ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL FEEDINGSTUFFS

ACAF Meeting 4 December 2002 - Information Paper

UPDATE ON THE WORK OF OTHER ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY

Classification: Annex II is for members’ use only.

Secretariat November 2002
UPDATE ON THE WORK OF OTHER ADVISORY COMMITTEES
AND THE FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY

Purpose

1. This paper outlines matters discussed by other relevant advisory committees (i.e. those which might have an impact on the work of ACAF) and the Food Standards Agency since the information paper ACAF/02/28 was issued in September 2002.

Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF)

2. The ACMSF held its forty-fifth meeting on 19 September 2002 when it discussed horizon scanning and agricultural disposal of sewage sludge. It also agreed to hold all future meetings in public. Its next meeting is on 5 December at Trinity House, Tower Hill, London EC3.

Campylobacter Working Group

3. ACMSF members received a progress report on the work of the Campylobacter Working Group. They also gave their approval in principle to a first instalment of Working Group advice – on the on-farm control of Campylobacter spp. in chickens – going forward to the Food Standards Agency (FSA) as advice from the whole Committee. Making advice available to the FSA as and when it becomes available, rather than holding it until a final report has been finalised, reflects the importance of this organism in terms of the Agency’s foodborne disease and chicken strategies. Campylobacter is the single biggest identified cause of bacterial food poisoning in the UK.

4. The draft advice was subsequently refined, to reflect the comments made by Members in discussion, and was submitted to the FSA on 26 September. The advice (attached at Annex I) is provisional, and will be supplemented as appropriate to reflect any further information which emerges as the Working Group continues its deliberations and consultations.

Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP)

5. The ACNFP met on 12 September 2002. It discussed the organisation and agenda for the open meeting to be held on 13 November, phytosterols and considered a consultation paper issued by the European Commission on the review of the Novel Food Regulation 258/97. It also discussed its draft advice to Ministers on T25 Maize.
6. The Committee held an open meeting on 13 November in Cambridge. The format of this event consisted of questions from the audience on three topics of interest namely consumer involvement in the assessment of novel foods, horizontal gene transfer and the testing of novel foods in relation to allergies. The next regular meeting of the ACNFP was held on 14 November when it discussed the open meeting, iodine in eggs, argan oil, phytosterols and T25 maize. The ACNFP’s draft advice to Ministers is contained at Annex II. Please note that as this advice is in draft form it is to be treated as **confidential and for members’ use only**.

7. The ACNFP will next meet on 29 January 2003.

**Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP)**

8. The ACP met on 5 September. It considered bone oil, an EC review of aldicarb, additional studies on fluazifop-P-butyl, an evaluation of peroxyacetic acid and a proposal to reinstate products containing dichlorophen.

9. The Committee met again on 17 October when it discussed an application for provisional UK authorisation of nicobifen and applications for UK approval of dimoxystrobin and ferric phosphate. The Committee also discussed draft pesticides usage survey reports on soft crops and outdoor bulbs and flowers in Great Britain 2001, a contingency strategy for use of pesticides in combating West Nile Fever, the Agriculture and environment Biotechnology Commission (AEBC) consultation on GM crops; post commercialisation scenarios and the AEBC work plan. It met again on 28 November. This will be reported in the next update paper.

**Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE)**

10. ACRE met in Edinburgh on 7 November 2002 when it discussed an application from Monsanto to market GM herbicide and insect resistant maize, the inquiry into the public health impacts of GM crop trials to be held by the Health and Community Care Committee of the Scottish Parliament on 20 November and examined the terms of reference for the review of the GM inspection and enforcement regime. ACRE also considered whether the risk assessments for the non-native control species *Macrolophus caliginosus* and *Amblyseius californicus* were still valid, following the findings in the research report “Assessment methodologies for establishment potential of non-native arthropods”.

11. The post-market monitoring sub-group agreed to table its report for the January 2003 meeting. The remit of the newly established soil ecology sub-group was discussed and it was agreed that a scoping document would be circulated to members. The Committee was also informed that the final version of ACRE’s advice on T25 maize would be circulated to members
(including members of the ACAF GM sub-group) shortly. The intention was to issue ACRE’s advice in parallel with the outcome of the resumed Chardon LL hearing.

**Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT)**

12. The Committee met on 22 October. Issues discussed included: the continuing review of toxicology literature on the topical insect repellent diethyl-m-toluamide (DEET); the draft statement on mercury in imported fish and shellfish and UK farmed fish and their products; di-isopropyl-naphthylene (DIPN); newlase: an analytical method to detect rhizoxin; and finally iodine in milk.

13. The next meeting of the Committee takes place on Tuesday 10 December.

**Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC)**

14. SEAC met on 11 September when it discussed the epidemiology of cattle BSE cases born after July 1996. Members were also updated on the ongoing research project in sheep transfused with blood from TSE infected donors. To date there have been transmissions in recipient sheep transfused with blood from scrapie affected sheep, and also sheep transfused with blood from sheep experimentally infected with BSE. The EU Scientific Steering Committee has also issued an Opinion on this research.

15. SEAC met again on 14 November. This will be reported in the next update paper.

**Veterinary Products Committee (VPC)**

16. The VPC met in September and October when it considered five applications for marketing authorisations, one of which was for nicarbazin for use as an aid in the prevention of coccidiosis in broiler chickens. The committee endorsed the assessment report and a list of questions prepared by the VMD.

17. The Committee next met on the 14 November. This meeting will be reported in the next update paper.

**Veterinary Residues Committee (VRC)**

18. The Committee met on 3 October 2002 when items discussed included the launch of the 2001 VRC Annual Report, the results of the 2002 UK Statutory Surveillance Programme and draft plan for 2003, and the
workings of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Animal feed related issues considered included updates on zeranol and the feed additives position. Zeranol is a hormone that could be used illegally to promote the growth of animals, so any samples that are shown to contain zeranol are of particular interest. However, *Fusarium* spp. can produce zeranol as a metabolite, which can then be ingested by cattle etc. This phenomenon has been reported in several countries. Extra tests can be carried out for other fungal metabolites to see if the likely cause of any zeranol residues is illegal administration to the animal, or mouldy feed. To avoid aflatoxins and zeranol residues, the VRC is keen that farmers are given ‘Best Practice Guidelines’ for feed storage, perhaps including them in the quality assurance schemes for livestock.

19. The VRC has set up a sub-group to look at measures to reduce the incidence of these residues and the concentrations detected. They have initially looked at nicarbazin, which is used in the poultry industry to control a protozoal disease that causes diarrhoea. The VRC sub-group have held meetings with industry to address the problem and have advised the VMD to run fast-track analysis of broiler samples, so that the causes can be investigated on the farms-of-origin quickly.

**Food Standards Agency**

20. The Food Standards Agency Board met on 12 September in Llandudno, Wales, when it discussed the Agency action plan to prevent the diversion of animal by-products (unfit meat) into the Human Food Chain. The Proposed EU Regulation on the Organisation of Official Controls on Products of Animal Origin Intended for Human Consumption and received an Update on GM Issues.

21. The Board met again 14 November 2002 at the Management Centre Europe, in Brussels. It considered an action plan on food labelling and consumer involvement in policy making. It also discussed GM labelling (see Board paper at Annex III) reaffirmed the stance it had taken at its meeting in Belfast in September 2001, namely that GM derivatives should not be labelled given the continuing doubts over delivering a reliable and effective information system for consumers. Board members accepted that this stance was in conflict with the views of consumer organisations, the European Commission and a large majority of EC Member countries. The next Board meeting will be held on 12 December in London.

22. The Deputy Chair, Suzi Leather, will be resigning from the Agency at the end of December 2002 in order to devote more time to her position as Chair of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority. Also Geoffrey Podger, Chief Executive of the Food Standards Agency, has been recommended by the Management Board of the European Food Safety
Agency (EFSA) for the post of Executive Director of the EFSA. Geoffrey has yet to agree terms with the EFSA but he could be leaving the Agency early next year.

23. A copy of the November issue of Food Standards Agency News is attached to this paper. Further information on the work of the Agency and its advisory committees can be found on its website at: www.food.gov.uk

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