



Minutes of the fifth Meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Committee, held on
Monday the 14th January, 2013 at 10.30am
safefood, Block B, Abbey Court, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1.

PRESENT:

Dr. Mary Upton, Chairperson (MU)
Prof. Helen Roche (HR)
Prof. Margaret Patterson (MP)
Dr. Gary McFarlane (GMcF)
Ms. Claire Cerins (CC)
Dr. Bridget Maher (BM)
Ms. Amanda McCloat (AMcC)
Prof. Martin Caraher (MC)
Ms. Tina Leonard (TL)
Dr. Robert Huey Vice-chair, (RH)
Ms. Marian Jennings (MJ)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Martin Higgins, Chief Executive (MH)
Ms Fiona Gilligan, Director Marketing & Communications (FG)
Dr Aileen McGloin, Scientific Support Manager (AMcG)
Dr James McIntosh, Toxicologist (JMcI)
Dr David McCleery, Chief Specialist Microbiology (DMcC)
Dr Cliodhna Foley-Nolan, Director Human Health and Nutrition
Ms Frederica Doyle, Minute Secretary (FD)
Dr Amy-Jane Troy, Minute Secretary (AJT)

APOLOGIES:

Dr. Moira Dean (MD), Mr. Kenneth Carroll (KC), Dr Marian Faughnan, Chief Specialist Nutrition, Human Health & Nutrition (MF), Dr Gary Kearney, Director Food Science (GK)

ACTIONS:

- Action 1: AmcG to distribute summary document on research projects conducted to date
- Action 2: MJ to share report on male farmers in NI with AMcG
- Action 3: MC to share literature on food taxes with CFN
- Action 4: AMcG to liaise with SAC members regarding a subgroup for the **safefood** education committee
- Action 5: MC to share literature on the psychological impacts of food intolerances with JMcI
- Action 6: AmcG to confirm date for the next meeting which will be held in May

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairperson welcomed all members to the fifth meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Committee (SAC). The apologies MD, GK, and MF were noted.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE SAC HELD ON

The minutes of the fourth meeting have been adopted with no changes or amendments apart from updating the title to correct the date of the last meeting

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Matters arising will be covered under Agenda item 5.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (oral)

There were no declarations of interest.

5. safefood business plan (oral)

MH provided a brief update to the committee. He noted that the 2012 business plan was approved in December 2012. **safefood** is currently negotiating to get agreement with the various Departments on the elements of the 2013 business plan and it is hoped that this should be completed by mid-February. MH suggested that at the next meeting the business plan for 2013 should be presented.

6. safefood research programme (oral)

DMcC informed the group that **safefood** has a budget of approximately 1 million euro to conduct research each year and alluded to the tender for nine research projects posted on the **safefood** website on the 14th December. These tenders were primarily in the area of food safety. A second call with a primary focus on nutrition is likely to be issued in April.

JMcI added to the information presented by DMcC to include information on where details on projects could be accessed. JMcI referred to a joint database that was previously available through the RELAY project. Although this database is no longer available, **safefood** is currently looking at ways to re-engaging with the information stored on this database.

Noted: MU asked for a brief overview on the projects for new members on the board. Both DMcC and JMcI referred to various projects including the "Don't take risks" campaign and the "Nutrition takeout" series.

Noted: MC requested a separate database for the portrayal and management of all research. MC also queried if he could have a shortened document which presented an overview of research conducted. AmcG to distribute **(ACTION 1)**

- Noted:** MH referred to the 'Economic Cost of Obesity' project and 'Nutrition Takeout' series and noted how these had caught the interest of the public.
- Noted:** DMcC described the **safefood** knowledge networks and outlined their role as a dissemination tool. It was also mentioned how the networks assisted in the identification of emerging issues due to the presence of large group of professionals. MC indicated he had found the networks very beneficial to date but believed it was not always the public who utilised them and suggested an evaluation to assess who the users were.
- Noted:** MC suggested that it would be beneficial to assess how many research projects funded by **safefood** turned into published peer reviewed articles. CFN mentioned that influencing behaviour was the key indicator for **safefood** as opposed to strictly assessing peer reviewed articles. JMI acknowledged that establishing the number of peer reviewed articles would be an easy task but assessing whether the research had been utilised would be more difficult. HR suggested that a one page online form could be provided to all researchers in receipt of **safefood** funding. It was suggested that this form could consist of a variety of questions around publications and that information on this document could be recorded on a yearly basis.
- Noted:** MU and MH acknowledged that both a metric for publications and impact on behaviour were both beneficial and necessary for *safefood*.
- Noted:** MC acknowledged the level of work completed on food safety by **safefood** to date. In addition, GMcF noted that food poverty was very complex area and stressed how it was a rapidly growing issue and that there was a need for further investment.

7. Consumer focused review (CFR) (oral)

AMcG gave a brief overview on the genesis of the CFR and mentioned how certain areas had been revised in the past number of years. The Committee was informed that the next CFR would focus on men's Health. AMcG referred to the findings of the previous behaviour report and how it had informed the research on men's health.

- Noted:** TL asked if the "Stop the Spread" campaign would be regenerated. MH informed the committee that a new campaign had been launched in NI. MJ further added that this campaign had been on going in NI for approximately two weeks. MJ informed members that a variety of other health campaigns were being run in NI and

expressed concern over mixed messages being presented to the consumer.

Noted: MH referred to the changing viewing patterns on television and their impact on **safefood**. MH indicated that Video on Demand now offers better value in terms of audience reach, although it is currently very expensive. MH also referred to the difficulty associated with advertising on channels in NI compared to ROI. MH stressed the value that sponsorship of programmes and events held for **safefood**.

Noted: Committee members debated the merits of mass media communications vs. a 'bottom up' community approach.

Noted: MJ agreed that there is a lot to learn in relation to men's health and believed it would be good to refer to the research conducted in NI regarding male farmers. MJ to liaise with AMcG regarding this **(ACTION 2)**

8. Research project update -The economic cost of obesity (presentation)

CFN provided the Committee with a history of the research and referred to the large number of partners involved in the project from an island of Ireland (IOI) perspective. CFN indicated that a total of 7 cancers and 11 chronic conditions were investigated in the study. A brief overview of the results was presented to the Committee and the main findings were discussed. The summary report is available on the **safefood** website.

Noted: MJ asked how the economic cost of obesity in the IOI compared to other countries. CFN mentioned the difficulty in making comparisons when different methodologies were utilised but taking that into consideration Ireland is currently on level par with other countries.

Noted: MJ mentioned that the results of this research were interesting from an NI perspective due to the low tolerance for taxation. MC agreed but believed that there were certain locations/socio-demographic groups may be more responsive to taxation and agreed to share literature with CFN on the area **(ACTION 3)**

Noted: MJ asked if the differences outlined between NI and ROI in the research would be further investigated. CFN agreed that those differences would be further explored.

Noted: CC queried whether the research included prevention and treatment costs or just treatment costs. CFN confirmed that just treatment costs were investigated.

Noted: GMcF expressed caution around the recommendation regarding regulation. He acknowledged that the area warranted further

investigation but expressed concern about the effects on the most socially deprived in society and suggested that checks and balances are also investigated.

Noted: MH noted how health promotion was always the first to suffer in budget cuts. He indicated that the findings of this report would be useful in illustrating the effect that health promotion could have on public health.

Noted: MC suggested that the "The Children's Duty Campaign" report conducted by Sustain may offer some further suggestions.

9. Suggestions for future SAC subgroup work (oral)

MH referred to the various work areas previously targeted.

Noted: AMcG made reference to a potential **safefood** Education Advisory Group. She informed the board that the **safefood** education team was currently at a transitional stage as they moved more from a developmental platform to a promotional phase. It was suggested that an advisory meeting with particular members of the SAC might assist in this transition. There was general agreement from the members to this **(ACTION 4)**

Noted: AMcG also suggested an investigation into the link between food skills and health in an IOI context as a topic that was often discussed for possible further research.

Noted: AMcC referred to new on-going research regarding culinary skills from a parent's perspective involving St. Angela's, Sligo and University of Ulster and suggested that the findings from this research may inform larger scale research.

Noted: AMcG alluded to shopping behaviours as well as cooking skills.

Noted: MC suggested that a scoping exercise may prove valuable to see what resources are utilised used and implemented by teachers.

Noted: RH made reference to the work that is currently done in terms of reports and suggested that attention be focused on implementing and disseminating the findings of these. RH indicated that the last Committee's report on emerging risks and the idea of a "core body" could be taken forward in the immediate time.

Noted: MC referred to sociological issues regarding intolerance and suggested that it would be beneficial to collect this information now to aid scientific research in the future. JMcI mentioned there was a group in cork that studied the psychological impacts. MC to liaise with JMcI on transfer of this information **(ACTION 5)**

Noted: MJ referred to the suggestion discussed at the previous meeting regarding a focus on the variety of methodologies used in certain areas of research and indicated that this would be a possible area for research in food science area.

10. Communications update (oral)

FG gave an overview of the top line findings of the campaigns implemented by **safefood** since the last meeting. An overview of each of the campaigns was presented to the committee.

Dishcloth: FG noted how the Dishcloth campaign had positively influenced positive consumer behaviour relating to dishcloths (+23%) and indicated that although an increase was not evident for the number of consumers changing their dishcloth every two days, an increase in the number of consumers changing every three to four days was evident.

Food Waste: FG informed the board that the Food Waste campaign had increased consumer understanding between best before dated and use by dates by 11%. FG acknowledged the strong social media focus of this campaign and indicated the campaign increased the number of Facebook fans by 605 subscribers.

Christmas: FG indicated that the Christmas campaign centred around an infographic for storing and cooking turkey received over 10,000 clicks and 600 retweets.

Op Transformation: A brief overview on Operation transformation was also presented. The Committee were made aware of link between *safefood* and the programme and the advertising material that *safefood* would use during the shows.

11. SAC Progress Report (2013/1/1)

AMCG asked the Committee their opinion on the format of the progress report.

Noted: TL mentioned the information provided on the document was necessary but she would have a preference for an electronic document.

Noted: MC indicated that the paper-based copy was more suitable for him and that maybe an electronic copy in addition to a hard copy would be most suitable.

12. Tour de table (oral)

- RH alluded to the changing situation in Northern Ireland and the impact that might have for **safefood**.

- MJ discussed the proposed new changes to labelling in the UK and indicated that this situation should be monitored.
- BM suggested that parents association within schools should not be overlooked as they could provide a valuable resource in terms of information.
- GMcF informed that he established sustainable food communities and was in the process of developing six projects in UK. It informed the Committee that a secondary plan is to carry out sub-projects in Ireland and referred to the lack of research in the area of food poverty and health. He indicated that he will keep the Committee informed.
- CC questioned whether **safefood** would get involved in the area of alcohol. MH mentioned that it was outside the remit and rests with the other public health agencies.

13. Any other business

There was no other business

NEXT MEETING

MU confirmed that the next meeting would be held in May. AMCG to liaise with MU in relation to the next date **(ACTION 6)**