

ACAF/10/10

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL FEEDINGSTUFFS**

**50<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ACAF on 3 June 2010**

**Information Paper**

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

**Secretariat  
May 2010**

## 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. The ACMSF met on 25 March 2010. The following items were discussed:

#### Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP): Risk assessments on the use of source segregated composts in agriculture

3. The Committee received a presentation on two new risk assessments from the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) under their “Confidence in Compost Programme” and were asked to comment on the microbiological food safety aspects. After an initial discussion, the Chair proposed that a small group of ACMSF Members should look in greater depth at the risk assessments and agree a response to the questions posed by FSA and WRAP.

#### Listeria monocytogenes

4. The HPA presented a paper updating the Committee on its recent research into the epidemiology of human listeriosis in England and Wales. The Committee also reviewed the recommendations from the Social Science Research Committee Working Group on priorities for further research.

#### Foodborne Viral Infections

5. The FSA presented a paper on developments since the ACMSF Report on Foodborne Viruses was published in 1998. Dr David Brown (HPA) then gave a presentation on horizon scanning and foodborne viruses. In the light of these presentations the Committee agreed that it would be timely to set up an *ad hoc* group to consider foodborne viruses.

#### Biltong

6. The FSA had commissioned Campden BRI to undertake a literature review on the microbiological hazards that may be associated with biltong and similar dried meat products and the processes and controls to ensure their safe manufacture and shelf-life stability. Campden BRI gave a presentation on their draft report. It was

concluded that more information was required for the Committee to provide advice on risks.

### M. bovis

7. The Committee received a presentation on changes in the regulations and disease incidence in relation to *Mycobacterium bovis* infection in humans and animals since the ACMSF last considered the issue in 2003. The Committee did not consider any need to revise their original risk assessment.

### **Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP)**

8. The ACNFP met on 22 April and the Committee:
  - considered a set of Principles of Scientific Advice to Government which were recently published by the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser; and
  - received an oral update on the postponed ACNFP Open workshop and a proposed horizon scanning meeting, both of which are planned to be held later in 2010.

### **Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE)**

9. ACRE met on 18 March 2010 when it considered an application from the Sainsbury Laboratory to carry out a trial of potatoes genetically modified for resistance to potato late blight. It asked for further information on molecular characterisation and subsequently considered points from public representations before recommending that consent could be issued. The consent letter has been held up by the General Election
10. ACRE also considered a report on the establishment and persistence of potato volunteers and the potential consequences for current EU labelling thresholds for GM, commissioned by Defra to inform co-existence policy for GM and non-GM potatoes. ACRE agreed recommendations for research trials to reduce the likelihood of true potato seed and tubers remaining in the soil and ensure volunteers were effectively identified and eliminated.
11. ACRE considered two documents circulated by EFSA for consultation:
  - (a) updated guidance document for the environmental risk assessment of genetically modified plants; and

(b) a scientific opinion on the assessment of potential impacts of genetically modified plants on non-target organisms.

12. ACRE confirmed that its next meeting would be open to the public (3 June 2010). This would be run as a normal committee meeting but any confidential items would be discussed afterwards in a closed session.

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

13. Details on this Committee, including minutes of meetings, can be viewed using the link below:

<http://www.iacoc.org.uk>

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

14. Details on this Committee, including minutes of meetings, can be viewed using the link below:

<http://www.iacom.org.uk>

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

15. A paper on the introduction to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) was debated. A brief history of the survey was given, including details of how the survey was undertaken and its scope. The paper identified the type of data and samples available to researchers along with a summary of research undertaken using stored specimens from the survey. More follow-up work was requested.

16. COT workshop on the evaluation and expression of uncertainties in risk assessment, COT want to seek further advice from the Social Science Research Committee and it should be referred back to the COT in September 2010.

17. COT has requested further information on chronic toxicity of methanol and it will likely be discussed again at its September 2010 meeting.

18. The next meeting of COT will be 22 June 2010, and items on the draft agenda include Idiosyncratic Environmental Intolerance, Toxicogenomics and Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals.

**General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS)**

19. The GACS held its 5th meeting on 4 March 2010.
20. Horizon-scanning - GACS discussed a presentation from Dr Suzy Walton, Chair of the Horizon Scanning and Futures Sub-Group of Defra's Science Advisory Council, on its work to challenge Defra on its needs and approach to horizon-scanning. GACS noted that future food scenarios developed by Defra are likely to be relevant to the Agency and recommended that the Agency liaise with Defra to keep track of this work and its outcomes, and on wider horizon scanning work. The Secretariat will also seek to arrange a presentation at the next GACS meeting from the team leading the Foresight project on Global Food and Farming Futures. Horizon-scanning was also a common theme in the discussion on cross-cutting issues arising in the forward work plans of the scientific advisory committees (SACs) . The Secretariat and Chief Scientist's Team will work with the SAC Secretariats Working Group to ensure cross-cutting issues from horizon scanning in the SACs are picked up and discussed collectively, and fed back to GACS for consideration of any needs for joint approaches.
21. Cross-cutting science issues from the Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs) - David Coggon (COT Chair) reported back on a COT workshop on improving the way in which uncertainty is evaluated and communicated in risk assessments. GACS agreed this issue is relevant across the SACs, and noted they use different terminology in discussing it. The COT Chair will report back at the next meeting on the application of the ideas from the workshop to specific cases. GACS Members will feed ideas and examples into this work. GACS will consider the potential for common terminology and approaches in light of this work.
22. Distinction between risk assessment and risk management (RA/RM) - GACS discussed a first report from its Working Group on risk assessment/risk management. It agreed the Working Group's terms of reference, and the Working Group's proposal to complete and report back to the next meeting on a pilot study. This will explore the variety of understanding and practice across the SACs, on the distinction between risk assessment and risk management, and how expert input feeds into the different stages of evidence-based decision making.
23. Assessing the performance of SACs - GACS discussed the outcome of the quinquennial review of the ACAF (Advisory Committee of Animal Feedingstuffs), and the proposed responses from the ACAF and from the Agency. GACS were content with the Agency's and ACAF's proposed responses. The Chief Scientist will draft a formal

response drawing on views made by ACAF and GACS in response to the quinquennial review for the Agency's Board to consider and agree.

24. Making use of data from industry and other sources - GACS noted the potential benefits of making more use of data from industry, NGOs and other sources outside the published literature, and also potential issues around assurance of quality and completeness, and risk to the Agency's independence, particularly from those it regulates. A sub-group will scope this issue and how it might be taken forward, looking first at how this could work for new work initiated jointly, then at how the same principles might be met for existing data.

Future work:

Issues for future meetings include:

- report back from Risk Assessment/Risk Management Working Group;
- report back from Sub-Group on making use of data from other sources;
- cross-cutting science - to include a report from the SSRC Chair on the Agency's Food Issues Survey; and
- horizon-scanning.

**Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN)**

25. SACN aims to publish its Iron and Health report in July 2010 and will discuss both the energy requirements and early nutrition reports at its next meeting on 7 June 2010.

**Social Science Research Committee (SSRC)**

26. The Social Science Research Committee held its fifth meeting on 27 April 2010. The minutes are currently being cleared by members and will be published on the SSRC website (SSRC.food.gov.uk) shortly. The meeting was successful and productive.
27. Additionally, the SSRC 2009-10 Annual Report is expected to be published at the end of May 2010. This outlines the Committee's main achievements over the last 12 months. The report will be available on SSRC.food.gov.uk.

**Appointments and Recruitment Exercises**

- ACMSF - vacancies for a food research microbiologist and a commercial caterer on the Committee have been advertised and interviews are expected to be held in June 2010.

- COT - welcomed 4 new members: Derek Bodey and Robert Smith – the new lay members; and Dr John Thompson and Professor Brian Houston. The COT was advised that two members were leaving: Professor David Ray and Dr David Tuthill whose last meeting will be the 22 June 2010. COT will shortly be looking to recruit members with the following expertise:
  - dietary exposure assessment;
  - neurotoxicology;
  - environmental exposure assessment in epidemiological studies;
  - experimental toxicology, including respiratory toxicology; and
  - statistical approaches to dose-response modelling.
- ACRE – may look to recruit a new member shortly.
- SACN - is currently advertising for the appointment of 7 expert members and 1 consumer representative, with a deadline of 1 June 2010 for applications.
- SSRC – the Chairman has stepped down due to other work commitments, and the two year tenures of two Committee Members ended in April 2010. The Deputy Chair will be acting as Chair until a new appointment has been made. All three vacancies will be advertised in the near future.

**ACAF Secretariat  
May 2010**