

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

1 Chief Executive's engagements

1.1 In June 2019, I presented at the Westminster Food and Nutrition Forum in London on "The food regulation landscape across the UK". Heather Hancock, Chair of Food Standards Agency (FSA) gave a keynote address. The seminar examined the key issues for the future of food regulation across the UK. I also met Dr. Siddika Mithani, the new President of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. She was interested to learn about what we have done, how we operate and how we set up the Scottish Food Crime and Incidents Unit. We have agreed that further discussions would be beneficial.

1.2 On the 20th and 21st June 2019, with Ross Finnie, Chair, members of the Senior Management Team and myself we attended the Royal Highland Show, Edinburgh. We met with senior officials from Scottish Government and Defra and representatives from Asda, James Hutton Institute, Tesco, Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and Quality Meat Scotland.

1.3 During June and July, myself and the members of the Senior Management team met senior colleagues from Food Standards Agency (FSA) when they visited Pilgrim House. As there has been quite a bit of change at the senior management level within the FSA, we felt it was important and good opportunity to invest time meeting and building relationships with new colleagues.

2 Operations

2.1 Update on transfer of Official Veterinarians and Meat Hygiene Inspectors from Hallmark Meat Hygiene Ltd to Food Standards Scotland

2.1.1 On the 18th June 2019, FSS to ended its contract with Hallmark Meat Hygiene Ltd (HMMH) who supply Official Veterinarians (OV's) and Meat Hygiene Inspectors (MHI) to undertake controls to support Scotland's important meat, game and poultry industry.

2.1.2 FSS will deliver this function from 16th September 2019 and the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) will be applied to determine whether Hallmark staff are in scope to transfer to FSS. A project team has been established to manage the TUPE process, with the project delivery plan on-schedule. . Scottish Government Human Resources are analysing employee liability information in advance of determining the terms and conditions. A Question and Answer document is being maintained to inform FSS and HMMH staff of the progress of the TUPE process.

2.1.4 We are monitoring HMMH staffing levels and a recruitment campaign for MHI's has already commenced, as we are aware that a shortfall of staff in East and North of Scotland may materialise due to an increase in operational demands forecast around the point of transfer.

3 Food Protection, Science and Surveillance

3.1 Provision of UK Laboratory Services for Official Controls on Food and Feed

3.1.1 As part of our programme of work to review capacity and capability when the UK leaves the European Union, FSS has been working with FSA and other government departments to assess the provision of laboratory services in the UK for undertaking Official Controls on Food

and Feed. The findings of this review will be considered in the context of work we have been doing with Local Authorities, Scottish Government and Health Protection Scotland to identify future models for delivering scientific services that align with regulatory strategy and wider public health ambitions. The high level findings of the UK review and proposals for taking forward its recommendations will be presented to the FSA Board at meeting on 18th September 2019, and we will be consulting with the Board around the same time, with a view to presenting an update at the Board meeting on 20th November 2019.

3.1.2 On the 28th June 2019, I met with the Chief Executives of Aberdeen City Council, Dundee City Council, City of Edinburgh Council and Glasgow City Council in Edinburgh to discuss the way forward for the future provision of laboratory services for Official Controls on Food and Feed in Scotland. It was agreed that a further meeting should take place given the risks to Scottish capability in this area and Dundee Local Authority agreed to take the lead in driving this forward.

3.2 World Food Safety Day

3.2.1 The first United Nations World Food Safety Day was celebrated on 7th June 2019. We took the opportunity to raise awareness of the five main food poisoning bacteria and to encourage people in Scotland to follow correct food hygiene practices. We developed fast [fact sheets](#) for consumers on each of the main pathogens, which were published on the FSS website along with the technical guidance and information for businesses and industry. Overall the fast fact sheets have received nearly 400 page views, and a series of infographics are being created to further promote the fact sheets on social media. Professor Norval Strachan, Chief Scientific Advisor, also wrote a [blog](#) about the main causes of food poisoning and the steps people can take to prevent it.

4 Nutrition, Science and Policy

4.1 Joint UK-wide consultation on fortification of flour with Folic Acid

4.1.1 On the 13th June 2019, a joint UK-wide [consultation](#) on proposals to introduce mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid was published by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). FSS advised the Scottish Government (SG) in August 2017 that because of the integrated UK market, the introduction of mandatory fortification should happen on a UK wide basis. The suggested impact of the policy options in the consultation are largely based on the technical report published by FSS in 2017. FSS worked closely with DHSC and SG officials to ensure that the policy options and supporting evidence were set out clearly in the consultation, which closes on Monday 9th September 2019. We, along with the SG have long recommended that flour should be fortified with folic acid and limits on other sources of dietary folic acid introduced. We know that folic acid intake among people in Scotland remains low, so this is an important step in improving public health and, in particular, reducing the number of babies born with neural tube defects.

5 Regulatory Policy

5.1 Advisory Forum on Food and Feed

5.1.1 Discussions are ongoing with FSA and SG Legal colleagues on constituting the Advisory Forum on Food and Feed (AFFF) as a joint UK committee under both the Food Standards Act 1999 and The Food (Scotland) 2015 Act. The AFFF is an important element of the proposed future UK risk analysis arrangements, which the Board considered in [March 2019](#), and a key mechanism to support implementation of the UK framework on food and

feed safety and hygiene. FSS have also provided comments on the proposed Terms of Reference for the forum, which are currently being considered internally within FSA.

6 Incidents

6.1 Efficacy of Recalls and Withdrawals Project

6.1 The guidance on [Food Traceability, Withdrawals and Recalls within the UK Food Industry](#) was published on 12th March 2019. The guidance explains what the law requires, how businesses comply with the law and also includes best practice guidance. Since then, further work has been ongoing to develop other key products as part of the joint FSS and FSA Efficacy of Recalls and Withdrawals project.

6.2 A [Quick Reference Guide](#) which complements the main guidance is available, along with a [Root Cause Analysis](#) package which helps food businesses determine the reason(s) that the food recall occurred. The package consists of:

- A best practice example
- A feedback form that businesses can use to share their learnings with us, via their local authority
- An introductory level e-learning course

7 Defenders UK

7.1 On the 19th June 2019, Ian McWatt, Chief Operating Officer took part in filming for the second series of the BBC television documentary programme Defenders UK. He did a great job outlining the work FSS does, and the role our 'defenders' play in keeping the public safe. The series is due to air in September 2019.

8 Enforcement

8.1 Update on the Interventions Code and Food Law Ratings Scheme (FLRS)

8.1.1 In June 2019, the [Interventions Food Law Code of Practice \(Scotland\) 2019](#) was approved by the Minister For Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing and issued to Scottish Local Authorities (LA). The Code translates the legal framework into guidance for LA to apply Food Law in practice. The Code incorporates the following changes:

- Introduction of the Food Law Rating System (FLRS);
- Alignment with Food Standards Scotland's Regulatory Strategy;
- Alignment to reflect Food Standards Scotland's Strategy to 2021 and the Scottish Government's approach to Better Regulation as set out in the Scottish Regulators' Strategic Code of Practice.

8.1.2 The Interventions Code will be the first of further Code publications as part of our Regulatory Strategy and incorporates Food Law Ratings Scheme (FLRS) which is the new scoring system that combines food hygiene and standards for all registered food businesses in Scotland. Following a successful two-year early adoption process by 15 LA, industry engagement and FSS-led training events, FLRS was adopted by all 32 LA's on 1st July 2019.

9 Communications and Marketing

9.1 No to Upsizing campaign

9.1.1 During March 2019, the [No to Upsizing](#) campaign had a second run, with impressive evaluation results than when the campaign launched in June 2018. The campaign asked the people of Scotland to become more conscious of upsizing and to consider whether those offers to make meals large, have something while you wait, or upsize to a meal deal are really needed, and empowered them to say no thanks to upsizing meals more often.

9.1.2 We worked with external creative agencies to develop a fully integrated campaign to reach our audience and adverts appeared on TV, social media; outdoor screens and we held roadshows at colleges and in shopping centres around Scotland. We worked with a number of private, public and third sector partners and Local Authorities to share the campaign further including British Heart Foundation; Diabetes Scotland; NHS Scotland; Scottish Power; Tesco Bank and Young Scot.

9.1.3 The evaluation results of the campaign showed 'upsizing' is an increasingly recognised term, and most importantly, 9 out of 10 people who saw the campaign took action as a result, including 41% who refused all or some offers of upsizing their food order after seeing the campaign. 61% of the target audience – (younger women aged between 16-34 years, in socio-economic groups C1C2DE) had seen the campaign.

9.2 Success for FSS marketing campaigns

9.2.1 The 'No to Upsizing' healthy eating campaign was shortlisted for two awards and won the silver award in the Public Sector category at the Marketing Society Star Awards. This was a collaborative effort between the Communications & Marketing and Nutrition teams, along with our external creative agencies. The campaign has also been entered into the Communication and Engagement category in the 2019 Civil Service Awards.

9.2.2 We are shortlisted for three Chartered Institute of Public Relations Pride Awards, with two nominations for the 'No To Upsizing' campaign (Best Public Sector and Best Integrated campaigns) and one nomination for 'The Great Turkey Defrost Live' (Best Social Media campaign). Both campaigns have been highly effective in helping achieving our public health and organisational objectives, as well as deliver some strong results. This is fantastic news and a real team effort by all staff involved. The awards will be held on 3rd October 2019, and we will keep our fingers crossed.

9.3 Career Ready

9.3 In July 2019, we welcomed James McFarland to undertake a four-week internship with the Communications and Marketing team as part of the [Career Ready](#) programme. This programme aims to get young people between 16 and 19 years of age ready for the world of work and we have supported it over the last two years – both through providing internships and mentors to career ready students. The blog which James wrote about his career ready internship experience is available [here](#). I'm pleased to say that we will continue our support for a third year when the next intake of students starts in November 2019.

10 Events

10.1 Edinburgh Science Festival

10.1.1 From the 6th to 10th of April 2019, we took part in the Edinburgh Science Festival at the National Museum of Scotland. Over the four days, we attracted 13,000 visitors to our activity area. As well as the calorie countdown bikes, this year, we included a new interactive aimed at younger children: a magnetic wall with food icons representing the Eatwell Guide. This area proved extremely popular with families and served as an effective education tool through play. We included a 'No to Upsizing' wall which generated a lot of enquiries and interaction with visitors. In addition, our digital games area saw a total of 5,230 game plays, a huge increase compared to 650 game plays in 2018.

10.1.2 The visitor survey showed that 93% of adults said they had learned something useful while visiting the stand, by engaging with FSS staff or watching their children taking part in games and interactives on the stand. 73% of people were already aware that the FSS website has healthy eating and food safety information on it, and 82% said that they would visit the website in the future as a source of information. Nearly all adults said that they felt confident that FSS protects people in Scotland when it comes to food safety. The children's survey revealed that 100% of children enjoyed the calorie countdown bikes and most of them were surprised how long it took to burn off one jelly baby.

10.2 Taste of Grampian

10.2.1 On the 1st June 2019, we took part in the 20th anniversary of the Taste of Grampian event at Thainstone, near Aberdeen. The FSS stand included a specific area for the 'No to Upsizing' campaign which proved a useful talking point with visitors and stimulated quality conversations. We worked with other participants of the event in providing 1000 healthy eating recipe cards; an educational treasure hunt for families and giving healthy eating advice to food exhibitors and food safety and healthy eating advice to those working on the food demonstration areas. Ian McWatt, Chief Operating Officer presented [Eat Safe](#) awards to local businesses and schools.

10.2.2. Prior to the event, we attended networking events and provided a free [MenuCal](#) workshop for all caterers attending the event. The workshop was the first of its kind that we've held and all participants said they would use MenuCal in the future, and they'd also recommend this workshop to others.

10.2.3 Dr Gillian Purdon, Senior Public Health Nutrition Advisor was joined by Gary McLean, the National Chef of Scotland, to judge the primary schools competition to design and prepare a healthy packed lunch. Hillside Primary School from Aberdeen were the winners of this prize.

10.3 Royal Highland Show

10.3.1 From 20th to 23rd June 2019, we hosted our largest exhibition presence at the Royal Highland Show in Edinburgh. We had 12,000 visitors to the stand, which is an increase of 4,500 visitors when compared to the 2018 event. The stand was consistently busy across the four days with the Calorie Countdown bikes, Snack Attack game; Food Chain quiz; kitchen crimes and handwashing station, proving to very popular with visitors. This year, we introduced an Allergy wall promoting the [Food Alerts](#) service, allowing visitors to sign up on the spot. The magnetic Eatwell Guide wall was a new element to the stand, which was popular, particularly with younger children.

11 Brexit

11.1 Brexit continues to take up a significant amount of resource, with planning increasing for no-deal exit from the European Union in the lead up to the 31st October 2019. A no-deal is now the central planning assumption and the consequences of no deal are likely to impact on consumer choice, availability with a likely increase in the price of food. The assumption is that there will be sufficient supply of food, but a reduction in choice and if there are delays at the borders then it is highly likely that there will be a shortage of short shelf-life commodities. October is the end of the UK growing season and imports of fresh fruit and vegetables normally increase at this time. FSS continues to work with SG colleagues on no-deal preparation as well as Defra, DHSC and FSA in UK Government.

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