



Minutes of the fifth Meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Committee, held on
Tuesday, 2nd of October, 2012 at 10.30am
safefood, Block B, Abbey Court, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1.

PRESENT:

Ms Barbara Livingstone (BL)
Ms Tina Leonard (TL)
Maria Jennings (MJ)
Ms Amanda McCloat (AmcC)
Dr Wayne Anderson (WA)
Mr Robert Huey (RH)
Mr Barney Heywood (BH)
Mr Kenneth Carroll (KC)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Martin Higgins, Chief Executive (MH)
Ms Fiona Gilligan, Director Marketing & Communications (FG)
Dr Aileen McGloin, Scientific Support Manager (AMcG)
Mr Ray Dolan, Director, Corporate Operations (RD)
Dr David McCleery, Chief Specialist Microbiology (DMcC)
Dr James McIntosh, Chief Specialist Toxicology (JMcI)
Dr Marian Faughnan, Chief Specialist Nutrition, Human Health & Nutrition (MF)
Ms Frederica Doyle, Minute Secretary (FD)
Dr Amy-Jane Troy, Minute Secretary (AJT)

APOLOGIES:

Prof Seamus Fanning (SF)
Dr Moira Dean (MD)
Prof Martin Caraher (MC)
Dr Ken Baird (KB)

ABSENT

Prof Charlie Daly

ACTIONS

Action 1: AmcG to send results of the qualitative findings for the CFR on fruit and vegetables to WA

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairperson welcomed all members to the fourth meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Committee (SAC). The apologies SF, MD, MC, KB were noted.

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

The minutes were adopted with no changes or amendments to be made.

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. SAC AREAS OF WORK AND SUBGROUPS (SAC/2012/1&2)

The three subgroups of the SAC are emerging food safety issues, nutrition surveillance and body weight perception. Antimicrobial resistance remains a focus of the SAC.

a. Emerging Issues

JMcI made reference to the EFSA trials conducted on signals for emerging issues and the resultant report, which reviewed 1900 signals and focused specifically on 21.

The Advisory Committee was informed that a working group had been put together to try to complement the work of EFSA on an IOI level. The group consisted of CD, RW and BH and was augmented by a number of external experts. The aims of the working group were: to specify the drivers of change generating emerging issues; the data sources that could be used on IOI; and networks currently available on the island.

It was proposed that a core body could address these issues. It was mentioned that this body should actively promote information exchange. It was also concluded by the group that **safefood** was in a neutral position to oversee the core body.

Noted: There was some discussion as to whether the body would be a virtual or a physical entity. It was suggested that the **safefood** remit could serve as guiding model – having a focus on the IOI, with the potential to act as a safe haven so that private companies could share information on the next potential food borne illness. Therefore, it was suggested that horizon scanning would be conducted by a selection of suitable people with expertise in the necessary areas. However, maintaining continuity was expressed as a potential problem.

Noted: The potential method or mechanism for dealing with the relationship with the regulatory regime was queried. Because **safefood** holds a unique position members felt that that it would be possible for **safefood** to act as a liaison. It was mentioned that this could possibly be a difficult process and committee members alluded to the need for enforcement in certain areas within industry.

Noted: Dissemination of the document was discussed by the Committee members. It was questioned whether a consultation paper with targeted questions needed to be circulated. WA proposed that the paper needed to be piloted before it was published. It was suggested that the report be brought to the attention of the NSMC.

b. Nutrition Surveillance

All the feedback from the previous meeting was utilised and recommendations have been signed off. It was mentioned that the first two recommendations were very detailed and required some amendments. Currently, the report is being formatted and is due to be published next month. It will facilitate discussions on an IOI basis.

Noted: MH mentioned the positive step in terms of the potential for all-island working and the collaboration between the two departments.

Noted: MJ questioned how the recommendations of the report could be progressed. MH indicated that the report would go to NMSC. MJ expressed the need to ensure that a suitable body/group conducted the job of nutritional surveillance and suggested that this might be a suitable role for **safefood**. MH acknowledged this point but informed the board that until certain decisions regarding the nutritional remit of **safefood** had been agreed upon, whether **safefood** would be the most suitable body for this role could not be determined.

c. Body weight perception

An overview of the report was presented and AMcG informed the Committee that most obesity campaigns had not previously addressed perceptions of obesity. A short synopsis of the recommendations related to research, communication, training and measurement was given. BL and AMcC mentioned that the paper was a valuable resource that should be published. AMcC wondered if the report could be taken a step further in relation to best practice. AMcG mentioned the report could represent a starting point for this.

Noted: WA mentioned the document was very well referenced and that the report would serve as a manual to help further campaigns.

Noted: RH was of the opinion that the report deserved a more public focus as the report focuses around general interests that would be of interest to the larger public. MJ also alluded to the benefit of the

report to health professionals and the need for it to reach this target audience.

d. Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) AMcG

AMcG gave an overview of work in the area. The Committee was happy with the progress to date.

Noted: RH mentioned that he had reason to recommend the **safe food** report that was used to inform protocol for recent labelling of beef products for a major retailer.

6. CONSUMER FOCUSED REVIEW (CFR)

AMcG informed the Committee that the Chicken, Finfish and Food Related Behaviour CFRs have been published and the report on food related behaviour was received particularly well. Reference was made to the Consumer Food Behaviour Network and all members of the Committee were extended an invite to the network. The Committee was given a brief update on the progress of the CFR on fruit and vegetable. They were also made aware of a new report on men's health, which is due to start in the last quarter of 2012.

Noted: WA mentioned that the recent qualitative results from the CFR on fruit and vegetables would be useful to review (ACTION 1).

7. SAFEFOOD RESEARCH PROGRAMME (SAC/2011/2/3)

The report was circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting and research questions were invited. DMcC mentioned how the report spanned a large range of disciplines. JMCI referred to the knowledge Networks and discussed the role of the networks as a horizon scanning mechanism that will feed into **safe food**.

Noted: MJ mentioned how the research programme added value and would be very happy to see it continue.

Noted: Members queried whether an enhanced focus on nutrition had occurred from 2008 and questioned if a more balanced focus between food safety and nutrition was needed. MH mentioned research conducted since 2008 had been informed by knowledge gaps but acknowledged that it was important consideration. Members mentioned that the area of risk assessment (for example: standardisation of new technologies, molecular technologies etc.) would provide valuable information and suggested that the research could be conducted through smaller 1 year projects or PhD thesis.

Noted: BH questioned if the information outlined in the research document was available. MH confirmed that all reports were easily accessible via the website.

Noted: MH mentioned how the networks could act as dissemination forum. He mentioned that RELAY was very helpful previously but since its closure there has been a gap for information dissemination.

Noted: WA suggested that it might be beneficial to conduct systematic reviews and offer concrete conclusions.

8. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE SAC SUBGROUP WORK

AmcG mentioned how “the influence of parenting style on diets and childhood” was a topic that was brought up in a previous meeting and asked the members their opinion on whether this topic should be followed up.

Noted: BL confirmed that has been no work conducted on parenting styles on IOI. AMcC questioned if the topic was too sensitive from a communication point of view. BL suggested the area of neophobia was less controversial and may be a possible avenue for a report.

Noted: KC mentioned that a joined up approach to education and communication between schools and parents was needed to ensure children received consistent health messages. He suggested that research focusing on this issue might promote discussion on such a joined up approach.

Noted: WA suggested a focus on molecular methods and techniques. He proposed work on how molecular methods can be used to deal with outbreaks; techniques most appropriate for dealing with particular organisms; and standardisation of techniques.

Noted: MH alluded to the resource costs in the current financial climate and WA confirmed these costs would be substantial. However WA discussed how the benefits would positively impact upon health and costs spent on healthcare. MJ mentioned that carrying out such an action in stages may prove more feasible.

Noted: TL proposed the idea of consumer behaviour from a more general perspective and suggested that maybe an overview of all the current available information would offer valuable information. AmcG mentioned that the CFR’s would offer some insights into this area and more could be attained through specific projects but acknowledged that there were large gaps.

Noted: MJ believed that a focus on the retail sector may provide interesting findings and made reference to a recent NI report conducted on the consumers’ shopping experience that could serve as a basis for such work.

Noted: BL suggested the idea of personalised nutrition as a possible beneficial topic for future research.

Noted: AMcC proposed the idea of food literacy with a focus on what consumers know. It was mentioned that there was very little research conducted in this area.

9. COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

- An overview of the Chinese takeaway report was provided. The report was well received and has gained substantial publicity.
- The burger report, also part of the takeaway series, was published in July. A key finding was that that burger portion sizes for children were often as large as those for adults.
- The CFR on chicken was published in September. This was an update on the previous report and therefore did not receive significant publicity.
- From an events perspective, the ploughing championships focused on cross contamination using the motif 'Germ Scene Investigation' There was a prize of a laptop for those who attended the stand and answered a question regarding cross contamination. The event proved very successful. The same stand was used successfully at the Balmoral show.
- The Dept. of environment collaborated with **safefood** for National Food Safety Week and **safefood** for the food waste campaign.
- The food related behaviour conference 'Food, Health, Choice and Change' took place in June in Cork and had a strong focus on behaviour change. This event was also used to launch the new Consumer Food Behaviour Network.
- The 'Takeaway My Way' competition completed in March 2012 in conjunction with St Angela's in Sligo. 900 post primary pupils from the island of Ireland entered. The senior winner came from Fermanagh and the junior winner from Limerick.

10. SAC PROGRESS REPORT (SAC/2012/2/4)

Members were invited to comment on the progress report. Many of the issues had previously been covered under other agenda items.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

MH remaindered members of the current call for expression on interest for new SAC members that has been advertised. He thanked all members for their participation and commitment to the committee to date.

NEXT MEETING

This will be set on appointment of the new **safefood** Advisory Committee.