

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

### 1 Chief Executive's engagements

1.1 Since the last Board meeting in November 2017, in December 2018 I delivered a presentation at the Westminster Food and Nutrition Forum Keynote Seminar – “Next Steps for policy on high fat, sugar and salt foods regulation, innovation and marketing”.

1.2 During November 2017, myself, Elspeth Macdonald, the Deputy Chief Executive and Ian McWatt, Director of Operations attended FSS Operations Staff Engagement sessions in Glasgow, Inverurie and Perth. The purpose of these sessions was to provide plant-based Operations staff with the opportunity to discuss a range of work related topics with the Senior Management team.

1.3 In December, myself, Ross Finnie, the Chair, and the Deputy Chief Executive met with Aileen Campbell, the Minister for Public Health to update her on what we have been doing in relation to our work on Brexit.

1.4 In January 2018, myself and Jason Feeney, Chief Executive Officer of Food Standards Agency (FSA CEO), visited the Suffolk Coastal Port Health Authority at Felixstowe. This is the largest port in the UK for third country imports and the purpose of the visit was to get a better understanding of the challenges for imports and exports through the current port structure. Given the UK's possible third country status when the UK leaves the European Union, it was useful to see and learn about the challenges from port authority representatives.

1.5 I presented at three Operational Delivery Profession Leadership Events in Manchester, Glasgow and London about My Leadership Journey. I also spoke at a seminar for Business School students at the University of Glasgow. These events are more a function of a wider Senior Civil Service corporate responsibility than related specifically to FSS business, but it does help raise our profile too.

1.6 I have also met with the Director for Food in Defra; attended the Scotland Food and Drink Annual General Meeting, met with representatives from Sainsbury's, Food and Drink Federation Scotland, Marks and Spencer, the Chief Executive of Forest Enterprise, NHS National Services, Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers and Agricultural journalists.

1.7 On 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018, I attended a joint meeting with the FSA CEO to meet with meat industry stakeholders to discuss issues emanating from the Russell Hume incident. FSS had a separate meeting with Scottish stakeholders to talk specifically about our approach to the review and the issues arising. While the Russell Hume incident has been UK wide (see paragraphs 8.1, 8.2 below), cutting plants also supply locally within Scotland so it is important our approach is comprehensive.

1.8 On 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018, I also attended a food fraud conference where we had a member of staff from our Food Crime and Incidents Unit presenting to the conference and I chaired a panel on legislation and Brexit in the context of food crime. Elspeth MacDonald also presented at the conference on policy priorities for tackling obesity in Scotland on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018 and 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018 she presented at the British Frozen Food Federation's annual conference in Birmingham.

1.9 At the beginning of March, myself Ian McWatt and Steve Hardie, Senior Policy Advisor travelled to Tokyo to attend the Global Food Safety Initiative Conference.

1.10 I attended a formal government to government meeting which focused on further areas of co-operation and development. Areas of co-operation were agreed around tackling food crime, horizon scanning and surveillance.

1.11 On the 6<sup>th</sup> March, Elspeth MacDonald attended the First Minister's Advisory Council on Women and Girls. FSS was approached to be part of a wider circle working with the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council's remit covers:

- to bring attention to inequality, as experienced by women and girls in Scotland
- to champion policies that make a meaningful difference to encourage Scotland to become a beacon for gender equality
- to be a catalyst for change, providing a challenging voice if progress is slow or ineffective

1.12 The circle is a good mix of representatives from across the public, private and third sectors and working to achieve gender equality is important to FSS as an organisation and each of us as individuals.

## **2 Food Enforcement Partnership Event**

2.1 On 31<sup>st</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018, FSS held its third annual Food Enforcement Partnership event in collaboration with the Scottish Food Enforcement Liaison Committee and the Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland. Myself, Elspeth Macdonald and Ian McWatt, were in attendance.

2.2 The event was extremely well supported with over 95 attendees on each of the two days. A variety of topics were covered during the event, including updates and workshops on Food Law Code of Practice Annex 5 - Food Law Inspections, the challenges of Brexit, Local Authority Capacity and Capability and the web-based calorie calculator, MenuCal.

## **3 FSS Audit Team help Dumfries and Galloway Council win award**

3.1 In December 2017, Dumfries and Galloway Council won the 'Best UK Performer' in the Environmental Health category at the Association for Public Service Excellence Performance Networks Awards. Dumfries and Galloway gave credit to the FSS Audit team for their support throughout the audit process as part of the reason for their success. This is a good example of FSS staff working effectively together in partnership with Local Authorities to help drive major changes and improvements.

## **4 Communications and Marketing**

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

4.1.1 It is good news to report that the results of Wave 5 of the Food in Scotland Consumer Tracking Survey conducted in December 2017, shows that awareness of FSS is at 59%, up from 57% from Wave 3 & 4. Trust in the organisation (among those aware of FSS) is 78%, up from 76% at Wave 3 and 74% at Wave 4.

4.1.2 Whilst it is hard to compare these results directly with other public sector organisations trust figures, in terms of our own benchmarking this is significantly up over the course of two years from Wave 1 in December 2015, when our trust figure was 70%. Overall, it is pleasing to note that steady and sustained progress in trust and awareness of FSS has been made.

## **4.2 Kitchen Crimes Campaign**

4.2.1 In January 2018, we launched a new food safety campaign – ‘Kitchen Crimes’<sup>1</sup> which is based on the evidence that people in Scotland, on average only follow 11 of 20 food safety practices. The campaign aims to highlight risky behaviours in the home and raise awareness of how changes to our food preparation and cooking behaviours can reduce the likelihood of food poisoning.

4.2.2 The campaign is currently being independently evaluated by Kantar TNS.

## **5 FSS Records Management Plan agreed by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland**

5.1 In December 2017, the Keeper of the Records of Scotland from the National Records of Scotland agreed the FSS Records Management Plan (RMP). This is the 207<sup>th</sup> RMP to be agreed by the Keeper, but more significantly, it is the first RMP agreed for an authority which didn’t appear on the original Schedule of the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011.

5.2 The Act, which came into force on 1 January 2013, requires public authorities listed on the Schedule to create a RMP detailing records management arrangements with those authorities.

5.3 The Deputy Chief Executive attended a photo-call with the Keeper and she said “*FSS is pleased that the Keeper of the Records of Scotland has agreed our RMP. It was a real team effort within the organisation in developing the RMP, which demonstrates that FSS has the necessary arrangements in place to efficiently manage information and records. As a relatively new organisation, we’re delighted to have achieved this. We’re committed to ensuring everyone plays their part in carrying out the plan across the organisation*”.

## **6 Healthy Working Lives – Bronze Award**

6.1 FSS has retained the Bronze Award in the Healthy Working Lives scheme. This year, we are aiming high and working towards achieving the Gold Award.

## **7 North East Learning Collaborative**

7.1 FSS, along with Marine Scotland Science, have been accepted to join the North East Learning Collaborative (NELC). NELC is made up of public and third sector organisations across the North East of Scotland, who work together to deliver shared training events and resources on leadership and management, online learning, mentoring and coaching.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/food-safety/at-home/kitchen-crimes>

7.2 The aim is to design and deliver the learning events that suit the needs and support organisational goals, whether these are national or local.

## **8 Incident Management**

8.1 The Board has been regularly appraised of progress in managing the meat incident which originated with Russell Hume but subsequently expanded to cover other businesses, namely Muscle Foods and Fairfax Meadow. Given the UK wide nature of this incident which started in England, FSA has led on the incident and chaired the Senior Incident Management response to it. FSS has contributed fully to the management of the incident.

8.2 The Board will also have noted our intention to undertake a review of cutting premises and cold stores given the issues that have come to light. What I would observe is that we again have an incident that has started because a business has not been able to demonstrate a validated and verified food safety management system to justify the changes of process they have introduced. Inevitably, that creates high degrees of uncertainty that inevitably leads to a more precautionary approach. To date, there is no evidence of any impact on public health arising from this incident and investigations continue.

8.3 It is worth pointing out too that in terms of communication our line is that the "investigation is on-going". This is another incident where despite this being an enforcement action undertaken by us as a regulator (and where prosecution is within the range of possibilities), there has been pressure for us to say more and more about the content of the on-going investigation. We have not done so and I have asked that in our on-going dialogue with the media and editors that we emphasise the restrictions that apply to us are the same as any other enforcement agency and we should not jeopardise potential actions - or indeed the rights of individuals under investigation – by commenting.

## **9 Publications and Research**

### **9.1 Understanding the sources of human Campylobacter infection in Scotland**

9.1.1 On the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2018, we published the results<sup>2</sup> of research conducted by the University of Aberdeen which shows that chicken remains the biggest source of campylobacter infection in Scotland. FSS commissioned the University of Aberdeen to compare clinical strains of campylobacter from the Grampian area with strains isolated from chickens, cattle, sheep, pigs and wild birds. This was used to determine the proportion of infections in Scotland from these potential sources.

9.1.2 While campylobacter remains the most common source of foodborne illness there has been a reduction in those contracting campylobacter from chicken. The proportion of cases attributed to chicken decreased from 55-75% to 52-68% when compared to data collected between 2012-2015.

9.1.3 These findings will assist FSS in developing a new campylobacter strategy for Scotland. The strategy will consider how we can achieve a continued decline of campylobacter cases from chicken. We will also identify opportunities to work with other organisations to reduce the risks from sources other than chicken which may be caused by environmental exposure.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/publications-and-research/campylobacter-attribution-extension>

## 9.2 Situation report on the Scottish diet: It needs to change, 2018 update

9.2.1 The updated situation report on “The Scottish diet: It needs to change”<sup>3</sup> published on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018, updates previous key findings about the state of the Scottish diet, and provides new insights into consumer attitudes towards changing the food environment, and information on calories consumed from alcohol.

9.2.2 There continues to be a lack of progress towards the dietary goals and improving obesity and diet related poor health. Discretionary foods and drinks contribute around 20% to calories and fats in the diet, and 50% of the sugar. Alcoholic drinks also contribute large amounts of calories in some people. The report highlights the skew towards unhealthy foods in both the out of home environment, and in the balance of retail promotions. However, consumer mind-sets are shifting and public support for action to change the food environment may be growing.

## 9.3 Monitoring retail purchase and price promotions in Scotland (2010-2016)

9.3.1 The monitoring retail purchase and price promotions in Scotland report<sup>4</sup> published on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018, provides information on retail purchase and price promotions in Scotland between 2010 and 2016, using data from Kantar Worldpanel.

9.3.2 It provides new insights into sugar purchase and explores price promotions in more depth. Overall purchase of calories, fats and sugars has changed very little since 2010. Large reductions in sugar purchased from soft drinks have been offset by increases in sugar purchased from other categories. Purchase on promotion has recently decreased from 39% of calories to 36%, and purchase on promotion continues to be skewed towards less healthy categories. Within the top 5 retailers, total purchase on promotion was around 40% with up to 74% of confectionery was purchased on promotion. Analysis found that, while price promotions can help save money on individual categories, there may be cheaper alternatives available.

## 10 Brexit

10.1 This level of resource required to support Brexit related activities continues to increase and from this point on we expect that over the next year Brexit will continue to absorb more resources. To date, there has been no additional funding providing to FSS even though nearly all food and feed legislation is from the European Union. We have raised our concerns with Scottish Government (SG).

10.2 The Board are also receiving a paper at the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018 Board meeting related to the budget allocation for next year which shows what our starting position for 2018/19 is with regards to resources for this programme.

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/publications-and-research/the-scottish-diet-it-needs-to-change-2018-update>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/publications-and-research/monitoring-retail-purchase-and-price-promotions-in-scotland-2010-2016>

10.3 Key actions over the last couple of months have been our involvement with SG on discussions around possible areas for UK Frameworks with UK Government in the context of a set of principles agreed through the Joint Ministerial Committee; raising awareness with Local Authority (LA) colleagues at our recent Partnership event; discussions in the Scottish Meat Industry Forum and discussions with colleagues in Scottish Government, including development of a stakeholder engagement approach. During January 2018, Elspeth Macdonald gave evidence to the House of Commons Public Bill Committee on the Trade Bill.

## **11 New contract for official controls delivery in approved meat establishments**

11.1 FSS is introducing a new contract for meat hygiene official controls delivery in approved meat establishments from April 2018 for a 3 year period, with the option of a 1 year extension. This new contract provides Food Business Operators (FBOs) with an opportunity to improve their levels of efficiency through coupling veterinary charges with hours worked and level of controls delivered, as per Business Agreements. This will therefore provide industry with an incentive to ensure veterinary hours requested are actually required and allow FSS to deploy more efficiently therefore reducing costs.

11.2 We appreciate however, it is up to the individual businesses to decide how they wish to organise their throughput, but the new contract means there are opportunities for FBO's to contain their costs with better time management and ensure the service they request is the service they require. It is in both our and the FBO's interests to contain costs as inflationary pressures exist on all sides.

11.3 The new contract will not lead to a dramatic reduction in costs, and we are aware that the tender pricing, remoteness and rurality of the service that has to be provided in certain areas of Scotland mitigates against that. In England and Wales, very different economies of scale can be achieved and we can't expect that to be replicated across the Scottish process.

11.4 Discussions have been held with Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers to develop and agree a set of guiding principles to ensure the charging model and discount system remain transparent and encourages efficient working practice going forward.

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20<sup>th</sup> March 2018