



Guide to information

**Prepared in accordance with the provisions of
the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000**

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Section 1: Introduction

The Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs

1. The Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs (ACAF) is an independent body of experts formed in 1999.
2. The Committee's terms of reference are:
'To advise the Food Standards Agency, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Ministers of the Scottish Government, the National Assembly for Wales and the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development (Northern Ireland) on the safety and use of animal feeds and feeding practices, with particular emphasis on protecting human health and with reference to new technical developments. In carrying out its functions, the committee liaises with other relevant advisory committees as appropriate.'
3. In practice this means that ACAF advises on all aspects of animal feed, including the safety of animal feeds and processes, and consults with other expert committees where necessary, before making its recommendations to the Board of the Food Standards Agency and relevant Ministers.
4. The Members of the Committee are appointed in accordance with the Nolan Principles, which aim to ensure fairness and transparency in appointments to public bodies.
5. The Committee currently consists of a Chairman and 13 members from wide-ranging backgrounds including consumer affairs, animal nutrition, veterinary science, toxicology, microbiology, novel technology, feed compounding, occupational health, farming and local authority enforcement. Further details are available at:

http://acaf.food.gov.uk/more_about/membersbios

6. All Members are required to declare any personal or business interest that may, or may be perceived (by a reasonable member of the public) to, influence their judgment. This register is available using the link below:

http://acaf.food.gov.uk/more_about/regmeminterests

7. All ACAF reports, papers, agendas and minutes of meetings, and any press releases, are available using the link below:

<http://acaf.food.gov.uk/>

ACAF is supported by a Secretariat provided by the Food Standards Agency (the Agency).

For further information on ACAF please contact:

ACAF Secretariat
Area 1B
Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London, WC2B 6NH
Tel; 020 7276 8083
Email: acaf@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

What are our priorities and how are we doing?

8. ACAF has agreed a work plan and it discusses progress against this plan at each of its meetings. It also performs an annual self-assessment of its performance, including an assessment against the Good Practice Guidelines developed by the Agency. Further details can be found at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/committee/acaffwp2011.pdf>

9. The ACAF Annual Report covers the Committee's activities, progress and future plans, and its annual self-assessment. Further details can be found at:

<http://acaf.food.gov.uk/acafannualreports/>

How we work

10. The ACAF Code of Practice describes how the Committee operates. ACAF meetings are open to the public and papers, minutes and reports are published on this website. Agendas are published in advance of meetings.
11. ACAF operates in accordance with the guidelines and procedures established by the Agency and to relevant guidance and rules established across Government for the operation of Advisory Committees and public bodies.
12. Appointments to the ACAF are made in accordance with the principles set out in the Nolan Report on Standards in Public Life. In making such appointments, the Agency is committed to affording equal opportunities to all those with the requisite qualifications and expertise irrespective of race, age, disability, gender, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, transgender and working patterns.
13. The overriding principle is that appointments are made on merit. Members are appointed for their individual qualifications and the

expertise they can bring to the Committee, and not to represent any particular sectoral interest. The balance of the Committee is intended to ensure that it has a wide range of expertise on which to draw, in order to enable it to advise the Food Standards Agency effectively.

14. Vacancies and further information on procedures for appointments are published on this site when vacancies arise.

15. ACAF operates under the Agency's policies and procedures on complaints, records management and personal data, and charging for information. Further information can be found at:

http://www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/how_we_work/charter

and

http://www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/how_we_work/copopenbranch/

Financial information

16. ACAF has no independent budget or expenditure. The Agency covers the costs for the operation of the committee (including Secretariat support, Members fees and expenses, and administrative costs for meetings, publications and events), and these are recorded formally in the account of the Agency.

17. ACAF Members are not employed by the Agency and they do not receive a salary for their work on ACAF. They are however entitled to claim expenses and fees for attending meetings and, in some circumstances, for work between meetings. The Chairman receives £205 per meeting inclusive of a preparation fee, whilst Members receive £160 per meeting inclusive of a preparation fee. The Food Standards Agency has currently £24,000 per annum for the operation of ACAF.

Other information

18. ACAF does not hold any assets itself. Information in respect of the committee is managed by the ACAF Secretariat and where relevant is recorded in the Asset and/or Information Asset Registers of the Food Standards Agency.

About the Freedom of Information Act 2000

19. The Freedom of Information Act (the Act) 2000 received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000. The Act has been fully in force since January 2005. It gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities, provides exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities. ACAF, is one such authority. Under the Act, any person who makes a written request to a public authority for information must be informed whether the public authority

holds that information and, subject to exemptions, be supplied with that information within 20 working days.

20. The Act requires the Committee to have in place its publication scheme, which is a guide to the Committee's publications and policy. It is intended to provide a framework for you to obtain direct access to these published documents.

What the publication scheme is for

21. ACAF, along with every other public authority operating under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), has a legal duty under Section 19 of the Act to:

- adopt and maintain a scheme which relates to the publication of information by the authority and to have that scheme approved by the Information Commissioner;
- publish information in accordance with that scheme; and
- review the scheme from time to time.

22. The publication scheme specifies:

- the classes of information which the public authority publishes (or intends to publish);
- the manner in which information in each class is, (or is intended to be), published; and
- whether the material is (or is intended to be) available free of charge or on payment of a fee.

23. From 1 January 2009, all public authorities were required to adopt the new model publication scheme designed by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO). The ACAF has signed up to the model publication scheme and this document has been revised accordingly.

24. The aim of the ACAF Publication Scheme is to bring together in one place the many differing types of information that are issued by the Committee in the discharge of its public functions in a clear and structured manner. The scheme categorises the information type and provides details on how to obtain it. The overall benefit to our stakeholders and others is to save time and effort in searching and securing relevant Committee information.

Our copyright policy

25. The Committee reports to the Food Standards Agency and Agriculture Ministers throughout the UK and as such its information is subject to Crown copyright protection. Accordingly, you are authorised to make one free copy, by downloading to printer or to electronic, magnetic or optical storage media, of any items featured in our publication scheme for the purposes of private research, study and / or reference. If you wish to re-use or reproduce any of the Committee's publications for any other use, for example commercially or for circulation for education or other purposes, you will in most cases need to apply for a copyright licence to do this. Further information about this is available at:

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/click-use/psi-licence-information/index>

26. Where we hold documents or material belonging to or shared with another copyright holder, we will, if possible, give you their contact details or a hyper-link to their website to assist you in accessing the document or material.

For Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) Guidance Notes on a range of copyright issues, see the OPSI website at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/advice/crown-copyright/copyright-guidance/index.htm>.

Section 2: The ACAF Publication Scheme

27. Please note that documents within this publication scheme may, on occasion, be edited where, in the view of the ACAF Secretariat, specific information should not be disclosed on the grounds of exemptions specified in the FOIA. If a document has been edited, it will be made clear to the user that this is the case.

28. All information on the FSA website regarding the Committee, can be found by going through the Committee's homepage at: ***acaf.food.gov.uk***

CLASS OF INFORMATION	WHERE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE
<i>ACAF Agendas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On FSA Website • On ACAF Website
<i>ACAF Meeting Cover Papers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On FSA Website • On ACAF Website
<i>ACAF Minutes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On FSA Website • On ACAF Website
<i>ACAF Annual Reports and Periodical Reports</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On FSA Website • On ACAF Website •
<i>Code of Conduct for Members of ACAF</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On FSA Website • On ACAF Website
<i>Table of Members' Interests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On FSA Website • In ACAF annual reports • On ACAF Website
<i>News Releases</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On FSA Website • On ACAF Website
<i>ACAF recruitment exercises</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On ACAF Website • On ACAF Website •
<i>Consultation Documents</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On FSA Website • On ACAF Website

NOTE 1: Contact details / addresses

Committee Secretariat:

You should in the first instance contact the ACAF Secretariat at:

*Area 1B
Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6NH*

*Tel: 020 7276 8083
Email: acaf@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk*

Section 3: Access to information under the scheme

29. ACAF's general policy stemming from its Code of Practice on Openness is to be as open and transparent as possible in dealing with all requests for information.

30. You can make a written request for information under the Food Standards Agency's Code of Practice on Openness at any time.

31. A copy of the Agency's Code of Practice on Openness is available on the Food Standards Agency's website at:

http://www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/how_we_work/copopenbranch/

32. We will treat all requests for information on a fair and equal basis, and without prejudice. All written requests will be acknowledged within ten working days and a full reply within twenty working days thereafter. Where we are unable to provide the information you request, we will explain why. Where we decide not to release the information you request, we will explain why and give you details of how you can complain against our decision.

33. Applications for information under the Agency's Code of Practice on Openness should be made providing us with as much detail as possible to identify the information sought:

In England, to:

Food Standards Agency
Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London WC2B 6NH

In Wales, to:

Food Standards Agency (Wales)
1st Floor
Southgate House
Wood Street
Cardiff CF10 1EW
Fax: 029 2067 8918/8919

In Scotland, to:

Food Standards Agency (Scotland)
St Magnus House
6th Floor
25 Guild Street
Aberdeen AB11 6NJ
Fax: 01224 285167

In Northern Ireland, to:

Food Standards Agency (NI)
10C Clarendon Road
Belfast BT1 3BW
Fax: 028 9041 7726

Section 4: The Information Asset Register (IAR)

34. As part of the Government's commitment to openness and in line with our own Code of Practice on Openness, ACAF will look to provide details of relevant unpublished information to the Food Standards Agency Information Asset Register (IAR). The IAR details Government information assets that can be re-used under licence. It focuses primarily on **unpublished** data holdings and thus provides a guide to facilitate ease of access to unpublished information resources held by the Food Standards Agency.
35. The inforoute search engine is the gateway to information held by UK Government bodies for anyone with web access. It provides direct access to the Government's IAR which identifies;
- what information the government holds;
 - how useful that information is; and
 - importantly, a contact point to whom requests for the underlying information may be made (requests would be subject to the Open Government Code and the Freedom of Information Act, the Data Protection Act and the Environmental Information Regulations).
36. Further information on the IAR is available on the Office of Public Sector Information's (OPSI) website at www.opsi.gov.uk/iar/index.htm.

Section 5: Complaints procedure

37. Even the best organisations will sometimes get things wrong. If you are dissatisfied with something we have done or the way we have done it, please let us know. We will try to resolve any problem quickly, and explain what we have done and why. Hearing from you will help us improve by learning from our mistakes.
38. If you wish to complain, in the first instance, please give details of what you are unhappy with and why to the person you have been dealing with. If you do not have a named contact, you can get in touch with the Agency's Complaints Co-ordinator via the Openness Team :

Food Standards Agency,
Aviation House,
125 Kingsway,
London,
WC2B 6NH
email: Openness.team@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk.

39. If we cannot deal with your complaint immediately, we will acknowledge it within ten working days (please always give us your full postal address). We will write to you with a full reply within 20 working days thereafter. If this is not possible, we will explain why and say when you will get a full reply.
40. If you are not satisfied with our response and would like to take your complaint further, please contact the FSA Complaints Co-ordinator at the address above. The Complaints Co-ordinator will look at it again and give you a full reply within 20 working days.
41. If you are still unhappy, you can then ask the Complaints Co-ordinator to refer your complaint to the Chief Executive of the Food Standards Agency, Ms Catherine Brown.
42. If you remain dissatisfied with the way the Agency has acted, you may then ask for your complaint and its handling to be investigated by the UK Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (the Ombudsman). You should write to a Member of Parliament to ask them to refer your complaint to the Ombudsman. The telephone number for the House of Commons Information Office, where you can get information on contacting an MP, is 020 7219 4272. Alternatively, you can search for your MP's contact details by visiting:
- <http://www.parliament.uk/directories/hciolists/alms.cfm>
43. This complaints procedure applies across the Food Standards Agency to its headquarters in London, Executives in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and to ACAF.
44. If you feel that we have not complied with our obligations under the FOIA, you should write or email within two calendar months of the date of our response to your request for information to the FSA Complaints Coordinator at the above address and ask for an internal review.
45. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Agency. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

ICO Helpline : 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745
Fax: 01625 524510
Email: casework@ico.org.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

Section 6: Your feedback

46. This scheme fulfils our legal duty under Section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. We would positively welcome any views and comments on the structure and / or content of the scheme itself. This scheme will be treated as a 'living' document, which we will amend and develop in the light of our experience, as appropriate.

47. When commenting, we would particularly ask you to actively consider the following:

- did you find the structure and layout of this scheme easy to understand and navigate?
- were you looking for some specific information?
- did this scheme facilitate that search successfully?
- if you were browsing, did the scheme help guide your search and make the process easier?
- are there any types of information or areas that are not currently covered by the FSA Scheme that you would like to see in the future?
- do you have any suggestions or other comments that might make this scheme more user-friendly or helpful?

48. Please send your views and comments on this scheme to acaf@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk stating your name, organisation (if relevant) and contact details. Alternatively, you can write to:

ACAF Secretariat
FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY
Area 1B
Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London WC2B 6NH

Tel: 020 7276 8083