



Minutes of the 107<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Board  
Held on Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at 10:30am  
**safefood** Dublin office

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**PRESENT:**

Mr Paul Gibbons (PG) (Chair)  
Ms Jane Wells (JW)  
Mr Brendan Kehoe (BK)  
Mr Alan McGrath (AMG)  
Mr Thomas Burns (TB)  
Dr Mary Upton (MU)  
Ms Helen O Donnell (HOD)  
Mr Campbell Tweedie (CT)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Ray Dolan, Chief Executive (RD)  
Dr Gary Kearney, Director of Food Science (GK)  
Ms Fiona Gilligan, Director of Marketing & Communications (FG)  
Ms Patricia Fitzgerald, Director of Corporate Operations (PF)  
Ms Alison Dries (secretary) (AD)

**APOLOGIES:**

Mr Edward Spellman (ES)  
Ms. Darina Allen (DA – Vice chair)  
Ms Julie Andrews (JA)  
Ms Hannah Su (HS)

## 1. Introduction and apologies

**Noted:** The Chair welcomed all members of the Advisory Board to the meeting.

**Noted:** The apologies of DA, JA, HS and ES were noted.

**Noted:** The Chair thanked members of the Advisory Board for their flexibility to bring the meeting forward a week, in order to accommodate the EHOA conference which is taking place on the original scheduled date.

## 2. Minutes of meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2015

**Agreed:** The minutes were adopted with no amendments.

## 3. Matters arising from the minutes

**Noted:** No matters were arising from the minutes

## 4. Presentation by Ms. Lisa Duncan:

***'Working together to conserve Irish biodiversity' Irish seed savers association***

**Noted:** The Chair thanked Lisa for her presentation; it was very interesting in terms of food security and the history of Irish food.

**Noted:** Discussion took place around biodiversity, organic produce and the suitability of returning to Irish seeds for commercial growers.

**Noted:** FG thought **safe food** could develop a link between Seed Savers and the Community Food Initiative programmes.

## 5. Chief Executive's Report

### 5.1 Financial statements 2014

The draft 2014 financial statements were prepared by the end of February and the C&AG's office concluded two weeks of field work on the annual audit in April. We are advised that they plan to issue their audit report in June.

## 5.2 Business plan 2015/2016

We are currently performing against the 2015 Business Plan. The planning process for the 2016 Business Plan commenced at the start of the month and we expect to complete the process by the end of the summer. PF advised that a meeting had taken place on 6<sup>th</sup> May with both sponsor departments during which we briefed them on our progress. Their particular interests were in our work in the area of Folic acid and our 2016 Business planning.

## 5.2 HR Issues

Recruitment competitions are currently under way. The vacancy for an Executive Assistant in the Corporate Operations Directorate has just been filled and the recruitment process to fill the role of Finance Manager is on-going.

## 5.3 NSMC Health and Food Safety meeting

This meeting took place on 15<sup>th</sup> April and was chaired by the previous Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety Jim Wells MLA. His successor is Simon Hamilton. The CEO wished Jim Wells all the best for the future; he had been a strong supporter of **safefood**'s work.

**safefood** arranged for Professor Chris Elliott (QUB) to deliver a presentation on 'Food Safety and Traceability – an all-island imperative'. On foot of this the Chair suggested it may be useful to deliver a presentation or training to professionals working in the field on an all-island basis. GK confirmed that this is taking place in the form of the 'Food Authenticity: Protecting your business from food fraud event due to be held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and the food summit event scheduled for 2016 to coincide with the 'Year of food' in NI. **safefood** shall also consider how information and guidance around food fraud may be disseminated to environmental health practitioners across the island. As the Agri-food industry is so significant across the island of Ireland, it is important that those working in the field need to engage in continual horizon scanning for food safety/fraud gaps that could potentially arise across the food chain.

**Noted:** BK advised that the FSAI had covered fraud in alcoholic drinks

**Noted:** TB suggested inviting Randox laboratories who are a market leader in developing innovative diagnostic solutions for hospitals, clinical, research and molecular labs, food testing, forensic toxicology, veterinary labs and life sciences along to the events.

**Noted:** JW advised that there is an Agri-food marketing body due to be set up in NI, the equivalent to Bord Bia in ROI.

#### **5.4 Minister of State visit**

The Minister of State for Development Trade Promotion and North-South Co-operation at the Department of Foreign Affairs Sean Sherlock, TD visited **safefood**'s Cork office on 17<sup>th</sup> April.

#### **5.5 Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement**

The Chief Executive along with the Executive Board attended a meeting of the Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> April to discuss North/South cooperation in Food Safety and Initiatives to promote healthy eating and combat obesity. The staff were well prepared and able to answer a wide range of questions. Frank Feighan, Fine Gael TD and Chair of the committee invited **safefood** to submit recommendations to the Committee. **safefood** will take this opportunity and respond accordingly.

#### **5.6 Campaigns**

##### Childhood obesity – 'sleep and screentime'

Advertising for the campaign launched on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> April and ran for three weeks on Television, radio, digital and video on demand. The campaign was supported with digital media partnerships with selected parenting websites in NI and ROI, and a print and digital media partnership with Mirror Newspapers for four weeks.

FG gave an overview of the results of the campaign - it covered a strong message which was new and not expected in relation to obesity. The message received good traction in the press and the stats on social media were very strong (reach 950,000 versus 488,000 last month). Comments received from parents showed they thought it would be very difficult to put the messages into practice but in reality it wasn't and this has given them confidence in making changes for the better. FG suggested that **safefood** explore this from a behaviour change perspective.

The next phase of the Childhood obesity campaign will launch 1<sup>st</sup> June and will run for three weeks.

### Folic Acid

**safefood** was initially requested by the Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland and then subsequently by the Dept. of Health in the South to undertake a promotional campaign around the importance of supplementing the diet with Folic acid for women of child-bearing age.

The campaign will air through digital media which is an effective medium to reach the target audience. The campaign will adopt a sensitive approach as the consumer may see the purchase of folic acid as a declaration they are 'trying' for a baby.

Materials are currently been tested through Vizzata, an online tool for researchers to quickly explore the reactions of participants to prompt material. Stakeholder meetings will also take place with potential partners in both NI and ROI in a bid to get the message out as far and wide as possible.

**Noted:** AMG suggested adding the Irish Association of Health Stores (IAHS) to the list of stakeholders in ROI as they can potentially run a concurrent campaign and advise consumer to choose a multivitamin that contains the required amount of folic acid, as not all multivitamins do. The IAHS also have a magazine with which there could be opportunity to partner.

**Noted:** JW offered to pass on contact details of personnel in Boots Pharmacy group.

### **5.7 Events**

The last day of the three-day Balmoral show was taking place today Friday, and TB visited the stand and reported it as being very informative, engaging and busy. The deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MLA and Joanne Dobson MLA of the Ulster Unionist party and a member of the Health Committee also attended the stand.

### **5.8 Social media and the web**

The Chief Executive briefly gave an overview of the performance of the web and social media through their resulting stats.

**Noted:** The Chief Executive thanked all staff that work in this area for the effort that goes into keeping the social media channels active outside the normal office hours.

## 5.9 Research

### Operation Transformation

FG gave an overview of the Operation Transformation Omnibus research which was carried out since the last Advisory Board meeting and there was very positive feedback and results. The article in the Irish Times written by Jackie Jones was mentioned whereby she claimed the show was for the contestants only. However, the research showed that 20% of those surveyed who watched the show claimed to have lost weight with 23% becoming more active and 21% eating healthier food as a result of watching Operation Transformation.

The Operation Transformation Facebook page still attracts traffic and this week we launched a six week weight loss programme on the page.

**Noted:** MU suggested the Advisory Board invite Donal O'Shea to speak at a meeting. **safefood** have asked him before and his availability is very limited but will try again.

**Noted:** JW commended **safefood** and staff on the sleep campaign; the coverage in NI has been very good.

**Date of next meeting:** Friday, 26 June, in Cork, time TBC. The Audit committee will meet beforehand.