



Minutes of the sixth meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee of **safefood**, the Food Safety Promotion Board, held on Thursday 26th April, 2007 at 10.30 am in the Dublin office of **safefood**, Block B, Abbey Court, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1.

PRESENT:

Prof Charles Daly (Chair) (CD)
Prof David McDowell (Vice-Chair) (DMcD)
Dr Brian Smyth (BS)
Mr Gerry McCurdy (GMcC)
Mr Barney Heywood (BH)
Mr Martin Mullane (MM)
Ms Catherine Foye (CF)
Dr John Egan (JE)
Dr Wayne Anderson (WA)
Mr Bert Houston (BtH)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Martin Higgins, Chief Executive (MH)
Dr Cliodhna Foley-Nolan, Director, Human Health & Nutrition (CFN)
Dr Geraldine Quinn, Scientific Support Manager (GQ)
Dr David McCleery, Chief Specialist Microbiology (DMC)
Mr Ray Dolan, Director of Corporate Operations (RD)
Ms Fiona Gilligan, Communications Manager (FG)
Ms Marita Hennessy, Minute Secretary for the meeting (ML)

APOLOGIES:

Dr Emer Shelly
Prof Shay Fanning
Ms Patricia McCusker
Prof Barbara Livingstone
Dr Ken Baird
Dr Brian Gaffney
Mr Jim Buckley
Dr Margaret Patterson
Dr Derval Igoe
Dr Thomas Quigley
Ms Eileen O'Connor
Ms Suzanne Doran

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

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

The Chair introduced DMC, Chief Specialist Microbiology and ML, Minute Secretary in the absence of Eileen O' Connor.

Apologies were noted and recorded.

2. MINUTES OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE SAC HELD ON 25TH JANUARY 2007.

The minutes were agreed and adopted.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (oral)

Members were reminded to declare interest on topics where appropriate.

5. ANTI-MICROBIAL RESISTANT BACTERIA IN THE FOOD CHAIN

DMcD briefed members on the paper on antimicrobial resistance and food safety which he prepared in conjunction with SF. The following advice was given:

- The composition of the scientific panel should only be decided upon after the contributors and the Executive have advanced the mapping exercise.
- SF has recently been appointed to an EFSA Working Group which is considering the issue.
- The initial mapping study should focus on the situation on the island of Ireland, but it should draw on international trends.
- Antibiotic resistance acquired externally should be mapped also.

Action: SF, DMcD and Executive to advance mapping exercise for next meeting in September.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH/SOUTH WORKING

MH briefed members on the first meeting of the North-South Working Group held on 18th April. The following points were noted:

- Developing North/South working relationships is critical. If **safefood** is to initiate this process, however, mechanisms/structures need to be put in place for its sustainability.
- The rationale for such working must be needs driven rather than for altruistic reasons.
- Indicators of success are anticipated to include change of mindset towards N/S working at institutional level, joint-thinking and avoidance of work duplication. A bottom-up as well as top-down approach is needed.
- Suitable projects need to be identified, for example, projects that work well in one jurisdiction could be rolled out in the other.
- Involvement of the statutory sector is critical.
- **safefood** involvement must stay within its remit of food safety and nutrition.

Action: GQ to circulate copies of the Food Strategy Implementation Partnership: Report of the Foresight Leadership Group (Vision Twenty/Twenty) to members.

7. CHALLENGING AND EMERGING ISSUES: *TOUR DE TABLE*

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

- The three leading global baby formula companies are now taking milk from IoI.
- Healthy eating is now the primary concern in NI while food safety ranks 13th. There is a need to get outputs from inputs.
- Water – Galway outbreaks may only be the tip of the iceberg. NI has a different water provision system to RoI.

8. UPDATES

- **2008-2010 Corporate Strategy**

MH briefed the SAC on the consultation process that **safefood** engaged in with staff, the Executive Board and the Advisory Board over the last number of weeks.

The following points were noted:

- Opportunities for **safefood** arising from the consultation include the new political regime, and increased organisational awareness among consumers. Threats identified included political instability and evaluation (St. Andrew's Agreement).
- The **safefood** strategy will complement the strategies of other bodies, such as the FSA, FSAI and the respective sponsoring departments.
- The plan is to be submitted to the sponsoring departments by July 2007.

Action: GQ to circulate draft strategy to SAC by correspondence.

Action: Matrix of stakeholders in the food safety/nutrition arena on IoI to be drafted.

- **Consumer Focused Reviews**

GQ provided members with an update on activities relating to the 'Consumer Focused Reviews'. The following points were noted:

- The Fruit and Vegetable Report was launched 11 February, with subsequent stakeholder meetings.
- The Beef Report is complete and ready for printing. The summary document is currently being prepared in-house. The final report review will be ready in June but may not be launched until September.
- The Dairy Report is being compiled and a first draft will be available by the end of May/early June.

In relation to communication activities arising from the launch of the Beef Report, it is anticipated that Third Country Imports and controls will be topical in the media. The following advice was given:

- Two separate issues – trade and public health.
- Describe the controls in place to reassure consumers.
- Have Q&A prepared in advance.
- Liaise with the Food and Veterinary Office.

Action: GQ to circulate first draft of Dairy report to members by correspondence for comment.

Action: GQ to speak with Food and Veterinary Office in relation to Third Country Imports.

- **Communications**

FG provided an update of current activities in the Marketing & Communication Directorate at **safefood**. The following points were noted:

- Balmoral Show takes place 16 to 18 May. **Safefood** is showcasing a production developed by FSA UK entitled 'Grill the audience' which incorporates key nutrition messages.
- National Food Safety Week takes place in June. The theme this year will be 'Eating Outdoors'.
- CFN recorded a piece on superfoods for the television series 'Corrigan Knows Food' which will be airing in June.

DMC informed members of the forthcoming food hygiene campaign aimed at raising standards in retail and catering premises.

- **Research**

Members were given an update on current research activities at **safefood**. A number of points of clarification were requested in relation to its content. The 'new research proposals' were put forward at a recent internal group research meeting. A final decision on projects will be taken shortly.

- **Extranet Site**

The site should be back in working order from mid May 2007.

9. SAC PROGRESS REPORT DOCUMENT

Noted: Members were given the updated SAC Progress Report document.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Noted: The new Health Claims legislation does not apply to **safefood** campaigns.

Noted: The FSA, FSAI and **safefood** are hosting a conference 'Dietary Habits – the evidence for change' on May, 1.

Noted: EFSA has recently appointed **safefood** as a competent body to undertake projects on behalf of EFSA.

Noted: The Vice-Chair will chair the next meeting as the Chair will not be available.

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 27th September, 2007.