

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

1 Chief Executive's engagements

- 1.1 Since the Board meeting in March, I have attended several events, including the British Nutrition Association Conference, the Scottish Food and Drink Awards, the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland's Annual Environmental Health Forum, and have met with the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), the Scotch Whisky Association, Scottish Bakers, and the Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers. I have also met with representatives from food wholesalers and retailers - Bookers, Lidl, Morrisons, Marks and Spencer and Sainsburys - where the main focus of discussions was on diet and nutrition.
- 1.2 A number of officials recently attended our fourth 'Improving Scotland's Diet' meeting with Scottish Government and NHS Health Scotland colleagues. This was our first meeting since the election in May, and it there was a useful discussion on how to progress our work over the next Parliament and possible governance arrangements that we could consider putting in place.
- 1.3 I have also met Scottish Government colleagues to talk about how we might contribute to work on tackling organised crime, which is a shared objective around the protection of the public. On 13th June, we are also meeting Health and Safety Executive and Scottish Environmental Protection Agency to talk about greater co-operation in tackling fraud.
- 1.4 At the UK level, I have met with Defra, to discuss clarity of responsibilities, and a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and also with the Department of Health, where the discussion covered sugar tax, mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid and an update on their childhood obesity strategy.
- 1.5 Looking beyond the UK, during May, the Deputy Chief Executive attended a two-day conference on European Union Food Law held at the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in Parma, Italy. The agenda was broad, covering food safety and risk assessment, the regulatory challenges of EFSA's strategy, food fraud and nutrition and health. The nutrition and health session was of particular interest, with a very relevant session on the mix of approaches that may be needed to address the dietary health challenges faced by an increasing number of countries. The conference was also a very good opportunity to build our networks with EFSA and contacts from other Member States.
- 1.6 I have also met with the Finnish Food Authority and with the President of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The President of the CFIA was primarily visiting to look at what the UK delivers on science, but also on other areas of common interest.

2 Communications and marketing

Events

- 2.1 On Saturday 4th June, Taste of Grampian saw over 14,500 consumers walk through the main gates of Thainstone Mart in Inverurie, to an array of stalls and stands filled with Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire's "best of the best" from the local food and hospitality industries. With this being the 10th year FSS (previously FSAS), we overhauled the

stand content, where we implemented our new “Balance Your Basket” interactive shopping zone game which is based on the new Eatwell Guide. Excellent feedback was received from both consumers and staff volunteering at the event, and the game is being further developed before FSS take it to this year’s Royal Highland Show. Over the Taste of Grampian weekend, our social media channels also saw an increase in activity, with Twitter reaching over 7,600 interactions, and Facebook reaching 8,000 interactions by 5,000 unique users.

Food in Scotland Consumer Tracking Survey

2.2 The Communications & Marketing and Nutrition teams are currently working on the questionnaire for the next wave of the tracking survey, which replaces Wave 1’s Food Safety module with a Diet & Nutrition module. This will be run at the end of June, with results likely by August. This will be shared with the Board later this year.

3 Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHIS)

3.1 Last year the Board agreed that a review should be undertaken of the operation and presentation of FHIS. We have carried out qualitative consumer research to gather opinions on the existing scheme and its future development. In addition, we have sought initial views from local authority (LA) enforcement officers. This evidence indicates that a comprehensive review of the scheme is required, and that consideration of mandatory display of information should be an important part of this review.

3.2 To address the issues highlighted so far and to align this work with the approach to improving compliance outlined in the Regulatory Strategy, the review will re-focus the key aim of the scheme to incentivise business compliance through influencing consumer choices. The intention is to develop a scheme that is well understood and used by consumers and that acts as a disincentive to non-compliance and rewards sustainably compliant businesses. We should also consider opportunities to link it with other schemes to ensure consumers are fully informed. The Board will receive a progress paper in December 2016 setting out the preferred way forward for their consideration, following further targeted stakeholder engagement work in the next few months.

4 Update on Animal Feed official controls delivery

4.1 Earned recognition (where compliant feed businesses benefit from reduced inspection frequency) was rolled out for the animal feed industry, beyond primary production, for 1 April 2016, with supporting documents on the FSS website. Implementation will be monitored over the coming months.

4.2 On 23rd March, the Minister for Public Health agreed FSS should progress a centralised delivery model and a return of the funding currently allocated to LAs for feed through the block grant. Work is developing on the options available for a centralised model which will consider other official controls taking place at feed businesses, in order to reduce footfall wherever possible. Consultation meetings with relevant stakeholders are taking place in June to further inform the decision making process. We aim to have the model agreed by end of July 2016.

4.3 We met with COSLA on 25th May to discuss a proposal to transfer funding from the block grant to FSS in order to finance feed official controls from April 2017. COSLA

has raised objections to a transfer of the money on the basis that it has since been diverted to other local authority functions. FSS will be discussing the funding issue with SG Finance and possibly the Minister for Public Health, and continue to work with COSLA to try to resolve it. However, the Board should note the lack of funding presents a considerable risk and the Executive view is that the diversion of funds from a statutory obligation which we know is not being delivered is not sustainable. This is also now classified as a red risk on the level 1 risk register and ARC were advised of this at the meeting on 8th June 2016. The fact that the funding has been diverted confirms that LAs are not meeting their obligations in this area and poses considerable reputational risk to Scotland's food production.

5 New meat hygiene charging structure

- 5.1 Operations and finance colleagues have completed a series of meetings with key meat industry stakeholders to explain our new charging structure for this year. Meetings were positive and welcomed by the industry. Their only real concern at this stage relates to the conduct and charging for partial audits. We have agreed to review this particular issue in the coming months. We still remain clear that the industry can do more to reduce the cost of official control delivery and the Operational Delivery team are conducting a plant by plant analysis over the next 6 months to evaluate this.

6 Audit System Review

- 6.1 FSS has a key role in overseeing delivery of feed and food law. To do this FSS and its predecessor organisation have had an audit system in place for a number of years. Transition to Food Standards Scotland has both necessitated and facilitated a review of the system. That review has now taken place; the key changes are highlighted below:
- Recommendations for both *corrective and preventive* action will be raised following audit. Recommendations should address the end-result to be delivered rather than means of correcting non-compliance. Corrective and preventive action should not be confined to addressing specific technical requirements but should, where appropriate, include system-wide measures.
 - A root cause analysis of any non-compliance will be required to be conducted by the auditee (and submitted as part of the action plan) in order to determine the most appropriate corrective or preventive action.
 - Finally, a level of assurance will be assigned following each audit. The format for this will be based on Scottish Government auditing practices.
- 6.2 An audit programme is currently under development and will be issued in due course.

7 Intelligence System

- 7.1 FSS has now become a partner of Trading Standards Scotland Intelligence System, and has moved away from recording intelligence on FSA's system. The system has been live for the last few months and staff from the Scottish Food Crime and Incidents Unit were formally trained recently. The next phase is to develop training that can be rolled out to all appropriate FSS staff, who will be able to input

intelligence into the system, and also Local Authority Environmental Health personnel. The end result will be that FSS will form part of a Scotland-wide intelligence system, which will record information related to food issues. We are now in the position where we have improved both capacity and capability but we really need better flows of information from primary production and food producers\manufacturers.

8 Incident management

- 8.1 Since 16th March 2016, 25 routine incidents have been reported to FSS. During this period FSS has issued 1 Allergy Alert notice and 4 Product Recall information notices to consumers.

9 Review of terms and conditions

- 9.1 Offers of Scottish Government Main (SGM) terms and conditions were made to all staff with a deadline of 18th March 2016 for acceptance. Of the 159 offers made, 137 were accepted with 21 staff opting to remain on FSS terms and conditions. New staff employed after 1st April 2016 are automatically appointed on SGM terms and all pay negotiations will be conducted as part of the SGM bargaining unit regardless of whether staff have opted to take SGM terms and conditions. Within the SGM bargaining unit, the recognised trade unions are PCS, Prospect and FDA and therefore the FSS trade union recognition agreement with Unison has ended.

10 Mainstreaming Equality Report

- 10.1 In April, FSS published a document which sets out our current position and our commitment to fully embed equality as a key component of our business, both as a consumer protection body and also as an employer.

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/mainstreaming-equality-report>

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09 June 2016