



Minutes of the fifty-fourth meeting of the Advisory Board of **safefood**
held on Friday 11th May 2007 at 11.00 am
safefood's Boardroom, Block B, Abbey Court, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin

PRESENT:

Cllr Bertie Kerr (Chairman)
Ms Catherine Murphy (CM)
Prof Don Anderson (DA)
Mr Odran Flynn (OF)
Mr Leslie Craig (LC)
Prof Sean Strain (SS)
Prof Patrick Fottrell (PF)
Prof Charlie Daly (CD)
Mr Patrick McColgan (PC)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Martin Higgins, Chief Executive (CEO)
Mr Ray Dolan, Director of Corporate Operations (RD)
Mr Peter Dewhurst, Finance Manager (PD)
Ms Fiona Gilligan, Marketing & Communications Manager (FG)
Ms Eileen O'Connor, acted as Secretary

APOLOGIES:

Ms Anne Speed
Dr Clíodhna Foley-Nolan
Ms Suzanne Doran
Dr Thomas Quigley
Dr Margaret Patterson

1. INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

Noted: The Chairman welcomed everyone and noted all apologies.

2. PRESENTATION ON AIMS OF SAFEFOOD CORPORATE PLAN

Noted: PD, Finance Manager, gave a presentation.

Noted: The CEO thanked PD for work on the Corporate Plan. He asked members present to reflect on main points and for their opinion. It was decided that main areas for discussion should include how to influence behaviour and how to influence the food environment.

3. MAIN DISCUSSION POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION OR ACTIONS GOING FORWARD

- **safefood** presence in Northern Ireland - is it necessary to have an address there? It will be necessary to follow direction from NS Ministerial Council and to put a business case to them if this approach is agreed.
- The CEO will meet Mr John Harwood, CEO, Food Standards Agency, London, to discuss issues on North/South and East/West dimension.
- Further to SAC subgroup meeting on North/South cooperation the CEO met with Mr Pat Colgan, CEO of SEUPB, it is hoped to develop a strategy to help establish harmonised funding approaches.
- Enteric Reference Laboratory – levels of interest are very encouraging in 'revised' plan.
- The name of "**safefood**" should stay, it has been well established and major resources have been put into building up brand recognition.
- Wider agenda – encourage healthy eating, **safefood** is currently well recognised by media as a contact for nutrition information.
- Comparisons with any similar European organisations might be helpful.
- Advisory Board – should it remain advisory or become a governing body?
- A key role should be to influence public policy.
- Social marketing – influence on food environment is vital.
- In changing the perception of how government bodies view us, hope for a vision where they would come to us. Approach government and ask what we can do for them.
- Source communications agencies who specialise in political communications.
- Achievements should be more publicised.
- Community Development – act as a catalyst, e.g. HAZ was able to pull in funding after our initial investment.
- Reach communities who are not well off.
- Try to identify projects to fund and use as a lever e.g. Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF) putting fruit into schools was based on a pilot project.
- Research – focus on closing research gaps.
- Look out for groups needing speakers and grasp opportunities.

- There is a need for a voice/face of **safefood**. Take opportunities to be more visible.

STRENGTHS:

- Creditability and excellence of **safefood**.
- Excellent website.
- Strong networking for food safety issues and for access to information.
- Advisory Board and Scientific Advisory Committee.
- **safefood** should celebrate successes more.
- Consumer Focused Reviews.
- Major achievements in short time frame.
- Experts in social marketing – it is influential in terms of politicians.
- Uniqueness of being a North/South body.

WEAKNESSES:

- Internal Communications:
 - Staff should be encouraged to keep in touch with the internet and extranet.
 - All staff are sent a copy of the CEO Report, Partnership programme etc.
 - Efforts are made to ensure communications are easy between Cork and Dublin offices.
- Not having a presence in NI.
- **safefood** should celebrate successes more.

MH thanked the Members present for their advice, as a next step he will give a draft of the information to the Executive Board.

The Chairman thanked **safefood** management and staff for their hard work and hospitality.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next board meeting will be held on Friday 8th June 2007 in Dublin.