



Minutes of the 133rd meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Board

Held on Thursday, 24 January, 2019 at 10:30

safefood, Dublin office

PRESENT:

Ms Helen O'Donnell (HOD) (Chair)

Mr Paul Gibbons (PG) (Vice Chair)

Dr Mary Upton (MU)

Dr Eddie Rooney (ER)

Mr Brendan Kehoe (BK)

Mr Alan McGrath (AMG)

Ms Wendy McIntosh (WMI)

Mr Mervyn Oswald (MO)

Ms Margaret Jeffares (MJ)

Mr Stephen Moutray (SM)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Ray Dolan, Chief Executive (RD)

Ms Patricia Fitzgerald, Director, Corporate Operations (PF)

Dr Aileen McGloin, Director, Marketing and Communications (AMcG)

Dr Gary Kearney, Director, Food Science (GK)

Ms Alison Dries (secretary) (AD)

APOLOGIES:

Prof Dolores O'Riordan (DOR)

Dr Cliodhna Foley-Nolan, Director, Human Health and Nutrition, (CFN)

1. Meeting of Advisory Board members – without Executive present

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

2. Introduction and apologies

Noted: The Chair welcomed all members of the Advisory Board to the first meeting of 2019 in the **safefood** Dublin office. The Chair passed on the sympathies of the Board to GK on the passing of his Mother.

Noted: The Chair thanked all attendees for travelling to Dublin.

Noted: Apologies of DOR were noted.

3. Conflicts of interest

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

4. Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 6 December, 2018

Noted: The minutes were adopted with no amendments

Proposed: SM

Seconded: BK.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

Noted: There were no matters arising from the minutes.

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

Noted: Members of the Advisory Board discussed the need for media training and requested advice on the protocol if they were approached for comment by media.

Action: AMcG in her role as Director of Marketing and Communication was deemed best placed to evaluate the need for Board members to undertake media training and will advise accordingly.

Noted: Members of the Advisory Board discussed the increase in the popularity of a vegan diet and asked if this is an area **safefood** should look at. AMcG informed that the M&C and HHN

Directorates were monitoring this development and that **safefood**'s advice is to follow the food pyramid/plate.

Noted: Members of the Advisory Board discussed the issue of eco packaging and the growing number of consumers who would like to see less packing on food. Members queried how this would impact on food safety.

Action: GK in his role as Director of Food Science was deemed best placed consider this issue and will revert to the Board.

7. Chief Executive's report

Corporate

Noted: In the absence of an NI Assembly and the NSMC, **safefood**'s 2017 and 2018 Business Plans and **safefood**'s 2017-2019 Corporate Plan await formal approval. The CEO informed that **safefood** had recently received correspondence from the NSMC explaining it is not in the position to approve any matters which are reserved for NSMC approval. This has impacted on an agreement with five members of the **safefood** Advisory Committee (SAC) to extend their term until the NSMC appoints members. Five members of **safefood**'s Advisory Committee concluded their terms of appointment in January 2019 creating 5 vacancies which cannot be fulfilled at present. The CEO informed this will also apply to three Board members if the Northern Ireland Executive is not in place by the end of 2019.

Noted: **safefood**'s open recruitment competition to fill a vacancy in the ICT Division proved unsuccessful due to the salary scale. The position may be filled by contract.

Noted: **safefood**'s open competition to recruit a Director of Human Health and Nutrition will close on 25 January 2019.

Noted: A signed certificate from the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) of the 2017 Annual Report and Financial Statements has been received. The Annual Report 2017 is expected to be approved and published by the end of February.

Campaigns

Noted: START – A healthy weight for children advertising is currently running on television and radio to coincide with Operation Transformation on RTE 1. Commissioned research by **safefood** on the topics 'What's on your child's plate', 'Why do adults give treats to children' and the 'Balance of foods on promotion' will support the next phase of the Start campaign.

Noted: Printed resources for the Handwashing campaign titled 'Rufus the messy monster' have been distributed to 4,000+ pre-schools and creches on the island of Ireland serving more than 100,000 under five year olds. The resources were available at the meeting for Board members to view.

Noted: A one page review of the Christmas food safety campaign was prepared in advance of the meeting and available for all members. AMcG informed of the hugely successful campaign which witnessed the busiest period ever on the **safefood** website and reached over 1 million consumers on Facebook.

Noted: The campaign – “Transform your Trolley” - will feature instore healthy eating advice in supermarkets and reinforce **safefood** as the trusted, independent source of advice on healthy eating in January as part of **safefood**'s sponsorship of RTE's Operation Transformation. **Safefood** staff will push the message that, if good decisions are made in the supermarket, this will serve healthy eating for the rest of the week. The recently launched **safefood** funded research report titled 'What's on offer? The types of food and drink on price promotion in retail outlets in the Republic of Ireland' backed the messages from the 'Transform your Trolley' campaign. The report shows the balance of foods on promotion does not follow the food pyramid and consumers should be aware of their shopping environment.

Events

Noted: **safefood** attended the Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN) event to promote the Education resource 'MediaWise' aimed at Junior Infants through to sixth class.

Other items

Noted: Dr James McIntosh represented **safefood** at the FSAI Allergen Declaration on Non-Prepacked Food Working Group. Non-prepackaged food continues to present problems for the regulator, this group was set up to assess the progress made in compliance with allergen declaration and to determine ways of improving compliance and accuracy. In the Republic of Ireland, allergen information should be readily available. This presents a huge risk if consumers assume that this is the case and judge the lack on information to mean their is no allergen risk to their health.

Noted: **safefood** is planning the launch for the Community Food Initiative programme term 2019-2021, the CEO asked Members of the Board their availability to attend this event.

Knowledge Network

Noted: The CEO's report detailed activity taking place under the Knowledge Network. GK highlighted a webinar taking place on 29 January titled ' Due dilligence response and other legal aspects of catering for food allergens' which may be of interest to member of the Board as there is currently a big push in the EU to move away from precautionary labelling.

Noted: The Chair enquired about the SME workshops. GK informed they had proved difficult to attract attendees due to time obligations of those working in the sector. The workshops were popular with cheese producers. The pilot will be reviewed.

8. Presentation on the work carried out by *safefood*'s Corporate Operations Directorate.

Noted: The presentation from Corporate Operations is the last of the four presentations requested by the Board as an overview of *safefood*'s work and operations.

Noted: PF informed the Corporate Operations Department supports and ensures *safefood* delivers its legal mandate.

Corporate operations looks after *safefood*'s legal, finance, Human resource, Information and Communications technology, facilities and corporate governance requirements. The Directorate oversees *safefood*'s value-for-money objective, which is also supported by an assurance framework made up of;

- External Auditors
- Advisory Board
- North South Ministerial Council
- Executive Board
- Advisory Committee.

Noted: The Chair thanked PF and her team for their work in supporting *safefood* to achieve its mandate.

Noted: ER commented that it is reassuring to see a robust corporate function which is vital to the organisation.

8. Financial Report

Noted: PF referred to the summary Financial Results until the end of January 2019. The year end close down for 2018 is taking place. *safefood* finished the year within budget for 2018.

10. AOB

There being no other business the meeting closed.

Date of next meeting: Thursday, 21 March, 2019, *safefood*, Dublin office.