



Minutes of the eight meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee of **safefood**, held on Thursday 7th February, 2008 at 10.30 am in the Dublin office of **safefood**, Block B, Abbey Court, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1.

PRESENT:

Prof Charles Daly (CD)
Prof Seamus Fanning (SF)
Ms Patricia McCusker (PMC)
Prof David McDowell (DMcD)
Mr Gerry McCurdy (GMcC)
Ms Catherine Foye (CF)
Dr John Egan (JE)
Dr Emer Shelly (ES)
Mr Barny Heywood (BH)
Mr Bert Houston (BeH)
Dr Wayne Anderson (WA)
Dr Margaret Patterson (MP)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Martin Higgins, Chief Executive (MH)
Dr Geraldine Quinn, Scientific Support Manager (GQ)
Dr Cliodhna Foley-Nolan, Director, Human Health & Nutrition (CFN)
Mr Ray Dolan, Director, Corporate Operations (RD)
Dr Thomas Quigley, Director Food Science (TQ)
Ms Fiona Gilligan, Director Marketing & Communications (SD)
Dr David McCleery, Chief Specialist Microbiologist (DMcC)
Ms Eileen O'Connor, Minute Secretary

APOLOGIES:

Dr Brian Smyth
Mr Martin Mullane
Prof Barbara Livingstone
Mr Jim Buckley
Dr Derval Igoe
Dr Ken Baird
Dr Brian Gaffney
Dr James McIntosh

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed all Members to the eighth meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC).

Apologies were noted and recorded.

The Chairman congratulated FG on her appointment as Director of Marketing and Communications to **safe food**.

2. MINUTES OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE SAC HELD ON 27TH SEPTEMBER 2007.

The minutes were agreed and adopted.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Noted: Discussions on the Research Networks are postponed until the April meeting when preliminary outcomes of the review of the networks and a paper on their successes will be available.

Noted: Due to the formation of a new Advisory Board the North South Working Group could not proceed. Setting up of a North South Working Group will be an agenda item at the April SAC meeting and it is hoped that a new committee will be reconstituted.

Noted: The North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) has given the go-ahead on the proposal for an Enteric Reference consultation. Dr Jon Bell has been appointed, consultation and meetings with stakeholders will be organised.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (oral)

Members were reminded to declare interest on topics where appropriate.

5. PRESENTATION FROM THE FOOD AND VETERINARY OFFICE

Noted: Mr Graham Wood, from the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO), gave a presentation on the work of the FVO and discussed the controls that take place in relation to the primary production of food animals and how these are organised and prioritised. He welcomed questions from Members.

Noted: The Chairman thanked Mr Wood and for an informative and interesting presentation.

6. ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE IN FOOD (SAC/2008/01)

A paper on Antimicrobial Resistance and Food Safety was circulated to Members. Members comments were as follows.

- Primary focus should be on the food chain, not animals.
- Sanitising agents should be included.
- Identify hazards and antimicrobial resistance.
- Include MRSA.
- Look at Transfer of antimicrobial resistance factors between pathogenic and non-pathogenic organisms.
- Consider possible effects of sublethal stress on resistance of organisms

Noted: SF advised that the bacteria being studied would be the most significant bacteria and others may be considered as the review continues.

Action: The above suggestions will be taken into consideration in order to provide guidance and recommendations for public health. Aim to have a draft document on the table by end of April 2008.

7. SURVEILLANCE WORKING GROUP

Noted: DMC gave details on Members and remit of the Surveillance Working Group. The first meeting of the group took place on 21st January. He informed that two smaller working groups would be established for surveillance and they will report to the main group and to the SAC.

Action: The first meeting of the animal and food group will take place on 3rd March 2008. Mr Martin Mullane will Chair the meeting and WA agreed to join the group.

8. PRESENTATION ON RESEARCH – IID

CFN, Director, Human Health & Nutrition, gave a presentation on Research – IID and welcomed discussion.

Noted: She explained that the aims and objectives of the study are to firstly:

- Prospectively estimate burden of IID in population & presenting to GPs
 - Using a population cohort
 - Study of cases presenting to GP
 - Study of routine clinical care in primary care and secondly

- Estimate burden of IID by telephone survey
- Compare results with prospective study.

Noted: The Chairman thanked CFN for the presentation and congratulated her on the scale and planning of the project.

9. 2007 CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN – BACKGROUND RESEARCH PAPER (SAF/2008/02)

Noted: TQ outlined the 2007 Christmas Campaign. Members were given a copy of the leaflet which had been publicly distributed as part of the campaign giving guidelines on how to safely cook a stuffed turkey.

Noted: Members discussed the fundamental differences between temperature in different ovens and what best way to get information to the general public.

Action: Further discussion will be held at the April meeting when the main research investigator will be present. TQ asked Members to consider and bring their suggestions to the next meeting with regard to what the 2008 Christmas Campaign should be based on.

10. CONSUMER FOCUSED REVIEW (CFR) (SAC/2008/03)

Noted: GQ gave an outline on work to date on the CFRs. Six have been completed and three have been launched. Statistics in the Beef CFR have been updated so that it can now be launched. The Diary CFR is currently being printed and will be launched second week in March.

Noted: GQ explained that as outlined in the Corporate Plan, it is planned to continue with the CFRs with an aim to produce four over the next three years. Considered topics include ready meals and carbon foot print. GQ welcomed advice from members.

Action: Members discussed suitable topics. An in-house **safefood** meeting will discuss the issue, following which further advice will be sought from the SAC.

11. CHALLENGING AND EMERGING ISSUES: TOUR DE TABLE

The Chair invited Members present to identify issues that they considered to be of note. These included:

- A need for more work on counteracting childhood obesity.
- A study of best way to approach allergies in school settings.

- Work on defining what exactly the term 'organic food' means.
- A stronger message on the reasons why unpasteurised milk should not be consumed.
- Communicate regarding the increase in Lysteriosis amongst older people.

Noted: The CEO thanked Members for identifying these issues.

12. UPDATES

- **Communications**

FG provided an update of current activities in the Marketing & Communication Directorate at **safefood**.

- **Research**

Members were given an update on current research activities at **safefood**.

13. SAC PROGRESS REPORT DOCUMENT

Noted: Members were given the updated SAC Progress Report document. GQ will follow up actions and work on gaps in-house.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Action: The CEO advised that the 2nd October 2008 SAC meeting will take the form of a mini conference for SAC members. He invited Members to attend, there will be a dinner on the previous evening. Details of venue and agenda to follow.

Noted: The CEO advised that a new Advisory Board has now been appointed. He paid tribute to the outgoing Board Members and in particular CD who was Vice-Chairman and thanked them for their work in taking **safefood** forward.

As there was no further business the meeting closed.

The next business meeting of the SAC will be held in the Dublin office of **safefood** on Thursday 24th April, 2008.