

Minutes of the 63rd meeting of the Advisory Board of **safefood**
Held on Friday 7th November 2008 at 11.00 am
The Waterways Ireland Headquarters, Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh,
Northern Ireland

PRESENT:

Mr. John Dardis (JD - Chair)
Mr. Campbell Tweedie (CT – Vice Chair)
Ms. Lynn Ni Bhaoighealláin (LNB)
Mr. Joe Byrne (JB)
Ms. Aoife Healy (AH)
Mr. Seamus Sheridan (SS)
Mr. Con Traas (CT)
Ms. Jane Wells (JW)
Ms. Susan Heraghty (SH)
Mr. Neven Maguire (NM)
Dr. Ken Baird
Mr. Brian Cunningham (BC)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Martin Higgins, Chief Executive (MH)
Ms Fiona Gilligan, Director of Marketing (FG)
Mr Ray Dolan, Director of Corporate Operations (RD)
Mr Peter Dewhurst, Finance Manager (PD)
Ms. Erin Brennan, Secretary (EB)

APOLOGIES:

Dr Margaret Patterson (MP)
Dr. Cliodhna Foley-Nolan, Director, Human Health & Nutrition (CFN)

1. INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

Noted: The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming the Members to Enniskillen. He expressed his thanks to Waterways Ireland for the use of their boardroom, and also to NM for his lunch invitation after the meeting. The apologies of CFN and MP were noted.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 29TH AUGUST 2008

Agreed: As no matters were arising, the minutes were approved.

3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Noted: North South Ministerial Council

- Meeting in Armagh on Monday 10th November; hoping to have 2009 Business Plan approved
- Currently have no indication of Budget 2009

Noted: Resignations

- Dr. Thomas Quigley, Director of Food Science has taken early retirement; he was wished well in his future career.
- A number of posts have been advertised; the Director of Food Science role will be advertised shortly.

Noted: Research

- Sugar Sweetened Drinks: Millward Brown IMS has been commissioned to advise; results should be available at the beginning of December
- Funding Community Projects
 - o Using qualitative approaches to identify and develop accessible information to help traditionally hard-to-reach groups manage food safety issues
- 2 research reports have been completed
 - o Presented at the Food Poverty Conference in Dundalk last Wednesday 5th November; papers were presented to policy makers and other interested parties

Noted: Lablink Activities

- A two-day workshop was hosted in Dublin for senior staff working within public food safety laboratories
- A one-day seminar on 'Rapid Methods in Food Microbiology' will be held in Dublin in November

Noted: Enteric Reference Service

- Aim is to meet the needs of service users in both jurisdictions and further enhance public health protection on the Island.
- Dr. Jon Bell, former Chief Executive of the UK Food Standards Agency, was recruited as **safefood's** facilitator and is assisted by Prof. Henrik Wegener to advise on the scientific and public health merits of the options under consideration and on the development of the service.
- A final proposal paper shall be submitted to the North-South Ministerial Council in due course.

Noted: North South Working Group (NSWG)

- Members of the NSWG (including Board members LNB and JB), held two meetings on the 19th and 28th August in Dublin to discuss North-South working and **safefood's** role in both jurisdictions. A need to further develop **safefood's** profile in Northern Ireland was noted. Suggestions such as an office in Northern Ireland, targeting local key journalists, and building stronger communications with stakeholders were all noted.

Noted: Public Health and Scientific Update

- An allergy training programme targeting EHOs and catering colleges was launched at the **safefood** Food Allergy Conference on 20th October in Malahide.
- Final research data to support the Christmas campaign are being analysed and interpreted by **safefood** science to develop cooking advice for consumers for both stuffed and unstuffed turkeys.
 - o An SMS text campaign will be available in early December (consumers can text in 'turkey' followed by the weight of the bird to get the appropriate cooking time).

Noted: Antimicrobial Resistance in Food

- A sub-group of the **safefood** Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) has been developing a paper on the subject. Feedback suggests that it is worth presenting to the North-South Ministerial Council.

Noted: Sugar Sweetened Beverages

- Due to the high number of children and teenagers that consume sugar sweetened beverages, **safefood** has commissioned some qualitative research that will be used to ensure that communications and practical advice are as relevant as possible to parents/guardians and teenagers.

Noted: All-Island Obesity Action Forum

- Approved by the North-South Ministerial Council
- 1st Meeting on Thursday, 4th December.
- MH met with Minister Mary Wallace, who is very supportive of the forum.

Noted: Community Initiatives

- **safefood** is funding a community food initiative programme which will be administrated through the Healthy Food for All Initiative
- A total of 83 Applications were received, of which 16 were from NI and 67 from ROI. The applications are currently being evaluated.

Noted: Consumer Focused Review (CFR)

- The next CFR will be on 'Where Does Our Food Come From?'
- Under this theme, issues governing and impacting on the importation of food from Third Countries will be discussed and clarified.
- Many members of the Board expressed the need for a European standard in food labelling.
 - o FG to consider including questions surrounding consumer opinions about food origins in the next Millward Brown IMS safetrak.
 - o It was agreed that once the CFR is available, the issue will be further discussed.

- Noted:** Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)
- The last meeting of the SAC was held on 2nd October.
 - Two key issues emerged at the meeting included the discussion of the Antimicrobial Resistance in Food paper and the surveillance of food.
 - A mini conference under the aegis of the SAC was also held on the afternoon of 1st October in the Radisson Hotel, Cork. The day included presentations from Dr. Andrew Wadge, Professor Patrick Wall, Mr. Peter Wight, and Mr. Paul Cullen.
 - o A number of Advisory Board members attended

- Noted:** Little Steps Healthy Eating Campaign
- FG to meet with the HPA next week to discuss the campaign's next phase (early 2009).
 - 'Eating on a budget' will be a theme under consideration for next year.
 - The following press releases have been released since the last meeting of the Advisory Board:
 - o 27 October – Launch of the 'Speak Out' Campaign
 - o 30 October – **safefood** Allergy Training Conference
 - o 05 November – **safefood** Food Poverty Conference and Research Launch
 - o 21 November – Launch of 'Tastebuds' Educational Resource
 - o 24 November – Launch of Consumer Focused Review (CFR) of Pork

- Noted:** Speak Out Campaign
- FG thanked AH, SH, and NM for their help with the Speak Out Materials
 - The Restaurant Association and the Hotel Federation have not endorsed, but have given **safefood** access to their mailing list.
 - Results from Phase 1 have been very positive, especially in Northern Ireland
 - Radio Interviews, including one with **safefood** Chief Specialist Microbiologist David McCleery on BBC Ulster Radio, have been completed.
 - FG to send CT a copy of the Speak Out Radio Ad.

- Noted:** Men's Health Initiative
- FG thanked CT for his contact at Norfolk Line.

4. 2009 BUSINESS PLAN

- Noted:** Marketing & Communications:
- Marketing & Communications headlining campaigns for 2009 include Speak Out, Little Steps, and seasonal messages
 - o The Healthy Eating Little Steps Campaign budget for 2009 is dependant on HSE and HPA funding for next year.
 - Plans for research in 2009 are very budget-dependant

- The Infectious Intestinal Disease Study will provide valuable data on the burden of food borne infectious disease on the Island of Ireland.
 - o €3 million will be invested over 3 years
 - o The survey will be complete in 2010.
- National Diet and Nutrition Survey
 - o Joint initiative with Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPSNI).
- Stakeholder Development
 - o €250,000 development strategy to ensure that **safefood**'s relationships with key organisations and disciplines are harmonised across the various directorates, and opportunities for further collaboration are optimised.
 - o A joined-up approach to the development of food safety and healthy eating initiatives for the Island of Ireland will occur with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and the Food Standards Agency.

Noted: Corporate Operations

- o The current document management system is being modified to improve the internal management process.

Noted: International Year of the Potato

- Encouraging children to make a sustainable connection to food; children learn how to grow and cook vegetables such as potatoes.
- NM involved in this campaign.
- Currently involves 2,000 ROI schools.

5. EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS STRATEGY

Noted: FG presented **safefood**'s 2007-2010 Education Strategy to the Board

- A demonstration of the 'Tastebuds' Primary School resource was given.
- **safefood**'s Safe Food For Life (SFFL) Campaign was also discussed.

There being no further business the meeting ended.

Date of next meeting: Friday 12th December in Dublin.