

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Cross Party Group on Food held in Committee
Room 4 of the Scottish Parliament on 26 April 2017**

Present

Rhoda Grant	MSP (Chair)
John Scott	MSP
Richard Lochhead	MSP
Alan Rowe	Rowett Institute
Prof Baukje de Roos	Rowett Institute
Prof Julian Mercer	Rowett Institute
Mary Lawton	CPG Secretariat
Cat Hay	FDF Scotland
Gregor McNie	Cancer Research UK
Rachel Mirfattahi	Interface
Sara Smith	RHASS
Gillian Purdon	Food Standards Scotland
Elsbeth Macdonald	Food Standards Scotland
Claire Hislop	NHS Health Scotland
Stephanie Scott	NHS Health Scotland
Douglas Scott	Scottish Federation of Meat Traders
Gordon King	Scottish Meat Training
Claire Harper	Children's Food Trust*
Miriam Smith	QMU
Martin Irons	QMU
Gillian Bell	QMU
Graeme Findlay	SQA
Wendy Wrieden	Newcastle Uni
Andrea Riveria del Rio	Newcastle Uni
Christine Fraser	Food Training Scotland
Athina Tziboula-Clarke	Abertay Uni
Karen Barton	Abertay Uni
Helen Welsh	Abertay Uni/ Food blogger
Lindsey Macdonald	NFUS
Archie Gibson	Agrico/FDF Scotland
Sue Whittle	Compassion in World Farming
Julia Brown	Pinsent Masons
Kathryn Grant	SPICE Scot Parliament*
Ewan Macdonald – Russell	Scottish Retail Consortium
John Cooke	Slow Food Scotland
Jeff Justice	Edinburgh Uni

To meet new requirements of CPGs, organizational non-members (as submitted on re-registration) are denoted by an asterisk.

1. Apologies for Absence

These were received from Ian Collinson, Viv Collie, Jackie McCabe, David Lonsdale, Brian Ratcliffe, Lesley Stanley, Diane Whately, Paul Birkin, Marnie Somerville,

Kirsten Leask, Pam Rodway, Martin Meteyard, Viv Collie, Ian Collinson, Jennifer Bryson, Elaine Bannerman, Diane Alderdice, Robbie Beattie, Moira Stalker, Fiona Bird, Stanley Blackley, Peter Faassen de Heer, Christine Graham, Cris Rea, Anna Brand, Moyra Burns James Withers and Tony McElroy.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

These were approved.

3. Matters Arising

Following the last meeting a letter had been sent to relevant ministers and Co-Conveners of Parliamentary Committees supporting the excellent work in skills and food education and raising the concerns of the CPG about funding beyond March 2017. This letter had been circulated to the Group together with the reply from Fergus Ewing. Many of these projects have now received funding from Scottish Government and REHIS has some from Food Standards Scotland.

On malnutrition, Michelle Carruthers of the Food Train was meeting with the Public Health minister to discuss the issue and actions from the Summit Report on May 17th. A watching brief would continue.

ACTION: ML

4. What is the Future for Reformulation?

Dr Alan Rowe (AR), Food and Drink Specialist of the Rowett Institute, University of Aberdeen introduced the topic and asked the question whether, given the changing times, we should broaden our approach to reformulation. Issues to be taken into account included the increase in world population, expanding middle class in BRIC economies, more urban living, climate change, finite resources and possible trade tariffs following Brexit. He suggested there were opportunities for reformulation;

- Wider health agenda including for life stages
- Reducing health burden-lower cost
- Positive health –preventative
- Genetics and epigenetics –personalised nutrition
- Changing lifestyle –on the go, unconventional meal times, chrono-nutrition
- Low climate impact ingredients
- Low energy and low water consumption in manufacture
- Increase economic and environmental resilience
- Creating value up supply chain.

A copy of his presentation is attached to the minutes.

Prof Baukje de Roos (BR) Deputy Director of the Rowett Institute gave some case studies on reformulation related to health.

- *Farmed salmon and human health*- levels of omega-3 fatty acids have been decreasing due to changes in fish feed. Even when salmon feed contained vegetable oils, humans eating 2 portions of this farmed salmon saw their omega-3 index raised by 2%.
- *Mussels and Human health* – mussels are low fat and have high bio active Vitamin D. Eating them 1-2 a week would be the same as having a supplement, however they are high in salt.
- *Plant –based protein sources* – we need new protein sources as population increases and protein is used in increased satiety products. Plant based sources can provide less calories, fat, sodium and also more fibre and have anti-inflammatory effects.

A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.

Open Debate

Richard Lochhead MSP (RL) asked how food manufacturers could be encouraged to reformulate their products and whether there should be legislation. **BR** said it was important that any changes were financially viable. She noted that people spent money on making life easier but little on health until they were middle-aged. It was really important for youngsters to eat well and there may need to be some nudges to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

AR said manufacturers were commercial businesses. Reformulation meant investment in time and money and there needed to be an economic advantage. When reformulating it was not just a question of removing/replacing ingredients but the product had to be tasty, have the correct mouth feel and shelf life. There were technological and legislative constraints. There had been and was on-going a lot of work for example that resulted in the M&S Fuller For Longer/ Balanced for You Range. This had led to interest in satiety products being picked up by others.

Cat Hay FDF Scotland reminded the Group of FDFS work in this area particularly for SMEs and subsequent [published guides](#). Manufacturers were working hard under the voluntary approach. A [Common Interest Group](#) had been set up together with Interface to encourage companies with an interest in product reformulation to work together and with academic experts to deliver products with reduced energy density or increased nutrient content. Anyone wanting to learn more or join the group should contact Cat Hay.

ACTION: ALL

John Scott MSP asked about Vitamin D and the deficiencies in Scotland. **BR** said the Vitamin D problem was due to a lack of sunshine in winter as UV of a certain wavelength is needed to make Vitamin D. Norway and Iceland also have less sun

but don't see a dip in levels in winter as they eat more fish. It was an issue particularly for those who did not go out much such as the elderly, those with sunblock on, such as children and those fully clothed for religious reasons. **BR** noted that shellfish need Vitamin D to maintain the integrity of their shells and work was ongoing monitoring this across the seasons and looking at the balance with toxins etc.

Christine Fraser Food Training Scotland said she was concerned about "free from foods" which many people were consuming as a lifestyle choice and so avoiding dairy, gluten free etc. She pointed out some of these had higher sugar and fat to impart flavour. **AR** agreed that there was a consumer perception that gluten free was better often due to celebrities' choices and not down to science. Dairy products did not need to be high in fat and were a valuable source of calcium.

Elsbeth Macdonald Food Standards Scotland (EM) noted the use of "stealth products" where products are made healthier gradually. She asked if there had been studies on how the concept of "healthier" resonated with different consumer groups. **BR** noted that when Seafish had asked consumers why they bought fish health came in 8th after taste and ease. When Unilever had produced a low salt product they had found that the consumer added salt when using, so had removed this from their label. Health was often not on people's agenda. There was an issue with everyone being interested in food as a consumer and often being subjected to information without any scientific backing. People also wanted quick fixes. One idea could be to scan bar codes in the shop and then choose the healthier version but this took time.

AR agreed that the time the consumer took to make food choices was decreasing and based on a number of factors and was different for different social groups. Work was ongoing at the Rowett in this area. **Julian Mercer Rowett Institute (JM)** said there were Kantar surveys and as part of the RESAS programme there was work ongoing on the socio-economics of food choice.

RL asked why if for example hummus had 30 % less fat it seemed to be 30% more expensive so a healthy choice was not cheaper. **BR** said the reformulation could mean that more expensive ingredients were used, different production processes used or adaptations made for shelf life.

Claire Hislop NHS Health Scotland said it was important not to widen health inequalities. If the cost of healthy foods was high this made the food inaccessible to some and they may not have cooking skill sets. She asked how the healthy choice could be made universal. **BR** agreed that foods lower in salt, fat and sugar should be available across the board. **AR** noted that often early adopters were needed; these might be priced at the higher end but once the technological issues had been sorted and a new food type created others then followed. He said satiety products were now widely available after originally being at the high end of the market.

Jeff Justice Edinburgh University asked that given the loss of land and water and that food could become a crisis commodity whether hydroponics had been considered. **AR** said that in Scotland there were demonstration hydroponics but not at mainstream level given Scotland's rainfall. However he could see it being useful going forward to monitor mineral/nutrient uptake that could lead to cost savings.

Wendy Wrieden Newcastle University thought that replacing some meat with plant protein mentioned in the case study would be good for health, the planet and cheaper. **BR** agreed and said they were working with James Hutton Institute on this. They needed to prove the health benefit and then how to market to the consumer but in particular it could be a good replacement for low quality meat. Care also had to be taken as fava beans for example contained allergens.

Lindsey Macdonald National Farmers Union Scotland said that with the population increasing, waste management was an issue. We needed to waste less and value food more. **AR** said that consumer behaviour needed to change and also waste in supply chains. Food waste could be used in more creative ways such as freeze drying vegetables so they could be used in other products which would also benefit from their antioxidant properties. He referred to "disco breads" where vegetables are added to breads to produce coloured products. **JM** said there was Scottish Government research ongoing on addressing food waste and Zero Waste Scotland was extremely active in this area.

Ewan Macdonald-Russell Scottish Retail Consortium said that retailers had worked very hard on reducing salt, fat and sugar and questioned whether the easy wins had now happened and if it would be harder across other broad categories. **BR** said that in particular sugar reduction in soft drinks had been a low hanging fruit as there were artificial alternatives. However it was more difficult in solid foods but the direction of travel was there. Calorie intake reduction was challenging as food was so cheap and readily available. Serving and pack size reduction was one approach but could lead to the consumer feeling "ripped off".

Athina Tziboula- Clarke Abertay University said when reformulating, the functionality of the ingredient was important for example fat affected the texture and if replaced by starch was that better than fat or carbohydrate. The work was challenging. She thought the consumer was confused also about portion sizes.

Archie Gibson Agrico said that a lot of work had been done such as trans-fat removal and reformulation was ongoing by manufacturers who were committed to working with FSS and research institutions. He hoped the new City deal would help SMEs. Regulation could be a big stick; changes were happening and the science continually moving on. **AR** agreed that there was dominance of micro businesses and SMEs in Scotland and that was why the Common Interest Groups were

important to share problems, experiences and solutions as well as having access to larger projects.

EM said innovation was needed for reformulation, it was key that SMEs were supported and FSS were working with industry. The recent [FSS Board paper on Diet and Nutrition](#) had seen regulation as a possibility for some interventions but not having a big role in reformulation. Regarding food waste there was work ongoing on best before/use by dates and how to help the consumer.

Sue Whittle Compassion in World Farming asked if there was work on going on the health benefits for people of animals being let out to pasture rather than farmed intensively. There were food waste and animal welfare issues as well. **BR** said they had not but the SRUC had a project ongoing looking at the quality and micronutrients in milk.

5. AOB

There was no AOB.

6. Date of Next meeting

This will be on September 20th in Committee Room 4 at 6pm and will be the AGM.