

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL FEEDINGSTUFFS

60th Meeting of ACAF on 16 January 2013

Information Paper

UPDATE ON THE WORK OF OTHER ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Secretariat January 2013

UPDATE ON THE WORK OF OTHER ADVISORY COMMITTEES

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. ACMSF's scheduled meeting of 27 September 2012 was cancelled. The next meeting of the full committee will be on 31 January 2013. The main items for discussion are expected to be:
 - antimicrobial resistance; and
 - the application of molecular epidemiology to investigations and outbreaks.
3. The ACMSF's Risk Profile in relation to toxoplasma in the food chain was published in July 2012 and can be found at:

<http://acmsf.food.gov.uk/acmsfreps/acmsfreports>.

4. The Ad Hoc Group on Raw, Rare and Low Temperature Cooked Foods met for the 3rd time on 27 November 2012.

Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP)

5. The ACNFP met on Tuesday 20 November 2012, items discussed included:

risk assessments on:

- Clostridium butyricum probiotic;
 - Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) - rich oils;
 - Chia oil;
 - D –Ribose;
 - Rapeseed protein; and
 - Nattokinase.
6. The Committee also discussed a paper entitled 'ACNFP Advice' which consisted of an annual overview of action taken by the Agency following ACNFP advice.
 7. The next ACNFP meeting is scheduled for 13 February 2013.

Advisory Committee on Releases into the Environment (ACRE)

8. ACRE met on 11th October 2012 when it discussed applications to cultivate GM maize varieties Bt11 and 1507. ACRE was asked to consider advice following opinions that update European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) evaluation of the environmental risk assessments associated with these applications and provide more detail on risk management options. A key element in both opinions is a model developed by EFSA to further characterise the hazards posed to non-target Lepidoptera by pollen from these Bt maize events. ACRE had briefly discussed the model as calibrated for both 1507 and Bt11 maize pollen at previous meetings. At this meeting ACRE was requested to develop this consideration so that its advice explained how the outputs could be used in making regulatory decisions including imposing conditions of consent.
9. ACRE considered EFSA's final opinion on an application for 40-3-2 herbicide resistant soybean for cultivation, food and feed use in the EU. ACRE considered the relative impact on farmland biodiversity resulting from altered herbicide regimes associated with this GM soybean. ACRE considered that EFSA had provided a very comprehensive and high quality review of this issue and that it had clearly identified the major risk factors to weed communities. It noted that impacts on soil microbes within the field would be affected by the nature of the proposed rotation as well as the innate resilience of the soil microflora. ACRE considered the risks to non-target organisms from the cultivation of 40-3-2 soybean. It noted that weed community shifts caused by altered herbicide use could potentially impact on bees and recommended that general surveillance should be sufficiently sensitive to determine whether significant changes in weed communities had occurred.
10. ACRE also considered an application for trial of a GM vaccine against prostate cancer, adding sites to a list which had received consent following a previous application. ACRE confirmed its previous advice would apply, subject to any points arising from the public consultation on the new application.

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

11. COT met on 11 December 2012, discussion items included:
 - report of the COT subgroup on the Lowermoor water pollution incident;
 - review of potential risks from high levels of soy phytoestrogens in infant diet;
 - Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition's review of vitamin D: serum calcium: regulation and analysis;
 - second draft statement on the potential risks from high levels of vitamin A in the infant diet; and

- second draft statement on the potential risks from high levels of lead in the infant diet.

12. The next COT meeting will be held on 5 February 2013 in Aviation House, London.

The Committee on the Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COC)

13. The COC met on 22nd November 2012, discussion items included:

- polyurethane coated breast implants. The MHRA has asked the COC whether, on the basis that new literature data presented in a commissioned review, the Committee would change earlier advice that breakdown of the polyurethane shell could release a probable genotoxic carcinogenic, 2,4-TDA, and present a carcinogenic risk;
- consideration of the 1st draft of the statement on the ‘Relative vulnerability of children to asbestos compared to adults’;
- a paper on Insulin-like growth factor (IGF-1) and prostate cancer presented as part of the COC review of the possible carcinogenic hazard to consumers from IGF-1 in the diet. Paper submitted by the Food Standards Agency;
- horizon scanning 2012; and
- ongoing work on COC Guidance statements, including a draft statement on the use of biomarkers in carcinogenic risk assessment, and a paper on the Threshold of Toxicological Concern.

The Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COM)

14. COM met on 18 October 2012, items discussed included:

- genotoxic consequences of exposure to mixtures of food-derived chemical carcinogens. Paper submitted by Food Standards Agency. COM Statement on cell transformation assays;
- evidence for hormesis in mutagenicity dose-response relationships; and
- horizon scanning 2012.

General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS)

15. GACS met on 31 October 2012, and the following items were discussed:

- Horizon scanning in the SACs - GACS discussed the outcomes of a pilot of an approach to supporting horizon-scanning in the Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs). GACS agreed that SACs should trial the approach which could be tailored to each SAC. The materials would be updated to reflect GACS comments before circulating to SACs.

- Report on how FSA had responded to advice and recommendations from the SACs - GACS welcomed the report and felt that each SAC should receive such updates regularly from its Secretariat, with GACS taking an overview to consider gaps/cross-cutting issues.
- Report from the SACN Chair on the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) - GACS underlined the fundamental importance of the NDNS data to the FSA and to other SACs, in underpinning exposure assessment and hence risk assessment for food safety, as well as informing work on diet and health in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- Report on SACs' current activities and forward plans - GACS was encouraged to note that these discussions were fostering increasing co-ordination and joint-working across SACs.
- The first report from the GACS Working Group on Science Communication and Engagement - the Working Group will develop a draft final report with recommendations for the FSA for discussion at the GACS spring meeting.
- A report on the Agency's evidence portfolio - GACS did not identify any significant gaps or imbalances, but suggested additional analyses that would help inform future discussions
- A report from the Agency's Chief Scientist on science activities and plans: GACS agreed that the FSA should develop its use of data using modern techniques (data mining, text mining, analysis of web/social media, etc.). It asked the FSA to scope potential ideas and contacts, and a sub-Group of GACS will then work with FSA to develop detailed plans.

16. The meeting papers are published on the GACS website and the draft minutes of the meeting will be available in due course.

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

17. The next GACS meetings are on 21 March and 8 October 2013 (with the annual GACS dinner planned for 20 March 2013).

Social Science Research Committee (SSRC)

18. The SSRC held their tenth meeting on Wednesday 3rd October 2012 in Aviation House, London, items discussed included:

- behavioural economics;
- healthy eating work in FSA Scotland and FSA Northern Ireland; and
- Members on Advisory Groups in the following areas provided the SSRC with updates: Meat Controls; Kitchen Practices Observational Research; and the Agency's Food and You Survey.

19. An external consultant is carrying out the quinquennial review of the SSRC. This is scheduled for completion by the end of 2012 and the report will be available in 2013.

Veterinary Residues Committee (VRC)

The VRC met on 5 December 2012, items discussed included:

- antimicrobial Resistance surveillance;
- imports surveillance;
- non-Statutory Surveillance scheme;
- communication issues;
- Statutory Surveillance Scheme;
- honey issues;
- concentration of lead contamination in food producing animals; and
- FSA surveys and research in contaminants.

20. The Committee's Annual Report 2011 was published in September 2012. It can be viewed at:

<http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/vrc/pdf/reports/vrcar2011.pdf>

21. The Committee will next meet on 6 March 2013.

Appointments and Recruitment Exercises

ACMSF

- A recruitment exercise is currently under way for a member with expertise in microbiological risk assessment.

ACNFP

- A recruitment exercise is currently under way for a toxicologist and also a consumer affairs representative.

ACRE

- A new member, Dr Matthew Heard from the NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, joined on 26th October 2012 in place of Prof James Bullock who has retired from ACRE.

COC

- Dr David Lovell has been appointed as Chair of the COM from 1 November 2012 for a period of 3 years.

GACS

- The Committee welcomed new expert member Professor Colin Dennis to his first GACS meeting on 31 October 2012.

**ACAF Secretariat
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