



Minutes of the 106th meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Board
Held on Friday, 27th March 2015 at 10:30am
safefood Dublin office

PRESENT:

Mr Paul Gibbons (PG) (Chair)
Ms Jane Wells (JW)
Mr Brendan Kehoe (BK)
Ms Julie Andrews (JA)
Ms Hannah Su (HS)
Mr Alan McGrath (AMG)
Mr Thomas Burns (TB)
Dr Mary Upton (MU)
Ms Helen O Donnell (HOD)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Gary Kearney, Director of Food Science (GK)
Ms Fiona Gilligan, Director of Marketing & Communications (FG)
Dr Clíodhna Foley-Nolan, Director of Human Health and Nutrition (CFN)
Ms Patricia Fitzgerald, Director of Corporate Operations (PF)
Ms Alison Dries (secretary) (AD)
Ms Angela Cahill (AC) [for Item 4 only]
Mr Andrew Castles (ACS) [for Item 5 only]

APOLOGIES:

Mr Edward Spellman (ES)
Ms. Darina Allen (DA – Vice chair)
Mr Campbell Tweedie (CT)
Mr Ray Dolan, Chief Executive (RD)

1. Introduction and apologies

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

Noted: The apologies of DA, CT and ES were noted.

Noted: The apologies of RD (CEO) were noted as he was attending a meeting in Armagh.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 27th January 2015

Agreed: The minutes were adopted with no amendments.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

Noted: No matters were arising from the minutes

4. Feedback from the Audit Committee

Noted: Angela Cahill, Corporate Operations Manager with **safe food** provided feedback from the Audit committee meeting, which took place prior to the Board meeting.

Noted: The Audit Committee agreed to hold four meetings in 2015, taking place prior to the Board meetings in March, May, August and December.

Noted: The Audit Committee agreed to a full internal review of the risk register by October but if this is not possible an audit of the media buying function will be completed.

Noted: AC will review the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the committee and issue to members before the next meeting.

Noted: The Audit Committee agreed to continue meeting with Senior Management throughout the year. It was agreed that the committee would meet with RD in June, CFN in October and FG in December.

5. Presentation by Mr. Andrew Castles:

'safefood childhood obesity campaign – one year on'

Noted: The **safefood** campaign in regard to childhood obesity and in conjunction with Healthy Ireland, is in the first year of a three year campaign. Andrew Castles, Events and Direct Marketing Executive at **safefood** presented on the results of the first year of the campaign and plans for the future.

Noted: The first year of the campaign has five phases covering four different messages. This year the campaign will focus on increasing sleep/reducing screen time in an effort to reduce the rising trend in obesity.

Noted: Research found that campaign engagement reached above industry norms.

Noted: A good discussion took place around the rationale to target the campaign at two to 12 year olds as eating habits are defined early on. There is a lot of information widely available for pre-two years old, and advice around issues such as breast feeding and weaning is often individualised. The campaign and its supporting advice will be going out through various media channels, TV, radio, social and digital media, so all parents will see the coverage regardless of the age of their child.

Noted: JW congratulated **safefood** on the recent portion size report 'Consumer understanding of food portion sizes' and its associated media coverage – the report had significant resonance in Northern Ireland.

Noted: BK was interested to know if sleep patterns between rural and urban children existed. CFN responded that social class appeared to be the only differing factor.

Noted: HS enquired as to what research was available around how people eat e.g. not realising you have eaten too much. FG responded that a lot of these issues of been incorporated into our messages i.e. sitting down at the table to eat as a family and turning off the TV.

Noted: A discussion took place around extending the reach of the campaign to over 12's and in particular the issue of un-healthy food been available in schools. MU stated that tuck-shops and canteens bring in revenue for schools so they are reluctant to tackle the issue. It was also noted that the Department of Education has indicated in meetings attended by **safefood** that they will not take ownership of the issue and have said it is up to individual schools.

6. Chief Executive's Report

6.1 Annual Audit

The C&AG's office are currently in the cork office for two weeks field work to carry out the annual audit

6.2 Business Plan 2016

Work for the 2016 Business plan will commence this coming May.

6.3 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

safefood are currently in the process of developing a MoU and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the Public Health Agency and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland.

6.4 Oireachtas Committee meeting

The Chief Executive along with the Senior Management team will attend a meeting on 23rd April of the '*Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement*' to discuss North/South cooperation in food safety, healthy eating and obesity issues.

6.5 NSMC Health and Food Safety meeting

The Chief Executive along with the Chairperson will attend the North South Ministerial Council (Health Sector) meeting on 15th April to provide an overview of **safefood's** achievements against the Business Plan targets and updates on campaigns from 2014. Professor Chris Elliott (QUB) will also attend to present an overview of his interaction with **safefood** in the area of food safety and his involvement with research and especially the Knowledge Networks.

6.6 Corporate day

The bi-annual corporate day is due to take place in 25th June in the **safe food** Cork office, with Advisory Board members invited to attend. This is seen as an effective way for Board members to interact with staff and learn more about **safe food**. Discussion took place surrounding ideas for the day, these have been taken on board and arrangements for the day will be progressed by Corporate Operations.

Noted: JA sent her apologies in advance of the day.

6.7 Campaigns

CFN advised that **safe food** were 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.

Research has shown that folic acid prevents 70 per cent of neural tube defects. The Irish population has a genetic pre-disposition to the condition and the incidence of neuro-tube defects are beginning to rise.

CFN stated it is significantly difficult to consume the required amount of 400 mg folic acid per day from diet alone, and this raises the question around mandatory fortification which takes place in the USA, Canada and Australia. However it was also noted that research has shown that if a large amount of fortified foods are consumed this could lead to toxicity accelerating cancers, although this is very rare.

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

AMG advised that the product needs to be accessible to the consumer as multivitamins don't always contain the required 400mg per day. He also advised researching the profile of people currently taking folic acid as in his experience, the consumption for pregnancy is minimal and it's taken for different reasons e.g. by runners for muscular and cardiovascular support.

safe food have also been in contact with SHINE, a registered charity, which was formed in 1966, to help families and individuals affected by spina bifida and hydrocephalus in the UK.

6.8 Listeria Knowledge Network Annual Conference

GK advised members of the next Listeria Knowledge Network Annual Conference which will take place on 20th May at Moorepark, Co. Cork. One of the main themes focuses on risk communication and a representative from Fonterra is scheduled to speak.

6.9 Balmoral Agricultural Show

safefood will once again be hosting a stand at the Balmoral Agricultural show in Belfast on the 13th May to promote the reduction in obesity message.

Noted: An invitation was extended to all Board members and to contact AD should they wish to attend.

6.10 All-island nutrition surveillance planning group.

safefood is leading an all-island nutrition surveillance planning group, which aims to have a common nutrition surveillance system which would be very cost effective and reduce potential duplication. The process is in the early stages but such a configuration would be aligned with UK and European systems so comparable data would be produced.

6.11 safefood Equality – Resources for the visually impaired in Northern Ireland

Action: **safefood** to send this resource to JA in the Linen Hall Library Belfast.

7. AOB

Noted: The Chair attended the National Hygiene Partnership's (NHP) 20 year anniversary event, and commented that the NHP were very thankful for the support they receive from **safefood**.

Noted: JW advised that the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment in Northern Ireland declared 2016 the 'Year of Food', and there may be potential opportunities for **safefood** in the context of business planning for next year.

Noted: AMG suggested that Board members might wish to propose a representative from their respective fields of expertise to present at future Board meetings. This proposal was supported by MU.

Action: The Chairperson and the CEO will consider this suggestion and how it might be arranged.

Date of next meeting: Friday, 22 May, in Dublin, time 10:30am. The Audit committee will meet beforehand at 9:30am.