

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL FEEDINGSTUFFS

53rd Meeting of ACAF on 2 March 2011

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 Committee met on 20 January 2011. The main items discussed are set out below.
3. Horizon scanning - the Committee agreed an approach which would consider the risks presented by changes in underlying agricultural, sourcing, processing and production factors rather than a detailed examination of a particular organism.
4. Raw milk for direct human consumption - the Committee did not consider there was a need to change their existing advice in the light of currently available data.
5. The Committee received presentations from Prof Tom Humphrey on chicken liver pâtés and from Dr Norval Strachan on the findings of the Rural Economy and Land Use programme relating to E. coli O157 in the food chain.
6. The Secretariat put forward proposals for greater openness of the ACMSF's working groups including providing more information on the Committee's website. These proposals were endorsed by the Committee.
7. The Committee received updates from the Newly Emerging Pathogens Working Group which had met recently to discuss Bovine Neonatal Pancytopenia and from the Ad Hoc Group on Foodborne Viral Infections, a new group which had met for the first time in November 2010.

The next full meeting of the ACMSF will be on Thursday, 19 May 2011.

Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP)

8. The ACNFP held its last meeting on 9 February 2011. Issues discussed included:
 - an update on a postal consultation about EFSA's draft guidance on GM plant comparators. EFSA's consultation period ended on 15 January 2011;

- an update on a postal consultation about EFSA's revised guidance on risk assessment of 'GM microorganisms and their food and feed'. EFSA's consultation period on its guidance ended on 31 January 2011; and
 - the ACNFP discussed EFSA's guidance on risk assessment on nanoscience and nanotechnologies in relation to food and feed. EFSA's consultation period on its guidance will end on 25 February 2011.
9. The next meeting of the ACNFP is scheduled to be held on 12 May 2011.

Advisory Committee on Releases into the Environment (ACRE)

10. There was a meeting of a working group on 10 January 2011 to discuss EFSA's guidance on the environmental risk assessment of GM plants. In November 2010 the European Food Standards Authority (EFSA) published the final version of its guidance on the environmental risk assessment (ERA) of GM plants. This final version of the guidance will be incorporated into a Commission document that will be discussed by officials from Member States before voting on whether to adopt it. The Commission has asked that Member States submit comments by 15 February 2011.
11. The ACRE working group considered whether the document works as guidance, i.e. is it clear, consistent and provides a framework for ERAs that are fit for purpose and whether EFSA's approach to addressing key issues is proportionate and evidence-based? ACRE's preliminary position is that the guidance is not fundamentally flawed and can be redeemed through editing. There will be a further discussion in the full Committee.
12. Other items scheduled for discussion are an application for a research trial of a GM typhoid vaccine, a case study of herbicide tolerant (HT) oilseed rape produced by oligo-directed mutagenesis and the assessment of potential impacts on biodiversity resulting from altered herbicide regimes in conjunction with GM HT maize.

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

13. The COT met on 2 November and 14 December 2010 and on 1 February 2011.

14. The main topics for discussion at the last two meetings of 2010 were methanol, phthalates and mixed halogenated dioxins and biphenyls in UK food.
15. In November 2010 the Committee also discussed the Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees update and in December 2010 discussions on the joint SACN/COT statement on timing of introduction of gluten in the infant diet, took place.
16. The agenda for the February 2011 meeting included draft statements on methanol, idiopathic environmental intolerance and phthalates. Other discussion topics were phytoestrogens, research projects on mixtures of pesticides and similar substances, and an update on actions taken subsequent to COT advice and horizon scanning. These issues will be reported on at ACAF's meeting in June 2011.
17. Agenda papers and minutes for meetings can be found on COT's website <http://cot.food.gov.uk/>

General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS)

18. The next GACS meetings are planned for 3 March and 9 November 2011.
19. Agenda items for the GACS meeting on 3 March 2011 include:
 - a discussion on science in the SACs, including a report from the ACNFP Chair on nanotechnologies and a presentation from the SSRC Chair on the 'Food and You Survey' results;
 - a report from the Working Group considering the issues in relation to use of data and funding from industry and NGOs;
 - a report from the Working Group on Risk Assessment and Risk Management;
 - a discussion on revision to the Agency's Science and Evidence Strategy;
 - a report from the Agency's Chief Scientist on the FSA's strategic evidence needs and evidence management – challenges and ideas; and
 - a presentation on the Global Food Security Initiative Research Strategy.
20. The finalised agenda and papers will be available on the GACS website in advance of the meeting.

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

Social Science Research Committee (SSRC)

21. The SSRC is looking forward to the publication of the results of wave 1 of 'Food and You'. This is a cross-sectional survey of the UK population to provide information on attitudes and behaviours to food and food issues. A working group of the SSRC advised the Agency on the survey design and has contributed to the Advisory Group overseeing development, execution and reporting of the survey. Publication is scheduled for 3 March 2011.
22. A Working Group on Meat Controls has been advising the Agency on the evidence base required to underpin its work in this area. This work is ongoing.
23. At the next SSRC meeting on 24 March 2011 the Committee will consider the Agency's forward evidence plan, the Social Science Research 'Food' Framework (for commissioning social science research) and hear reports from Working Groups and about recently completed research including 'Food and You'.

Appointments and Recruitment Exercises

ACRE

24. ACRE was given the go-ahead to advertise a vacancy for a Member with expertise in soil microbial ecology.

ACMSF

25. Four Members of the Committee reach the end of their terms of office on 31 March 2011. A recruitment exercise is in progress to fill vacancies for the following new specialist members: a food retailer, an epidemiologist, a virologist and a food microbiologist.

SSRC

26. The SSRC has a vacancy for the Chairman and a number of members, including one lay member. It is hoped that these positions will be filled before 31 March 2011.

**ACAF Secretariat
February 2011**