

Minutes of the 138th meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Board
Held on Thursday, 17 October, 2019 at 9:30am
Stormont Hotel, Belfast

PRESENT:

Mr Paul Gibbons (PG) (Vice Chair)
Dr Mary Upton (MU)
Dr Eddie Rooney (ER)
Mr Brendan Kehoe (BK)
Ms Wendy McIntosh (WMI)
Mr Alan McGrath (AMG)
Mr Mervyn Oswald (MO)
Ms Margaret Jeffares (MJ)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Ray Dolan, Chief Executive (RD)
Dr James McIntosh, Manager, Chemistry and Toxicology (JMI)
Ms Patricia Fitzgerald, Director, Corporate Operations (PF)
Ms Angela Cahill, Manager, Corporate Operations (AC)
Dr Aileen McGloin, Director, Marketing and Communications (AMcG)
Dr Catherine Conlon, Director, Human Health and Nutrition (CC)
Ms Alison Dries (secretary) (AD)

APOLOGIES:

Ms Helen O'Donnell (HOD) (Chair)
Mr Stephen Moutray (SM)
Prof Dolores O'Riordan (DOR)

1. Meeting of Advisory Board members – without Executive present

Noted: The members of the Advisory Board met without the Executive present.

2. Matters arising from the Meeting of Advisory Board members – without Executive present

Noted: There were not matters arising.

3. Introduction and apologies

Noted: The Vice Chair welcomed all members of the Advisory Board to the Stormont Hotel, Belfast.

Noted: The Vice Chair thanked all attendees for travelling to Belfast.

Noted: The Vice Chair welcomed CC to her first meeting.

Noted: The Vice Chair passed on congratulations on behalf of the Board to HOD and family on her son's graduation.

Noted: The apologies for HOD, DOR and SM were noted.

4. Conflicts of interest

Noted: The Vice Chair asked members if there were any conflicts of interest relating to the agenda. No conflicts of interest were raised.

5. Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 22 August, 2019

Agreed: The minutes were adopted with no amendments

Proposed: AMG

Seconded: MU

6. Matters arising from the minutes

Noted: Regarding the first point noted under section 8. Members of the Board remain concerned in relation to quorum and governance relating to the completion of the term of three Board members. The CEO informed he asked both the Sponsor Departments and the NSMC to write to the Board to explain the situation.

Noted: ER informed of the importance to officially record the concerns of the Board and the implications of the situation.

Action: The CEO to issue correspondence to the Permanent Secretaries of the Sponsor Departments and the NSMC voicing the concern of the Board. Followed up by correspondence from The Chair if required.

7. Presentation

Noted: Dr Sinead McCarthy of Teagasc presented on the topic of sustainable diets in particular the carbon footprint of food consumption in Irish adults and thoughts for future food consumption. The presentation informed of the following;

- One quarter of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGE) come from the Agri-food sector.
- A sustainable diet involves eating to meet requirements i.e. don't overeat. This ties in with **safe food's** obesity campaign, in particular portion size messaging and food waste initiatives, in particular clarifying 'best before' and 'use by' dates on food labels.
- Very few EU countries feature messages about sustainability in their food guidelines.
- Behaviour change is required to change to a sustainable diet.
- In order to get comparable nutrition requirements from plant sources (especially protein) a person would have to eat 3-4 times the equivalent servings of meat which would also have an environmental impact in terms of more land needed for growing plants and ploughing the land releases carbon. This would impact the older population more as appetite decreases with age and nutritional requirements must be satisfied by smaller food portions.
- Some more sustainable products are not healthy, therefore the message is not simple. A litre of coke would be more sustainable than a litre of milk but does not provide the same nutrient benefits.
- A holistic assessment of food production and diet is required for any attempts to reduce dietary GHGE.
- Recommendations to reduce dietary related emissions must consider consumer behaviour, prevailing dietary patterns as well as focussing on reducing emissions associated with food production and food consumption.

Noted: The Vice chair thanked Dr McCarthy for her presentation and for taking the time to travel to Belfast.

Noted: Dr McCarthy's presentation generated a broad discussion.

8. Corporate Plan 2020-2022

Noted: The Draft Corporate plan which covers the three year period 2020-2022 and a summary cover page were circulated to all Board Members prior to the meeting. Printed copies were also available at the meeting.

Noted: PF informed of the process undertaken in the development of the Corporate Plan which consisted of an online survey of staff and Board Members, followed by a staff workshop and to date the draft has been circulated to Board members and feedback invited.

Noted: The next steps in completion of the Corporate Plan involve:

- Input and feedback invited from Board Members
- Issue to Sponsor Departments for approval
- Present to staff.

Noted: The 2020-2022 Corporate Plan is the first which has invited feedback from the Board and this is on foot of the Boards request to have more input.

9. Chief Executive's report

Corporate

Noted: In the absence of an NI Assembly and the NSMC, **safefood's** 2017 and 2018 Business Plans and the 2017-2019 Corporate Plan await formal approval. Drafting of the 2019 Business Plan is at an advanced stage and should be issued to Sponsor Departments shortly.

Noted: **safefood** met with both Sponsor Departments in September primarily to discuss the latest draft of the new Financial Memorandum. The Vice Chair enquired as to what level of spending the memorandum covers. PF confirmed the draft Financial Memorandum is more restrictive than the existing Financial Memorandum and would create extra workload to ensure compliance and could result in potential delays in delivering projects if speedy sponsor department approval is not forthcoming.

Campaigns

Noted: AMcG informed of activity taking place in campaigns.

Noted: The next phase of the Start campaign will go live on 21 October across TV, radio digital and supported by PR. Initial feedback will be available at the December meeting.

Noted: The Rufus the messy Monster Handwashing campaign continues to be a success. A further 1,500 requests through digital media have been received for the pack and copies are also being disseminated through Tulsa.

Noted: AMcG confirmed **safefood** will continue to sponsor RTE's Operation Transformation in January 2020.

Publicity

Noted: AMcG informed of the media coverage secured during September, this included;
Promotion of regional Small Medium Enterprise (SME) food safety workshops
Interest in the Handwashing campaign from parent bloggers and parenting websites
The launch of **safefood**'s Energy drinks survey received significant coverage with highlights including RTE Morning Ireland, News talk 106FM, the Daily Mirror; Irish Times; Irish Sun and Daily Star.

Noted: AMcG informed publicising the SME workshops on a local scale worked very well.

Events

Noted: AMCG informed **safefood** presented the START campaign along with the HSE at the National Ploughing Championships in September. This was a very successful event generating good engagement with the audience. The location of the **safefood** stand in the Healthy Ireland marquee worked very well.

Noted: **safefood** also presented the START campaign as the GAA's annual Healthy Clubs conference. This was a new invitation for **safefood** who were pleased to be asked as it allows engagement with the target audience.

Digital

Noted: The digital team supports all of **safefood**'s work and endeavours to extend reach further than what can be achieved through other channels. A further 1,500 Rufus packs were ordered and was downloaded over 740 times. The digital team have also been sharing recipes and information from 101 Square Meals across social channels. As a result nearly 2,500 users downloaded the PDF and over 40 have requested a hard copy, this was achieved through non-paid for activity.

Community Food Initiative (CFI) programme.

Noted: **safefood** is hosting a regional workshop on 6 November in Belfast. The aim is to provide a platform to network and allow the CFI's to promote their work to professionals working in the social inclusion and community sectors.

Minimum nutritional standards for healthcare facilities NI and ROI

Noted: The technical group in NI is awaiting final sign off from funders in order to proceed to print with the revised standards document. The group has agreed to eliminate all sugar sweetened beverages from canteens and is now also proceeding with a 200kcal cap for all snacks in canteens and vending machines.

Noted: In the ROI the Nutrition Standards implementation plan were presented to the Healthier Food Environment Advisory Group in September. A date for the launch of the Standards will be confirmed once the plan is signed off.

All-island food poverty network

Noted: CC informed the recent All-island food poverty annual conference was a success. The conference focused on social prescribing and looked into if it had a role in tackling food poverty. Social prescribing involves looking at alternatives to medicines that could help patients to improve their health and wellbeing. **safefood** is interested in working this into the CFI's in relation to overweight and obesity.

Knowledge Network

Noted: JMI informed of the activities taking place in the Knowledge Network:

- 10 new members have been appointed to the expert group, four meetings per year will be held.
- The development of eLearning tools to support food safety training for small food businesses is underway.
- A list of up-coming events was given
- Following on from the success of the allergen masterclasses in NI in conjunction with the FSA NI this year **safefood** is hosting allergen masterclasses in ROI in conjunction with the FSAI. The programme is being rolled out to catering and hospitality students and staff in Institutes of Technology and Vocational Colleges. MU informed there is a huge ignorance on allergens and a huge demand on industry.

Research

Noted: JMI informed of the progress of Research projects commissioned by **safefood**.

Noted: MU enquired if **safefood** had done a comparison of food from other decades compared to now. AMcG confirmed the Lancet compared 1946-2006 which showed calorie consumption had reduced. Caution has to be taken when comparing diets as factors in lifestyle need to be considered.

9. Financial Report

Noted: PF referred to the summary Financial Results until the end of September 2019. **safefood** is slightly under budget at present due to timing differences and expects to spend the full budget by year end. PF noted that funding for the final quarter of the year is in sterling, therefore the exchange rate will be especially important during the final quarter.

10. Tour de table

Noted: no matters were raised.

11. AOB

Noted: no other business was raised.

Date of next meeting: Friday, 6 December, 2019, Dublin