

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL FEEDINGSTUFFS

51st Meeting of ACAF on 22 September 2010

Information Paper

**UPDATE ON THE WORK OF OTHER ADVISORY
COMMITTEES**

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Purpose

1. This paper outlines issues from other advisory committees that may be of interest to ACAF.

Advisory Committee on Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF)

2. The ACMSF's last full Committee meeting was held on 25 March 2010 and details from this meeting was reported in ACAF/10/10.
3. The *Ad Hoc* Group on Vulnerable Groups has been meeting to consider current information on toxoplasmosis in the food chain, and whether there is a need to revise current food safety advice. The Group is meeting in early September 2010 and is aiming to finalise its draft report to present to the full Committee in December 2010.
4. The next meeting of ACMSF is on 23 September 2010. The draft agenda includes the following topics:
 - the FSA's Foodborne Disease Strategy and Food Hygiene Delivery Programme;
 - a paper from the ACMSF Surveillance Working Group on isolation of *Campylobacter* species from food and environmental samples;
 - possible health risks from consuming chicken liver pâtés;
 - *Mycobacterium bovis*: possible health risks from pasteurised milk and milk products
 - the findings of a UK survey of microbiological contamination of red meat on retail sale ; and
 - horizon scanning.

Advisory Committee on Releases into the Environment

5. The Committee last met on 3 June 2010 and will next meet on 9 September 2010. The following meeting on 14 October 2010 will be an evidence-gathering workshop on GM insects, open to the public and held at Mary Sumner House London SW1 – details of the workshop can be viewed using the link below:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/acre/meetings/10/min101014.pdf>

6. ACRE considered its future work plan in June 2010 and in addition to the insects work suggested the possibility of a further open meeting to cover GM medicinal products, to examine the challenges new products pose to environmental risk assessment and the current regulatory system. ACRE also agreed in June 2010 to produce a paper assessing potential impacts

on biodiversity resulting from altered herbicide regimes used in conjunction with GM herbicide tolerant maize. This paper would set out how ACRE's thinking has evolved since formal advice was last published in 2004 in relation to the farm-scale evaluations.

7. In June 2010 ACRE considered the draft report from its New Techniques Sub-group. ACRE had set up the sub-group to advise on the science underpinning the classification of a list of plant breeding techniques that are new to EU regulators, i.e. where it is not clear whether the techniques are captured by the existing legislation and if they are, whether the products should be excluded. The techniques include those that: (i) induce targeted mutations and (ii) involve a GMO in the breeding process but do not result in a final product that contains inserted DNA. ACRE agreed that the Sub-group's conclusions challenge the concept of a process-based approach to the regulation of GMOs. The Committee noted that in a number of cases the product of these new techniques would not be distinguishable from non-GM crops and in some cases, from naturally-occurring variants. ACRE agreed that an appropriate regulatory system, as far as possible, should be able to deal with future developments in technology. It concluded that for the most-part, the techniques under discussion had not been foreseen when the definitions in the current GM legislation were drafted. ACRE concluded that this was an inherent weakness in a process-based, rather than product-based system.
8. In September 2010 ACRE will discuss future research priorities, the advice on herbicide-tolerant maize referred to above and a research report on adventitious GM presence arising from use of shared farming machinery, transport and storage equipment.

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

9. The next meeting of the COT will be on 14 September 2010, agenda items include:
 - the systematic review of epidemiological literature of Para-Occupational exposure to pesticides and health outcomes:
 - a. additional Evaluation of data; and
 - b. draft Statement;
 - an appraisal of a "State of the Art on Mixture Toxicity" commissioned by the European Commission, DG Environment;
 - Methanol – effects of inhalation exposure to occupational levels;

- occurrence of mixed halogenated dioxins and biphenyls in UK Food preliminary results; and
- further information on the use of National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey data.

10. The agenda can be viewed on the COT website:

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

General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS)

11. The Committee's second Annual Report for the period 2009/10 was published in July 2010 and is available on the GACS website:

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

12. The GACS Chair provided his annual report to the FSA Board on 20 July 2010 and Board members praised both the content and presentation of the report. The Board were pleased with the progress made, and endorsed the Committee's future plans. The presentation slides are available online and the meeting is also online to watch or listen to on the Agency website: <http://www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/ourboard/boardmeetings/>

13. The next GACS open meeting is scheduled to take place on 19 October 2010. Items for likely discussions include:

- a discussion on science in the SACs, including a presentation on the Food Issues Survey from the acting Chair of the Social Science Research Committee;
- a presentation on the findings of the Foresight project 'Global Food & Farming Futures';
- a brief update from the COT Chair on any follow-up activities in relation to the COT workshop on uncertainty and variability in risk assessment (including any examples of dealing with uncertainty provided by SACs);
- a report from the Working Group that is preparing a response to the Soil Association and Organic Trade Board regarding concerns raised about the Agency-funded systematic review of nutrient content of organic and non-organic foods;
- a report from the Working Group on risk assessment and risk management;
- a report from the Working Group considering the issues in relation to use of data and funding from other sources, such as industry and NGOs; and
- a report from the Agency's Chief Scientist.

14. The final agenda and papers will be available on the GACS website in advance of the meeting.

Dates for GACS meetings in 2011

15. The next GACS meetings will be held on Thursday 3 March and Wednesday 9 November 2011.

Social Science Research Committee (SSRC)

16. The Social Science Research Committee will hold its 6th meeting on 7 October 2010. Since the last meeting a Working Group on Meat Controls has been established and consideration of the Agency's Science Checklist and its applicability for Social Science Research is underway. Both of these workstreams, in addition to an update on the work of the Social Science Research Unit, analysis and dissemination of wave 1 of the Food and You Survey and development of wave 2 of this survey will be discussed.
17. Any members wishing to attend the meeting on 7 October 2010 should e-mail SSRC@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk to reserve a place.
18. The Agenda and Papers will be published on the SSRC website www.ssrc.food.gov.uk by 23 September 2010.

Appointments and Recruitment Exercises

ACMSF

19. Interviews were held in June 2010 to fill 2 vacant posts: a commercial caterer and a research microbiologist. The successful candidates will be announced once Ministerial approval has been obtained.

COT

20. Interviews were held in July 2010, to fill vacancies on COT. The successful candidates will be announced once they have agreed to accept COT's offer of a position on the Committee.

**ACAF Secretariat
September 2010**