

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

### 1 Chief Executive's engagements

1.1 Since the Board meeting in March 2017, with the Chair I have met with the Minister of Public Health to discuss the diet and obesity strategy and discuss progress on advice on the implementation of fortification of flour with folic acid. I have also met the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland to discuss progress on folic acid. I also had a very constructive meeting with Jason Feeney FSA's new Chief Executive and his approach and the importance he attaches to effective working relationships suggests a very good and strong relationship going forward.

1.2 On the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017, I, along with the Chair and Director of Operations, attended the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland conference, the main focus of the conference was health and I gave a presentation on "What the future might look like". The first day of the conference in particular was very good with a good focus on public health protection.

1.3 On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2017 I attended the Cancer Research UK (CRUK ) reception at the Scottish Parliament, the Minister for Public Health was in attendance and Professor Linda Bauld gave a presentation. Both CRUK and FSS recognise the links between diet, cancer and obesity and believe that highlighting these to consumers in Scotland is likely to have a considerable degree of traction. We know that consumers are not always aware of the health consequences from a sustained poor diet, and while the consequences of type 2 diabetes may be less well understood, there is a very high level awareness of cancer. We anticipate that in working with CRUK there are opportunities to gain more leverage to focus consumers on health consequences related to diet.

1.4 On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2017, I attended the Obesity Action Scotland Steering Group where I gave a presentation on "The proposal for improving the Scottish diet". I discussed the challenges we face around securing changes in diet and the difficulties of communicating diet and obesity issues alongside the challenges faced by the medical profession in tackling obesity.

1.5 In addition, across FSS we have met with a range of stakeholders including attending the Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers Annual Conference, the Specialist Cheesemakers Association, the British Retail Consortium, Defra, Health and Safety Executive, Soil Association, NHS Health Scotland Public Health Nutrition Network and representatives from the shellfish and aquaculture sectors.

### 2 Animal Welfare

2.1 FSS has recently received a number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests regarding animal welfare. The initial request sought data on welfare breaches and data was released on 706 breaches detected by our Official Veterinarians and Meat Hygiene Inspectors based in slaughterhouses in Scotland between 1 May 2015 and 31 January 2017. Of the 706 breaches, approximately a quarter (181) occurred in abattoirs.

2.2 A follow up FOI request sought data on Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) coverage and linkages to whether the breaches were in areas covered by CCTV.

2.3 During this same period, approximately 900,000 cattle, 2,390,000 sheep, 580,000 pigs and 81,400,000 poultry were slaughtered in abattoirs in Scotland. While 706 breaches is too high, overall the incidence rate is low. Nonetheless, proportionate and effective enforcement action will continue to be taken where breaches are detected. We currently have 62 veterinarians in slaughterhouses in Scotland to monitor and enforce animal welfare standards as we take animal welfare extremely seriously. The Director of Operations released a media response which made it clear we do not tolerate animal cruelty and that any breaches are investigated as a priority, with action taken dependent on the type of breach. There are a range of options open to FSS, including providing reports to the Procurator Fiscal, who can then take the decision on any further action required. FSS currently has four cases under investigation and one of which is already at the prosecution stage. FSS also has the option to suspend a slaughterer's Certificate of Competence, and have done so in 10 cases.

2.4 Further solutions to this unacceptable issue will be considered by a new working group comprising of FSS, Quality Meat Scotland, Scottish Government (SG), Animal & Plant Health Agency, Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Scottish Local Authorities. The purpose of this working group will be to specifically focus on emerging welfare issues and will consider, at a strategic level, the key areas we need to focus on in order to understand what works well and what we need to improve. The working group will convene for the first time in June 2017.

### **3 Delivering Animal Health and Welfare in Scotland**

3.1 On the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> March 2017, a team of Operational Delivery colleagues attended a veterinary conference organised by APHA and SG on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The audience included representatives from Scotland's Rural College, the National Farmers' Union of Scotland, Health Protection Scotland and Livestock Health Scotland, as well as practice veterinary staff and veterinary students.

3.2 The conference had the themes of 'One Health' and 'One Welfare' and was a really good example of how different agencies are working together to improve both human and animal health and welfare. An FSS Veterinary Manager addressed the conference with an update from FSS and focussed on our improved collaboration with our colleagues from other agencies such as APHA and SG that are starting to reap benefits by improving the investigation of welfare incidents on farm or during transport.

### **4 Animal Feed**

4.1 Scottish Government Legal Department has confirmed that a change to primary legislation is required to give effect to a centralised delivery model where FSS assumes legal competence and delegates to a limited number of Local Authorities. An amendment to secondary legislation, currently in draft, will enable local authorities to continue to operate as the enforcement authority, but on a regional basis, and can be achieved to allow implementation in October 2017.

4.2. FSS met with the regional authority representatives on 4th April 2017 and 9th May 2017 to help develop the systems that will be required for implementation, for example, data management, official control planning, training and terms and conditions. Positive discussions are on-going with other on-farm inspectorates in order to ensure that there is coverage of official controls on farm in Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles.

## 5 FSS Quarterly Incidents Report

5.1 On the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2017, FSS published its second Quarterly Incidents report<sup>1</sup> which contains a summary of food product recalls and withdrawals issued between January and March 2017.

5.2 This publication explains the details of the incident, the level of risk to consumers and what action we, industry and/or local authorities took. Over this three month period, 36 food notices were issued including 22 related to allergies. Local authority and key partner contributions have been vital in delivering effective management of these incidents.

## 6 Food Fraud Global Understanding Conference

6.1 On 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017, the Director of Operations and the Head of Food Crime and Incidents Unit attended the Food Fraud Global Understanding Conference in Quebec, Canada. This was a major conference centred around the prevention and mitigation of food fraud and was an excellent platform to promote the work of the Scottish Food Crime and Incidents Unit and network with a wide range of countries. The conference proposed ways forward for global harmonisation of regulatory frameworks associated with food fraud and whilst creditable, is likely to be extremely challenging.

## 7 Scottish National Database

7.1 The Enforcement Delivery Branch held a launch event on the 4th May 2017 in Dundee for the Scottish National Database (SND) project, which is a key part of our Regulatory Strategy.

7.2 The SND will provide a weekly update of Food Law enforcement activity undertaken by Local Authorities (LA) across Scotland, without increasing their administrative workload. The data will provide Local Authorities and FSS the ability to get real-time datasets, which will allow analysis on rising concerns and the potential to combine datasets with other regulators such as Food Standards Agency (FSA), Health Protection Scotland (HPS), and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). A key outcome of the launch event was the opportunity for Local Authorities to work with us on governing the future of SND, by becoming members of a joint FSS/LA Development team.

7.3 The event had excellent representation with over 90% of Local Authorities attending, which is impressive given many were busy supporting the local council elections. The Management Information System providers for Scotland Civica, IDOX and Northgate Public Services were represented. HPS also sent a representative and we had a keynote speaker from the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), Frank Feechan, who gave an interesting talk on how APSE use data to drive benchmarking and resource management in Local Authorities. The feedback from the event was very positive with a large majority acknowledging the benefits of a national database to the Food Law enforcement community in Scotland as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/quarterly-incident-reports-january-march-2017>

## 8 Shellfish Stakeholder Workshop

8.1 On the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017, FSS hosted a shellfish stakeholder workshop which involved representatives from across both the wild fishery and aquaculture industry sectors as well as officials from Scottish Government, FSA, the European Union Reference Laboratory for monitoring bacteriological and viral contamination of bivalve molluscs and shellfish programme contractors. The purpose was to facilitate discussion on three shellfish consultations which ran for 12 weeks, formally closing on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2017. We also announced our intention to form a Shellfish Industry Forum which will take the outcomes of the consultation forward which alongside the event itself, was well received by those present.

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10<sup>th</sup> May 2017