

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

**Paper for Information: Government Update on Nutrition
Related Activities – Food Standards
Agency**

Agenda Item 11

Please see attached paper for information.

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

Government Update on Nutrition related activities – Food Standards Agency

Low Income Diet and Nutrition Survey (LIDNS)

1. The Agency has commissioned a dietary survey of low income/materially deprived consumers in the UK in order to obtain robust data on food consumption, nutrient intakes, nutritional status and barriers to healthy eating in this group. The contract has now been awarded to a consortium led by the National Centre for Social Research and including University College London, King's College London, Institute of Food Research, Royal Victoria Infirmary and the Rowett Research Institute. Ethical clearance for the feasibility study has been obtained, and interviewer and nurse briefings completed. Feasibility study fieldwork began on 22 May and will last for about 6 weeks. About 30 postcode sectors are being sampled, covering England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. About two-thirds of the areas have a high deprivation level and there is a mix of urban and rural areas. Main stage fieldwork is due to commence in January 2003 and the results should be available from the study in 2005.

Review of N08 Programme – Dietary Surveys and Nutrients in Food

2. The N08 research programme directly supports the N10 dietary surveys and nutrients in food programme. Its main objective is to ensure that surveys in the N10 programme are cost effective and that the data they generate are robust, of high quality, and are able to be translated effectively into information to support policy development.
3. Research conducted in this programme, which was established in 1991, falls under three main areas:
 - the development of improved methods of nutrient analysis, particularly the separation and measurement of the different forms of certain nutrients that occur in foods;
 - the validation of current methods and development of improved methods for collecting reliable quantitative data on habitual food consumption;
 - appropriate further analysis of data from Government dietary surveys to investigate dietary and other factors that contribute to good or poor nutritional status.
4. The programme is currently undergoing a review in three stages. The first stage, reviewing research on improved methods of nutrient analysis is nearing completion. Outputs were reviewed by three experts, who then met, in May 2002, to discuss a consensus paper summarising all comments. A small stakeholder workshop was then held to discuss the future of the programme. The report of the review is currently being drafted.

Proposed Nutrition Campaign aimed at raising awareness of the healthy eating message for young adults (12-18 year olds) in the UK

5. Background:

Young people do have knowledge of healthy eating practices but still fail to put this knowledge into practice. A range of complex and conflicting factors influences their dietary patterns. There are a range of nutritional issues in adolescence that differ to those experienced by the general population. These include obesity and overweight, iron deficiency, reproductive health, low intakes of calcium and vitamin D, and restricted food consumption. If a reduction in health related diseases are to occur and food choices are to improve, change is necessary but facilitating this change remains a challenge.

Motivation for achieving changes in these dietary patterns of this group are different from older adults. Furthermore there is evidence that eating patterns established in adolescence are likely to remain through adult life.

Current Government campaign activity is in the main targeted at children in schools.

6. Objectives:

- To develop a simple message on healthy eating targeting the 12-18 age group that uses images and words which this group can relate
- To raise awareness of nutrition / dietary issues
- To encourage behaviour change towards a healthy balanced diet

7. Context:

- This target group is difficult to engage on healthy eating messages – some are interested in this, but many are not
- This target group is at a key stage for the development of behavioural patterns in relation to diet and independent thinking / action
- There is a need to put nutrition and dietary behaviour on the map for this group
- To engage this group there is a need to use exciting images, something different from what they may have already seen

8. Action Plan:

Stages in delivering this campaign are:

- Exploration of the relevance of healthy eating messages for the 12-18 age group
- Development of design and materials via Advertising Agency
- Focus testing across the four countries
- Revision of design / materials
- Placement
- Evaluation

9. Timescale:

The envisaged launch of this campaign is Summer 2002.

Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals

10. The EVM have considered all 36 nutrients. A drafting group has been set up to finalise the draft risk assessment for consistency of approach. This group held its first meeting on 31 May and is due to meet again on 10 June in view of going out to public consultation later this summer. Reviews and risk assessments will be available on the website at www.food.gov.uk. The EVM are aiming to publish their findings later in the year.

Nutrition Strategy FSA Wales

11. Developed within the context of the Agency's UK nutrition strategy framework, the strategy is designed to be complementary to and complemented by a number of Welsh Assembly Government strategies.
12. The work of the steering group established to oversee the development of the strategy has in large measure been endorsed by a wide range of stakeholders who attended a series of participative workshops between October 2001 and April 2002. At the last workshop a first draft of the likely recommendations and actions section was presented to delegates in order that account could be taken of any final views and comments before further written consultation stage.
13. Feedback from the workshops indicated that to achieve dietary change a combination of information and training, local and national initiatives and polices were required.
14. The steering group has now completed its deliberations and the draft strategy document will be subject to full written consultation commencing mid to late June. Copies of the consultation document will also be available on the FSA's website-www.food.gov.uk .
15. The final strategy will be launched by the Minister for Health and Social Services, Ms Jane Hutt in September.

FSA Scotland Policy update:**FSA Scotland Diet and Nutrition Strategy**

16. A first draft of a Diet and Nutrition Strategy for FSA Scotland was presented to the Scottish Food Advisory Committee at their open meeting in April.
17. The Strategy is based on the FSA's agreed UK-wide Nutrition Strategic Framework and objectives, and takes account of needs and priorities in Scotland. It details our partnership working with the Scottish Executive Health Department and the Scottish Food and Health Co-ordinator, and other organisations working to improve the diet in Scotland as it is essential that we work together to be most effective in achieving our objectives and the targets set in the Scottish Diet Action Plan¹.
18. FSA Scotland is now considering various revisions to the draft document. The revised draft will then be widely circulated to stakeholders for comment.

¹ Scottish Office Department of Health (1996) *Eating for Health: A Diet Action Plan for Scotland Sets out targets and recommendation for addressing the diet of the Scottish population through a concerted approach to dietary improvement, examining every sector of the food industry and other areas that present the hardest challenge to a healthy diet.*

Catering for Health

19. Following the success of 'Catering for Health' in England, FSA Scotland commissioned the BNF to adapt the Guidelines for use in Scottish educational establishments. A review panel was set up to assist with the revision and the work was jointly funded by Scottish Executive Health Department.
20. As the underlying principles of Catering for Health are applicable throughout the UK, the basis of the Scottish version is exactly the same. The revision mainly involved bringing in reference to the Scottish Diet Action Plan targets and the Scottish Healthy Choices Award Scheme and other Scottish initiatives where appropriate. The Scottish version uses the Health Education Board for Scotland's (HEBS) 'Eating for Health' plate model as a guide to the contents of a balanced meal or diet. The original English Guide used the 'Balance of Good Health' which is the equivalent model used in England.
21. To mark the publication of the Guide, FSA Scotland organised a competition for all Scottish catering students. Students were invited to develop a healthy alternative to a recipe traditionally high in fat, sugar or salt etc. Two finalists were selected to take part in a cook-off at the launch on 10 May 2002.