

7TH Meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Committee

Friday 14th November 2014

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Dr Mary Upton, Chairperson (MU)
Claire Kerins (CK)
Dr Bridget Maher (BM)
Kenneth Carroll (KC)
Dr Christine Domegan (CD)
Dr Gary McFarlane (GMcF)
Maria Jennings (MJ)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ray Dolan, CEO (RD)
Dr Gary Kearney, Director Food Science (GK)
Dr Clíodhna Foley Nolan, Director Human Health and Nutrition (CFN)
Fiona Gilligan, Director Marketing and Communication (FG)
Dr Aileen McGloin, Scientific Support Manager (AMcG)
Dr James McIntosh, Chief Specialist in Toxicology (JMcl)
Dr Linda Gordon, Chief Specialist in Food Science (LG)
Sara Eslami, Research Fellow (SE)
Dr Kenneth McKenzie, Strategic Planning Director, Publicis (KMck)
Jim Power, Jim Power Economics Ltd. (JP)
Joan Burton TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection and leader of the Labour Party (for latter part of the meeting)

APOLOGIES:

Prof Martin Caraher (MC)
Dr Moira Dean (MD)
Robert Huey (RH)
Prof Helen Roche (HR)
Amanda McCloat (AMcC)
Prof Margaret Patterson (MP)
Dr Marian Faughnan, Chief Specialist in Nutrition (MF)

1. Welcome and apologies

The chairperson welcomed all members to the last meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Committee (SAC) in 2014. The apologies were noted.

2. Introductions by chair

Noted MU noted the change in the format of the meeting, as an outcome of discussions from the previous brain-storming meeting in February, which involved a workshop examining the role of the SAC in the context of **safefood**'s overall operations.

Noted MU noted several targets for today's meeting including greater clarity for SAC members as to **safefood**'s legislative remit, greater clarity for members in terms of their role in the SAC and identification of key themes that would require SAC input and participation over the coming year as well as stronger liaison between the SAC, the Executive and the Advisory Board.

Noted MU introduced JMcl as the new facilitator of the SAC.

3. Speaker Presentations

Noted MU noted that as part of the previous meeting, the role of **safefood** in the wider food environment was discussed which prompted the presentations now by the external speakers.

'Flags in the ground: Guesstimating near-future consumer behaviours' Presented by KMck

4. Overview of **safefood**'s remit

LG presented an overview of the FS directorate activities.

CFN presented an overview of the work of the HHN directorate.

FG presented an overview of the **safefood** communication strategy.

5. Speaker Presentations

'Food issues in the macro-economic environment' Presented by JP

6. **safefood 2015 business plan: Roles for the SAC**

RD presented the **safefood** 2015 business plan and upcoming projects and campaigns for FS, HHN, M&C directorates in terms of education and research activities.

Noted RD noted that 2015 business plan is in draft form and awaiting approval.

Noted RD outlined campaigns and activities planned for 2015 by **safefood**.

Noted RD noted that in **safefood**'s 14 year existence, it has partnered effectively with FSA, FSAI and EHOs amongst many others on developing campaigns and resources.

7. **Over to you: areas of expertise and expectations from SAC membership**

Noted KC talked about challenges industry face, particularly more recently in relation to allergens and how consumers may communicate to caterers about issues they have in regard to food. In the legislation as it stands, consumers don't have an obligation to inform catering establishments of an allergy and the onus is with the operators. Work needs to be done on enhancing consumer awareness on this issue and KC is happy to input on this issue from an industry point of view.

Noted MJ noted challenges facing FSA, which is currently developing its strategy for next 5 years. There is a need for FSA and **safefood** to work together more than ever because in addition to challenges faced by both organisations, they have overlapping remits in a few areas which has presented challenges in the past and will continue to do so.

Noted MJ noted that she would very much like to be involved and engaged with some of the work mentioned by FG during her presentation with regards to working with the food industry, particularly in the initial steps and planning stages because FSA have done a lot of work in that space.

Noted GMcF noted that Chartered Institute of Environmental Health in NI is entering a new phase of professional collaboration with their colleagues in the ROI, which is relevant to **safefood**. GMcF noted that he has a UK perspective as well as experience working with the industry and so can bring a degree of commercial insight to the work of the SAC.

Noted GMcF noted that there is a need for **safefood**, FSAI and FSANI to publicise ongoing collaboration and joined-up working - this is particularly important due to the nature of the current and upcoming fiscal and political environment.

- Noted** CK noted her experience in preventative cardiology from both a research and a clinical perspective. CK also noted her work both with patients and healthcare professionals in relation to dietary health promotion. CK runs short courses for health professionals to provide training for dealing with weight issues with patients and noted that many dieticians feel uncomfortable pointing out weight issues to patients. She noted that this is an area which falls within **safefood**'s remit of promoting health eating and preventing obesity and expressed an interest in helping to inform **safefood** of practical issues happening in the community.
- Noted** BM noted her work in coordinating nutrition education for medical students in UCC, as well as outreach programmes in local schools where medical students give talks on aspects of healthy eating. She noted that although there is a level of interest among students in nutrition, she finds training opportunities in this area lacking and welcomes work in improving nutrition education to healthcare professionals. BM noted that an academic organisation would welcome working with **safefood** in providing such resources.
- Noted** CD noted her work in relation to behaviour change science. Currently behaviour change is moving away from the individual and towards addressing the complexities that were mentioned in KMCK presentation in relation to predicting and evaluating consumer behaviour. She noted that she can push this way of thinking to assist the work of **safefood** and would welcome to be called upon to provide this expertise.
- Noted** MU thanked members for their contributions and noted that in addition to the points mentioned it is important to narrow down the work of the SAC and outputs and ideas to be presented to the board.
- Noted** GMcF noted that members should be called upon to provide expertise to assist and shape **safefood**'s corporate plan and ensure a sustainable organisation with targeted and informed plans.
- Noted** CFN noted that listening to experiences from SAC members, she can identify areas she can call upon members to use their expertise in relation to work **safefood** does. For example as KC mentioned, working with the industry in relation to children's meals, calories in menus, or an IOI collaborative approach as mentioned by GMcF, particularly with allergen legislation, or as CK and BM mentioned in relation to providing resources for healthcare providers to take issues such as weight management on more comfortably. In addition, CD could also provide expertise in relation to community food initiatives. CFN noted that there

is a different approach in relation to food in schools between ROI and NI and better collaboration could provide learnings.

Noted KC noted that many schools don't have provisions for catering, even in newly built schools, which makes promotion of healthy lunches difficult. Even when such facilities are available, they mostly include service areas rather than facilities to prepare meals which impacts quality of the meals. This also gives children the impression that meals are delivered and packages are opened and not something that is prepared and cooked.

Noted KC noted that there are 14 new buildings being built for primary healthcare centres, however looking at some of the plans, there are no plans for catering or food provision in the designs. While some were open to amend this issue, while others showed no interest.

Noted MU, CFN and KC noted the importance of focusing on food in schools and that this is an important area of interest for **safefood**.

Noted GMcF noted that contribution of the committee should go beyond the SAC meetings which can happen through better engagement and alignment of the committee with the corporate strategy.

Noted MU noted that while it is recognised that all members voluntarily give their time to the SAC, work can be done to effectively increase contact without taking a lot of time from the members. MJ noted that she would welcome facilitating VC connection to organise better contact between members.

8. Overview of the visit of the Tánaiste and Minister for Social Protection and Leader of the Labour Party, Joan Burton TD

Noted The Tánaiste noted that breakfast clubs in schools has been an area of particular interest to her, and nutrition and educating parents in relation to good nutritional standards has been a major focus. The presence of breakfast clubs for instance has proven extremely positive. This scheme allows school staff to identify children who may be experiencing nutritional deficits at home without necessarily exposing these children. The model has seen major improvement in outcomes in terms of learning and behaviour.

Noted The Tánaiste noted that Ireland is becoming a multi-cultural society and many children currently in the Irish education system may not have been born in Ireland or have parents who were not born in Ireland. Many of these people would be from countries with a strong food culture and how well that integrates with the Irish food culture is very interesting. Do

people get captivated by takeaways and fast food, having come from a very strong and sensible food culture? You can see it in some of the children, that with the availability of cheap fast foods, obesity can quickly become a problem.

9. Close

MU invited members to tea/coffee and lunch and to informally meet with the Tánaiste.