

Meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Committee

Friday 12th March 2021

Virtual Meeting

MINUTES

SAC members present:

- Prof Elizabeth Keane, Chair
- Prof Mary Corcoran
- Dr Martin Rose
- Prof Mary Brennan
- Prof Frank Monahan
- Clare Mac Evilly
- Dr Muiris O'Ceidigh
- Dr Nazih Eldin
- Prof Eileen Gibeny
- Mary Daly
- Anne Marie Crowley
- Dr Rhodri Evans

safefood staff:

- Mr Ray Dolan
- Dr James McIntosh
- Dr Aileen McGloin
- Dr Catherine Conlon
- Dr Gary Kearney
- Dr Charmaine McGowan
- Dr Mairead McCann
- Ms Colette O'Shea

1. Welcome, introductions & apologies

Ray Dolan, CEO **safefood** welcomed the Advisory Committee (SAC) members and **safefood** staff to the meeting.

Due to Covid-19 public health restrictions, this meeting took place remotely via the Microsoft Teams meeting platform. It is hoped to convene the next meeting in a physical setting.

2. For Information

Human Health & Nutrition Presentation

Presented by: Dr Charmaine McGowan, safefood

Dr Charmaine McGowan gave an overview to the group of the work carried out by the HHN directorate including the healthy eating campaigns, commissioned research, and survey work to underpin **safefood's** communications.

Charmaine invited the SAC members to contribute their perspectives in the topic areas addressed including:

- Dissemination to hard of reach audiences
- Consideration of perspectives that are novel/unfamiliar to **safefood**
- Suggestions regarding areas that require attention from an Island of Ireland perspective

Action: Interested members were invited to contact HHN to discuss issues in more depth

Action: **safefood** to send on links to SAC members to sign up for [all-island obesity action forum](#), [food poverty network](#) and [food wise](#) newsletters.

Marketing & Communications Presentation

Presented by: Dr Aileen McGloin, **safefood**

Dr Aileen McGloin gave an overview to the group of the work carried out by the M&C directorate including our digital communications. Examples of recent campaigns and the associated digital resources were shown.

safefood's use of different social media platforms and approaches to media literacy within the education sector were described.

Action: Interested members were invited to contact Dr McGloin to discuss any aspects of **safefood** communications.

Food Science Presentation

Presented by: Dr Mairead McCann, **safefood**

Dr Mairead McCann gave an overview to the group of the work carried out by the FS directorate in promoting food safety to consumers and the food industry. In the former case this is largely done through campaigns while regarding the food industry this is accomplished through the **safefood** Knowledge Network.

Resources for food industry members include training and other events, audio visual resources and publications.

The Food Science directorate also oversee **safefood's** research programme.

Action: Members were invited to assist Food Science by suggesting new partnerships & communication channels that would be of benefit to **safefood**.

Action: **safefood** to send on link to SAC members to sign up for [safefood Knowledge Network](#).

3. For Discussion:

The SAC members were asked to consider two items for discussion one from each of the Food Science and Human Health and Nutrition directorates.

3.1 Dr Catherine Conlon Director of HHN introduced the first discussion item, Healthy and sustainable diets.

Food systems are changing and facing new challenges to “provide adequate safe, diversified and nutrient rich food for all that contribute to healthy diets due to constraints posed by resource scarcity and environmental degradation, as well as unsustainable production and consumption patterns” (FAO/WHO).

safefood's work in the coming years will support stakeholders in the development of food policies that represent a coordinated approach between health, agriculture, finance and the environment that is realistic, acceptable, affordable and socially responsible, as well as improving the communication of relevant information on this topic to consumers on the island of Ireland.

Question for SAC members: HHN would welcome the SAC's support in identifying emerging evidence on healthy sustainable diets, as well as initiatives and new research in the area.

Noted: **safefood**'s perspective for a need to transition the global food system within a safe operating space was commended.

Actions: Due to time constraints members were invited to respond to this discussion item via Colette or contact Dr Conlon directly.

3.2 Dr Gary Kearney Director of Food Science introduced the second discussion item 'Leveraging new partnerships and networks' – and emphasised the importance for **safefood** in expanding its professional networks and contacts.

safefood's overarching role is to promote good food safety behaviours throughout the food chain on the island of Ireland, literally from farm to fork. In this regard we have engaged in consumer-focussed food safety campaigns, training for different food chain actors, and developed structures such as the Knowledge Network to facilitate the flow of information and knowledge. The endeavours have largely been concerned with microbiological and food allergen control.

An ongoing concern is the identification of current (overlooked) and emerging food safety issues that **safefood** can address to ameliorate their impact on public health and the food chain. In this regard we would be interested in approaches taken by other agencies, bodies, and institutes with a view to potentially partnering with them to identify and address these issues. In previous years, the partnership approach has proved beneficial as it has allowed us to leverage other expertise and resources to great effect.

Question for SAC members: The SAC to consider agencies, bodies, and institutes (not necessarily on the island of Ireland) with whom **safefood** could work in the identification of current (overlooked) and emerging food safety issues?

Noted: The current economic impact on production margins was mentioned vis-à-vis the Unfair trading practices directive which comes into effect in May 2021. Although this legislation is not currently being considered in **safefood**, we continue to keep a watching brief on vulnerabilities in the food chain that can give rise to food safety deficits

Actions: Due to time constrains members were invited to respond to this discussion items via Colette or contact Dr Kearney directly.

4 AOB & date for next meetings

Noted: Next meeting will be held on Friday 15th October 2021.

Noted: The Chair thanked the members and closed the meeting.