noted the difficulties which may be encountered when dealing with actual conflicts of interest and perceived conflicts of interest. This is a matter which is considered regularly by Chief Executive (CE) and Chair. The Chair confirmed that he was content to allow Carrie to participate in the Board meeting.

3 Chief Executive's Oral Report

- 3.1 The CE confirmed that FSS governance documents which include the Code of Governance, Model Publication scheme and Model of Complaints handling procedure and associated guidance documents have been published on the FSS website.
- 3.2 The development of FSS strategy continues alongside development of the strategic plan across the organisation, and the next iterations will be tabled at the board meeting to be held on 20 January 2016. This will allow the executive to take account of the Scottish Government Budget, which is expected to be announced in December 2015. This work has been discussed with stakeholders through our ongoing engagement, and there will stakeholder and consumer panels held during January to focus on this, which Board members are welcome to attend. More details will be provided.
- 3.3 The CE and Ian McWatt, Director of Operations (DO) have recently returned from business visits to Australia, Canada and New Zealand (NZ) which were undertaken alongside colleagues from Food Standards Agency (FSA) to follow up the recommendations in the report of the Expert Advisory Group on horsemeat led by Professor Scudamore.
- 3.4 This was a useful opportunity to gather ideas on strategic direction on future delivery models on charging, risk management and third party assurance and look beyond the United Kingdom at world class surveillance systems.

- 3.6 Peter Midgley, Director of Policy and Evidence recently attended a meeting of the Scottish Government's Food Commission, and a future meeting between the FSS Board and Food Commission has been suggested. In January, the CE and Chair are due to meet with Julie Fitzpatrick, Deputy Chair of Food Commission. A joint executive meeting towards the end of the financial year has been agreed between FSS and Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and areas of common interest will be identified prior to the meeting. A joint meeting between FSS, Health and Safety Executive and SEPA is also to be arranged.
- 3.5 On recruitment matters, interviews for Chief Scientific Advisor are being held on 21 December 2015 and six candidates are to be interviewed. In total, 21 new members of staff have been recruited over the last few months. A Financial Accountant has been appointed and will take up the position on 11 January 2016.
- 3.6 A crisis management training session for senior managers was held in November which will build resilience within FSS when managing future incidents. Another session will be arranged for all senior managers who were unable to attend, as well as for other staff, to increase and further enhance our resilience.
- 3.7 George Brechin wished to express his thanks for the recent visit to the Perth abattoir.
- 3.8 The UK Government is planning to review the classification of public bodies in England, that could have implications for Scotland.

4 Adulteration of Food - Thresholds for action and reporting 15/12/01

- 4.1 The Chair commented that this paper is an example of areas where FSS collaboration with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is necessary to achieve a UK wide approach. The Chair invited Peter Midgley to present the paper to the Board.
- 4.2 Peter Midgley explained that the executives of FSS and FSA had agreed arrangements for working jointly on any analytical thresholds for action in response to food adulteration incidents, following the principles outlined in a recent FSA Board paper on adulteration of food. This paper does not refer to prior agreement with FSS, but this was made clear when the paper was presented to the FSA Board on 18 November 2015. The FSA Board held a thorough discussion on their paper and the emphasis was clear to put the consumer first and consider the food safety risks. The FSS executive were satisfied that the principles outlined in the FSA Board paper applied equally in Scotland, and agreed that the FSA consultation on those principles in the rest of the UK should be mirrored by FSS in Scotland.
- 4.3 In discussion, the board made a number of points:
- (a) It should be the FSS Board's decision to agree to consult jointly with FSA where appropriate.
 - (b) A mechanism should be developed to identify any areas where we need to co-operate with FSA in advance. This reinforces the FSS position of not being different for the sake of it and ensuring coherence on key areas for consumer protection such as incident management.
- 4.4 The Chair noted it is encouraging that the respective FSS and FSA executives are collaborating in the spirit of the Memorandum of Understanding.
- 4.5 The Board:
- **Noted** the agreement between the executives of FSS and the FSA to work jointly to ensure that thresholds for action in response to food adulteration incidents are developed on a UK wide basis.
 - **Agreed** on the basis described to the joint approach to consultation with FSA.

5 Review of the Scottish Dietary Goals in light of the SACN recommendations on Carbohydrates and Health – 15/12/02

- 5.1 The Chair noted that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) report had been published which places FSS in the middle of an iterative process. At this stage of the process, FSS is not discussing how to achieve the Scottish Dietary Goals (SDG), but simply whether relevant goals should be reviewed in light of the SACN report. The Chair invited Peter Midgley to present the paper to the Board.
- 5.2 Peter Midgley outlined the proposed changes to the relevant SDG, and noted that the FSS situation report, published today, that demonstrates the state of the Scottish diet and the lack of progress to date in achieving the SDGs. The paper tabled for the Board today focusses on changes to the SDGs, and the executive intends to provide proposals on risk management at the next Board meeting to be held 20 January 2016.
- 5.3 In discussion, the Board made a number of points which the executive responded to:
- (a) What are the implications of changing the definition of sugars to “free sugars”? The executive explained that there is very little difference between the two definitions : free sugar is slightly more lenient.
 - (b) Why is there no specific goal to reduce consumption of sugar sweetened soft drinks? The executive explained that this is considered to be better achieved through policy measures rather than having a specific SDG for these products.
 - (c) The executive explained in response to a question that the definition of fibre has changed from non-starch polysaccharide (NSP) to the Association of Analytical Communities (AOAC) definition which FSS has adopted.
 - (d) By referring only to increasing consumption of wholegrains, pulses and vegetables, the fibre recommendations seem to restrict options to increase fibre intake in diet. Suggest amendment to definition of fibre to remove the text “by increasing consumption of wholegrains, pulses and vegetables”. The executive explained that the wording reflected the view that it is possible to meet fibre recommendations through a healthy balanced diet, but accepted that re-wording would remove any perception of restriction.
 - (e) All existing policies and initiatives affected by SDGs will need to be reviewed, if the proposed changes to the SDGs are adopted.
 - (f) It is a welcome opportunity to reset SDGs. The executive noted that previous consumer messaging has been too generalised and communications and marketing team are undertaking segmentation which will allow a much more focused and targeted approach to specific consumer groups.
 - (g) A paper providing background on folate could be added to the forward plan for a future board meeting.
- 5.4 The Board:
- **Agreed** the revisions to the SDGs with the amendment of the fibre revised goal to be : *“Average population intake of dietary fibre for adults (16+) to increase to 30/g day”*
 - **Agreed** to advise the Minister for Public Health to approve the proposed revision to the SDGs

6 Close

- 6.1 Only one stakeholder Cat Hay from Scottish Food and Drink Federation was present via teleconference and the Chair closed the meeting.