

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL FEEDINGSTUFFS

49th Meeting of ACAF on 3 March 2010

Discussion Paper

Report of Quinquennial Review of ACAF (2009)

Action: The Committee is invited to:

- i) consider the recommendations in the Quinquennial review final report;
and**
- ii) suggest how it can assist in addressing the recommendations relevant to
the Committee.**

Secretariat: February 2010

Report of Quinquennial Review of ACAF (2009)

Purpose

1. This paper seeks to update ACAF on the quinquennial review of the Committee. Committee Members are invited to consider the final report (Annex I) and suggest how it can provide assistance in addressing the recommendations specific to the Committee.

Background

2. The 2002 Food Standards Agency Report of the Review of Scientific Committees¹ recommended that all scientific advisory committees should be reviewed at least once every five years to determine 'whether each committee fulfils its intended function and whether all the current committees are still needed'.

3. The review of ACAF commenced in September 2009 and lasted for 3 months. Its main objectives were to assess:

- the need for ACAF;
- its role, methods of operation and effectiveness; including its terms of reference and composition;
- the openness and transparency of its procedures and the relationships between ACAF, the commissioning department and other bodies with related responsibilities, in particular the other scientific advisory committees which advise the Agency; and
- the implementation of the 2002 review recommendations, the revised Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees² and the current governance structures.

4. The Report of the review mentions a number of good practices that the Committee follows. These include:

- that the Chair and the Secretariat routinely ensure at meetings that issues to be considered by ACAF are within its remit;
- that ACAF publishes its work programme annually and also publishes an annual report of its activities;
- ACAF meetings are an example of good practice in terms of well run open meetings which, having papers and minutes of each meeting available on its website, provide a high level of openness and transparency;
- the administrative support provided by the Secretariat is of a consistently high standard;
- ACAF's induction of new members is an example of good practice; and
- at each meeting ACAF provides an update on the work of other advisory committees in an information paper.

¹ <http://www.food.gov.uk/science/researchpolicy/commswork/scicomrev>

² <http://www.berr.gov.uk/consultations/page39872.html>

5. The report, lists seventeen recommendations and these are set out in Annex II.

6. A number of the recommendations (Recommendation 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, and 16) are generic to all scientific advisory committees and thus will be taken forward by the Food Standards Agency. However Recommendations 2, 3, 7, 9 10, 12 and 17 are for the consideration and action by the Committee working as necessary with the Secretariat. All the other recommendations are for the Secretariat to take forward.

Action

6. The Committee is invited to consider the final report and suggest how it can provide assistance in addressing the recommendations specific to the Committee.

ACAF Secretariat
February 2010

Recommendations

1.	It is important that ACAF maximises the value that it contributes and continues to provide evidence of its value.
2.	The role of ACAF within its overall remit has evolved over time and clarification of the current role at the next ACAF meeting would be beneficial.
3.	The exact remit with regard to animal health and welfare should be clarified and formal action taken and recorded in the minutes of the meetings with regard to appropriate liaison with Defra for animal welfare issues.
4.	The process for determining the work programme should be improved to ensure that the potential value contributed by ACAF is maximised.
5.	Work should be scheduled for each year so as to avoid “light” agendas at meetings, with the number of meetings reduced if the required work does not warrant four meetings a year.
6.	Completed work should be summarised in terms of outcomes and impact achieved.
7.	The Chair should continue to ensure that the members of the Committee are aware that they can and should request the commissioning of data from the FSA if the Committee’s view is that it is required in order for them to provide advice.
8.	It is recommended that the Committee takes greater steps to show evidence of scientific rigour by using the FSA’s Science Checklist more explicitly and also routinely considering whether peer reviews are appropriate for work on which the Committee’s decisions are based.
9.	A brief summary of the Committee’s outcomes and impact achieved would provide an appropriate summary of the Committee’s activities and achievements for the Board.
10.	The Committee should be more explicit in stating the level and type of uncertainty associated with its advice.
11.	The FSA needs to ensure that the risk management advice it asks ACAF for does not go beyond advice on risk management options put to them by the Secretariat.
12.	It is recommended that ACAF should work with other committees as appropriate and take proactive steps to consider when that might be appropriate.
13.	The FSA should have internal procedures in place to ensure that any differences of opinion between its own policy units with regard to risk management are handled appropriately.
14.	The FSA should consider an alternative approach to the assessment of ACAF members and introduce an appropriate method of assessing the performance of the Chair.
15.	There is some uncertainty with regard to the exact roles and responsibilities of officials and assessors on the Committee and it would be beneficial to confirm those at ACAF’s next meeting.
16.	The out of London meetings are valued by members and stakeholders. It is

	recommended however that the FSA continues to monitor and take a view on the value of those meetings compared with the cost of running them and reassesses that approach at regular intervals.
17.	ACAF should consider whether it may be appropriate to set up additional subgroups to address specific issues in the future, particularly if only one or two members have specific expertise directly relevant to the issue to be addressed.