

Minutes of the sixth meeting of the **Safefood** Advisory Committee, held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 at 10:30am

**Safefood**, Block B, Abbey Court, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1

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**PRESENT:**

Dr. Mary Upton, Chairperson (MU)  
Dr. Gary McFarlane (GMcF)  
Prof. Martin Caraher (MC)  
Ms. Tina Leonard (TL)  
Dr. Moira Dean (MD)  
Maria Jennings (MJ)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Dr. Aileen McGloin, Scientific Support Manager (AMcG)  
Dr. David McCleery, Chief Specialist Microbiology (DMcC)  
Dr. Clíodhna Foley-Nolan, Director Human Health and Nutrition (CFN)  
Dr. Gary Kearney, Director Food Science (GK)  
Dr. Marian Faughnan, Chief Specialist in Nutrition (MF)  
Mr. Ray Dolan, Director Corporate Operation (RD)  
Ms. Fiona Gilligan, Director Marketing and Communication (FG)  
Ms. Frederica Doyle, Minute Secretary (FD)  
Ms. Sara Eslami, Minute Secretary (SE)

**APOLOGIES:**

Mr. Martin Higgins, Chief Executive (MH)  
Ms. Claire Kerins  
Dr. Robert Huey  
Dr. Bridget Maher  
Prof. Helen Roche  
Mr. Kenneth Carroll  
Dr. James McIntosh  
Ms. Amanda McCloat

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The chairperson welcomed all members to the sixth meeting of the *Safefood* Advisory Committee (SAC). The apologies of MH were noted.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF SAC HELD ON 14<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2013**

**Noted:** MC noted that there were discussions on the impact of studies not published in peer reviewed journals in item 6 which were missing from the minutes of the previous meeting.

**Noted:** GMF to send corrected wording for comments including in item no 12.

### 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Matters arising will be covered under Agenda item 5, 6 & 7.

### 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

**Noted:** MU declared that she is also on the board for Healthy Food for All which is referenced at this meeting.

### 5. SAC SUB-GROUPS

Education Advisory Group

**Noted:** AMcG noted that the advisory group met on 25<sup>th</sup> of April to help guide **safefood** on its education strategy, utilisation of resources in schools, dove-tailing with current school curriculum and training of teachers. AMcG to send minutes to GMcF (**Action 1**)

Food Skills

**Noted:** AMcG noted that the advisory group on food skills is meeting after the SAC meeting to assist **safefood** in developing terms of reference for the report and also in defining food skills on the island of Ireland. In turn, **safefood** will commission a project based on the agreed definition and the relation of these skills to dietary quality. GMcF noted that this is a difficult task and requires pragmatism. GK noted that other pieces of work can be used and be built upon. AMcG noted that **safefood** has already identified a number on definitions internationally, which will be used to help form an island of Ireland (IOI) definition. AMcG to send minutes to GMcF (**Action 2**)

Emerging Issues

**Noted:** GK outlined the purpose and work of the **safefood** SAC group on emerging issues. A final report has been prepared with a number of recommendations including the proposed setting up of a core body of individuals who could highlight emerging issues that may be of concern. **safefood** is researching the viability of such a group or committee and a possible role. GMcF noted that these efforts should be based on the sustainable development model and that he believes excluding regulators actually builds mistrust.

MJ suggested that FSA be consulted to avoid replication. GK noted that the group is aware of the work of FSAI, FSA and EFSA so as to avoid replication but will consult widely.

### 6. UPDATE ON Safefood RESEARCH PROGRAMME

**Noted:** GK gave a brief overview of a recent advertisement for tender for 9 different projects described below:

1. 'Iodine status: is there a public health issue on IOI?' This project focuses on iodine status of young girls due to its role during pregnancy.  
MF noted that iodine is an emerging public health issue internationally but there is no IOI data. Iodine is largely acquired through milk consumption, which has decreased in young girls recently. GK noted this project will commence in late 2013.
2. The nutrition take out series, which follows on from a previous studies, will look at commonly consumed takeaway foods in terms of nutritional contents (Indian foods and wrap style sandwiches) and will be conducted by University of Ulster on an IOI basis.
3. An analysis of raw chicken, pork and beef for presence of antibiotic resistant *E. coli* in order to elucidate the impact of production systems on the emergence of such organisms. This project will take 18 months.  
GMcF commented on the origin of chicken consumed on the island of Ireland. DMcC clarified that the project will focus on fresh chicken, not frozen products, sold at retail level and will target locally produced foods.
4. Consumer choice in relation to artisan food products such as cheese. This project aims to isotopically and spectrally fingerprint artisan cheese products in order to assure consumers that products advertised to be from particular geographical regions on the island of Ireland are truly coming from that particular region. This will be a 15 month study and will be quite focused and is not aiming to produce an all-encompassing library.  
GK noted instances of food fraud which have prompted this issue and acknowledged that if there are such issues discovered during the project, regulators will be informed immediately and not at the end of the project.
5. A risk registry for pig and poultry meat on the IOI. This is a follow on from a project from Queens University where a database on feed imports was set up in collaboration with industry. The database will act as an early warning system and allow other companies who are part of the system to be alerted in case of problems. There is on-going effort to keep both ROI and NI importers involved and establish sharing of information. This project will start summer 2014 and will last for 15 months.
6. Impact of climate change on food safety on IOI and its implications. This entails desktop research only and will be conducted by Queens University.
7. Nanotechnology and its application in the agri-food industry. Short 2-3 months desktop research project.
8. Desktop research on non-0157 *E. coli* and its implications. Project aims to gauge IOI capabilities for detection of non-0157 *E. coli*.

9. Tenders will be advertised for a project to develop a quantitative tool to assess food skills in adults on IOI and their impact on healthiness of diet.
10. A survey of fridges across IOI to assess current practice and to advise people on 'best before' and 'use by' dates so as to avoid food waste. The project will run for 6 months and is being conducted by Queen's University Belfast.
11. Managing food on shift work is a project that will explore barriers and facilitators to healthy eating for a range of shift workers. This project will take 18 months.

GK noted that there has been a good response to these tenders and applications have been very competitive. All applications are evaluated by external evaluators and were of a high quality.

GK noted that reports and resources from completed **safefood** research projects are available on **safefood's** website.

## 7. CONSUMER FOCUS REVIEW (CFR)

- Noted:** AMcG noted that the current review is focused on men's health. The advisory group consisting of a range of individuals working with men, has met and advised on content and tone of the CFR. The market research agency has also been briefed on the qualitative work. In the meantime, **safefood** has produced five key messages for Men's Health Week in June that will be circulated through our online channels.
- Noted:** AMcG acknowledge that **safefood's** online audience is 75% female but noted that messages can be directly targeted at men on Facebook and Twitter.
- Noted:** MU noted that a campaign on this topic may be very useful and MC noted that the work of this CFR can be linked with the project looking at shift workers as a large proportion of those workers are men.

## 8. TELEPHONE SURVEY OF INFECTIOUS INTESTINAL DISEASE IN ROI

CFN presented the findings of the telephone survey of intestinal infectious disease.

- Noted:** CFN noted that a full report is available online and has been circulated to stakeholders.
- Noted:** MC noted that in the UK GPs are not paid to take samples anymore. There is a statutory obligation for them to report on this issue but not to take samples and so there may be even more under

reporting that previously. This may affect comparison between surveys.

## 9. EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY FOOD INITIATIVES

MF presented information on community food initiatives project.

**Noted:** MF noted that an evaluation report available on website and can be circulated to interested members.

**Noted:** MF noted that successful projects have integrated into other on-going initiatives in the community and those involved will act as mentors for new projects.

## 10. COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

**Noted:** FG mentioned that research was conducted on Operation Transformation (OT) in April and showed strong viewership. Forty two per cent watched the show, including 3 in 10 viewers with the purpose of losing weight. Three in 10 tuned in to lose weight and four in 10 lost less than 1 stone. Ninety per cent of those maintained that weight loss. Six in 10 said they had made changes to their lifestyle and there were over 60,000 unique visits to the OT website using the tools and resources. FG noted that these results will be published in shortly.

**Noted:** FG noted that Take Away My Way competition finals took place in May in St. Angela's College. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of this competition and entries have gone up each year.

**Noted:** FG noted that Food Waste campaign was launched last November. It initially aimed to educate consumers about 'best before' and 'use by' dates. Research has shown some improvements when comparing pre and post campaign understanding of these dates but there is still some confusion. Focus groups showed that using the two together confused people so as a food safety agency **safefood** decided to focus on 'use by' dates only. FG mentioned that Apps were developed along with use of social media platforms to answer consumer queries.

**Noted:** GK thanked TL about talking about the Food Waste campaign on the Pat Kenney Show.

**Noted:** FG noted that TL is also participating in a Google Hang Out for **safefood** later that day.

**Noted:** FG noted that events included community food initiatives mentioned by MF as well as Balmoral which used the same message from previous years but incorporated the food label messages. It was quite successful.

- Noted:** FG noted that Food Safety Week is coming up and the theme this year is food safety myths. FG mentioned that FSA have created a quiz type resource for consumers.
- Noted:** FG mentioned that the all-Ireland obesity action forum workshop is in June in Belfast.
- Noted:** FG noted that the focus of the up-coming campaign will be childhood obesity which will aim to increase awareness of all parents of the health challenges associated with excess weight. FG noted that 1 in 4 children are obese and 50% of parents are not recognising this fact.

## **11. SAC PROGRESS REPORT**

- Noted:** MU asked members for any comments on the SAC progress report.
- Noted:** There were no comments.

## **12. TOUR DE TABLE**

- Noted:** GMcF informed members on the progress of sustainable a food communities' project.
- Noted:** MJ noted that in relation to front of pack labelling in the UK, the 10 big retailers have signed up to the FSA scheme, as well as some manufacturers. MJ noted that there was some discussion around which foods should go into the amber and red categories. MJ also noted that retailers play a big role as 70% of food produced in NI is under the retailer's own brands.
- Noted:** MJ reminded members about the Nutrition Surveillance report and encouraged members to keep this issue on their agenda.
- Noted:** GMcF noted that a consultation in NI has been concluded on food hygiene rating of restaurants. At the moment this is voluntary but consultation recommended it to become mandatory.
- Noted:** MJ noted that the FSAI have a technical issue with their legislation which does not allow them to publish the rating scheme for individual businesses but that they are pursuing this further with the Department of Health.

## **13. AOB**

- Noted:** AMcG noted that the next meeting will be scheduled for early October. AMcG to confirm date with MH and inform members **(Action 3)**

**Noted:** AMcG noted that process for selection of new members to SAC is underway and eligible members can become candidates again.

**Noted:** MU noted that TL has indicated that she will not be joining the SAC next year and thanked TL for her contribution to the SAC.

**14. Close**