

Meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Committee

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018

**safefood**, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Block B, Abbey Court, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1

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**MINUTES**

**SAC members present:** Prof Margaret Patterson, Chair

Dermott Jewell

Michael Bell

Prof Mary Corcoran

Dr Mary McCarthy

Dr Elaine Mooney

Prof Joe Hegarty

Martin Roper

**SAC apologies:** Gerry Leen

Therese Coleman

Dr Kirsten Dunbar

Prof Elizabeth Keane

**safefood staff:** Ray Dolan, Chief Executive Officer

Dr Gary Kearney

Dr James McIntosh

Dr Aileen McGloin

Dr Charmaine McGowan

Colette O'Shea

**Invited guests:** Peter Whelan, FSAI

## 1. Welcome, introductions & apologies

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

Apologies were noted from Gerry Leen, Therese Colman, Dr Kirsten Dunbar and Prof Elizabeth Keane

There were no conflicts of interest with regard to the agenda items.

## 2. Minutes of the SAC meeting of Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and matters arising

The minutes from the last SAC meeting held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017 were reviewed and agreed. There were no matters arising. However, following a request for an update on the Folic Acid campaign, Dr Aileen McGloin advised that the most recent phase of the campaign had been in September 2017 and this had resulted in a small increase in the number of women taking folic acid supplementation.

## 3. Knowledge share

### *Food Fraud*

Presented by: Peter Whelan, FSAI

**Noted:** Combatting criminal activity in the food chain in the Republic of Ireland is the responsibility of the Garda and FSAI in collaboration with relevant government departments.

**Noted:** Criminal activity along the food chain represents a real risk for the reputation of Irish food products.

**Noted:** Criminal activity includes both deliberate fraudulent activity and food operators who may for any reason be bypassing the normal food controls.

**Noted:** The importance of the Protective Disclosure Act for gathering intelligence was emphasised.

## 4. For discussion

### a) Prioritisation of future SAC work

**Noted:** A Working Group to look at the issue of Strategic Partnerships had been set up since the previous SAC meeting in October 2017. This consisted of Michael Bell, Dr Kirsten Dunbar, Prof Joseph Hegarty, Demott Jewell and Prof Elizabeth Keane. The group met in February 2018. The report from the Working Group was sent to all members.

**Noted:** The report stated that the scope for **safefood** to form strategic partnerships was not limited to the island of Ireland and strategic partnerships could give **safefood** access to new networks.

**Noted:** **safefood**'s experience as a trans-border organisation may be of interest at the European level in defining post-Brexit EU-UK relations, particularly with regard to the evolution of the food chain and the associated increase in turbulence.

**Noted:** The focus of the next Corporate Plan will dictate the strategic partnerships that will be necessary to ensure its delivery.

**Noted:** Under *Healthy Ireland*, each county is applying for *Healthy County* status and have received funding for targeting diverse communities, training, etc. However, there is no evaluation method applied to this programme. **safefood** may be able to provide expertise.

**Noted:** Some members expressed an interest in participating in a Working Group looking at *Improving the cooking skills of Early School Leavers*.

**Action:** **safefood** to contact the members with regard to establishing a Working Group looking at *Improving the cooking skills of Early School Leavers*.

#### b) **Standing Item: Brexit issues and potential impact on the lol agrifood chain**

**Noted:** The Brexit process is ongoing and there still is very little clarity as to what the outcomes will be vis-à-vis regulatory divergence, border evolution, trade, etc.

**Noted:** Approximately 55% of cross-border trade on the island of Ireland is agrifood in nature. Any disturbance in the current border structure, particularly with regard to the regulatory regime, will have negative impacts on this flow of trade.

**Noted:** There may be increased regulatory demands on food businesses, especially SMEs who could see a substantial increase in compliance bureaucracy.

**Noted:** Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) status is an EU system for accrediting agrifood businesses. Essentially no NI agrifood business have this accreditation which takes at least 6 months to achieve. This may prove necessary for cross-border trade post Brexit.

**Noted:** **safefood** needs to keep a watching brief on developments as Brexit will have an enormous impact on all aspects of the agrifood industry on the island of Ireland, particularly with regard to the potential for criminal exploitation and any associated impacts on food safety.

#### c) *Research ideas*

**Noted:** **safefood** relies on its various networks, including the SAC, for the identification of knowledge gaps that would benefit from focussed research, particularly with regard to implementable solutions.

**Noted:** A number of ideas were broached. However, it was agreed that the members needed more time to think about this issue.

**Action:** Members to feedback research ideas by end of June.

### 5. For Information - **safefood** CEO Report

**Noted:** The CEO advised that Dr Aileen McGloin had been appointed as the Director of Marketing & Communications at **safefood** while Fiona Gilligan was on secondment at the Dept. of Health.

**Noted:** The CEO went through the different elements of the most recent CEO report to the **safefood** ` Advisory Board.

**Noted:** The CEO and Directors of Food Science and Marketing & Nutrition met the EU Environment and Food Safety Committee on their recent visit to Dublin.

**Noted:** Updates were given on the second phase of the Childhood Healthy Eating (START), Childhood Handwashing and the Mediawise campaigns. The recent phase of the SME food safety training workshops was discussed as was **safefood's** involvement in Social Prescribing as an advocate for CFIs and a more holistic perspective of food.

**Noted:** An update was given on the extent of consumer engagement with current **safefood** campaigns and also the impacts and ramifications of GDPR in this regard.

**Noted:** An update was given on two new research projects: *Portion Control Tools* and *Food for Kids in Social Spaces*.

## **8. Tour de table**

**Noted:** The issue of SAC continuity was discussed given that the period of membership of some members was coming to a conclusion at the end of 2018. It was clarified that, given the current political situation in Northern Ireland (i.e. no functioning Assembly and therefore NSMC), clarification would be sought from the sponsoring departments on how best to proceed in this regard.

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

**Noted:** The members were encouraged to feedback with any suggestions for presentations they consider would be of value to the SAC.

**Noted:** The CHRO19 - International Workshop on Campylobacter, Helicobacter and Related Organisms conference will be in Belfast in September 2019.

**Noted:** The FSAI is organising a food safety themed conference in June 2019.

**Noted:** The venue of the next meeting is to be decided.

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