

Meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Committee

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2019

**safefood**, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1

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## MINUTES

**SAC members present:** Ms Elaine Mooney, Chair  
Prof Mary McCarthy  
Mr Gerry Leen  
Dr Kirsten Dunbar  
Prof Joe Hegarty  
Prof Elizabeth Keane

**SAC apologies:** Prof Mary Corcoran

**safefood staff:** Dr James McIntosh  
Dr Aileen McGloin  
Dr Gary Kearney  
Dr Marian O'Reilly  
Mr Ray Dolan  
Ms Colette O'Shea

**Invited guests:** Dr Sinead McCarthy, Teagasc  
Ms Aisling Corcoran, Ipsos MRBI

### 1. Welcome, introductions & apologies

The chairperson welcomed the **safefood** Advisory Committee (SAC) members, **safefood** staff and the invited guests to the meeting.

Apologies were noted from Prof Mary Corcoran. There were no conflicts of interest with regard to the agenda items.

## 2. Minutes of the SAC meeting of Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and matters arising

The minutes from the last SAC meeting held on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018 were reviewed and agreed. There were no matters arising.

**Action:** Gerry Leen requested Jim Power's presentation from the October meeting

## 3. For discussion

### *Carbon footprint of food consumption in Irish adults*

Presented by: Dr Sinead McCarthy, Teagasc

**Noted:** Foods from animal sources are the greatest contributors of daily dietary greenhouse gas emissions. However, those who eat the most red meat (cultural) did not have significantly different dietary emissions than those who ate the least (nutritional).

**Noted:** Eating beyond our estimated energy requirements can be considered a form of food waste that contributes not only to climate change but also to public health issues such as obesity. Western style unsustainable diets typified are particularly bad for the climate as well as lower achievement of dietary guidelines.

**Noted:** To achieve parity for protein from red meat will require >3 times the amount of lentils or soya beans would need to be consumed, resulting in higher calorie intake.

**Noted:** Germany and Sweden are the only two European countries that feature messages about sustainability in their food guidelines

**Noted:** Recommendations to reduce dietary related emissions must consider consumer behaviour, prevailing dietary patterns as well as focussing on reducing emissions associated with food production.

### *Safetrak 2018 and recent trends in consumer behaviour*

Presented by: Aisling Corcoran, Ipsos MRBI

**Noted:** The top food related issue of most concern to consumers in ROI are (1) food additives, (2) food poisoning, (3) hygiene, (4) date marks, and (5) undercooked food. The top food related issue of most concern to consumers in NI are (1) chicken preparation, (2) food poisoning, (3) date marks, (4) food additives, and (5) cross-contamination.

**Noted:** 30% of ROI respondents claim that they are not well informed about healthy eating, while 19% of NI adults claim not to be interested in healthy eating.

**Noted:** 93% of adults claim to always wash their hands after using the toilet while the vast majority (78%), have used hand sanitisers in the past 3 months with usage among females reaching 84%.

**Noted:** Just over one third (35%) of adults on the island of Ireland seek out information about nutrition/healthy eating once per month or more often. Websites are the main source of information, followed by social media and GPs.

#### 4. For Information

##### a) *safefood* CEO Report

Presented by: Dr James McIntosh, *safefood*

**Noted:** An update on the START and Handwashing campaigns was given and the consumer campaign 'Transform your Trolley' which supports Operation Transformation. The consumer awareness campaign 'Don't Wash Raw Chicken' will be launched in ROI as part of World Food Safety Day (7<sup>th</sup> June.)

**Noted:** *safefood* hosted Healthfest in partnership with the National Dairy Council in NI. Fourteen new projects (9 ROI and 5 NI) have been awarded funding under the CFI programme 2019 – 2021. Both START and Handwashing campaigns featured at the Balmoral Show in May. The all-island Obesity Action Forum workshop – Children's rights, children's weight takes place in Belfast in June.

**Noted:** 58,000 lunchbox leaflets have been sent to schools and a further 45,000 leaflets have been requested. Over 450 people have signed up to *safefood*'s first consumer facing e-newsletter. Development of the new *Tastebuds* resource is ongoing. *safefood* is collaborating with FSA NI who are piloting the implementation of Minimum nutritional standards for healthcare facilities in 2 council areas in NI.

**Noted:** The first of three Knowledge Network Food Chain magazines has been published. Eight applications for the Food Safety Skills Fund programme have been approved. Four one-day training shelf life workshops were organised in NI. ISO 17025:2017 workshops for staff in food testing laboratories (public and private) were run in March in Belfast, Cork, Galway and Dublin. Since January, the KN has hosted 4 webinars. The fourth series of Food Safety Workshops for small food businesses has started. A request for Expressions of Interest for a new Expert Group of food chain experts for the Knowledge Network has been advertised.

**Noted:** An update on new research projects was provided

##### b) *safefood* Food Safety Development Awards

Presented by: Dr James McIntosh, *safefood*

**Noted:** The awards are novel and focus on food safety research that has been carried out on the island of Ireland and that has been successfully implemented along the food chain.

**Noted:** The winning entry will receive a travel bursary.

**Noted:** The competition is open to researchers from any background on the island of Ireland.

##### c) *High Protein Snack survey*

Presented by: Dr Marian O'Reilly, *safefood*

**Noted:** Many consumers on the IoI follow a high protein diet and the number of foods with 'high protein' claims has substantially increased.

**Noted:** The recommended protein intake for adults ( $\geq 18$  years) is 0.75g/kg body weight/day providing 12-15% of daily energy intake. Data shows that intakes are adequate across all age groups.

**Noted:** Of 39 high-protein products (mostly bars) sampled, 77% were high in saturated fat, 79% were medium for salt content and half were low sugar. High protein yoghurts, quark and protein drinks/smoothies were low in total fat, saturated fat and salt content.

**Noted:** Overall, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that high protein intakes provide healthy individuals with additional health benefits.

#### **6. AOB & date for next meetings**

**Noted:** Next meeting will be held on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in Newry, Northern Ireland.

**Noted:** The Chair thanked the members and closed the meeting.