

Annual Report **2017**



2017 Highlights

24

The Authority issued 24 food alerts in 2017, a reduction from the number issued in 2016 (39), which is a positive development.

▶ [READ MORE ON P37](#)

9,160

The Environmental Health Service of the Health Service Executive carried out 9,160 unplanned inspections of food businesses.

▶ [READ MORE ON P24](#)

3,400

More than 3,400 consumer complaints were handled by the Advice Line in 2017, with more than one-third of those complaints regarding unfit food.

▶ [READ MORE ON P30](#)

1,143

In 2017, 1,143 whole time equivalents were involved in carrying out official controls in Irish food businesses.

▶ [READ MORE ON P23](#)

69

During 2017, food inspectors served 64 Closure Orders, 1 Improvement Order and 4 Prohibition Orders on food businesses.

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49,874

In 2017, 49,874 food businesses were under the supervision of official agencies that have service contracts with the Authority.

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2,738

In 2017, there were 2,738 notifications of food supplements which were assessed for safety and health claims.

▶ [READ MORE ON P41](#)

320

The Authority responded to 320 media queries and issued 23 press releases during 2017.

▶ [READ MORE ON P27](#)

Our Mission

We protect consumers by leading a collaborative food safety community to continuously raise food standards and create a culture of excellence.

To the Minister for Health

The Board is pleased to submit to the Minister its Annual Report and accounts for the 12-month period that ended on 31 December 2017, in accordance with Section 25 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998.



Prof. Michael Gibney
Chairman



Dr Pamela A. Byrne
Chief Executive Officer

For more information,
please visit: www.fsai.ie

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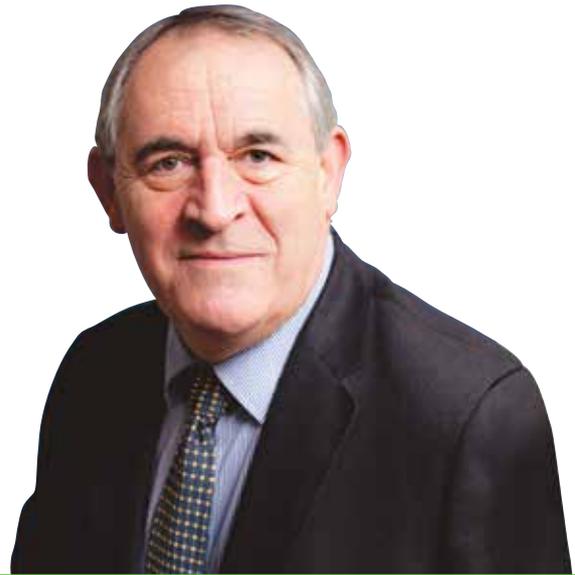


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Chairman's Statement

The Authority completed an extensive programme of work in 2017 and this Annual Report provides both an overview and a detailed account of the team's activities. The information contained in the report demonstrates the significant role that the Authority plays in ensuring that Irish food businesses are complying with food law in relation to food safety, hygiene, integrity and authenticity.



In order to assess the food industry's compliance with European food law, the Authority oversees the enforcement of a strong regulatory framework that is based on the best science and information available as well as robust enforcement powers – all of which underpin the delivery of the Authority's vision of safe and trustworthy food for everyone.

In 2017, the Authority continued to deliver against its Strategy 2016–2018, despite constraints on resources and the relocation of its offices. With one year remaining in this Strategy, the Authority will strive to deliver on its ambitions; however, this may not be fully attainable. Regardless, the team is committed to ensuring that it retains its focus on the areas of highest risk so that it can protect consumers from any impact on their health due to unsafe food being placed on the market.

Access to robust data, evidence and science is key to delivering on the Authority's ambitions, and I am confident that through the Authority's Scientific Committee, talented scientific staff and collaboration with scientists in Ireland and internationally, the Authority has the ability to ensure that all their decisions are based on the best scientific information available. The Scientific Committee and its Subcommittees are essential in assessing risks to consumers from food, which underpins strong risk management decisions and the development of policies that ultimately benefit public health. I was delighted to see the Scientific Committee agree its five-year work programme in 2017. I am also delighted that the Authority published its *Science Strategy 2017–2019*, which will ensure that we have a structured approach to accessing, using and communicating the science that is critical to protecting consumers. The Board and I fully endorse and support the Authority in its implementation of the Science Strategy.

Ensuring that risks to consumers' health and interests are removed or minimised requires a robust system of official food controls. Through the service contract model and other collaborations, the Authority is in a strong position to monitor and intervene across the food chain as necessary – from farm gate to fork – in order to manage risks. This involves monitoring for chemical and microbiological contaminants, carrying out risk assessments on food hazards, inspecting the food service sector, and managing food incidents that are related to issues that have occurred either in Ireland or in other European Union (EU) countries.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank all those involved in Ireland's food control system for their hard work and commitment to protecting consumers. It is a credit to the people in this system that we are able to remove or mitigate risks in a timely manner so that consumers do not become ill. However, we must never become complacent. The food system is becoming more complex as the industry in Ireland sources its supplies both from within Ireland and from across the world, and with the potential for vulnerabilities within our food system to become even more compromised due to events such as climate change or fraudulent and deceptive practices, the risks are becoming greater than ever. We must ensure that we continue to work in collaboration and partnership in order to deliver effective and efficient food controls. I would like to congratulate the work of the inspectorate and the State laboratories in delivering on a significant programme of work during the year, particularly as many of the agencies were working with constrained resources.

This year, there was once again a notable increase in the number of complaints from consumers to our Advice Line, which received more than 3,400 complaints relating to food, food businesses or food labelling. This figure represents a total increase of 6% on 2016 (when 3,200 complaints were received), with the number of complaints relating to the non-display of allergen information increasing significantly (45%). A considerable increase was also seen in complaints relating to incorrect information on food labels. As food inspectors cannot be in every food business every day, we rely on consumers to be our eyes and ears, and we continue to encourage them to inform us if they have negative experiences when purchasing and/or consuming food.

In 2017, the Authority issued 24 food alerts, a reduction from the number issued in 2016 (39), which is a positive development. However, the Authority dealt with 640 food incidents throughout the year, which was an increase on 2016 (554). It also issued 30 food allergen alerts, which was an increase from the number issued in 2016 (28). As a result of an audit on allergens carried out in 2016, the Authority launched a major campaign to increase food businesses' compliance with regard to providing accurate written information on 14 specific allergens. This is a requirement by law, and the campaign also provided an opportunity to raise consumers' awareness of their right to easily access written information with regard to allergens in their food. Compliance with allergen legislation will continue to be an area of focus for the Authority over the years to come.

As the Chairman of the Board, and having been involved with the Authority for more than 18 years, I am proud to say that the Authority has a great reputation across the world, which is due to its highly skilled and experienced staff's dedication to protecting consumers. The food inspectors of the official agencies that work under service contract to the Authority, as well as those organisations that work in collaboration with the Authority, are vital to achieving our goal of ensuring safe and trustworthy food for everyone, and I thank and commend them for their ongoing diligence, commitment and dedication.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Health, Simon Harris, TD, and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed, TD, and the staff of their respective Departments and agencies, the Health Service Executive (including the Environmental Health Service and the laboratories) and the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, which have been proactive and supportive of the Authority in its endeavours and actions in 2017. I would also like to thank the veterinarians in the local authorities and those working in the Marine Institute and the National Standards Authority of Ireland for their ongoing contributions to ensuring that Ireland has a fit-for-purpose official control system in place. I would like to recognise the increased engagement between the Authority and the State Laboratory.

I would also like to thank my fellow Board members for their tremendous contribution to the strategic direction and workings of the Authority. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the many scientific experts who participate in our scientific advisory structure. We have access to some of the best scientific experts in their various specialist fields in Ireland. The Authority is very grateful for the time and effort that these scientists contribute on a voluntary basis. I would also like to recognise the contribution of the Food Safety Consultative Council in developing our thinking on key areas of interest, such as the use of food supplements in the context of fitness.

Finally, it has been a busy and very productive year and I have enjoyed working with my colleagues on the Board and receiving the continued support of the Scientific Committee and the Food Safety Consultative Council. I am honoured to have been the Chairman of the Board and look forward to handing my position over to the incoming Chairman when my term ends in early 2018. I know that the Board looks forward to supporting the Authority in fully delivering on its Strategy 2016–2018.



Prof. Michael Gibney

Chairman

Chief Executive's Overview

I am pleased to present the 2017 Annual Report and accounts for the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. This report covers my third year as Chief Executive Officer of the Authority and I would like to thank my team for their ongoing commitment and dedication to delivering on our ambitious vision of safe and trustworthy food for everyone. I remain inspired by the professionalism and passion of the team in delivering on our legislative mandate.



The Authority performs a key function in coordinating the implementation of food legislation. Our ultimate objective is to protect consumers by continuing to develop a culture of excellence in food businesses in Ireland by engaging with those who can directly improve food safety – the manufacturers, processors, retailers and caterers, as well as the State agencies. To this end, I am delighted that we continue to host industry fora where we can engage with a variety of stakeholders throughout the year. In addition, we have continued our commitment to provide advice, host seminars and disseminate publications to support those in the food sector in continuing to raise food standards in line with our mission.

The Authority regulates and oversees a dynamic and expanding sector. More than 470 new food businesses were registered in 2017 and the food sector is expected to expand even further. This was outlined in the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's *Food Wise 2025* strategy, which has set significant growth targets and aspires to deliver this growth through dairy, beef, seafood, consumer food and drinks exports. Therefore, an independent, robust, respected and well-regarded food safety inspectorate system is a tremendous asset for our country's economic reliance on its food sector. However, we must continue to receive the required resources in order to ensure that we can deliver against the challenges and risks associated with this increased activity.

We are at a pivotal point in Ireland, with rapid growth in the food sector and further growth anticipated due to the removal of milk quotas, the opening of new markets for Irish produce, changing consumption patterns, and new food businesses opening up – all of which offer tremendous opportunities for Ireland. We have a strong regulatory system, but the expansion in the sector places a renewed onus on food businesses to ensure that the highest food safety standards are in place. We must all work to achieve the highest possible level of compliance within this exciting, dynamic and growing industry, and the importance of training cannot be underestimated.

Consumers of food in Ireland and the consumers of Irish food abroad expect a fully functioning food safety system, and ongoing training is an important part of this system. The expansion of the industry, while exciting, will also pose some challenges, and we will need to ensure that we have the systems, processes and resources in place to deal with this expansion. It will be important for us all to engender a regulatory culture of the highest possible standards achievable throughout the food chain, and training is key to protecting consumers as well as Ireland's reputation as a country that takes food safety seriously. There is no market for unsafe food and it is incumbent on all involved in Ireland's food system, especially those in the food industry, to ensure that consumers' health and interests with regard to food are protected insofar as is reasonably possible.

In fulfilment of our mission to protect consumers by leading a collaborative food safety community to continuously raise food standards and to create a culture of excellence within the food industry in Ireland, the Authority has worked tirelessly to provide the resources and tools required to support the food inspectorate to assess industry compliance with food law and to support the industry to comply with law. While the legal responsibility for putting safe food on the market rests with the industry, the Authority and its partners in the official agencies are responsible for providing the evidence to demonstrate that they are fulfilling their mandate.

The Authority does not work in isolation. Collaboration and partnership are key values of the Authority, as we recognise that in order to fulfil our mission we have to work in partnership with the official agencies and in collaboration with others. Our service contracts, as well as senior management meetings with the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, and the Local Authority Veterinary Service, ensure that we are in a position to direct our limited resources to focus on the areas of highest risk to consumers. We collaborate with other organisations in order to facilitate an integrated approach to the enforcement of food legislation and to the assessment and management of risks.

In 2017, I was delighted to sign new partnership agreements with Food Standards Scotland and the Food Integrity Network, which will ensure that we have access to intelligence and data regarding where fraudulent practice within the food chain may be occurring. I also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Bord Iascaigh Mhara and progressed our discussions with the Health Products Regulatory Authority to allow us to leverage the capability and capacity from each other's organisations to help us deliver against our mandates.

Without these and other such partnerships in place the Authority would not be in a position to protect those who consume food that is produced, manufactured, processed or distributed in Ireland. There is no doubt that interagency cooperation leads to greater consistency in enforcement and enhanced integration of the national food safety control system. Our close working relationships with those further afield also ensure that we can share and exchange critical information in a timely manner where there is a risk to consumers from food either produced in Ireland or imported into Ireland that the official agencies in Ireland have detected as being unsafe.

Highlights of 2017, which proved to be a very fruitful year, included a successful international conference on food fraud and authenticity; the publication of a report by the *Campylobacter* Stakeholders Group; a well-managed incident concerning fipronil in eggs; the decision to publish full details of all Enforcement Orders on the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) website; new EU measures to reduce acrylamide in food; a drive to ensure the inclusion of allergen information on all non-prepacked food; food safety guidance on food donations to charities; guidance for food businesses when selling food online; a national conference on food innovation; guidance for domestic animals in food premises; and many more.

Partnerships and engagements with agencies such as the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland, the European Food Safety Authority, and our counterparts in Europe and across the world enable us to access timely, accurate and robust information that supports us in our role. I will continue to assess and monitor our partnerships in order to ensure that they are relevant and robust and that they deliver added value to our activities. In 2016, I began to work with other food safety agencies on the use of private certification schemes as part of the official food control framework; while this is not an element of Ireland's official food control system, I will continue to review new and innovative mechanisms and initiatives that can bring more efficiency and effectiveness to the Authority's work. The regulatory landscape for food is evolving globally and it is critical that the Authority stays connected to other regulatory authorities across the world as they develop their systems, so that we can leverage best practice and, where relevant, embed those practices into our system.

We will continue to monitor and intervene as necessary across the food chain, from farm gate to fork. This will involve monitoring for chemical and microbiological contaminants; carrying out risk assessments on food hazards; inspecting food businesses; and managing food incidents that are related to issues that have occurred in Ireland or that have originated in other EU countries. We will prioritise areas that could have the greatest effect on protecting the consumer. This includes ensuring industry compliance with its legal obligations to produce safe food, as well as monitoring those areas of greatest food safety risk in the food chain.

470

More than 470 new food businesses were registered in 2017 and the food sector is expected to expand even further.

24%

Of the food businesses that provided written allergen information, just 24% actually provided this information accurately.

88%

88% of those audited required corrective action.

A clear example of our commitment to protecting consumers in 2017 was our allergen campaign. An Authority audit found that almost one-third (32%) of food businesses did not provide any written allergen information to consumers. Of the food businesses that provided written allergen information, just 24% actually provided this information accurately. In total, 88% of those audited required corrective action. Most people take for granted that they can enjoy food without undue risk. However, for 3 in every 100 people in Ireland, there is a need to be ever cautious and avoid certain food allergens. For them, consumption of foods containing these allergens, even at trace amounts, can cause severe and possibly life-threatening reactions. Clear and accurate labelling of allergens is therefore essential in order to avoid the serious consequences for those affected.

In response to these findings, we launched a nationwide advertising campaign to create further awareness among food businesses of their legal requirement to display accurate food allergen information for their customers. The objectives of the campaign were to reinforce food businesses of their legal responsibility to have written food allergen information easily located and accessible to the consumer; to increase food businesses' compliance with the legislation; and to reinforce the message that the fundamental impact of the legislation is ultimately consumer health protection in relation to allergens in food.

The campaign featured impactful imagery and language to motivate audiences to act. The campaign concept focused on food businesses who are not taking allergens seriously enough, with the advertisements designed to shock people into action. They highlighted to food businesses that the food they produce or sell is their responsibility and that failure to provide accurate food allergen information can have serious consequences.

Another significant event for the Authority's team was our relocation to new offices. At the end of October 2017, we relocated to a new modern office in the Exchange building in the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in Dublin, leaving our Abbey Court location after almost 19 years.

Relocating presented us with many opportunities, namely to encourage a more proactive and positive working environment, to embrace new work practices, to collaborate and communicate more effectively, to re-establish and build upon our culture, and, last but not least, to strengthen and embrace our core values. In an environment that is undergoing structural and functional change, our values provide a compass for guiding our activities. The values of teamwork, respect, passion, innovation, collaboration and integrity have led us through this change period and will continue to guide us beyond. They are essential components of our culture and are instrumental in determining, directing and informing our behaviour.

For quite some time, we were planning and preparing for the office relocation. Without excellent teamwork and collaboration, we would not have reached the progressive position we are in now. Team members worked on many committees and working groups in order to ensure that the relocation project went smoothly. Issues were anticipated early and measures put in place to assuage them in a timely manner. Good communication has been a key component in alleviating concerns throughout the process.

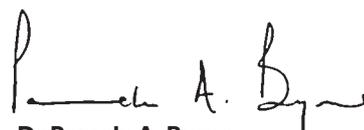
‘ The Authority does not work in isolation. Collaboration and partnership are key values of the Authority, as we recognise that in order to fulfil our mission we have to work in partnership with the official agencies and in collaboration with others. ’

I observed a definite passion throughout the year among the team to ensure that the organisation embraced this change of location and used the opportunity to become better and to work more effectively. Likewise, respect has been very apparent. In addition to the opportunities already mentioned, a change in environment provides a great chance to start implementing new and innovative ways of working – old and unused documentation and goods were shredded or disposed of (in accordance with regulations on data protection and in line with our corporate social responsibilities) in order to reduce waste and recycle where possible, and we removed and relocated our complete information technology (IT) infrastructure, including PCs and servers, with minimum disruption to the team. The entire team put a significant amount of time and energy into planning the move and I would like to recognise this and thank them sincerely.

I am really looking forward to continuing to implement our strategy over the coming years and to demonstrating, through scientific evidence, the impact of our activities on protecting consumers, raising food standards and creating a culture of excellence within the food industry in Ireland. Ireland has excellent food businesses that are producing food for the domestic and export markets, and through the work of Government Departments and other State agencies, Ireland is recognised as 'the food island'. This position brings with it the responsibility to produce the safest food we possibly can, and it is the Authority's role, through working in partnership, to demonstrate that we have the most robust official food control system possible. I believe that this will become even more important in the context of Brexit.

Ensuring that we can deliver on our legislative mandate requires a team, and I am very privileged to have a professional and committed team within the Authority. I would like to thank the Department of Health, particularly the Food Unit, for its continued support of the Authority and in particular for continuing to provide sanction for the recruitment of staff to fill vacancies that have arisen over the last number of years. I would also like to thank the Department of Health for its support with the move to our new offices.

Finally, I would like to thank Prof. Michael Gibney, Chairman of the Board, and the Board members for their continued support and guidance during the year. On behalf of the Authority, I would like to sincerely thank Prof. Gibney for his dedication and commitment to the Authority since it was established in 1998. I would like to wish him every success in all his future endeavours when his term as Chairman comes to an end in early 2018. I am looking forward to continuing to work closely with the Board and the new Chairman, the team within the Authority, the Scientific Committee, the Food Safety Consultative Council, the official agencies, the State laboratories and the industry fora, as we continue to deliver on our strategy together over the next two years.



Dr Pamela A. Byrne

Chief Executive Officer

About the Food Safety Authority of Ireland

Legal Basis

The Authority was established in 1998 under the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, Act, 1998¹ (S.I. No. 29 of 1998 as amended) as an independent Government agency responsible for the enforcement of food legislation in Ireland. This Act was enacted in July 1998 and came into effect on 1 January 1999.

The principal function of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland is to take all reasonable steps to ensure that food consumed, produced, distributed or marketed in the State meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene reasonably available, and to ensure that food complies with legal requirements or, where appropriate, with recognised codes of good practice.

The Authority is a statutory, independent and science-based regulatory enforcement body dedicated to protecting public health and consumer interests in the area of food safety and hygiene. It comes under the aegis of the Minister for Health and currently has a 10-member Board. It also has a 15-member Scientific Committee that assists and advises the Board. Therefore, decisions relating to food safety and hygiene take account of the latest and best scientific advice and information available.

Everything the Authority does is about ensuring that people in Ireland have access to a safe food supply and truthful information about the food that they eat. By doing what it does, the Authority is also protecting the consumers of Irish food abroad. The Authority's activities are key to underpinning the health of Irish society and Ireland's economic growth.

The foundation of a healthy society and a functioning economy is healthy people making informed choices about the food that they eat. The *Department of Health Statement of Strategy 2016–2019*² recognises the importance of ensuring that the appropriate legal frameworks, policies and relevant structures are in place, in order to achieve the highest standards of food safety and to achieve its overall objective of supporting people to lead healthy and independent lives.

For individuals, unwanted bacteria, viruses and chemicals in food can have acute health effects (e.g. gastroenteritis) and chronic health effects (e.g. cancer), and these impact considerably on quality of life. In addition, the consequences of food poisoning at a societal level impact on the economy through inability to work as well as through healthcare costs and social welfare costs. Although there has been no study in Ireland on the health costs of illness relating specifically to food, a 2007 *saferfood* study calculated the cost of gastroenteritis in Ireland to be €101 million per year. Consequently, a safer food supply means improvements in the lives of people in Ireland through reduced illness rates, lower health and welfare costs, and increased economic productivity.

Food and drink manufacturing is the largest indigenous sector in Ireland, directly employing 56,000 people and with exports of more than €12.6 billion to 180 countries.³ Both employment and exports have now recovered to, or exceeded, 2009 levels. Additionally, it is estimated that there are about 56,000 indirect employees associated with the sector, as well as twice this number of farmers.⁴ The manufacture of food and drink products is Ireland's most important indigenous industry, with a turnover of €27.5 billion.

The food and drink sector is deeply integrated into the wider economy, spending €18 billion a year on intermediate consumption in other sectors plus a further €2.1 billion on employee compensation. It accounts for 94% of total external product flows from the agricultural sector.

It is dispersed throughout the country and is a strong driver of regional development, accounting for 9.7% of total employment in the four economically weakest regions (Mid-East, Border, Midlands and South-East). In addition to servicing the domestic grocery and food service markets, the industry is highly internationalised and exports to 180 countries. It maintains substantial market positions in the United Kingdom (UK), other EU markets, and international markets.

¹ https://www.fsai.ie/legislation/fsai_act_related.html

² <http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/DoH-SoS-2016-2019-Final-En.pdf>

³ http://www.fooddrinkireland.ie/Sectors/FDI/FDI.nsf/vPages/Food_Industry-food-industry!OpenDocument

⁴ <https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/foodindustrydevelopmenttrademarkets/agri-foodandtheeconomy/foodwise2025/Final2017ReportFutureSkillsNeedsFoodDrinkSector130417.pdf>

Food Wise 2025, the report of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's 2025 Agri-Food Strategy Committee, sets out a cohesive, strategic plan for the development of the agri-food sector over the next decade. On the basis of available data and by taking the actions identified in the report, the Committee set out the following growth projections, which it believes are achievable by 2025:

85%

Increase the value of agri-food exports by 85% to €19 billion.

13bn

Increase value added in the agri-food, fisheries and wood products sectors by 70% to in excess of €13 billion.

65%

Increase the value of primary production by 65% to almost €10 billion.

23,000

Create an additional 23,000 direct jobs in the agri-food sector all along the supply chain, from primary production to high value-added product development.

Growth in food exports requires a high level of international confidence in the Irish food safety system. Simply put, there is no market for unsafe food. The work of the Authority in ensuring the safety of the Irish food supply will become even more significant if these projections are realised.



■ **Food Authenticity and Integrity Conference**

The Authority hosted a two-day international conference, in partnership with *safefood*, to share information and explore challenges facing the safety, the integrity and the authenticity of the global food supply chain. Over 300 delegates were in attendance at the *Safeguarding the Food Chain – Protecting Authenticity and Integrity* conference. National and international experts outlined that combatting increasing levels of food fraud requires interagency collaboration and intelligence-led insights to protect the food chain and ultimately consumer interests and health.

Pictured at the conference (l-r): Dr Pamela Byrne, Chief Executive, Food Safety Authority of Ireland; Mr Phil Hogan, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development; and Mr Ray Dolan, Chief Executive, *safefood*.

What the Authority Does

The Authority is responsible for:

- Putting consumer interests first and foremost
- Providing advice to Ministers, regulators, the food industry and consumers on food safety issues
- Ensuring the coordinated and seamless delivery of food safety services to a high standard agreed by the various State agencies involved
- Ensuring that food complies with legal requirements or, where appropriate, with recognised codes of good practice
- Working with the food industry in order to gain its commitment in the production of safe food
- Setting food standards based on sound science and risk assessment
- Managing risk in association with front-line agencies and the food sector, and communicating risks to consumers, public health professionals and the food industry.

The Authority's key remit is the enforcement of food law, which is coordinated through working in partnership with other food regulatory authorities. Food legislation is enforced on behalf of the Authority by a network of official agencies through a service contracts programme, which the Authority monitors. The Authority also reports on the agencies' activities and seeks continuous improvement and accountability through a programme of regular audits.

Staff from the official agencies who work under service contract to the Authority carry out inspection and oversight functions in more than 49,000 food businesses, in order to ensure compliance with legal standards and codes of best practice. Inspection officers have a range of control measures at their disposal in the event of non-compliance with food law, including business closure and detention of food. The Authority also oversees a national monitoring and surveillance programme in collaboration with the official agencies and external bodies that measure exposure to harmful microorganisms and chemicals in the Irish diet. Data from these programmes form the basis of the Authority's control and prevention strategies, ensuring that consumer interests are first and foremost.

The Authority managed more than 600 food incidents and emergencies in 2017, and ensures that it keeps all stakeholders informed through regular communications and alerts on food recalls and withdrawals in the event of risk to consumers' health. As the national contact point for the European Commission's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) and for the World Health Organization's International Food Safety Authorities Network, the Authority deals with thousands of alerts annually. This work also includes tackling food crime, which involves extensive investigations in collaboration with a number of external bodies, including Revenue's Customs Service, An Garda Síochána, and the competent authorities with roles in official controls for food safety.

Science remains at the heart of the Authority. Independent scientific evidence underpins the Authority's advice to Government Ministers on food safety and nutrition issues. The scientific staff and members of the Authority's Scientific Committee and Subcommittees ensure that all work, from the day-to-day decision-making to work on risk assessment, is evidence based. The Authority follows and contributes to global developments in food science and technology, risk assessment, risk management, and official food control services.

The Authority works in partnership with the agri-food industry in order to gain the industry's commitment to the production and marketing of safe and correctly labelled foods. It works in collaboration with Bord Bia and the National Standards Authority of Ireland to establish standards and schemes in order to ensure the highest levels of food safety and hygiene in Irish food production. The Authority manages an Advice Line service for all stakeholders, which is available five days a week and takes approximately 11,000 calls a year.

The Authority has a strong commitment to communicating the importance of food safety and the associated risks, and to providing people with timely, meaningful and tailored information. The Authority's website is its shop window for the world and received slightly more than two million page views and almost one million visits in 2017. The Authority's enforcement activities and information resources are complemented by awareness campaigns, and practical advice and guidance for the food industry in order to make it easier for businesses to understand and abide by regulations, with an emphasis on minimising the burden of compliance for small food businesses.



■ Small Food Business Start-Up Seminar

The Authority hosted a *Small Food Business Start-Up* seminar to provide expert assistance and advice to those who are either working in a food business or are considering setting up a new small food business. Various experts from the Authority provided advice on topics including how to manage food safety; what to expect from an inspection; registering and running a small food business; general food labelling requirements; food safety training requirements; how to implement traceability in your food business; food product development and the numerous information resources available from the Authority. There were case studies by locally based companies sharing their personal insights into setting up and running a small food business. The Health Service Executive (HSE), Teagasc, Supporting SMEs, the Health and Safety Authority, Microfinance Ireland and the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland all had information stands at the event providing specialist information and useful insights.

In common with all EU Member States, Ireland has a National Control Plan, which is a requirement of European official food control regulations. This covers food safety, animal health and welfare, animal feed, and plant health.

How the Authority Operates

The Authority enforces food legislation through service contracts with 33 official agencies, and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 provides the requisite legislative basis for this.

The official agencies working under this service contract agreement in 2016 were the Health Service Executive; the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority; 28 local authorities; the National Standards Authority of Ireland; and the Marine Institute. The Authority's role is to coordinate and monitor the activities of these official agencies through the service contracts, which outline an agreed level and standard of food safety activity that the official agencies perform. The service contracts are in place for a minimum duration of three years, and, subject to the request of either the Authority or the official agency, may be reviewed during that time. Regular meetings are held with senior management in each agency and with the line managers responsible for the delivery of inspection and analysis services.

The HSE continues to provide chemical and microbiological laboratory analytical services under the terms of the service contracts. The service is provided by three public analyst's laboratories and six microbiological laboratories. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine also provides considerable laboratory analytical services. In common with all EU Member States, Ireland has a National Control Plan, which is a requirement of European official food control regulations. This covers food safety, animal health and welfare, animal feed, and plant health. The Authority is responsible for the food elements of the plan.

Industry Engagement

The food industry is primarily responsible for the safety of food on the Irish market, whereas the Authority's role is one of oversight and enforcement. Consequently, the Authority engages with the food industry to encourage compliance and to make food businesses aware of their responsibilities. During 2017, the Authority continued to engage with the food industry on many levels in order to reinforce the need for the sector to take responsibility for producing and marketing safe food and to improve standards of food safety and hygiene.

To this end, the Authority hosted a number of meetings with its four industry fora (see Appendix 1 for a list of members). These provide certain sectors of the food industry with a platform to raise pertinent issues and gain important information from the Authority.

ARTISAN FORUM

The Artisan Forum brings together a diverse group of specialist food producers and provides them with an opportunity to discuss with the Authority food safety issues concerning the artisan food sector. The Forum is a vehicle for the Authority and the producers to come to a mutual understanding of each other's role in the provision of quality food that is safe for the consumer. It creates a network of contacts that is used outside of formal meetings to resolve problems arising in the sector regarding enforcement of food legislation. In addition, the Forum allows for discussion on new legislative proposals and their possible impacts on artisans. It is a valuable resource for artisan food producers and the Authority and it helps everyone involved to approach consumer protection with regard to facilitating the production of the diversity of artisan food. The Artisan Forum met once in 2017. Some of the issues discussed at this meeting included Brexit; the regulation of the cheese industry; glyphosate; membership of the Forum and the Forum's terms of reference; and an update on Teagasc activities of interest to the artisan food sector.



Catex 2017

The Authority had an information stand at Catex 2017, which took place in the RDS, Dublin from 21 to 23 February 2017. It is Ireland's largest foodservice and hospitality show and it brings together 200 exhibitors and 11,000 visitors. Visitors to the Authority's stand requested information on starting up a food business, food safety legislation, food labelling, putting allergens and calories on menus, and HACCP.

RETAIL FORUM

The Retail Forum includes representatives from both the main supermarket chains and the major symbol groups operating in Ireland. The Forum serves as a useful mechanism to increase understanding of food legislation, disseminate food safety advice and share best practice. The Retail Forum met once in 2017. The main issues discussed were guidance on selling or advertising food online; antimicrobial resistance; *Campylobacter*; sale of organic produce; labelling of alcohol; surplus food; the Authority's allergen information campaign; hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) flexibility for small retailers; and Brexit.

FOOD SERVICE FORUM

The Food Service Forum draws its membership from catering businesses, food service businesses and representative organisations. The Forum is used to disseminate food safety advice, share best practice and improve understanding of relevant food legislation. The Food Service Forum met once in 2017. The main issues discussed were the Authority's allergen information campaign; allergen information requirements for 'drive-through' businesses; surplus food; update to I.S. 340; hygiene in the catering sector; frozen berries; the Authority's e-learning modules; Regulation (EU) 2017/625 on official controls; enforcement consistency; and queries to the Advice Line from caterers.

The Emerging Risks and Threats Forum (ERTF) is a recently established joint meeting between food manufacturing members of Food Drink Ireland (FDI) and the Authority. The objective of the Forum is to build knowledge and share non-competitive and non-confidential information.

MOLLUSCAN SHELLFISH SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee is the national stakeholder committee for the Irish Shellfish Monitoring Programme. The aim of the Programme is to ensure that only safe shellfish are placed on the market. The Committee is chaired by the Authority and includes representatives from the official agencies, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, the shellfish industry, and other stakeholder groups. During 2017, the Committee met four times and a wide range of issues were discussed, including sample coordination, biotoxin events and shellfish water quality. The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority and Marine Institute kept the Committee up to date in relation to the ongoing EU baseline survey on norovirus, research into the possible presence of tetrodotoxin, and developments within Europe. The Committee oversaw reviews of both the biotoxin and microbiological codes of practice under the Programme. The Committee members provided user feedback to the Marine Institute as phases of the new harmful algal blooms biotoxin database were launched, and stakeholders also supported the Marine Institute in its hosting of the International Conference on Molluscan Shellfish Safety.

EMERGING RISKS AND THREATS FORUM

The Emerging Risks and Threats Forum (ERTF) is a recently established joint meeting between food manufacturing members of Food Drink Ireland (FDI) and the Authority. The objective of the Forum is to build knowledge and share non-competitive and non-confidential information on:

- Emerging risks to consumers' health from new and changing hazards in the food chain
- Emerging threats to consumers' health and interests from fraudulent activity in the food chain, including adulteration and substitution of ingredients
- Emerging threats to the integrity of the Irish food system.

The Forum met twice in 2017. It discussed issues including methods for the detection of food authenticity; safefood's work on the effect of climate change on the dairy industry; and efforts by Government agencies, healthcare bodies and other stakeholders in Ireland to combat antimicrobial resistance. The Forum provided input into the signals of emerging risk circulated by the European Food Safety Authority's Emerging Risks Exchange Network (EREN), and it also discussed the Authority's ongoing food authenticity work, as well as feedback from the industry's own horizon scanning activities.

Other Collaborations

During 2017, the Authority continued its collaborations with a number of organisations both in Ireland and abroad. Its close cooperation and collaboration with the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland also continued and is supported by means of a Memorandum of Understanding that is designed to ensure rapid and effective cooperation in the event of a food incident and common enforcement matters in both jurisdictions. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Loughs Agency and the Authority covers assistance provided by the Loughs Agency to facilitate the operation of the Irish Shellfish Monitoring Programme in Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough. In 2017, the Authority continued to work with safefood on areas of mutual interest.

The Authority contributes to the HSE's Scientific Advisory Committee of the Health Protection Surveillance Centre. The Authority also has a confidentiality agreement with the United States (US) Food and Drug Administration. In 2017, we renewed our Memorandum of Understanding with Bord Iascaigh Mhara and signed a Data Sharing Agreement with the Food Integrity Network and Food Standards Scotland.

The Authority is an ongoing active contributor on a number of other committees from other organisations, the purposes of which are to raise and maintain standards in the food sector. These organisations include: Associated Craft Butchers of Ireland; Bord Bia; Broadcasting Authority of Ireland; Food Drink Ireland; Global TRUST Certification; National Heart Alliance; National Hygiene Partnership; and the National Standards Authority of Ireland. The Authority is also involved in the Healthy Food for All initiative, which seeks to combat food poverty by promoting access, availability and affordability of healthy food for low-income groups.

The Authority chairs Food Law Enforcement Practitioners, an EU group of inspectors and laboratory personnel engaged in food law implementation, and it also participates in the relatively recently formed Heads of Food Safety Agencies group. In addition, the Authority participates in a global government-to-government meeting on the use of private certification schemes in the context of official controls.

The Authority assists agencies in other countries which regard it as a model for single national food control agencies. In addition, it continues to contribute to Sustainable Food Systems Ireland, an initiative by Enterprise Ireland and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to make Ireland's food safety, scientific, technical, policy, and agri-food expertise available to support development overseas.

In 2017, two Authority staff members visited Vietnam in a programme arranged by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as part of the Irish Aid international development programme in that country. The mission followed a visit by a Ministerial delegation from Vietnam in 2015. The aim was, firstly, to meet a series of Vietnamese food agencies/Ministries to discuss food controls there and potential future collaborations with the Authority and, secondly, to provide training on food safety controls to one agency, the National Agro-Forestry-Fisheries Quality Assurance Department, with which Irish Aid has engaged to date. All costs to the Authority were borne by Irish Aid.

The Authority is a member of the International Commission on Microbiological Specifications for Foods. It is also the national contact point for the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), a joint initiative between the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization. It involves 177 Member States in the routine exchange of information on food safety issues and the sharing of experiences and expertise, and allows for rapid access to information in the event of food safety emergencies.

The Authority assists agencies in other countries which regard it as a model for single national food control agencies.

Food Safety Authority of Ireland Strategy 2016–2018

In 2016, following substantial internal and external stakeholder consultations, the Authority launched a new Strategy which sets out its new vision, mission, values, and strategic goals and objectives for 2016–2018. The new vision of safe and trustworthy food for everyone clearly articulates the Authority’s ambition, and the delivery of the new Strategy will build upon the work undertaken in the past and will further foster a partnership approach by delivering a strategically planned food safety regulatory system that continues to be relevant, progressive and robust for the future.

The Authority’s success is firmly based on working collaboratively with those in the food safety community, and its commitment to protecting consumers is the foundation of its mission, which states:

We protect consumers by leading a collaborative food safety community to continuously raise food standards and create a culture of excellence.

The following values underpin how the Authority works:

- **Integrity** – We are honest, open and independent in all that we do.
- **Passion** – We are passionate about protecting consumers.
- **Respect** – We act with respect and personal responsibility.
- **Innovation** – We change in order to do things better in pursuit of excellence.
- **Collaboration** – We recognise and value our partners.
- **Teamwork** – We develop and inspire our people to build a better organisation.

These values will constantly guide the Authority’s decisions and interactions as the organisation strives to achieve its vision and deliver on its mission and strategic goals.



Food Innovation Conference

The Authority hosted a conference to demystify the regulations to place innovative and new foods on the EU market. Over 150 entrepreneurs, researchers and food businesses interested in bringing new foods, food ingredients and food processes to the EU’s half a billion consumer market attended the *Food Innovation – New Foods and Food Technologies* conference. The conference provided updates and information on the latest foods and technologies available or in development for use by the food industry.

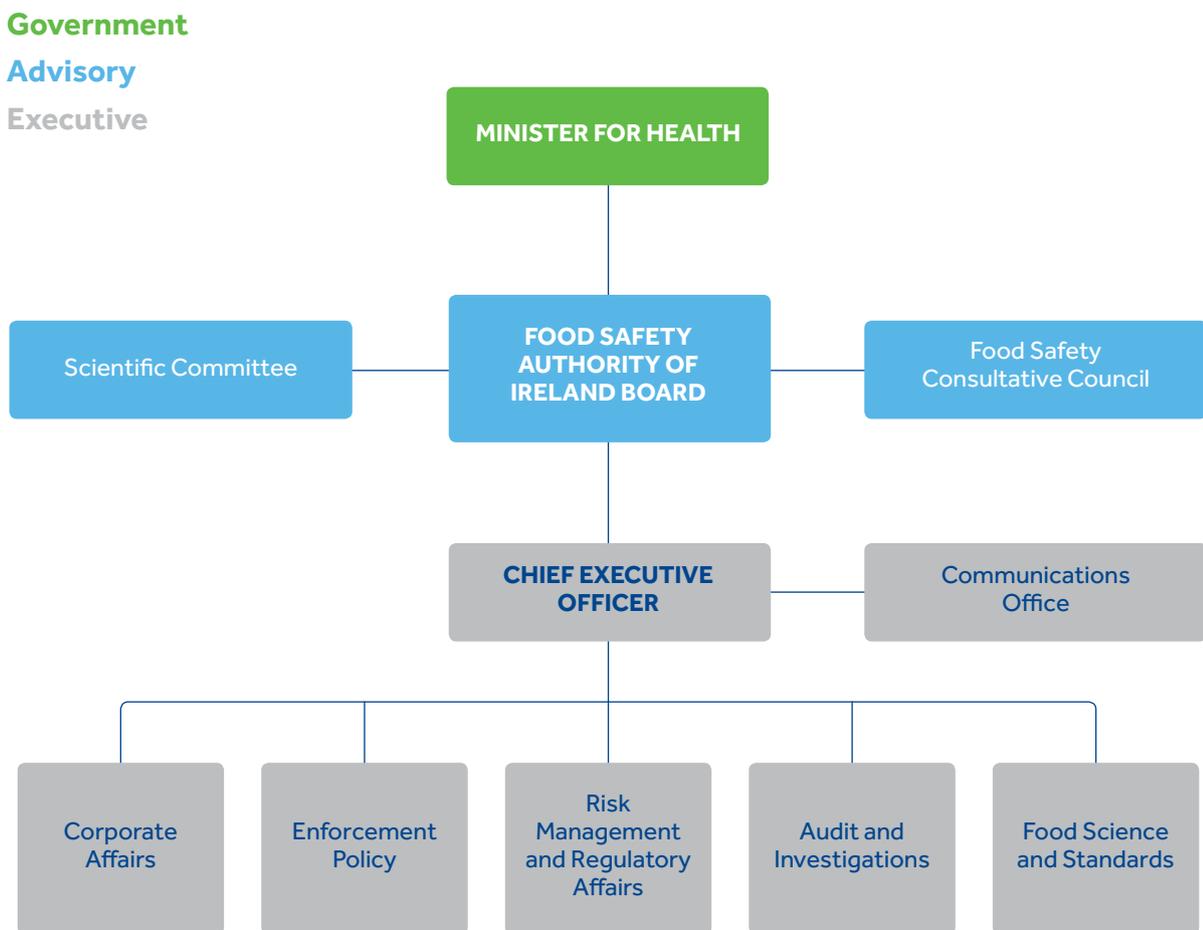
Pictured at the conference (l-r): Dr Karl McDonald, Food Safety Authority of Ireland; Dr Rhodri Evans, Exponent International Limited; Dr James Lyng, University College Dublin; Dr Pat O’Mahony, Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

Governance and Management

The Authority has a non-executive Board, appointed by the Minister for Health, which is responsible for the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer and for oversight of corporate governance in accordance with Government guidelines. Two independent bodies advise the Board, one comprising stakeholders in the food chain (e.g. food industry, consumers), entitled the Food Safety Consultative Council, and one comprising scientists, entitled the Scientific Committee. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

The Scientific Committee comprises 15 independent scientists appointed by the Minister for Health in consultation with the Board. The Chair of the Scientific Committee must be a member of the Board. The Scientific Committee advises the Board on scientific matters underpinning food safety and nutrition, and the Authority may not act on an issue referred to the Scientific Committee until such time as its opinion is provided to the Board. The Scientific Committee establishes subcommittees of independent scientists to progress its advice; consequently, the Authority is advised by the work of approximately 60 scientists.

Figure 1: Management structure



FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY OF IRELAND BOARD, 2017

Prof. Michael Gibney (Chair)

Mr Ciaran Byrne

Ms Mary Cullen

Mr Derek Cunningham

Prof. Albert Flynn

Mr Martin Higgins

Ms Margaret Moran

Ms Ros O'Shea

Dr Susan Quinn

Prof. Patrick Wall

FOOD SAFETY CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL, 2017

Mr Ray Bowe (Chair)

Musgrave Retail Partners

Mr Pat Daly

Teagasc (retired)

Ms Una Fitzgibbon

Bord Bia

Ms Maree Gallagher

Food Law Solicitor

Mr Dermot Gates

Boxmore Plastics Ltd

Mr Cormac Healy

Meat Industry Ireland

Mr Dermot Jewell

Consumers' Association of Ireland

Mr Jamie Knox

Britvic Ireland

Mr Brendan Kehoe

Dairy Farmer

Mr Donal Maguire

Bord Iascaigh Mhara

Ms Siobhan Murphy

Health Service Executive

Mr James McCrudden

Country Markets

Mr Tim O'Brien

Restaurateur

Mr Eamonn Quinn

Kelsius

Mr Martin Roper

Food Safety Consultant

Ms Annette Sweeney

Institute of Technology, Tallaght

FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY OF IRELAND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE, 2017

Prof. Albert Flynn (Chair)

University College Cork

Dr Paula Barry Walsh

Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Prof. Kevin Cashman

University College Cork

Dr PJ Cullen

Dublin Institute of Technology

Dr Geraldine Duffy

Teagasc

Dr Mark Fenelon

Food Research Centre, Teagasc

Mr John Keegan

Dublin Public Analyst's Laboratory

Prof. Brian McKenna

University College Dublin (Retired)

Dr Eleanor McNamara

Health Service Executive

Prof. Simon More

University College Dublin

Dr Michael O'Keeffe

Residue Specialist

Dr Margaret O'Sullivan

Health Service Executive

Mr Ray Parle

Health Service Executive

Dr Donal Sammin

Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Ms Ita Saul

Our Lady's Children's Hospital,
Crumlin (retired)

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Dr Pamela A. Byrne
Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Authority and is supported by the Senior Leadership Team in which there are five Directors who report to the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer is the Irish representative to the European Food Safety Authority's Advisory Forum and the European Heads of Food Safety Agencies group; a member of the Irish delegation to the Codex Alimentarius Commission; the Chair of the European Joint Programming Initiative 'A Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life'; a member of the Board of the Agri-Food Graduate Development Programme; a member of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's Research Advisory Committee; and Chair of University College Dublin's Institute of Food and Health Advisory Board. The Chief Executive Officer's office is responsible for liaison with the Authority's Board; management of the corporate risk register; coordination of all communications by the Authority; organisation of events; design and publishing of the Authority's publications; promotion of the work of the Authority in the media; and representation of Ireland at the European Food Safety Authority's Communications Experts Network.

The following describes the purpose of each of the Authority's functional areas:

CORPORATE AFFAIRS



Kevin Roantree
Director, Corporate Affairs

The Corporate Affairs functional area, led by Mr Kevin Roantree, implements leading-edge corporate affairs and information and data management strategies designed to enhance organisational performance and effectiveness. It is responsible for the human resources (HR), finance, IT, information and data management, freedom of information, corporate governance, and general facilities management functions of the organisation. This functional area is key to ensuring that the Authority achieves its business objectives internally and externally, building the organisation's impact and reputation, and ensuring its future success. The Corporate Affairs team also lead the organisation's ISO 9001:2008 compliance for its Quality Management System. This team works in close collaboration with other members of the Senior Leadership Team in developing and implementing strategic plans and annual service plans.

ENFORCEMENT POLICY



Dr Bernard Hegarty
Director, Enforcement Policy

The Enforcement Policy functional area, led by Dr Bernard Hegarty, is responsible for the enforcement of food legislation in Ireland. A key activity is the management of the service contracts with the Authority's official agencies, which carry out the enforcement activities. The service contract mechanism for the enforcement of food safety legislation was mandated under the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 and has been in place since 1999. Service contracts are in place with 33 official agencies. Most of the team's activities are focused on supporting the strategic goal of leading a regulatory culture of food legislation enforcement, although it also provides advice on proposed legislation to Government Departments and operates one of the Authority's consultative fora (the Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee). There are four main official agencies, and the structure of the Enforcement Policy functional area reflects this operating model.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS



Raymond Ellard

Director, Risk Management and Regulatory Affairs

Mr Ray Ellard leads the Risk Management and Regulatory Affairs functional area, which has two main roles within the Authority. It is responsible for leading on risk management decisions required in relation to food incidents and food alerts. The risk management decisions taken by the Authority are based on the risk assessments carried out by the Food Science and Standards team. In addition, the team manages the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed, which is a notification system managed by the European Commission to exchange information between members of the network – including EU Member States, the European Commission and the European Food Safety Authority – on hazards identified in food, feed, and food contact materials. The team is also responsible for the development of the Authority's regulatory strategy. This is achieved through consultations with veterinary, agricultural and environment health experts within the team. The Training and Compliance team ensures that the right tools are developed in order to enable food safety inspectors and the industry to comply with the law. The team is also responsible for the management and coordination of the Food Safety Consultative Council, the Artisan Forum, the Retail Forum, and the Food Service Forum.

AUDIT AND INVESTIGATIONS



Peter Whelan

Director, Audit and Investigations

Mr Peter Whelan leads the Audit and Investigations functional area, which is responsible for two broad areas: audits and investigations (including protected disclosures and food fraud investigations). The team in Audit and Investigations carries out audits of the official controls system and targeted audits of food businesses, and it also provides support on third country and European Commission Santé F audits in Ireland, all of which are in accordance with the Authority's legal mandate. The annual audit programme is designed to ensure adequate coverage of all relevant areas of activity and all official agencies at an appropriate risk-based frequency over a period not exceeding five years. Audit reports and their corrective action plans are published on the Authority's website. The team also conducts special investigations in conjunction with competent authorities where serious breaches of food law or food fraud have been detected. These investigations are designed to determine the nature and extent of non-compliance with food law and/or related food fraud. Outcomes of such investigations may result in enforcement actions and criminal proceedings being taken against offenders.

FOOD SCIENCE AND STANDARDS



Dr Wayne Anderson

Director, Food Science and Standards

The Food Science and Standards functional area is led by Dr Wayne Anderson and provides scientific expertise to underpin the risk management activities of the Authority. As well as carrying out in-house risk assessment, it manages and supports the work of the Authority's Scientific Committee, which comprises 15 independent scientists appointed by the Minister for Health. Experts in the Food Science and Standards functional area also provide scientific and technical input into the development of legislation at the European level through work on expert groups within the European Commission. Additionally, the team provides Government Departments with sound scientific advice for food safety and nutrition policy development. It also provides technical guides and tools for the food industry in order to help the industry produce safe food. The Food Science and Standards functional area is also involved in international standards setting through the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Food Science and Standards staff organise and conduct food monitoring studies in order to assess the safety of food, provide input into national and European food safety research policy, maintain expert networks with third-level institutions throughout Ireland and beyond, and communicate the Authority's scientific findings at national and international meetings. The team's aim is to provide the scientific basis for the activities of the Authority.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

In compliance with the Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies (2016), the Authority has a Corporate Governance Framework in place. This Framework was developed in order to assist in improving efficiency and enhancing openness and transparency. The Framework provides guidance for the organisation, detailing aspects such as conducting Board business; strategic planning; operational processes; risk management; financial control; and standards of behaviour. The Authority achieved compliance with the Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies (2016) during 2017 and put a governance framework in place to ensure ongoing compliance.

THE BOARD

The key functions of the Board include reviewing and guiding strategic direction and major plans of action, risk management policies and procedures, annual budgets and business plans, setting performance objectives, monitoring implementation of the Authority's strategy and business plans, and overseeing major revenue and capital expenditure, and investment decisions. The Board has a formal schedule of matters specifically reserved for it, for its consideration. The Board meets at least twice a year, without the Authority's management team present, to discuss any matters deemed relevant. During 2017, two Board members were reappointed.

BOARD AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

The Authority had a fully functioning Board Audit and Risk Committee which undertook the following audits: internal financial controls; food studies; and risk management. During 2017, the Board continued to review its effectiveness. It also commenced the process to have an independent assessment of Board (and Audit and Risk Committee) effectiveness. This was completed and will be considered by the Board early in 2018.

The Financial Statements, as approved by the Board Audit and Risk Committee and the Board, were subject to audit by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General. Four Board Audit and Risk Committee meetings were held in 2017. The Audit and Risk Committee has an independent role in the provision of assurance to the Board on internal control, risk management, audit and assurance matters, as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the Authority. The Audit and Risk Committee operates under an agreed charter and prepares a formal annual report for the Board.

Number of meetings: Four

Chair: Dr Susan Quinn (until October 2017) followed by Ms Margaret Moran

Membership: Ms Margaret Moran, Mr Ciaran Byrne, Mr Ray Dolan, Ms Mary Cullen (from October 2017)



Food Donation Guidance

In light of growing awareness of the need to reduce food waste and an increase in food donations to combat food poverty, the Authority published four new guidance documents for charities and donating food businesses to ensure that the highest food safety standards are maintained to protect consumer health. One in eight people living in Ireland is experiencing food poverty, while food waste in Irish businesses accounts for 750,000 tonnes per year, with 300,000 tonnes coming from retail and catering businesses and over 400,000 tonnes generated by the industrial food processing sector. Often this food is suitable for redistribution, so food businesses offer unsold or non-saleable food items to charities. The FSAI's free guidance documents have been created to ensure that like all operators in the food supply chain whether donating, receiving or handling donated food, they must comply with the law in relation to food safety.

THE NOMINATIONS AND REMUNERATIONS COMMITTEE

The Nominations and Remunerations Committee is appointed as an independent subcommittee of the Board to manage the Chief Executive Officer or senior management recruitment process. As required, the Committee agrees remuneration with Government Departments, develops the job description, identifies the relevant competencies and ideal candidate profile for the post, agrees the recruitment and search process, and sets a specific timetable. The Nominations and Remunerations Committee convenes as required by the Board. No meetings were held in 2017.

Number of meetings: Nil

Chair: Prof. Michael Gibney

Membership: Prof. Michael Gibney, Prof. Albert Flynn, Prof. Patrick Wall

STATUTORY AND OTHER NOTICES

Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995 and the Standards in Public Office Act, 2001.

In accordance with Section 41 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998, the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995 and the Standards in Public Office Act, 2001, members of the Authority's Board, Scientific Committee, Scientific Subcommittees and designated Authority staff are required to submit a declaration of interests annually. These are in turn submitted by the Authority to the Minister for Health and/or the Standards in Public Office Commission, as appropriate.

PROTECTED DISCLOSURES ACT 2014

There was one protected disclosure made to the Authority in 2017.

PROMPT PAYMENTS OF ACCOUNTS ACT, 1997

It is the policy of the Authority to ensure that all payments are made promptly. Every effort, consistent with proper financial procedures, is being made to ensure that all suppliers are paid within the required timeframe, in accordance with best practice. The Authority publishes quarterly reports of compliance on its website.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2014

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 asserts the right of members of the public to access official information to the greatest extent possible consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy of individuals. The Authority complies with the Freedom of Information Act 2014 and publishes under Section 8 of the Act. This publication contains information about the services provided, or to be provided, to the public by the Authority, and it also features a disclosures log and financial information. During 2017, there were 37 Freedom of Information requests.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT) REGULATIONS 2007

The European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 133 of 2007) gives legal rights to those seeking access to information on the environment from public authorities. During 2017, there were two requests under Access to Information on the Environment legislation.

CUSTOMER CHARTER

The Authority has published a Customer Charter detailing its full commitment to providing customers with an efficient, timely, professional and courteous service. The Charter sets out the standards of service customers can expect to receive from the Authority.

Key Highlights of the Authority's Activities

The Official Food Control System: Numbers at a Glance

INSPECTIONS OF FOOD BUSINESSES

In 2017, 49,874 food businesses were under the supervision of official agencies that have service contracts with the Authority (Table 1). This represents a small (0.95%) increase over 2016. Of the registered food businesses inspected, about 92% were inspected by the Health Service Executive; 5% by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority; 2% by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine; and 1% by local authorities. This distribution of food businesses inspected by the official agencies has been similar over the past five years. A wide range of activities is carried out by these food businesses, from importation and manufacturing through to distributing, retailing and catering operations.

Table 1: Number and type of food businesses under supervision by official agencies, 2013–2017

Official Agency	Premises Type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Primary producers	286	313	311	114	123
	Manufacturers and packers	370	373	383	297	352
	Distributors and transporters	98	107	120	411	419
	Total	754	793	814	822	894
Health Service Executive	Service sector	28,214	28,843	29,222	28,933	29,177
	Retailers	10,972	11,259	11,362	12,950	13,529
	Not assigned	42		39	23	46
	Importers/exporters	73	79	57		
	Manufacturers	2,864	3,039	3,110	2,109	1,437
	Packers	92	100	108	117	121
	Transporters	64	80	105	123	132
	Wholesalers/distributors	1,098	1,111	1,183	1,138	1,158
	Third-country importers/exporters				37	41
	Administrative food businesses				102	162
	Total	43,419	44,511	45,186	45,532	45,803
Local Authorities	Slaughterhouses	209	205	205	201	195
	Small meat manufacturing plants	205	197	200	204	209
	Poultry plants	32	34	38	40	38
	Cold stores	21	29	31	36	43
	Butcher shops	5	7	8	9	8
	Mobile businesses	12	15	16	21	33
	Total	484	487	498	511	526

Official Agency	Premises Type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority	Fishing vessels	2,155	2,077	2,077	2,195	2,079
	Approved establishments on land	181	179	195		
	Molluscan production areas	133	137	141	2	182
	Registered food businesses on land (including ice plants)	87	99	110	8	10
	Freezer and factory vessels	35	45	52	40	60
	Processing plants				111	121
	Fresh fishery products plants				60	60
	Importers				53	58
	Cold stores			16	15	16
	Shellfish farmers				17	33
	Purification plants				16	17
	Dispatch centres				12	14
	Mobile businesses				9	
	Auction halls				1	1
Total		2,591	2,537	2,591	2,539	2,651
Total number of food premises		47,248	48,328	49,089	49,404	49,874

STAFF WORKING IN OFFICIAL CONTROLS

The official agencies report annually to the Authority on the staff resources they have dedicated to official controls under the service contracts. In 2017, 1,143 whole time equivalents were involved in carrying out official controls in Irish food businesses (Table 2). There was an increase of 34 whole time equivalents in 2017; however, the number of whole time equivalents in the food inspectorate in Ireland has decreased from a high of 1,280 in 2011. The food inspectorate continues to develop its expertise through training and development courses; in 2017, 665 courses were taken by the inspectorate.

Table 2: Whole time equivalent by official agency, 2013–2017

Official Agency	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine					
Inspection Service	333	315	319	319	338
Laboratory Service	89	76	84	79	82
Health Service Executive – Environmental Health Service					
Environmental Health Service	307	305	304	336	339
Laboratory Service	138	128	128	104	130
Food Safety Authority of Ireland	71	68	72	70	73
Local authorities	88	98	101	116	104
Marine Institute	27	29	38	41	41
National Standards Authority of Ireland	1	1	1	1	1
Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority	41	40	43	42	36
Total number of whole time equivalent inspectors	1,095	1,060	1,090	1,108	1,144

FOOD INSPECTIONS

All official agencies operate risk-based programmes of official controls, and each agency categorises risk in agreement with the Authority. Those food businesses which carry out activities that present the greatest potential risk to human health are prioritised for inspection. Unannounced inspections of food businesses are a key element of the official controls, as well as other activities, such as food sampling and investigation of incidents and outbreaks. There has been a decline in recent years in the number of inspections, with an increasing focus on more thorough audits of food safety management systems in larger food businesses and of establishments whose activities present higher risks to public health (Table 3). In addition to planned inspections, a significant number of unplanned inspections take place which arise as a result of food incidents, investigations, follow-up on complaints from the public, and advisory visits to food businesses. In 2017, the HSE Environmental Health Service carried out 9,160 other inspections of food businesses.

Table 3: Number of planned food inspections by official agencies, 2013–2017

Official Agency	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Health Service Executive (Environmental Health Service)	33,971	35,053	36,353	35,786	33,193
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Inspectorate)	13,733	15,021	15,011	11,985	11,569
Local authorities	5,021	4,802	5,033	4,870	4,891
Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority	2,114	2,035	2,015	2,228	2,245
National Standards Authority of Ireland	89	77	61	72	84
Total number of inspections	54,928	56,988	58,473	54,941	51,982

FOOD SAMPLING

The service contracts include programmes by the official agencies for the sampling and testing of food for compliance with all aspects of food legislation. Samples taken by the food inspectorates are analysed by a network of official and national reference laboratories operated by the agencies. In 2017, more than 57,640 samples were taken and tested, an increase of 1.85% compared to 2016 (Table 4).

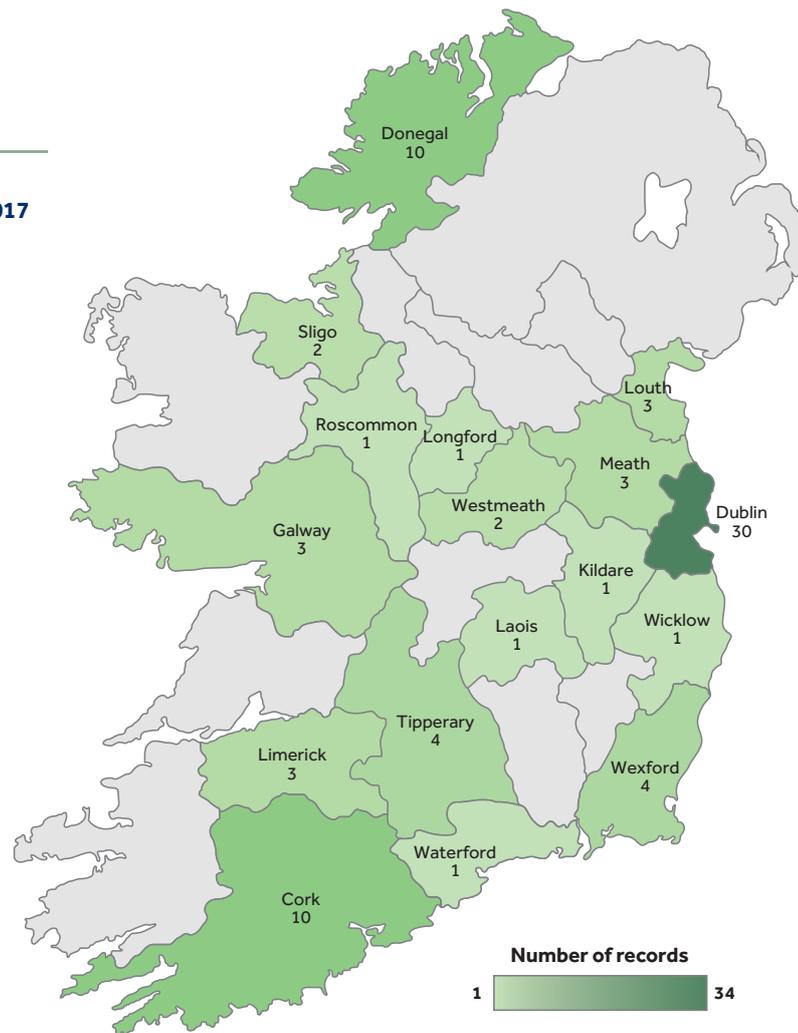
Table 4: Number of samples taken by official agency, 2015–2017

Sampling Agency	2015	% of total	2016	% of total	2017	% of total
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	30,333	54%	31,456	56%	32,947	57%
Health Service Executive (Environmental Health Service)	13,744	24%	13,220	23%	11,699	20%
Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority	8,229	15%	9,004	16%	8,353	14%
Local authorities	3,107	5%	2,388	4%	3,306	6%
Other agencies	1,262	2%	520	1%	1,335	2%
Total	56,675		56,588		57,640	

ENFORCEMENTS

During 2017, food inspectors served 64 Closure Orders, 1 Improvement Order and 4 Prohibition Orders on food businesses and took 11 prosecutions against food businesses throughout the country (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Enforcement Orders and prosecutions, by county, 2017



The types of recurring food safety issues which lead to Enforcement Orders and Improvement Notices (Table 5) are poor cleaning and sanitation of premises; poor personal hygiene; lack of running water; inadequate hand-washing facilities; incorrect food storage; lack of or an ineffective pest control programme; structural problems arising from lack of ongoing maintenance; and lack of or an inadequate food safety management system.

Table 5: Enforcements and prosecutions served, 2013–2017

Enforcement Action	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Closure Order	118	96	90	94	64
Improvement Notice	322	269	265	263	262
Improvement Order	5	1	0	3	1
Prohibition Order	20	16	16	9	4
Prosecution	13	12	13	13	11
Total	478	394	384	382	342

AUDITS AND INVESTIGATIONS

During 2017, reports from four audits were published, field work for a further four audits was carried out, 37 investigations were carried out, and Santé F was supported on two missions.

Communications

The Authority is committed to actively communicating with, and providing information to, interested parties on all aspects of food safety and hygiene. The Authority also encourages consumers to contact it with any food safety complaints or issues they may have.





A total of 33 publications were published on the website, including guidance notes for the industry, audit reports, Scientific Committee reports, surveys, fact sheets, and other materials.

The Authority's two-way communication is facilitated by its Advice Line, website, library, Facebook page, Twitter page, LinkedIn page and extranet. Over the course of 2017, the Authority organised six events, including three 'Breakfast Bites', one 'Small Food Business Start-Up Seminar', a food authenticity conference, and a food technology seminar. The Authority also collaborated with other State agencies for the Taking Care of Business Exhibition and for a business start-up event hosted by the Local Enterprise Board in Kilkenny. The Communications team responded to 320 media queries and issued 23 press releases, including the monthly Enforcement Orders press releases. The team continued its work on a stakeholder engagement project, which is a means to improve collaboration, create a wider understanding of its role, and encourage and create change in line with scientific developments and changes in regulation, while also supporting those directly involved in seeking to provide a robust official food control system. It also ran an information campaign across print, online and broadcast media that targeted food service businesses with strong messages highlighting the potential consequences that missing or inaccurate allergen information can have on an individual's health.

In 2017, Authority staff were regularly invited to speak on national and local radio. The Authority continued its active engagement with stakeholders through Facebook and Twitter, with an increase in the number of followers to 7,964 and 5,526, respectively. The Authority also actively engaged on LinkedIn in 2017, resulting in an increase in followers from 6,230 in 2016 to 9,741 in 2017. Four editions of the Authority's newsletter, *FSAINews*, were also published during 2017 and

disseminated to registered stakeholders. A total of 33 publications were published on the website, including guidance notes for the industry, audit reports, Scientific Committee reports, surveys, fact sheets, and other materials to support the achievement of the Authority's vision of safe and trustworthy food for everyone.

The Authority held a major two-day conference to share national and international learning on how regulators, authorised officers, the food industry, food scientists, and academia can work in collaboration to protect the authenticity and integrity of the food supply chain. The conference provided us with an opportunity to bring together all stakeholders in order to examine current issues around the authenticity and integrity of our food supply, the public health implications, and effective prevention control strategies. A total of 320 Irish, European and worldwide delegates attended the event on 5 and 6 October 2017 in the Conference Centre, Dublin Castle. Twenty speakers gave presentations on a wide range of topics during four sessions, which covered the role of the regulator; the role of industry, science and academia; and a panel discussion on the topic of online challenges regarding food fraud.

9,741

The Authority actively engaged on LinkedIn in 2017, resulting in an increase in followers from 6,230 in 2016 to 9,741 in 2017.

Corporate Affairs

The Authority's Corporate Affairs functional area plays a key role in ensuring that the Authority has the capacity and capability, systems, and processes to facilitate effective delivery of its services to all stakeholders. It also ensures that good corporate governance practices are developed, maintained and adhered to.



During 2017, the HR, IT and finance teams were heavily involved in the Authority's Relocation Project team, which invested a significant amount of time in preparing the Authority for its relocation to its new premises.

While the Authority's main function is to protect consumers' health and interests, its Corporate Affairs functional area ensures that the Authority is effectively managed and developed and that resources are effectively deployed so as to best deliver services. The key resources available to the Authority are primarily the executive and staff; financial resources; technology; information infrastructure and systems; and data and information, and ensuring that the best utilisation and development of these continues to be a priority. In order to underpin this, the Authority is committed to having in place a strong quality management system, which is essentially based on the concept of identifying customers and their requirements, planning how to meet these requirements, documenting procedures where appropriate, setting measurable objectives for all functional areas and all staff, and regularly reviewing achievements.

In 2017, the Authority maintained its ISO 9001:2008 registration for its Quality Management System. The Authority is working towards achieving certification to the ISO 9001:2015 standard.

A comprehensive Service Level Agreement was developed with the Department of Health for 2017, detailing the service deliverables and planned work programmes and projects for the year. These, in turn, formed the basis of the annual work plans at the organisational, functional area, team, and individual staff member levels. Key to demonstrating delivery in accordance with the Service Level Agreement are a strong performance management system and ongoing monitoring of individual and team performance and how that is contributing to the agreed deliverables. Planning, performance management, and continual review and improvement are an integral part of the Authority's day-to-day work, and the process is facilitated by the Quality Management System.

The HR team within the Corporate Affairs functional area focused on ensuring that staff had the requisite competencies, skills and knowledge to meet both organisational and personal development needs. The Authority places a strong emphasis on continuing learning and development, and it encourages staff to engage in continued professional and personal development activities. During the year, a broad range of training programmes was delivered to support this, and the Authority also supported a number of staff through developmental and further education programmes.

The Authority and the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) agreed that a Sea-Fisheries Protection Officer would be hosted in the Authority for a trial period of 18 months as part of a project to enhance cooperation and collaboration between the two organisations. The officer will continue to work for the SFPA's Food Safety Unit, but is available to participate in relevant Authority projects and to provide rapid communication and decision-making where it involves the SFPA. It is expected to enhance liaison between the organisations in relation to food safety incidents and official controls.

An efficient finance function continues to be in place within the Authority in order to ensure appropriate management and control over resources, and also to ensure that relevant accounting standards are met and adhered to, and that effective financial management systems and controls are operating. During 2017, the internal auditors conducted a review of the systems of internal financial controls, and the level of assurance achieved was 'substantial', the highest level available. The Authority also ensures that Department of Finance and Department of Public Expenditure and Reform budgetary measures are implemented in terms of salary, travel rates, procurement and other expenditure savings. During 2017, the finance team fully implemented the Sage system.

SFPA

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While the Authority's main function is to protect consumers' health and interests, its Corporate Affairs functional area ensures that the Authority is effectively managed and developed and that resources are effectively deployed so as to best deliver services.



Allergens Campaign

The Authority launched a national information campaign across, print, online and broadcast media to highlight the potential consequences that missing or inaccurate allergen information can have on an individual's health. This campaign followed an Authority audit of a representative sample of food businesses to determine their compliance with the legal requirements for the provision of written allergen information for their customers. The audit found that 32% of food businesses did not provide any written allergen information and of the food businesses that provided written allergen information, just 24% actually provided accurate allergen information.

Pictured at the launch of the information campaign: Dr Pamela Byrne, Chief Executive, Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

The Authority's key resource continues to be its very committed staff, who are dedicated to delivering top-class service. There is a Staff Committee, comprising staff at all levels throughout the Authority, which is consulted on many organisational issues, including the development of HR policies and processes. Regular meetings were held during the year and a number of issues progressed through the Committee. The Senior Leadership Team continues to support the delivery of initiatives under the Authority's Life@FSAI Health and Wellbeing Framework. The Authority is also fully committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its staff, to complying with the requirements of relevant health and safety legislation, and to promoting the health and wellbeing of staff. The Authority's Health and Safety Committee met regularly in 2017, and its work programme was implemented. Training was provided on relevant issues, and workplace monitoring continued on a regular basis in order to ensure a healthy work environment.

During 2017, the Authority received sanction from the Department of Health to proceed with the recruitment of a number of replacements for vacant posts. The recruitment process was managed in line with the requirements of the Department of Health and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The Authority continued to work with the Department of Health on the sanctioning of new posts required in order to enable the Authority to fulfil its legal mandate.

Throughout the year, the Authority's IT team continued to ensure that we had access to the required infrastructure and systems to enable us to do our work, as well as support other projects and activities within the organisation in order to ensure compatibility with the information and communications technology (ICT) systems in place. The team also played a key role in the delivery of the infrastructural elements of the Authority's data strategy.

The data team continued to provide key data reports for the Authority during 2017. Many of these reports are produced in accordance with our legislation and in response to the legal requirements of European food law. The Authority also provides data to the European Food Safety Authority on a number of food safety issues, including zoonosis. In addition, the team is very involved in the implementation of the Authority's data strategy. The full implementation of this strategy between 2015 and 2020 will ensure that the Authority can extract the maximum value from the data that are captured through the service contracts and other sources. By implementing the strategy, the Authority will have a very strong body of evidence upon which to base its risk management decisions, and which will allow it to direct resources to deliver on the vision of safe and trustworthy food.

More than 3,400 consumer complaints were handled by the Advice Line in 2017, with more than one-third of those complaints regarding unfit food. Overall, the number of complaints in 2017 represented a 6% increase on the 3,200 reported in 2016, with the number of complaints relating to non-display of allergen information up significantly, at 42%. A considerable increase was also noted among complaints relating to incorrect information on food labels, at 17%.

The majority of consumer concerns related to allergen information, which included a variety of non-compliance issues, such as a lack of allergen information available in restaurants; confused messages regarding the presence of particular allergens in food; a lack of awareness by food businesses of the legal requirement to display allergen information; allergens not being highlighted on a food label; and allergens being present in a food but not being indicated or displayed.

The categories of complaints were as follows:

- 1,233 complaints regarding unfit food
- 896 complaints regarding hygiene standards
- 808 complaints regarding suspect food poisoning
- 183 complaints regarding incorrect information on food labelling
- 103 complaints regarding non-display of allergen information
- 102 other.

Contamination of food with foreign objects was frequently reported by consumers; this included reports of food being contaminated with insects, glass, and other foreign objects. Examples of complaints received include several reports of chewing gum being present in a number of foods, including sandwich wraps, scrambled egg from a breakfast buffet, and takeaway rice. Other foreign objects found in foods were a long black hair in a sandwich, rodent droppings in a bag of crisps, a tooth in a takeaway dish, larvae in a jar of beetroot, a piece of glass in a smoothie, maggots in mashed potato, and a wasp in a packet of rashers.

Of those complaints regarding poor hygiene standards in food premises, rats, mice and flies were cited as being present in premises. Other complaints included poor personal hygiene habits of staff working in the food sector. Reports in this area cited staff wiping noses when preparing sandwiches, staff members picking up dropped food from the floor and then including the food to make a sandwich, and the smell of sewage in food premises. All complaints received by the Authority in 2017 were followed up and investigated by food inspectors throughout the country.

The Advice Line also offers advice and information, and during 2017 there were 9,576 queries from manufacturers; retailers; researchers; consultants; and people working in the food service sector. The most popular queries were regarding legislation on food labelling requirements and requests for Authority publications, as well as information for new food businesses setting up operations.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

With the publication of the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016)*, the Authority worked to achieve full compliance with the new Code over the course of 2017. The Authority also agreed its Service Level Agreement (SLA) with its lead Department, the Department of Health, and updated this SLA in line with the Code as an Oversight Agreement (OA) and a Performance Delivery Agreement (PDA). The Authority operated in full compliance with its tax obligations during the year.

In accordance with Section 41 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 and with the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995 and the Standards in Public Office Act, 2001, members of the Authority's Board, Scientific Committee, Scientific Subcommittees, and designated Authority staff are required to submit a declaration of interests annually. These are in turn submitted by the Authority to the Minister for Health and/or to the Standards in Public Office Commission, as appropriate.

The Authority had a fully functioning Board Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) in 2017. The ARC comprises three Board members and one independent member. The role of the ARC is to support the Board in relation to its responsibilities regarding issues of risk, control, and governance, and associated assurance. The ARC is independent from the financial management of the organisation; in particular, the Committee ensures that the internal control systems, including audit activities, are monitored actively and independently. The ARC undertook audits of internal financial controls, HR, and data protection during 2017. There were five ARC meetings in 2017, which exceeds the four required under the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016)*. The Financial Statements, as approved by the ARC and by the Board, were subject to audit by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General with a number of low-risk audit issues to be addressed during 2018. As described in the Authority's *Statement of Internal Control for 2017*, while there was a strong system of internal control in operation during the year, there is a need to further improve the Authority's procurement systems. This is being addressed during 2018.

In December 2016, the Board engaged in a Board Self-Effectiveness Review. The review was facilitated via electronic questionnaire and was followed up with a report to the Chairman, which the Board considered in 2017. The review found that the Authority's Board operated to a high standard, and made a number of recommendations for further improvement that the Board is actively considering.

Enforcement Policy

Negotiations on a new service contract with the Marine Institute concluded with agreement on a five-year contract from July 2017. A new service contract with the National Standards Authority of Ireland was signed with effect from August 2017.



Service contracts with other agencies were updated to reflect changes made by an Order by the Minister for Health under Section 5 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 to the list of food legislation to be enforced under the service contracts.

A new Regulation (EU) 2017/625 on official controls was published in March 2017. This Regulation outlines the rules for the performance by EU Member States of controls on the agri-food sector. In December 2019, it will replace existing official controls legislation, Regulations (EC) No 882/2004 and 854/2004. This Regulation will require changes in how food law is enforced, will form the basis of the next service contracts with all of the official agencies, and will require amendment of national official control legislation. During 2017, a programme of work to implement the Regulation commenced, including:

- The establishment of a steering group comprising the Authority, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and the Department of Health
- Input into the development of tertiary legislation (implementing and delegated EU Acts) in relation to Regulation 2017/625 at EU level
- Provision of information to the official agencies on the requirements of the Regulation.

During 2017, the Authority joined the EU Heads of Food Safety Agencies' steering group as well as six working groups to advise on the Regulation. The Authority is chairing the Heads of Food Safety Agencies' Working Group on Food Safety Laboratories, which commenced in 2017, and it is also participating in the other five working groups.



Enforcement Orders Published

In October 2017, the Authority announced that henceforth it would be publishing the full details of the Enforcement Orders served on food businesses. The Authority had been publishing the names of food businesses served Enforcement Orders for over a decade. However, its systems and processes now enable it to provide additional information which is in line with its objective to increase transparency as a regulator and to raise food safety and hygiene standards in food businesses. Enforcement Orders are served on food businesses only when a serious risk to consumer health has been established or where there are a number of ongoing serious breaches of food legislation.

A new Regulation (EU) 2017/625 will require changes in how food law is enforced, will form the basis of the next service contracts with all of the official agencies, and will require amendment of national official control legislation.

Other European engagement included:

- Continued participation in a working group on food safety indicators, which was established by the EU Heads of Food Safety Agencies. A final report and catalogue of indicators was published by this group.
- Participation in an EU working group in relation to compliance with EU rules on olive oil monitoring and reporting.

In 2017, the Authority published 69 Enforcement Orders (including Closure, Prohibition and Improvement Orders) served to food businesses for breaches in food safety legislation, a significant decrease on the 106 orders served in 2016. There was no obvious cause of the decrease, as inspection levels were unchanged. The Authority has noted the continuing public interest in the outcome of official controls and it has responded with the development (in-house and with the participation of official agencies) of an initiative to release the details of the orders served to food businesses. This has improved the transparency of the official controls process and has reduced the administrative burden on the Authority of requests for information under Freedom of Information legislation.

The Authority coordinated two audits by the European Commission (Santé F, formerly the Food and Veterinary Office) on food controls with the official agencies. These included a fact-finding mission on Internet sales of food, and an audit of import controls to evaluate the system of documentary checks at EU borders for food of animal and non-animal origin.

69

In 2017, the Authority published 69 Enforcement Orders (including Closure, Prohibition, and Improvement Orders) served to food businesses for breaches in food safety legislation.

Ireland is one of seven EU Member States that engaged with the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2017 in a 'Systems Recognition' exercise which assesses whether a country's food safety system and authorities provide an equivalent level of protection to that provided by another country. If systems recognition were achieved for the EU, Irish exporters would face less stringent food safety controls at individual plant level, thus enabling them to export to the US. In the case of three countries that have already achieved systems recognition (Canada, New Zealand and Australia), the number of food safety inspections has reduced dramatically. The Authority worked with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Health Service Executive and the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority to provide a detailed submission in December 2017. This submission allowed the FDA to perform a desktop assessment of Ireland's system of food safety controls in advance of the on-site assessment planned for 2018.

The first national Food Law Enforcement Policy, which was developed by a team in the Authority, was agreed with all official agencies during 2017 following a consultation process. It will be published in 2018.

The Authority provided a significant level of support to the official agencies during 2017, which included:

- Provision of cross-agency training workshops for inspectors on the requirements of the Food Information to Consumers (FIC) Regulation
- Provision of an information desk at a series of breakfast briefing events for the fishing industry, organised by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority
- Commencement of a series of five Shellfish Regional Information Events for the shellfish industry, with the support of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, the Marine Institute and Bord Iascaigh Mhara
- Participation in a training workshop in May 2017 on sampling and analysis requirements, organised by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine Organic Division for the organic control bodies, following up on a number of findings arising from a Santé F Organics Mission in 2016
- Development of a guidance document for industry in order to help businesses meet whiskey labelling requirements as part of compliance with the technical files for these products and with national and EU labelling and spirit drinks legislation. The guidance will be published in late 2018.
- Revision of *Guidance Note No. 25, Guidance for Enforcement of Legislation Applicable to: Natural Mineral Waters, Spring Waters and Other Bottled Waters* to reflect changes to EU and national legislation.

During May and June 2017, the Authority hosted cross-agency specialised training workshops for official agencies on the topic of thermal processing, with a particular focus on operations such as cooking and pasteurisation. Typically, these operations are complex, and consequently specialised technical training for inspectors is required in order to enable them to adequately assess the processes involved. More than 180 staff from the official agencies attended the two-day workshops. The training, which was delivered by a consortium including experts in this specialised field, covered both theoretical and practical aspects of these processes. The aim was to equip inspectors with sufficient knowledge and experience to effectively assess thermal processes and the controls employed by food business operators as part of their food safety management systems. Inspectors were provided with a detailed technical manual, case studies, exercises, and presentations on key topics. The workshops concluded with a formal examination, which all participants had to complete successfully. The training was recognised by the Veterinary Council of Ireland and it awarded Continuing Veterinary Education (CVE) credits to veterinary inspectors who attended the workshops.

The provision of specialised training of this kind was highlighted as a recommendation in a review that the Authority's Scientific Committee carried out and published on the Irish official control inspections system in 2016. Other recommendations referred to increased transparency and consistency of enforcement, areas where progress was also made in 2017 with the publication of details of Enforcement Orders and the development of the Food Law Enforcement Policy. The Authority has been working with official agencies to continually improve the inspection system. Progress on the recommendations was reviewed in December 2017 at a cross-agency meeting of senior representatives from the HSE Environmental Health Service, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Local Authority Veterinary Service, and the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority. The Authority appreciates the commitment of these partners to the further development of the official control system in future years.



■ Breakfast Bites

The Authority hosts a series of informal meetings for food businesses called *Breakfast Bites* each year. These events provide expert information on the topics people want to know more about. They are very helpful for those who own or work in a small food business and also for those who want to get a new food business off the ground. During 2017, the topics covered included an introduction to food labelling, food safety training requirements and allergen labelling.

Pictured at the *Breakfast Bite* on food labelling is Ms Anne-Marie Boland, Senior Technical Executive in Regulatory Affairs, Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

The first national Food Law Enforcement Policy, which was developed by a team in the Authority, was agreed with all official agencies during 2017 following a consultation process. It will be published in 2018.

Risk Management and Regulatory Affairs



The Risk Management and Regulatory Affairs (RMRA) functional area focuses on the reduction of harms in the food chain. This includes the management of food incidents involving dangerous or non-conforming food products in order to ensure their swift removal from the market, as well as to ensure the implementation of corrective actions to prevent recurrence of such incidents.



It also includes communication to consumers of risks associated with dangerous or non-compliant food products. The RMRA team worked closely with the official agencies and also with the food industry and the European Commission in managing the 640 food incidents which arose during the year and which resulted in the issuing of 24 food alerts and 30 food allergen alerts.

Acting as the contact point for the European Commission's Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), the team sent 68 notifications to RASFF about unsafe foods identified in Ireland. It followed up on a number of other notifications sent to the Authority by the European Commission, including notifications concerning the detection in eggs and egg products of the illegal substance fipronil. Of the more than 3,500 alert notifications sent to RASFF from across the EU in 2017, only 22 related to products originating in Ireland.

During 2017, the team assumed responsibility for managing the Authority's notifications system relating to the placement of food supplements on the market. The Authority received 2,100 food supplement notifications in 2017. Only 4.6% of these food supplements were manufactured in Ireland, while 44% were manufactured in the UK. In 2017, the team handled 91 food incidents relating to food supplements; this resulted in the issuing of four food alerts due to the presence of unauthorised substances, e.g. methylhexanamine (MHA), yohimbe, rauwolfscine HCL, and methandienone. With regard to food labelling, the team provided detailed responses to 185 labelling queries and resolved queries relating to other labelling and advertising issues raised through social media channels.

The team participated in an EU-coordinated programme, carrying out online searches from which 20 food supplements containing unauthorised novel ingredients were identified. Follow-up action was taken and newly developed guidance for business on e-commerce was published. In 2017, the team took action to ensure that 6 food supplements were not placed on the market, that 15 were withdrawn from sale and that 6 were recalled from the market. Of the 68 notifications from Ireland sent to RASFF, 19 concerned food supplements.

Other cross-EU activities included participation in the pilot stage of the EU labelling database whereby the database content was reviewed in order to ensure that it contained details of both EU laws and national laws on mandatory labelling requirements. The team was also involved in the organisation and planning of a two-day Food Law Enforcement Practitioners (FLEP) Workshop on the Official Control of Food Supplements, which took place in Brussels.

The team provided support to official agency staff in the form of guidance on food laws, publishing monthly website updates on new or revised legislation. It chaired a group which aims to improve the consistency of approaches in food law enforcement, and it also issued regular guidance bulletins on the controls on the importation of foods of non-animal origin.

The Veterinary Public Health team provided support to the Local Authority Veterinary Service and to the Audit and Investigations team on cases where foods of animal origin were involved. In addition, the team drafted a number of guidance documents and codes of practice, including a revised FAQs document on labelling of free-range poultry products which were impacted by restrictions on outdoor access due to an outbreak of avian flu.

During 2017, there was regular engagement between the RMRA team and the food sector and its various representative bodies. In addition, members of the RMRA team provided support services to the Authority's Retail Forum, Food Service Forum and Artisan Forum. RMRA team members also participated in European Commission and Heads of Food Safety Agencies working groups, thus contributing to the development and application of EU food laws. Additionally, the team provided support on the development of national food legislation. Another aspect of the RMRA team's work involved assisting with work associated with the Authority's Food Safety Consultative Council, which was reorganised in 2017 under the chairmanship of Mr Ray Bowe.

Continued training of official agency staff is critical and remained a priority in 2017. The RMRA functional area continued to develop its suite of e-learning modules, which are also used by the food sector. A new module, 'Food Additives – Labelling', was added to this resource, as well as an updated 'Food Information for Prepacked Foods' module. A total of 637 Authority e-learning modules were completed or used by staff in the official agencies via our learning management system, SafetyNet Learning, in 2017. More than 1,300 Authority e-learning modules were completed by users of the Authority's website.

The RMRA functional area avails of all opportunities to engage with the food sector and its influencers. The Training and Compliance team delivered two Food Safety Training Skills Workshops based on the Authority's *Guide to Food Safety Training Level 1*, resulting in a total of 24 managers/supervisors in the food industry being trained during the two workshops. Training courses developed and delivered to the inspectorate in 2017 included labelling training, specialised training on thermal processing techniques (185 participants), and allergen training (360 HSE staff). Five one-day workshops on food labelling were delivered to 152 HSE staff, and additional labelling training was provided for horticulture officers. Following invitations, presentations were made to industry groups and to conferences and seminars both in Ireland and internationally. The team also oversaw the participation of 46 Authority and official agency staff in the European Commission's Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) programme. Some 79 staff from Ireland's food control services participated in and obtained certificates on completion of BTSF's e-learning modules.

Audit and Investigations



In 2017, an official control audit was carried out in local authority-approved premises. The application of Commission Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005 on microbiological criteria for foodstuffs was a particular focus of this audit.



In addition, targeted audits were conducted on the following topics:

- Sheep identification, acceptance and traceability within slaughter plants
- Multiple retailers' management of food incidents, including food recalls and withdrawals
- The wild game food supply chain.

Three audit reports were published:

- *Targeted Audit of the Controls that Prevent Animal By-Products from Entering the Food Chain*
- *Targeted Audit of Allergen Information on Non-Prepacked Food*
- *Audit of Traceability in Food and Food Products of Animal Origin.*

The action plans to correct the findings generated during these audits were also published. These plans are updated as progress is made on closing out the individual findings.

The Audit and Investigations functional area also observed two EU Commission Directorate Santé F audits carried out in Ireland to assess the implementation of official controls. One audit covered import controls, while the second audit examined the Internet sale of food and foodstuffs. The US FDA also carried out a total of 12 inspections in Ireland during 2017. The outcome of these inspections resulted in continued access to the US market for the products produced by the food businesses inspected.

The Chief Executive of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland is a designated person under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014. In November 2017, a protected disclosure under the provisions of the 2014 Act was lodged with the Authority. The Audit and Investigations functional area commenced a detailed investigation into the information contained in the protected disclosure. This investigation was ongoing at year end.

The Audit and Investigations functional area, together with other State regulatory authorities and official agencies, conducted 37 investigations where breaches of food law and food fraud were suspected. These investigations were designed to determine the nature and extent of non-compliance with food law and related food fraud events. They required a variety of approaches, ranging from the execution of search warrants secured in the District Court under Section 49 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 to the monitoring of social media pages in cases where the operation of unauthorised food businesses was suspected. Together with An Garda Síochána, the Authority co-chaired a multi-agency team investigating the sale of illicit alcohol which had resulted in one person being blinded following the consumption of a counterfeit product containing methanol.

During the year, Authority staff participated with official agency staff at 12 multi-agency roadside checkpoints in six counties, organised by An Garda Síochána. Authorised officers from the relevant HSE Local Health Offices and local authorities also attended. A total of 241 vehicles were stopped and inspected, with follow-up action taken as required.

The Food Fraud Task Force is chaired by the Authority, and during 2017 three task force meetings were convened. This multi-agency, multidisciplinary forum continues to consider and report on issues that are likely to significantly impact on food fraud/authenticity, and to consider the current controls in place to deal with food fraud and their suitability to disrupt, detect and deter those involved. In 2017, Audit and Investigations functional area staff attended three meetings of the Cross-Border Task Force on Food Crime. They also attended three meetings of the Northern Region Multi-agency Checkpoint Forum, chaired by An Garda Síochána.

On behalf of the Authority, the Audit and Investigations functional area acts as the national food fraud contact point for the European Commission. During 2017, representatives attended two Food Fraud Network meetings. In addition, the European Commission's Administrative Assistance and Cooperation/Food Fraud Network database was monitored and any information that was relevant to Ireland was responded to.

The Authority signed an Information Sharing Agreement with the Food Industry Intelligence Network (FIIN) in 2017. FIIN currently represents a small number of very large food industry companies in the UK and Ireland, and it plans to expand its network further in 2018. Members share intelligence on food fraud, and FIIN also circulates an anonymised quarterly report to the members that have shared food industry intelligence. The Authority will be in a position to contribute to this process from 2018 onwards and also to receive the quarterly intelligence report.

The Authority, in collaboration with the Gardaí and Revenue's Customs Service, participated in the joint Europol/INTERPOL operation, OPSON. Returns submitted from Ireland to Europol indicated 14 seizures of foodstuffs, including alcohol, meat, chicken and a variety of jarred products.

During 2017, the European Heads of Food Safety Agencies decided to set up a number of working groups in preparation for the implementation of the new Regulation (EU) 2017/625 on official controls. Since then, an Audit and Investigations functional area representative has been participating in the working group on food fraud.

Food Science and Standards

The Food Science and Standards functional area focuses its work on expanding and analysing the evidence base and using it to conduct risk assessments, draft technical guidance for the food industry, and provide technical advice and support to Government policy-makers.



In the latter context, the team attended 42 expert meetings on behalf of the European Commission to support the development of European Commission food legislation which underpins the legal and policy work conducted by the Department of Health's Food Unit. Expert network meetings are also a feature of food science and standards collaboration with the European Food Safety Authority, and, in this context, members of the team actively participated in 10 network meetings covering emerging risks, microbiological risk assessment, genetically modified organisms, food contact materials, novel foods and zoonosis. On an international stage, the team contributed to five plenary meetings of the committees overseen by the Codex Alimentarius Committee. At these meetings, global food standards were agreed, including agreements on limits for contaminants; approvals of additives; approvals of dietetic foods; measures to combat antimicrobial resistance; and food hygiene standards.

Within the Authority, the Food Science and Standards functional area also conducts several competent authority functions in the area of notifications and approvals of certain foods. In 2017, there were 2,738 notifications of food supplements which were assessed for safety and health claims. A total of 94 foods used for special medical purposes were also assessed. In the area of novel foods, 8 full safety assessments were completed, 12 reviews of safety assessments in other EU Member States were carried out, and 21 substantial equivalence opinions were issued in 2017. The significant increase in assessment activity compared to 2016 was triggered by changes in the novel foods safety assessment system, which will be taken over by the European Food Safety Authority in 2018.

The Authority published the *2015 Data for Zoonoses in Ireland*, which compiles the results of thousands of tests carried out on nationwide samples of food and feed, as well as tests on material of animal or human origin, in an effort to determine the pattern and extent of infection by zoonotic pathogens transmitted to humans from animals. In addition, new data on nitrites in food, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, irradiated foods, fish speciation, and salt were generated in conjunction with official laboratories, and were shared with the European Commission, as required. *Guidance Note No. 24: 'Gluten-free' and 'Very Low Gluten' Declarations* was revised. A set of fact sheets on food safety and hygiene considerations around food donation were published, in conjunction with other teams in the Authority. Significant detailed work was carried out in order to update the Authority's guidelines, *Healthy Eating and Active Living for Adults, Teenagers and Children over 5 Years*, and bring these into line with the Department of Health's new healthy eating guidance. Work on updating the guidelines will continue into 2018.

The Authority's Scientific Committee signed off on four opinions in 2017. These were: maximum limits for vitamins and minerals in food supplements; safe cooking temperatures for beefburgers; the safety of fluoride and the foetus; and a total diet study of fluoride exposure from food and drink. These reports will be published in 2018.



Science Strategy 2017-2019

The Authority published its first *Science Strategy 2017-2019* in support of its corporate goal to further expand its scientific capacity and capability to underpin the provision of safe and trustworthy food for everyone. The Authority operates in a dynamic environment where the innovation cycles of the food industry are getting faster and today's consumers are more aware of the food that they eat and its safety, labelling and health impacts. Society has easy access to information and misinformation, and social media accelerates opinion-based conversation. The Authority therefore needs to have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of these changes in order to enable it to detect both existing and emerging hazards in the food chain, establish risks using a balance-of-evidence approach, and communicate these risks clearly to consumers and the food industry. The Strategy encompasses its scientific work in the areas of communication, regulation, risk management and risk assessment.

✓ AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD
www.fsai.ie/publications

Three training workshops on allergen labelling and the use of the Authority's online MenuCal tool were organised by the Authority for HSE environmental health officers.

In conjunction with the Department of Health, the Authority hosted the meeting of the World Health Organization Action Network on Salt Reduction in the Population in the European Region, which was held in Dublin for the first time. In addition, in 2017, members of the Food Science and Standards team delivered three international and six national presentations on scientific aspects of food safety and nutrition. They also delivered 11 lectures to graduate and postgraduate scientists at third-level institutions.

The Authority published its first *Science Strategy 2017-2019* and a detailed action plan was developed to deliver on its objectives.

Finally, the team continued to support the Authority's incident management activities by carrying out a total of 137 risk assessments during the year.

Strategic Goals and Achievements

Goal 1

LEAD A REGULATORY CULTURE WHERE EVERYONE IS PASSIONATE ABOUT ACHIEVING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS FOR FOOD

Underpinning this goal are five key objectives; in 2017, the Authority achieved the following against these objectives:

OBJECTIVE 1

Provide a framework for regulating food that is strategically planned and reviewed to encompass food safety and integrity, with enforcement that is proportionate, risk-based and effective

- 33 service contracts were in place with the official agencies in 2017, with new service contracts being signed with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and with the local authorities.
- 69 Enforcement Orders were issued and 11 prosecutions were taken against food businesses.
- A new Food Law Enforcement Policy was drafted following consultation with the other official agencies.
- The Authority participated in the Heads of Food Safety Agencies group meetings in order to exchange information and best practice on national official control systems, and met with its counterparts from China, Abu Dhabi, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Japan and Canada.
- The Authority continued to work closely with its counterparts in the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland in the management of food safety risks.
- 40 incidents of potentially fraudulent activities were investigated.
- The Authority received 2,738 food supplement notifications regarding food supplement labels, and carried out assessments on nutrition and health claims, foods for special medical purposes, genetically modified food, novel foods, and infant/follow-on formulas.
- In the area of novel foods, 8 full safety assessments and 12 reviews of safety assessments in other EU Member States were completed, and 21 substantial equivalence opinions were issued in 2017.
- A number of export certificates were issued; these were developed in partnership with the HSE.
- 640 food incidents were managed and 67 food alerts and allergen alerts were issued.
- Authority staff provided expert input into the development of legislation at the national and European levels.

OBJECTIVE 2

Operate a partnership approach to food regulation that engages with stakeholders and promotes innovative compliance solutions to raise standards

- A new Memorandum of Understanding with Bord Iascaigh Mhara was signed.
- The Authority continued to engage with key stakeholders, including *saferfood*, Revenue's Customs Service, An Garda Síochána, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Loughs Agency.
- Advice was provided to stakeholders in the areas of labelling, acrylamide, health claims, food supplements and many other issues.
- The Authority collaborated with a number of food businesses/associations in order to manage risks to consumers' health and interests.

OBJECTIVE 3

Strive for a world-class official control system that includes effective risk-based measures of performance, is verified through audits and delivers the best outcomes for consumers

- An Interagency Group on Official Controls continued to work on the recommendations from the *Review of the Official Control System in Ireland and Opportunities for Improvement: Report of the Scientific Committee of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland*.
- Four audits were carried out and a further three audit reports were published.
- The US FDA also carried out a total of 12 inspections in Ireland during 2017.

OBJECTIVE 4

Enhance our analysis, reporting and communication on the outcome of official controls

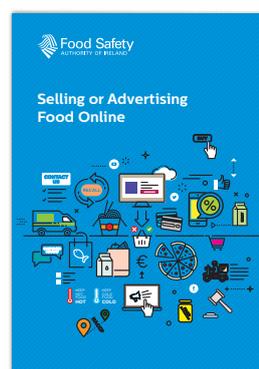
- The first phase of the implementation of the Authority's Data Strategy was progressed, which will ensure that the maximum value from the data collected is extracted, allowing the Authority to make robust decisions on future activities.
- The Authority presented the 2017 zoonosis data to the European Food Safety Authority.
- The publications *Safe Handling and Serving of Soft Ice-cream*; *Food Safety Workbook for Farmhouse Cheesemakers*; and *Selling or Advertising Food Online* were published.
- The *Annual Report on Ireland's National Control Plan, 2015* was submitted to the European Commission.

OBJECTIVE 5

Provide resources to our partners through training, advice and consultation

- The Authority's allergen audit findings led to the training of inspectors on what to look for in food businesses when carrying out inspections in order to determine compliance with allergen legislation.
- The Authority published *Guidance Note No. 24, 'Gluten-free' and 'Very Low Gluten' Declarations (Revision 1)*, which provides guidance on EU legislation governing voluntary information statements provided to consumers about the absence or reduced presence of gluten in food.
- The Advice Line responded to 9,576 queries, of which 3,400 were complaints from consumers regarding issues related to food that they had purchased or eaten.
- The *Interagency Protocol for the Management of a Food Crisis* (which supports the Authority and the Health Service Executive during an outbreak of foodborne illness) was updated to reflect learning from outbreaks that occurred in 2017. Other guidance materials on legislation and enforcement were also published in 2017.

- The Authority's Training and Compliance team developed and delivered training courses to staff in the official agencies in 2017, including labelling training, specialised training on thermal processing techniques (185 participants), and allergen training (360 HSE staff). Five one-day workshops on food labelling were delivered to 152 HSE staff, and additional labelling training was provided for horticulture officers.
- A total of 637 of the Authority's e-learning modules were completed or used by staff in the official agencies via our learning management system, SafetyNet Learning, in 2017. More than 1,300 Authority e-learning modules were completed by users of the Authority's website.
- A major allergen awareness campaign was run in the media in 2017 to raise awareness among food businesses and consumers on the legislation for allergens. Training courses were provided to HSE environmental health staff on allergen labelling and on the use of MenuCal.



Selling Food Online

The Authority published a new guide *Selling or Advertising Food Online* to help food businesses comply with their legislative requirements in order to safeguard consumer health and rights at all times. It sets out the information that must be provided to consumers by food businesses promoting or selling food online via websites or social media. It is the first guide that specifies what a business must do to comply with the law to ensure that consumers get the same information online, before making a purchase, as they would if they bought the product in a store.

It also highlights other legal requirements such as: registering a food business; temperature control during delivery; having a food traceability system in place; allergen information; and informing customers about product recalls.

✓ AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD
www.fsai.ie/publications

Goal 2

USE THE BEST SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, EVIDENCE AND EXPERTISE TO UNDERPIN POLICY AND RISK ANALYSIS IN RESPECT OF FOOD SAFETY

Underpinning this goal are six key objectives. In 2017, against these objectives, the Authority achieved the following:

OBJECTIVE 1

Underpin all decisions and advice with the best independent scientific knowledge, evidence and expertise

- The Authority's Scientific Committee agreed and published its five-year work programme and approved four opinions, which were sent to the Board and will be published in 2018.
- The Authority's *Science Strategy 2017–2019* was published and an implementation plan was developed.
- Research projects for the Environmental Protection Agency were reviewed and Authority staff participated in Horizon 2020 projects on food authenticity.
- The Authority's staff continue to participate in an advisory capacity in scientific projects related to the Authority's scientific activities.
- The Authority participated in the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's Research Advisory Committee in order to ensure that food safety and nutrition research receive adequate funding.
- A dairy supply chain vulnerability analysis project continued, in collaboration with *safe*food, the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland, Teagasc, and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.
- Authority staff trained in numerous scientific areas, including quantitative risk assessment, ready-to-eat foods, whole genome sequencing, epidemiology, and the HACCP system. Staff also attended scientific conferences on food microbiology, risk assessment, molecular methods, nutrition, food science and technology, and food preservation. Additionally, staff undertook internal auditor training, attended leadership courses and attained professional certification in dietetics. A number of students were also trained during 2017 in areas related to food science.

OBJECTIVE 2

Provide high-quality, independent, scientific advice to Government to inform and influence food policy within the areas of food safety, integrity and nutrition

- The Authority contributed to numerous Department of Health activities in the area of public health nutrition, e.g. fortification of foods with folic acid, drafting legislation regarding calories on menus, and scientific recommendations for healthy eating.
- The Authority contributed to the National Interdepartmental Antimicrobial Resistance Consultative Committee.
- The Authority became a member of the Department of Health's Obesity Policy Implementation Oversight Group (OPIOG) for the implementation of the *A Healthy Weight for Ireland: Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016–2025*. The Authority has also contributed its expertise to subgroups of the OPIOG.
- Staff provided input into the development of legislation in a number of areas, including pesticides, fertilisers, and processed cheese, and drafted a national position on chlorates.

OBJECTIVE 3

Provide timely, transparent, evidence-based risk assessments using the best available data and methods

- The Authority carried out 137 risk assessments in response to food safety incidents with regard to biological, chemical, nutritional and other food safety risks.

OBJECTIVE 4

Lead risk management and risk communication effectively and openly to promote trust and engagement

- The Authority continues to support the industry *Campylobacter* control programme in the poultry production and slaughter chain.
- Authority staff attended and participated in meetings of the European Commission's RASFF, including the Administrative Assistance and Cooperation/Food Fraud Network; the Heads of Food Safety Agencies group; and the European Food Safety Authority's Advisory Forum. There was no engagement with INFOSAN in 2017.
- During 2017, the Authority:
 - Supported responses to outbreaks of *Salmonella* and verocytotoxigenic *E. coli*.
 - Supported the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine interagency group on lead contamination in the Silvermines area of Co Tipperary.
 - Progressed the implementation of the recommendations of the Scientific Committee report *Potential for Transmission of Antimicrobial Resistance in the Food Chain*, engaged in European and international consultations and discussions, participated in the National Interdepartmental Antimicrobial Resistance Consultative Committee, and contributed to *Ireland's National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2017 - 2020*.
 - Developed the national chemical (residues, pesticides, contaminants, additives, nutritional, and compositional) and microbiological sampling plans in partnership with the official agencies. The Authority also reviewed the implementation of these sampling plans with the agencies.

OBJECTIVE 5

Lead in identifying and analysing current and emerging threats to food safety, and, where appropriate, to integrity and nutrition, including leveraging our partnerships in research, regulation and industry

- The Authority, in collaboration with Food Drink Ireland, held two meetings of the Emerging Risks and Threats Forum.
- During 2017, Authority experts collated Authority research priorities for *safe*food. Experts also contributed to the EU-funded projects Authent-Net and FoodIntegrity. Authority scientists also peer-reviewed Canada's *Food Guide*.

OBJECTIVE 6

Strengthen and develop our engagement with national, European and international food safety, integrity and nutrition partners, as appropriate, to ensure the delivery of robust advice and to underpin decision-making

- In 2017, the Authority:
 - Attended and participated in the Advisory Forum, the Emerging Risks Network, and other expert meetings of the European Food Safety Authority.
 - Supported the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and of the Codex Alimentarius Committees on Food Hygiene; Food Additives; Food Import and Export Certification and Inspection; Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses.
 - Supported the work of the International Commission on Microbiological Specifications for Foods through attendance at the International Commission on Microbiological Specifications for Foods meeting, and managed editorial tasks in the revision of *Microorganisms in Food 7*. The hosting of the International Commission on Microbiological Specifications for Foods' website was transferred to the Authority and updates were subsequently uploaded.
 - Presented at a number of International Union of Food Science and Technology conferences and workshops in Africa in order to promote the importance of science in the development of regulations.

Goal 3

CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE IRELAND IS A TRUSTED AND RECOGNISED LEADER IN FOOD SAFETY AND INTEGRITY

Underpinning this goal are five key objectives, and the Authority achieved the following against these objectives in 2017:

OBJECTIVE 1

Communicate openly, effectively and promptly on our work to foster trust and be an advocate for food safety and, where appropriate, integrity and nutrition

- The Authority dealt with 320 media queries during 2017; all were managed in a timely manner and accurate information was provided to the media.
- Authority staff gave 11 lectures to third- and fourth-year students in various national higher education institutions over the course of 2017.
- Six national and three international presentations at various events and conferences were given by Authority staff. Staff were also involved in the organising committees for a number of international conferences.
- Delegations from Japan and Dubai were facilitated by the Authority.
- The Authority also undertook a study visit to Vietnam to exchange information on Ireland's food safety system and to provide training in areas of interest to the Vietnamese official food inspectors.
- The Authority moved to a digital version of its newsletter in 2017 and published four editions of *FSAINews*, which is available to download on the Authority's website.
- The Advice Line answered 9,576 queries.
- Three 'Breakfast Bites' and one 'Small Food Business Start-Up Seminar' were held.
- A major conference on food integrity and authenticity took place in Dublin Castle in 2017. This conference was in partnership with *safe*food.

OBJECTIVE 2

Set standards that are practical and recognised globally, and implement a programme to attain those standards

- Authority staff continued to engage with the development of legislation during 2017 through engagement within the European Commission and with the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

OBJECTIVE 3

Work in partnership with consumer advocacy groups to address consumers' needs

- The Authority liaised with the Coeliac Society of Ireland in relation to the Authority's allergen information campaign.

OBJECTIVE 4

Create a network of leaders to champion food safety and integrity as a cornerstone for the success of the Irish food industry

- Meetings of the Food Safety Consultative Council were held during 2017 and a new work programme will be agreed in 2018.
- Meetings were also held with representatives from Irish food businesses to work through a number of risk management issues.
- Over the course of the year, the Authority chaired a number of meetings of the Artisan Forum, the Retail Forum, the Food Service Forum, the Emerging Risks and Threats Forum and the Molluscan Shellfish Safety Committee.
- The Authority participated in meetings of Food Drink Ireland's Regulatory and Environment Committee and provided updates on the regulatory activities of the Authority.
- The Authority's senior management also met with a number of companies during the course of 2017 on specific topics, particularly in the area of risk management.

OBJECTIVE 5

Build capacity and capability to allow Ireland to react and deal effectively with any national or international food incident or crisis

- This activity was postponed until 2018, in order to allow time for the development of a cross-country simulation exercise under the auspices of the European Heads of Food Safety Agencies, for which the European Commission has agreed to provide support.

Goal 4

DEVELOP OUR ORGANISATION WITH AN ETHOS THAT IS TRUE TO OUR VALUES

Five key objectives underpin this goal and in 2017 the Authority achieved the following against these objectives:

OBJECTIVE 1

Foster a culture of respect, integrity and humility, which is non-discriminatory and supports equality

- Work continued on embedding the Authority's values within the team.
- The Authority's Innovation team held a number of meetings to further develop the Authority's approach to innovation.
- Regular meetings of the Staff Committee were held during 2017, which facilitated discussions on numerous issues of relevance to staff, including the move to the new premises, which was completed in October 2017.

OBJECTIVE 2

Empower and inspire our team to deliver our work effectively and recognise achievements

- There was ongoing liaison with the Department of Health and other Government Departments in respect of IT, finance and HR – all of which are key elements of the Authority's ability to function effectively and efficiently.
- The Authority's recruitment needs were reviewed and recruitment progressed throughout the year in line with sanctions received.
- Salaries and benefits were implemented as appropriate and in line with Government policies.
- The Authority moved to new premises in October 2017, and this required a significant commitment from all Authority staff throughout the year.
- A number of initiatives under the Life@FSAI Health and Wellbeing Framework, developed by the Staff Committee and endorsed by the Senior Leadership Team, took place during 2017.
- Regular meetings of the Health and Safety Committee took place and the annual work programme was implemented. An audit was conducted by the Health and Safety Authority during the year and minor findings have been addressed.

- Team-building activities were organised, including support for a team from the Authority participating in the Staff Relay Series event in the Phoenix Park, Dublin.
- A draft HR Strategy was prepared and elements have been progressed; however, due to resource constraints, full implementation will be carried forward to 2018.
- A new electronic HR system was rolled out to all staff in 2017.
- Performance management in the Authority is operated in line with current guidelines. Training and development requirements are identified and forwarded to HR to develop organisational training plans.
- The Authority hosted a number of students throughout the year across all functional areas.
- A coaching programme for management was rolled out to a number of staff in 2017.

OBJECTIVE 3

Commitment to better communication, continual improvement, competency development and creating innovative opportunities

- The Internal Communications Policy was finalised following consultation with staff.
- Throughout the year, regular staff meetings and quarterly staff seminars were held. In addition, the Senior Leadership Team met twice a month on average to discuss issues and make decisions on key areas for the organisation. Functional area, team, and project meetings were also held with all teams on a monthly basis.
- A new Intranet system, 'Our Space', was rolled out in 2017 and all staff were trained on the new system.
- A number of project briefings were held throughout the year. Project briefings are recognised as a key mechanism for informing the staff of the activities of the organisation which they may not be directly involved in.

OBJECTIVE 4

Deliver a robust system of corporate governance to ensure accountability, transparency and public value

- The *Food Safety Authority of Ireland Corporate Governance Framework 2011* is based on the 2009 *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies* and the Authority complied with the elements of the framework in 2017, including the development of the new strategy, the production of the Annual Report and the management of risk. The Board membership is now complete and the Board Subcommittees are in place and functioning. A number of internal audits were undertaken throughout the year and the closeout of the findings is managed by subject matter experts within the Authority. Further work on ensuring that the Authority's risk management framework was compliant with the Code of Practice took place in 2017.
- The Authority also tendered for Board Auditors and appointed a company to carry out internal audits on behalf of the Board.
- The Authority's Risk Register was reviewed during the year and is available on the Intranet. Risk is a standing item on the Senior Leadership Team meeting agenda. In addition, a full review of the Authority's Risk Management Policy and Framework was undertaken by external auditors. The recommendations from this work will guide the review of the Authority's Risk Management Policy and Framework and the Risk Register.
- During 2017, there were 37 Freedom of Information requests, 2 requests under Access to Information on the Environment legislation, and 31 Parliamentary Questions. All requests were answered in a timely manner and in accordance with the relevant legislation.
- The Authority began assessing the impact of the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 with a view to identifying what actions the Authority needed to take in order to be compliant with the new regulations.
- There was one protected disclosure made under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 in 2017.

OBJECTIVE 5

Implement and develop management systems that will enable our team to meet and exceed legal and corporate governance requirements

- A document management solution was launched in 2017 and will be fully functional in 2018.
- In 2017, registration was maintained to the ISO 9001:2008 standard for the Authority's Quality Management System. Following an external and management review of the Authority's Quality Management System, the decision was taken to progress towards achieving certification to the ISO 9001:2015 standard in 2018.
- A paperless finance system was implemented during 2017, with all staff trained on the system by year end.

Goal 5

ADOPT A DIGITAL-FIRST APPROACH TO MAXIMISE ACCESSIBILITY, EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Underpinning this goal are five key objectives; in 2017, we achieved the following against these objectives:

OBJECTIVE 1

Develop intelligent and targeted information systems to improve communication, process workflows and service delivery

- A business continuity and disaster recovery infrastructure was fully implemented in 2017.
- Software development applications to support business activities were updated and further delivered in 2017.
- The Authority's website, www.fsai.ie, was maintained and we ensured that it was up to date and accessible on all devices for all users.
- The specifications for the IT requirements for the Data Strategy projects were progressed in 2017.
- SAP BusinessObjects analytical and report delivery solutions were explored and solutions implemented in order to automate reports.
- Active two-way engagement with our stakeholders was achieved with increased followers on social media platforms such as Facebook, with 8,519 followers (2016=6464); Twitter, with 5,614 followers (2016=4611); and LinkedIn, with 8,210 followers (2016=6230).

OBJECTIVE 2

Enhance how we gather and use data to better understand the environment in which we operate and inform decision-making

- Phase 1 of the Authority's data strategy was further progressed during 2017, with a significant amount of work on the data architecture being completed.
- The Authority's library resources are available for staff and external users, and all of the electronic resources were assessed and updated in line with organisational needs.
- All Advice Line queries were responded to in line with the Authority's Customer Charter.
- An online customer needs survey and Advice Line assessment, which were completed in 2016, led to a more strategic focus on written communications with our customers in 2017.

OBJECTIVE 3

Further enhance customer accessibility and engagement through the use of technology

- In 2017, the Authority was successful in implementing an electronic planning application (Trello).
- The IT team supported the updating of key databases that the Authority requires in order to carry out its functions.
- The IT team provided connectivity to the internal Intranet via iPads, which ensures that the team can access key documentation while off-site.
- An off-site disaster recovery system is now fully available to the Authority should it be required in the future.
- The Authority is moving towards using less paper in its day-to-day activities, which is enabled through the full implementation of the document management system facilitated through the Authority's Intranet, 'Our Space'.

OBJECTIVE 4

Utilise technology as a foundation for innovation

- Following the seminar on innovation with the Staff Committee, an Innovation team has been established and will progress work in 2018 on embedding innovation as a core value within the Authority's activities for the future.
- The Authority continues to use webinars, e-learning tools and MenuCal as innovative tools for increasing compliance with food legislation.
- The Authority further developed its use of webinar technology to record presentations and training exercises. Examples of webinars included the use of food additive checklists and the Official Agency Premises Inspections FAQs document via SafetyNet, the food safety inspectorate's Intranet run by the Authority.

OBJECTIVE 5

Explore Big Data to help us do our job better

- The Authority explored some external data sources for interoperability with its datasets. This work will continue into 2018 and will be aligned with the Authority's data strategy.

Appendix 1

Industry Fora Members

ARTISAN FORUM, 2017

Mr John Matthews (Chair)
Food Safety Authority of Ireland

Ms Darina Allen
Ballymaloe Cookery School

Ms Sally Barnes
Woodcock Smokery

Mr John Brennan
The Organic Centre

Ms Jeffa Gill
Durrus Cheese

Mr Michael Gleeson
Beekeeper

Mr Michael Healy
Game Expert

Mr Rupert Hugh-Jones
Farmer and Micro-brewer

Mr Sean Kent
Poultry Expert

Mr Donal Lehane
Food NPD Teo

Mr Hugh Maguire
Associated Craft Butchers of Ireland

Mr Pat Daly/Mr Eddie O'Neill
Teagasc

Mr Raymond O'Rourke
The TASTE Council

Mr Declan Ryan
Arbutus Bread

FOOD SERVICE FORUM, 2017

Ms Dorothy Guina-Dornan (Chair)
Food Safety Authority of Ireland

Mr Mark Anderson
Gather and Gather

Ms Louise Collins
Eddie Rocket's (IRL) Limited

Mr Pat Crotty
Vintners' Federation of Ireland

Mr Adrian Cummins
Restaurants Association of Ireland

Ms Martina Donohoe
Aramark

Mr Adam Heyes
Subway Ireland

Ms Louise Hickmott
McDonald's Restaurants of Ireland

Ms Helena O'Brien
Catering Management Association of Ireland

Mr Conor O'Kane
Irish Hotels Federation/Clayton Hotels

Mr Pat O'Sullivan
Irish Prison Service

Ms Manuela Spinelli
Euro-Toques Ireland

RETAIL FORUM, 2017**Ms Dorothy Guina-Dornan (Chair)**

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

Mr Ray Bowe

Musgrave Retail Partners

Ms Elizabeth Bowen

Retail Ireland/Ibec

Ms Paula Brock

Aldi

Ms Tara BuckleyRetail Grocery Dairy &
Allied Trades Association (RGDATA)**Ms Selena Burke**

Avoca

Mr Gareth Coburn

Pallas Foods

Ms Mary Daly

Dunnes Stores

Ms Diane Fox

BWG Foods

Mr Jonathan Halls

Boots Ireland

Ms Ciara Kane

Lidl Ireland

Ms Lynda Kenny

Musgrave Wholesale/Daybreak

Mr Rob McEvoy

Topaz Energy Ltd

Ms Aisling McGough

Tesco Ireland

Ms Sharon Murphy

Barry Group

Ms Caroline O'Connor

Gala Retail Services Limited

Ms Trish Twohig

Iceland Foods

Mr Peter Wight

Marks and Spencer

**MOLLUSCAN SHELLFISH
SAFETY COMMITTEE, 2017****Mr David Lyons (Chair)**

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

**Mr Dave Clarke/Mr Bill Doré/
Mr Conor Duffy/Dr Jeffrey Fisher/
Dr Sinead Keaveney/Mr Joe Silke**

Marine Institute

Ms Patricia Daly/Ms Vicky Lyons

Bord Iascaigh Mhara

**Mr Paul Duane/Mr Brian Nolan/
Mr Bernard O'Donovan/Dr Micheál O'Mahony/
Ms Aileen O'Sullivan**

Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority

**Mr Richie Flynn (RIP)/Mr John Harrington/
Mr Ray Harty/Mr Pat Mulloy/Mr Finian O'Sullivan**

Irish Shellfish Association and Processing Industry

**Ms Valerie Hannon/Ms Kate Harrington/
Ms Maeve O'Reilly**

Irish Water

Mr Paul Hickey

Health Service Executive

Dr Sarah McLean

Loughs Agency

Ms Maria Meghen

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

Mr Liam Ó Súilleabháin

Environmental Protection Agency

*The Authority wishes to acknowledge the sad loss
in 2018 of Mr Richie Flynn, IFA Aquaculture Executive.*

Appendix 2

Scientific Subcommittee Members

BIOLOGICAL SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE, 2017

Dr Geraldine Duffy (Chair)

Teagasc

Dr Declan Bolton

Teagasc

Prof. Martin Cormican

National University of Ireland, Galway

Dr Bill Doré

Marine Institute

Ms Catherine Foye

Health Service Executive

Dr Patricia Garvey

Health Protection Surveillance Centre

Dr John Griffin

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Ms Bernadette Hickey

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Dr Kieran Jordan

Teagasc

Prof. Simon More

University College Dublin

Dr Eleanor McNamara

Health Service Executive

Dr Joanne O’Gorman

University College Dublin

Dr Micheál O’Mahony

Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority

Dr Helen O’Shea

Cork Institute of Technology

Dr Margaret O’Sullivan

Health Service Executive

Mr Ray Parle

Health Service Executive

Mr Kilian Unger

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Dr Theo de Waal

University College Dublin

Dr Paul Whyte

University College Dublin

Mr Vincent Young

Health Service Executive

CHEMICAL SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE, 2017

Dr Michael O’Keeffe (Chair)

Residues Expert

Dr Gabriel Beechinor

Health Products Regulatory Authority

Mr Alan Breen

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Dr Finbar Brown

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Dr Nigel Brunton

University College Dublin

Dr Claire Chambers

Toxicology Expert

Dr Colman Concannon

Environmental Protection Agency

Ms Catherine Cosgrove

Health Service Executive

Dr Enda Cummins

University College Dublin

Dr Martin Danaher

Teagasc

Dr Edel Duggan

Beaumont Hospital

Mr John Keegan

Health Service Executive

Prof. Joe Kerry

University College Cork

Dr Ita Kinahan

State Laboratory

Dr Evin McGovern

Marine Institute

Dr Declan McKernan

National University of Ireland, Galway

Dr Tara McMorrow

University College Dublin

Dr Breige McNulty

University College Dublin

Dr John Moriarty

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Mr Joe Silke

Marine Institute

PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION SUBCOMMITTEE, 2017

Ms Ita Saul (Chair)

Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin (retired)

Dr Teresa Bennett

Health Service Executive

Dr Clare Corish

University College Dublin

Prof. Albert Flynn

University College Cork

Dr Eileen Gibney

University College Dublin

Prof. Mairead Kiely

University College Cork

Prof. Barbara Livingstone

Ulster University (retired)

Prof. Fionnuala McAuliffe

University College Dublin

Dr Sinéad McCarthy

Teagasc

Prof. Malachi McKenna

St Vincent's University Hospital

Prof. Helene McNulty

Ulster University

Dr Emeir McSorley

Ulster University

Dr Anne Nugent

University College Dublin

Dr Claire O'Brien

Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute

Dr Dilip Rai

Teagasc

Dr Janette Walton

University College Cork

Prof. Mary Ward

Ulster University

Dr Katherine Younger

Dublin Institute of Technology

AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON ALLERGENS

Mr Ray Parle (Chair)

Health Service Executive

Dr Pdraig Burke

Public Analyst Laboratory, Galway

Dr Orla Cahill

Dublin Institute of Technology

Dr Ruth Charles

Consultant Paediatric Dietitian

Ms Bridann Griffin

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

Dr James McIntosh

safefood

Dr Pat O'Mahony

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

Dr Ciara Walsh

Dublin Institute of Technology

AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING TECHNOLOGY IN FOOD PROCESSING

Dr Mark Fenelon (Chair)

Teagasc

Dr PJ Cullen

Dublin Institute of Technology

Dr Geraldine Duffy

Teagasc

Prof. Alan Kelly

University College Cork

Dr James Lyng

University College Dublin

Dr Karl McDonald

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

Prof. Brian McKenna

University College Dublin (retired)

Dr Michael O'Keeffe

Residues Expert

Dr Seamus O'Mahony

University College Cork

Dr Pat O'Mahony

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

Prof. Brijesh Tiwari

Teagasc

Appendix 3

Statement of Board Members', Chief Executive Officer's, and Scientific Committee Members' Interests

For 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017

Board Member	Commercial Interests		Non-Commercial Interests	
	Name of Organisations	Nature of Interests	Name of Organisations	Nature of Interests
Mr Ciaran Byrne	None	–	None	–
Ms Mary Cullen	Agricultural land	–		
Mr Derek Cunningham	None	–	None	–
Prof. Albert Flynn	None	–	International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) Europe	Member, Board of Directors
Prof. Michael Gibney	Nestlé Research Centre	Consultancy	International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) Europe	Non-executive Director
	Cereal Partners Worldwide	Consultancy		
	Keelen & Co	Consultancy		
	Kerry Foods	Lecture		
Mr Martin Higgins	None	–	None	–
Ms Margaret Moran	None	–	Arthur Cox Solicitors	Two family members currently employed as solicitors by Arthur Cox
Ms Ros O'Shea	None	–	None	–
Dr Susan Quinn	None	–	None	–
Prof. Patrick Wall	Luxcel Biosciences (company sold early 2018)	Non-executive Director	Agri Aware The Mater Foundation	Non-executive Chair Non-executive Director
	Maperath Management Ltd Offers advice to Dawn Farm Food on food safety matters	Director		
	Independent Milk Laboratories	Chairman		
	Aryzta	Shares		
	Luxcel Biosciences Ltd	Shares sold early 2018		
	Dawn Farm Foods	Member of Food Safety Advisory Committee		
	Moypark Poultry	Member of Food Safety Advisory Committee Member of the Antibiotic Control Group		
	China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment	Member of the Scientific Advisory Committee		
Chief Executive Officer				
Dr Pamela A. Byrne	None	–	None	–

Scientific Committee Member	Commercial Interests		Non-Commercial Interests	
	Name of Organisations	Nature of Interests	Name of Organisations	Nature of Interests
Ms Paula Barry Walsh	None	–	None	–
Prof. Kevin Cashman	None	–	None	–
Dr PJ Cullen	None	–	None	–
Dr Geraldine Duffy	None	–	None	–
Dr Mark Fenelon	None	–	None	None
Prof. Albert Flynn	None	–	International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) Europe	Member, Board of Directors
Mr John Keegan	None	–	None	–
Prof. Brian McKenna	None	–	None	–
Dr Eleanor McNamara	None	–	None	–
Prof. Simon More	None	–	None	–
Dr Michael O'Keeffe	None	–	None	–
Dr Margaret O'Sullivan	None	–	None	–
Mr Redmond (Ray) Parle	None	–	None	–
Dr Donal Sammin	None	–	None	–
Ms Ita Saul	None	–	None	–

Appendix 4

Board Members' Biographies



1. Prof. Michael Gibney
2. Mr Ciaran Byrne
3. Ms Mary Cullen
4. Mr Derek Cunningham
5. Prof. Albert Flynn
6. Mr Martin Higgins
7. Ms Margaret Moran
8. Dr Susan Quinn
9. Ms Ros O'Shea
10. Prof. Patrick Wall

1. Prof. Michael Gibney (Chair)

Professor Michael Gibney, MAgrSc, MA, PhD, is Emeritus Professor of Food and Health at University College Dublin (UCD), a post he took up in 2006. He graduated from UCD with a MAgrSc in 1971, and took up a teaching fellowship at the University of Sydney's Veterinary School and was awarded a PhD in 1976. From there, he moved to human nutrition, with a lectureship at the University of Southampton Medical School in 1977 and then returned to Dublin to take up a post at Trinity College Dublin in the Department of Clinical Medicine as Professor of Nutrition. During that time, he served as Dean (Vice President) of Research. He served as President of the Nutrition Society from 1995 to 1998 and served on the EU Scientific Committee for Food from 1985 to 1997 and chaired the working group on nutrition. From 1997 to 2000, he served on the EU Scientific Steering Committee and was chair of its working group on BSE. He serves on the scientific committee of the Sackler Institute of Nutrition at the New York Academy of Sciences and was a participant in the Google Food Experience Innovation Laboratory.

2. Mr Ciaran Byrne

Mr Ciaran Byrne has served as a member of the HSE's Dublin North East Regional Health Forum (2009–2011), the Governing Authority of Dublin City University (2011–2014) and the university's Risk Management Committee. A public representative on Fingal County Council (2001–2014), he was Mayor in 2009/10, a member of the Council's Audit Committee (2011–2014), and a member of the Corporate Policy Group. He chaired the Fingal County Development Board (2004–2009). He was Chairman of the Fingal Leader Partnership 2009–2011. He was a founding member of the Board of the Balbriggan Enterprise and Training Centre 2000–2014. Ciaran has worked in Voluntary Service Overseas in London, in Glockenspiel software engineers and as a partner in STS management consultants in Dublin. He is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin (Economic and Social Studies) and holds master's degrees in science, in arts and in media from IADT.

3. Ms Mary Cullen

Mary Cullen is a Chartered Accountant. She attended Trinity College Dublin, where she studied Business, Economics and Social Studies (BESS) following which she joined Price Waterhouse, now PwC. She held a number of senior management roles with PwC, including responsibility for Partnership and Company Secretarial matters and Partner affairs. Mary is a member of the Foundation Board of the RDS and a Board member of the Children's University Hospital, Temple Street, Dublin. Previously, she was Chairperson of the Board of Cappagh National Orthopaedic Hospital, Dublin and a Board member of Beaumont Hospital, Dublin.

4. Mr Derek Cunningham

Mr Derek Cunningham is a communications consultant. Previously, he was Special Adviser to the former Tánaiste and Minister for Health and Children, Mary Harney, and Head of Communications with the Irish Farmers' Association. He is a former journalist with RTÉ television and radio. He is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin (TCD) and has postgraduate qualifications from TCD and Dublin City University. He served on an Advisory Group of the Information Society Commission and was Chairman of the RTÉ Audience Council.

5. Prof. Albert Flynn

Professor Albert Flynn, BSc, PhD (NUI, Galway) is Professor in Nutrition in the School of Food and Nutritional Sciences, University College Cork. He has served on the faculty of the University since 1981 and from 1993 to 1996 he was Dean of the Faculty of Food Science and Technology. He has published widely on human nutrition, public health and food safety, on a range of topics including nutritional intake and status of population groups, food safety risk assessment, food fortification and risk benefit assessment of nutrients. He has extensive experience in providing scientific advice on human nutrition and food safety issues related to food policy and regulation. He is currently Chair of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's Scientific Committee. He has also served as a member of the European Food Safety Authority's Scientific Committee and as Chair of its Panel for Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies from 2003 to 2012 and as a member of the Scientific Committee on Food of the European Commission from 1997 to 2003. Professor Flynn was reappointed to the Board on 21 April 2015.

6. Mr Martin Higgins

Martin was founding Chief Executive of *safefood*, the all-island food safety promotion board, and led the organisation from its foundation in 1998 until his retirement in 2014. Prior to that he was the first Director of Corporate Services in the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, having previously been a Principal Officer in the Department of Health, specialising in finance and health agency regulation. He has professional qualifications in accountancy, international regulation and governance and is a qualified mediator and executive and leadership coach. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute. Martin has in the past been a Board member of the Irish Medicines Board and of CORU – the health and social care professionals regulator. In 2015 he was appointed to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland. He currently chairs the audit committee of An Bord Pleanála and sits on the audit committees of COMREG and the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland.

7. Ms Margaret Moran

Margaret Moran was Head of the Home Economics Department and Lecturer in Food Studies in the former St Catherine's College of Education for Home Economics. For many years, she provided advisory services to Fáilte Ireland and worked as a Regional Food Advisor with Bord Bia. Her postgraduate qualifications include MSc Agr (Food Science) from University College Dublin, Certificate in Food Safety from University College Dublin, Diploma in Food Policy from City, University of London and Advanced Culinary Skills Certificates from Dublin Institute of Technology. She is a member of the International Federation for Home Economics and previously chaired the Food Security and Nutrition Programme Committee. Margaret currently provides consultancy services to various institutions and organisations within Teacher Education, Further Education and Consumer Education.

8. Dr Susan Quinn

Dr Susan Quinn, MICI, MRSC is Lecturer in the School of Chemistry, University College Dublin. She obtained her BSc Hons degree in 1997 and PhD in 2002 from University College Dublin and carried out postdoctoral studies in Trinity College Dublin from 2002 to 2005. Dr Quinn has previously served on the governing authority and finance committee of UCD. In September 2009, she joined the School of Chemistry and Chemical Biology and she obtained tenure in 2012. Her current research interests lie in the areas of functional nanomaterials and the chemistry of DNA.

9. Ms Ros O'Shea

Ros is a highly experienced business leader with a career spanning almost 20 years working with the Board and Executive of two of Ireland's largest and most respected companies: CRH plc, where she was Head of Group Compliance and Ethics, and Smurfit Kappa Group plc. She is a partner in Acorn Governance Solutions and, in addition to the Food Safety Authority Board, sits on the Board and Audit and Risk Committee of the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital, Dublin. She is Programme Director for the Diploma in Governance and Compliance at the Irish Management Institute and also runs programmes for the Institute of Directors, the Institute of Banking and Chartered Accountants Ireland on these topics. Ros has first class honours business and master's degrees from University College Dublin, a professional diploma in Corporate Governance from the Smurfit Graduate Business School, is an associate of the Institute of Tax and a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants. She is also author of the book *Leading with Integrity: A Practical Guide to Business Ethics*.

10. Prof. Patrick Wall

Professor Patrick Wall is Professor of Public Health in University College Dublin's School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sports Science. He was the first Chief Executive of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) and he was the second Chairperson of the European Food Safety Authority. He is a member of the International Scientific Advisory Committee of the China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment. He is a member of the management board of the Mater Foundation and Agri Aware. He qualified in veterinary medicine in University College Dublin and in human medicine in the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland. He has an MSc in infectious diseases from the University of London, an MBA from the Michael Smurfit School of Business and a Diploma in Corporate Governance from UCD. He is a Diplomat of the European College of Veterinary Public Health, a Member of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine of Ireland, a Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine in the UK and a Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. He is Chairperson of the management board of Independent Milk Laboratories and of Horse Sport Ireland.

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Governance Statement and Board Members' Report

For the year ended 31 December 2017

GOVERNANCE

The Board of the the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) was established under the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998. The functions of the Board are set out in Section 31 of the Act. The Board is accountable to the Minister for Health and is responsible for ensuring good governance, and performs this task by setting strategic objectives and targets and taking strategic decisions on all key business issues. The regular day-to-day management, control and direction of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland are the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the senior management team. The CEO and the senior management team must follow the broad strategic direction set by the Board, and must ensure that all Board members have a clear understanding of the key activities and decisions related to the entity, and of any significant risks likely to arise. The CEO acts as a direct liaison between the Board and management of the Authority.

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

The work and responsibilities of all those associated with the operation of the Board are set out in the Code of Practice for Board members, Chairperson, Chief Executive and Secretary. The Code also sets out the matters specifically reserved for Board decision. Standing items considered by the Board include:

- Declaration of interests
- Reports from committees
- Financial reports/management accounts
- Performance reports
- Reserved matters.

The Food Safety Authority Act, 1998, Section 26 (5), requires the Board of the Authority to prepare Financial Statements in such form as may be approved by the Minister for Health with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, all proper and usual accounts of money received and expended by it.

In preparing these Financial Statements, the Board of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- Prepare the Financial Statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Authority will continue in operation
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the Financial Statements.

The Board confirms that it has complied with the above requirements in preparing the Financial Statements.

The Board is responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Authority and which enable it to ensure that the Financial Statements comply with Section 26 of the Act. The maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information on the Food Safety Authority's website is the responsibility of the Board.

The Board is responsible for approving the annual plan and budget. There is an ongoing evaluation of the performance of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland by reference to its annual business plan and budget. The Board is also responsible for safeguarding its assets and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Board considers that the Financial Statements of the Authority give a true and fair view of the financial performance and the financial position of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland at 31 December 2017. The Board approved the signing of this statement and the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2017 on 19 June 2018.

The Board consists of a Chairperson and nine ordinary members, all of whom are appointed by the Minister for Health. The members of the Board were appointed for a period of five years (previously three years) and meet eight times per annum. The table on page 61 details the appointment period for current members.

The Board has planned to commence an external Board Effectiveness and Evaluation Review in late 2018.

The Board has established one subcommittee, the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). The ARC comprises three Board members and one independent member. The role of the ARC is to support the Board in relation to its responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance and associated assurance. The ARC is independent from the financial management of the organisation. In particular the Committee ensures that the internal control systems including audit activities are monitored actively and independently. The ARC reports to the Board after each meeting.

The members of the ARC are Dr Susan Quinn (Chair), Ms Margaret Moran, Mr Ciaran Byrne and Mr Raymond Dolan. There were five meetings of the ARC in 2017.

Board Members	Role	Date Appointed	Additional Detail
Prof. Mike Gibney	Chairman	February 2013	
Prof. Patrick Wall	Ordinary Member	February 2016	
Prof. Albert Flynn	Ordinary Member	April 2015	
Dr Susan Quinn	Ordinary Member	October 2016	
Ms Margaret Moran	Ordinary Member	June 2017	Reappointed in 2017 for another term
Mr Ciaran Byrne	Ordinary Member	June 2017	Reappointed in 2017 for another term
Mr Derek Cunningham	Ordinary Member	June 2017	
Mr Martin Higgins	Ordinary Member	June 2016	
Ms Rose O'Shea	Ordinary Member	June 2016	
Ms Mary Cullen	Ordinary Member	June 2016	

SCHEDULE OF ATTENDANCE, FEES AND EXPENSES

A schedule of attendance at the Board and Committee meetings for 2017 is set out in Note 4(c) of the Financial Statements.

KEY PERSONNEL CHANGES

There were no changes to the membership of the Board during 2017.

DISCLOSURES REQUIRED BY CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF STATE BODIES (2016)

The Board is responsible for ensuring that the Authority has complied with the requirements of the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies* ('the Code'), as published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in August 2016. The following disclosures are required by the Code:

- Employee short-term benefits breakdown – set out in note 4(a) of the Financial Statements
- Consultancy costs – set out in note 4(h) of the Financial Statements
- Legal costs and settlements – set out in note 4(h) of the Financial Statements
- Travel and subsistence expenditure – set out in note 4(a) and 4(c) of the Financial Statements
- Hospitality expenditure – set out in note 4(f) of the Financial Statements.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

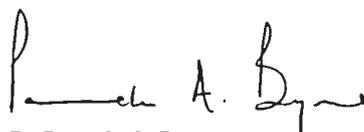
The Board has adopted the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016)* and has put procedures in place to ensure compliance with the Code. The Food Safety Authority of Ireland operated in compliance with the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies* for 2017.

On behalf of the Board of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland:



Mr Martin Higgins

Chairman
11 July 2018



Dr Pamela A. Byrne

Chief Executive Officer
11 July 2018

Statement on Internal Control

For the year ended 31 December 2017

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

On behalf of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI), we acknowledge the Board's responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal control is maintained and operated. This responsibility takes account of the requirements of the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016)*.

PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a tolerable level rather than to eliminate it. The system can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or detected in a timely way.

The system of internal control, which accords with guidance issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, has been in place in the Authority for the year ended 31 December 2017 and has been maintained up to the date of approval of the Financial Statements. In addition, the Board is provided with further assurance as to the quality of the Authority's internal control as the FSAI is certified to the Quality Management System Standard ISO 9001:2008. This Standard confirms that the Authority operates a set of policies, processes and procedures appropriate for planning and execution of its core business.

CAPACITY TO HANDLE RISK

The FSAI has an Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) comprising 3 Board members and 1 external members, with financial and audit expertise. The ARC met 5 times in 2017.

The FSAI has an internal audit function as defined in the Board's Charter for Internal Audit. The Authority has outsourced its Internal Audit Function to BDO Ireland. The work of the internal audit function is informed by analysis of the risk to which the body is exposed and annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. The analysis of risk and the internal audit plans have been endorsed by the ARC and approved by the Board. The Internal Auditor provides the Board with reports of internal audit activity.

The ARC has developed a risk management policy that sets out risk management processes and details the roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to risk. The policy has been issued to all staff who are expected to work within the Authority's risk management policies, to alert management on emerging risks and control weaknesses and assume responsibility for risks and controls within their own area of work.

RISK AND CONTROL FRAMEWORK

The FSAI has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, to mitigate those risks.

A risk register is in place which identifies the key risks facing the Authority and these have been identified, evaluated and graded according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the ARC on a quarterly basis. The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level.

The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibility for operation of controls assigned to specific staff. We confirm that a control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- procedures for all key business processes have been documented,
- financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability,
- there is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget which is kept under review by senior management,
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the information and communication technology systems,
- there are systems in place to safeguard the assets, and
- control procedures over the use of grant monies and the allocation of funding to outside agencies to ensure adequate control over approval of such monies so as to ensure grant funding has been applied for the purpose intended.

The FSAI makes payments to local authorities in relation to the provision of veterinary services. Annual service contracts are agreed with local authorities. Payments are based on quarterly claims from the local authorities based on activity levels.

ONGOING MONITORING AND REVIEW

Formal procedures which have been established for monitoring control processes and control deficiencies are communicated to those responsible for taking corrective action and to management and the Board, where relevant, in a timely way. We confirm that the following ongoing monitoring systems are in place:

- key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies,
- reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned, and
- there are regular reviews by senior management of periodic and annual performance and financial reports which indicate performance against budgets/forecasts.

PROCUREMENT

We confirm that the FSAI has procedures in place to ensure compliance with current procurement rules and guidelines and that during 2017, the FSAI complied with those procedures with the exception of expenditure of €126,067 on two contracts:

- One contract (€44,395) related to the provision of cleaning services on an expired contract. The FSAI plans to go to tender during 2018 for cleaning services.
- The other contract related to project management services totalling €81,672 provided by a third party in relation to the FSAI's re-location in October 2017. A specification of requirements was provided by the Authority to a number of property management companies and recruitment agencies, and, arising from this process, the most suitable provider was selected and a contract entered into. The contract ceased in June 2018.

The FSAI intends to conduct a full review of its procurement processes in 2018.

REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

We confirm that the Authority has procedures to monitor the effectiveness of its risk management and control procedures. The FSAI's monitoring and review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal and external auditors and the Audit and Risk Committee which oversees their work and the senior management within the Authority for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

We confirm that the Board conducted an annual review of the effectiveness of the internal controls for 2017 in January 2018.

INTERNAL CONTROL ISSUES

There were no internal control weaknesses identified during 2017 other than those disclosed in the procurement paragraph above.

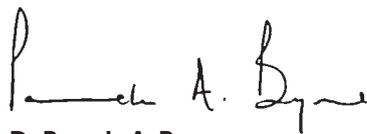
On behalf of the Board of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.



Mr Martin Higgins

Chairman

11 July 2018



Dr Pamela A. Byrne

Chief Executive Officer

11 July 2018

Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General

Report for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas

QUALIFIED OPINION ON FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

I have audited the Financial Statements of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland for the year ending 31 December 2017 as required under the provisions of Section 26 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998. The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 102 – The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, and comprise:

- The statement of income and expenditure and retained revenue reserves
- The statement of financial position
- The statement of cash flows and
- The related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, except for the non-compliance with the requirements of FRS 102 in relation to retirement benefit entitlements referred to below, the Financial Statements give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland at 31 December 2017 and of its income and expenditure for 2017 in accordance with FRS 102.

BASIS FOR QUALIFIED OPINION ON FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

In compliance with the directions of the Minister for Health, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland accounts for the costs of retirement benefit entitlements only as they become payable. This does not comply with FRS 102 which requires that the Financial Statements recognise the full cost of retirement benefit entitlements earned in the period. The effect of the non-compliance on the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's Financial Statements for 2017 has not been quantified.

I conducted my audit of the Financial Statements in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) as promulgated by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions. My responsibilities under those standards are described in the appendix to this report. I am independent of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the standards.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

REPORT ON INFORMATION OTHER THAN THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, AND ON OTHER MATTERS

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland has presented certain other information together with the Financial Statements. This comprises the annual report, the governance statement and Board members' report and the statement on internal control. My responsibilities to report in relation to such information, and on certain other matters upon which I report by exception, are described in the appendix to this report.

I have nothing to report in that regard.



Patricia Sheehan

For and on behalf of the
Comptroller and Auditor General
19 July 2018

APPENDIX TO THE REPORT

Responsibilities of Board members

The governance statement and Board members' report sets out the Board members' responsibilities. The Board members are responsible for:

- The preparation of Financial Statements in the form prescribed under Section 26 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act 1998
- Ensuring that the Financial Statements give a true and fair view in accordance with FRS 102
- Ensuring the regularity of transactions
- Assessing whether the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate, and
- Such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of Financial Statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

I am required under Section 26 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998 to audit the Financial Statements of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and to report thereon to the Houses of the Oireachtas.

My objective in carrying out the audit is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Financial Statements as a whole are free from material misstatement due to fraud or error. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these Financial Statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the ISAs, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. In doing so,

- I identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the Financial Statements whether due to fraud or error; design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks; and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- I obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal controls.
- I evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures.
- I conclude on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, on whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my report to the related disclosures in the Financial Statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Food Safety Authority of Ireland to cease to continue as a going concern.
- I evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the Financial Statements, including the disclosures, and whether the Financial Statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Information other than the Financial Statements

My opinion on the Financial Statements does not cover the other information presented with those statements, and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the Financial Statements, I am required under the ISAs to read the other information presented and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the Financial Statements or with knowledge obtained during the audit, or if it otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

Reporting on other matters

My audit is conducted by reference to the special considerations which attach to State bodies in relation to their management and operation. I report if there are material matters relating to the manner in which public business has been conducted.

I seek to obtain evidence about the regularity of financial transactions in the course of audit. I report if there is any material instance where public money has not been applied for the purposes intended or where transactions did not conform to the authorities governing them.

I also report by exception if, in my opinion,

- I have not received all the information and explanations I required for my audit, or
- The accounting records were not sufficient to permit the Financial Statements to be readily and properly audited, or
- The Financial Statements are not in agreement with the accounting records.

Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves

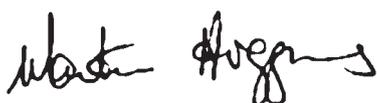
For the year ended 31 December 2017

		2017	2016
	Notes	€'000	€'000
Income			
Oireachtas Grant	2	17,924	15,250
Other Income	3	580	669
Operating Income		18,504	15,919
Expenditure			
Administration, Operations & Promotion	4	10,030	8,459
Communications Activities	5	527	471
Depreciation of Fixed Assets	6	591	235
Local Authority Veterinary Service	7	6,041	6,554
Total Expenditure		17,189	15,719
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year before Appropriations			
Transfer from/(to) the Capital Account	8	(2,142)	83
Profit or Loss on Disposal		(17)	0
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year after Appropriations		(844)	283
Balance at 1 January		555	272
Balance at 31 December		(289)	555

The Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

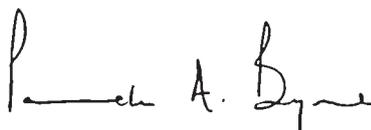
The Statement of Cash Flows and notes 1 to 14 form part of these Financial Statements.

On behalf of the Board of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland:



Mr Martin Higgins

Chairman
11 July 2018



Dr Pamela A. Byrne

Chief Executive Officer
11 July 2018

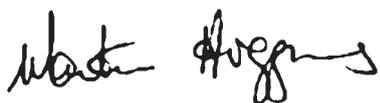
Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 December 2017

		2017	2016
	Notes	€'000	€'000
Non-Current Assets			
Property, Plant and Equipment	6	2,329	169
Intangible Assets	6 (a)	57	75
Current Assets			
Receivables	9	248	469
Cash and Cash Equivalents		94	339
Net Current Assets		342	808
Current Liabilities (amounts falling due within one year)			
Payables	10	631	253
Net Current Assets/Liabilities		(289)	555
Total Assets less Liabilities before Pensions		2,097	799
Representing			
Capital Account	8	2,386	244
Retained Revenue Reserves		(289)	555
		2,097	799

The Statement of Cash Flows and notes 1 to 14 form part of these Financial Statements.

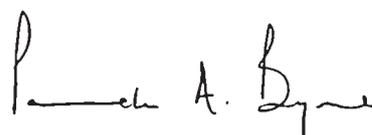
On behalf of the Board of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland:



Mr Martin Higgins

Chairman

11 July 2018



Dr Pamela A. Byrne

Chief Executive Officer

11 July 2018

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 31 December 2017

		2017	2016
	Notes	€'000	€'000
Net cash inflow from operating activities			
(Deficit)/Excess Income over Expenditure		1,315	200
Depreciation and Impairment of Fixed Assets	6	591	235
(Increase)/Decrease in Receivables	9	221	(32)
Increase/(Decrease) in Payables	10	378	(26)
Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities		2,505	377
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
Payments to acquire Plant & Equipment	6	(2,684)	(99)
Payments to acquire Intangible Assets	6 (a)	(66)	(53)
Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities		(2,750)	(152)
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents		(245)	225
Cash and Cash Equivalents at 1 January		339	114
Cash and Cash Equivalents at 31 December		94	339

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The basis of accounting and significant accounting policies adopted by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland are set out below. They have been applied consistently throughout the year and for the preceding year.

(a) General Information

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland was set up under the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998, with a head office at The Exchange, George's Dock, IFSC, Dublin 1.

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland's primary objectives as set out in Part II of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act are as follows:

To take all reasonable steps to ensure that:

- (i) food produced in the State (whether or not distributed or marketed in the State), and
- (ii) food distributed or marketed in the State meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene reasonably available and it shall, in particular, take all reasonable steps to ensure that such food complies
 - (a) with food legislation in respect of food safety and hygiene standards, or
 - (b) where appropriate, with the provisions of generally recognised standards or codes of good practice aimed at ensuring the achievement of high standards of food hygiene and food safety.

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland is a Public Benefit Entity (PBE).

(b) Statement of Compliance

The Financial Statements of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland for the year ended 31 December 2017 have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102, the financial reporting standard applicable in the UK and Ireland issued by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), as promulgated by Chartered Accountants Ireland.

(c) Basis of Preparation

The Financial Statements have been prepared under the accruals method of accounting, except as stated below, and under the historical cost convention in the form approved by the Minister for Health with the concurrence of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform under Section 26(5) of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998. The accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland's Financial Statements.

(d) Capital Funding

The fixed assets of the FSAI are funded from a combination of capital grants and allocations from current revenue. Funding sourced from grants is transferred to a capital account which is amortised in line with the depreciation of the related assets.

(e) Revenue

Oireachtas Grants

Revenue is generally recognised on an accruals basis; one exception to this is in the case of Oireachtas Grants which are recognised on a cash receipts basis.

Other Revenue

Other Revenue is recognised on an accruals basis.

(f) Plant and Equipment

Plant and Equipment are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation, adjusted for any provision for impairment. Depreciation is provided on all Plant and Equipment at rates estimated to write off the cost less the estimated residual value of each asset on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives, as follows:

(i) Leasehold Improvements	15% per annum
(ii) Computer Equipment	33% per annum
(iii) Office Furniture	15% per annum
(iv) Office Equipment	15% per annum
(v) Scientific Equipment	15% per annum

Residual value represents the estimated amount which would currently be obtained from disposal of an asset, after deducting estimated costs of disposal, if the asset were already of an age and in the condition expected at the end of its useful life.

If there is objective evidence of impairment of the value of an asset, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves in the year.

Intangible Fixed Assets are shown at their net book value having been depreciated at 33% on a straight-line basis.

(g) Receivables

Receivables are recognised at fair value.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

(h) Operating Leases

Rental expenditure under operating leases is recognised in the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Retained Revenue Reserves over the life of the lease. Expenditure is recognised on a straight-line basis over the lease period, except where there are rental increases linked to the expected rate of inflation, in which case these increases are recognised when incurred. Any lease incentives received are recognised over the life of the lease.

(i) Employee Benefits

Short-term Benefits

Short-term benefits such as holiday pay are recognised as an expense in the year, and benefits that are accrued at year-end are included in the payables figure in the Statement of Financial Position.

Retirement Benefits

A superannuation scheme has been approved by the Minister in accordance with Section 39 of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998. The scheme provides for a contributory defined benefit pension scheme for all employees. Deductions from salaries are retained and are treated as income by the Authority. The Department of Health's annual grant to the Authority is net of the deductions retained. By direction of the Minister for Health no provision has been made in the Financial Statements for future pension liabilities. Payments under the scheme are charged to income and expenditure and retained reserves when paid.

The Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012 became law on 28 July 2012 and introduced the new Single Public Scheme ('Single Scheme') which commenced with effect 1 January 2013. All new employees to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, who are new entrants to the Public Sector, on or after 1 January 2013, are members of the Single Scheme. Single Scheme members' contributions are paid over to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

(j) Local Authority Veterinary Scheme

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland provides funding to Local Authorities in relation to the provision of veterinary services. The Authority received funding from the Department of Health (as part of its annual determination) in this regard.

Funding received from the Department of Health and amounts paid to Local Authorities are recognised on cash received and cash paid basis.

(k) Key Estimates and Judgements

The preparation of these Financial Statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities at the reporting date and the amounts reported for income and expenditure during the year. Judgements and estimates are continually evaluated and are based on historical experiences and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The nature of estimation, by definition, means that the actual results may differ from the estimates made. The estimates and assumptions that can have a material effect on the amounts recognised in the Financial Statements are set out below:

- (i) **Establishing useful lives for depreciation purposes of equipment and leases.** Equipment and leases comprise a significant portion of the Authority's assets. The annual depreciation charge depends on the estimated useful lives of each type of asset. Given the relative short-term nature of the equipment assets, the estimation of the useful life of these assets is subject to regular review. Details of the useful economic lives is included in the accounting policies.
- (ii) **Establishing useful economic lives for amortisation purposes of capital grants.** The annual amortisation charge depends primarily on the estimated useful lives of each type of asset. The useful economic lives are subject to regular review. Details of the useful economic lives are included in the accounting policies.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

2. OIREACHTAS GRANTS

The Oireachtas Grants voted to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland from Vote 38, Department of Health as shown in the Financial Statements consist of:

	Subhead	2017	2016
		€'000	€'000
Grants for Current Expenditure	E.1	15,424	15,250
Grant for Capital Expenditure	L.1	2,500	0
Total		17,924	15,250

3. OTHER INCOME

	2017	2016
	€'000	€'000
Superannuation Deductions	250	260
Sale of Publications	156	147
Sundry Income	174	102
Sale of MenuCal Software Licence	0	160
	580	669

The FSAI paid €22,905 (2016: €18,972) to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in respect of employee contributions under the Single Scheme.

4. ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS & PROMOTION

	Notes	2017	2016
		€'000	€'000
Remuneration and Other Pay Costs	4(a)	6,439	5,676
Rent, Rates, Service Charges and Insurance		1,613	1,104
Research Costs		43	37
Legal and Consulting Fees	4(h)	351	248
IT, Telephone and Internet		868	806
Operating Expenditure	4(g)	716	588
		10,030	8,459

(a) Remuneration and Other Pay Costs

	Notes	2017	2016
		€'000	€'000
Staff Salaries, Basic Pay		4,351	4,245
Staff Salaries, Overtime		8	8
Retirement Benefit Costs		80	52
Retirement Lump Sum Costs		159	0
Employer's Contributions To Social Welfare		407	390
Staff Training and Development		250	180
Staff travel and Subsistence Cost – National Travel		87	78
Staff Travel and Subsistence Cost – International Travel		159	101
Temporary Staff		871	579
Board members' Emoluments	4 (c)	67	43
		6,439	5,676

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

4. ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS & PROMOTION (CONTINUED)

(b) Employee Benefits Breakdown

Range of Total Employee Benefits		Number of Employees	
From	To	2017	2016
€10,000	€59,999	58	57
€60,000	€69,999	10	10
€70,000	€79,999	6	5
€80,000	€89,999	5	7
€90,000	€99,999	3	3
€100,000	€109,999	3	2
€110,000	€119,999	0	0
€120,000	€129,999	1	1

Note: for the purposes of this disclosure, short-term employee benefits in relation to services rendered during the reporting period include salary, overtime allowances and other payments made on behalf of the employee, but exclude employers PRSI.

(c) Board Members' Emoluments

Board Member	Board Fee	Travel Expenses	Meetings Attended	Meetings Attended
	€	€	Board	Audit & Risk
Michael Gibney Chairman	11,970	0	6/6	
Derek Cunningham	7,695	0	5/6	
Margaret Moran (reappointed June 2017)	7,695	0	6/6	5/5
Ciaran Byrne (reappointed June 2017)	7,695	0	5/6	5/5
Ciaran Byrne	7,695	0	6/6	
Patrick Wall	0	0	4/6	
Susan Quinn	0	61	5/6	5/5
Albert Flynn	7,695	745	6/6	
Mary Cullen	7,695	0	6/6	
Ros O'Shea	7,695	0	5/6	
Martin Higgins	7,695	205	6/6	
	65,835	1,010		

During 2017, six Board meetings were held. Margaret Moran and Ciaran Byrne's first terms on the Board ended on 10 June 2017 and 8 July 2017, respectively. They were reappointed via State Boards on 1 June 2017. All travel and subsistence relates to domestic travel in Ireland.

Two Board members did not receive a Board fee under the One Person One Salary (OPOS) principle, as they are employed by other state organisations. The two members are Susan Quinn and Patrick Wall.

The Audit and Risk Committee included one external member, Ray Dolan, who attended 4 of 5 meetings.

Ray Dolan does not receive a fee under the OPOS principle.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

4. ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS & PROMOTION (CONTINUED)

(d) Chief Executive Officer Salary and Benefits

	2017	2016
	€'000	€'000
Chief Executive Officer, Pamela Byrne	128	126
	128	126

The CEO remuneration package for 2017 was annual basic salary of €127,805 with standard public arrangements.

The above salary values do not include the value of retirement benefits earned in the period. The key management personnel (excluding Board members) are members of the FSAI's contributory defined benefit pension scheme.

(e) Key Management Personnel Compensation

Key management personnel in the Food Safety Authority of Ireland consist of the CEO, five Executives and members of the Board of Directors. Total compensation paid to key management personnel, including Board members' fees and expenses and total CEO remuneration amounted to €630,708 (2016: €571,393).

(f) Hospitality Expenditure

	2017	2016
	€'000	€'000
Staff hospitality	3	3
Advisory Committee Hospitality	10	7

At the end of each year, a voucher for €100 is given to members of the FSAI Scientific and Consultative committees, and subcommittees who work on a voluntary basis.

(g) Operating Expenditure

	Notes	2017	2016
		€'000	€'000
Recruitment Expenditure		48	35
Stationery and Postage		31	34
Cleaning and Catering		101	94
Repairs and Maintenance		58	59
Audit Fee		12	12
Food Legislation Compliance		117	113
Training – Official Agency Staff		63	13
Food Supplement Database		60	0
Committee Expenses		20	24
Library Supplies		55	88
General Expenditure (including hospitality)	4(f)	151	116
		716	588

(h) Consultancy Costs

Consultancy Costs include fees paid to external parties providing advisory services of any nature.

	2017	2016
	€'000	€'000
Legal	76	105
Consultancy	275	143
Total Consultancy Costs	351	248
Legal Costs Capitalised	34	0
Consultancy Costs Capitalised	312	0
Consultancy Costs Charged to Income and Expenditure	351	248
Total	697	248

5. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

	2017	2016
	€'000	€'000
Public Relations	82	84
Industry Events	240	87
Industry Liaison	11	9
Publications	194	291
	527	471

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

6. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Computer Equipment	Office Equipment	Office Furniture	Leasehold Improvements	Scientific Equipment	Total
	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000
Cost:						
At 1 January 2017	981	133	349	130	311	1,904
Additions	202	54	307	2,121	0	2,684
Disposals	(137)	(71)	(333)	(128)	0	(669)
At 31 December 2017	1,046	116	323	2,123	311	3,919
Accumulated Depreciation						
At 1 January 2016	898	116	345	121	255	1,735
Charge for the Year	115	13	46	318	15	507
Depreciation on Disposals	(134)	(69)	(329)	(120)	0	(652)
At 31 December 2017	879	60	62	319	270	1,590
Net Book Value						
At 31 December 2017	167	56	261	1,804	41	2,329
At 31 December 2016	83	17	4	9	56	169

(a) Intangible Fixed Assets

	2017	2016
	€'000	€'000
1 January, Opening Net Book Value	75	100
Additions at Cost	66	52
Less Depreciation Charge for the Year	(84)	(78)
31 December, Closing Net Book Value	57	75

Intangible Fixed Assets consist of software licences which are written off over their useful life.

7. LOCAL AUTHORITY VETERINARY SERVICE (LAVS)

	2017	2016
	€'000	€'000
LAVS Payments	6,041	6,554
	2017	2016
	Number	Number
Number of Local Authorities Paid	25	25

Payments are made to Local Authorities for the provision of veterinary services, quarterly in arrears.

Funding is channelled through the Department of Health and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland and is included as part of the annual determination.

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

8. CAPITAL ACCOUNT

	2017	2017	2016	2016
	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000
At 1 January		244		328
Transfer from/(to) Income and Expenditure and Retained Reserves Account				
Additional Funds Allocated to Acquire Fixed Assets Funded through Operations	2,684		99	52
Funds Allocated to Acquire Intangible Assets	66		0	
Written off on Disposal	(17)			
Amortisation in line with Asset Depreciation	(591)	2,142	(235)	(84)
Balance at 31 December		2,386		244

9. RECEIVABLES

	2017	2016
	€'000	€'000
Prepayments	248	469

10. PAYABLES

Amounts falling due within one year.

	2017	2016
	€'000	€'000
Trade Creditors	354	67
Accruals	191	140
Payroll Accruals	38	0
Tax Creditor – PAYE/PRSI	0	4
Tax Creditor – VAT	5	13
Tax Creditor – PSWT	43	29
	631	253

11. OPERATING LEASES

During 2017, the three leases on the premises at Abbey Court expired, and on 9 October 2017, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland commenced a 20-year lease with landlords iPUT for the first floor of the Exchange Building, George's Dock, IFSC, Dublin 1. The Authority has a commitment in respect of a 20-year lease which commenced in October 2017 with five yearly rental reviews. The FSAI lease includes a rent-free year from 1 January 2018. The annual effective costs of the lease excluding service charges and non-recoverable VAT is €920,943 (2016: €583,000, for leases at the Abbey Court buildings). Under FRS 102, lease incentives are released over the life of the lease. At 31 December 2017 the FSAI had the following future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases for each of the following periods:

	The Exchange 2017	Abbey Court 2016
	€'000	€'000
Lease Obligations:		
Expiring within 1 Year	921	265
Expiring during the Years 2 to 5	3,684	0
Expiring more than 5 Years	13,581	0

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 December 2017

11. OPERATING LEASES (CONTINUED)

To bridge the period between the expiry of the three leases at Abbey Court and the relocation to the Exchange Building, the FSAl entered into a licence agreement with the landlord of Abbey Court that allowed the Authority to continue in occupation until the move to the Exchange Building, George's Dock, IFSC, Dublin 1. This equivalent annual cost of this licence agreement was at the same rate as the three expired leases. The cost of this arrangement in 2017 was €594,298 (excluding VAT). The period of the licence was from 1 April 2017 to 1 December 2017.

There was a period of overlap between the commencement of the Exchange Building lease and the licence on the Abbey Court licence. This was to facilitate the final commissioning of the new building. The period involved was seven weeks at a cost of €130,002.

12. CONTINGENT LIABILITY

A contingent liability has arisen, relating to a present obligation where payment is not probable and the amount cannot be measured reliably. The FSAl is in receipt of appropriate advice and is in consultation with other State Bodies to mitigate the risk of the contingency materialising. Further disclosure is not prudent as it could impact on the outcome.

13. BOARD MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Board adopted procedures in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Finance in relation to the disclosures of interests by Board members and these procedures have been adhered to in the year. There were no transactions in the year in relation to the Board's activities in which a Board member had a beneficial interest.

14. APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Financial Statements were approved by the Board on 19 June 2018.



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