

Annex 1 - Recommendations from ACAF review on cross-cutting issues, and outline of proposed Agency response

Recommendation	Outline of proposed Agency response
<p><u>Recommendation 11:</u> <i>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.</i></p>	<p>One of the recommendations in the Science review which the Agency accepted was “<i>the Agency should do more work to make the functional separation of risk assessment and risk management more transparent</i>”</p> <p>The Agency asked GACS, given that the committee agrees how the separation works in principle, to look more closely at how to observe the separation in practice. GACS has now established a Working Group (WG) on Risk Assessment and Risk Management, to look at whether the distinction is clear and how it is observed in practice in the Agency.</p> <p>The WG will also consider the ACAF review as part of its work and will make recommendations to the Agency on any changes needed to guidance or procedures by March 2011.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 13:</u> <i>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.</i></p>	<p>This relates to effective communication internally, particularly between SAC Secretariats and between Secretariats and policy customers. These actions will help address this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chief Scientist Team has reconstituted the Agency’ SACs Secretariat Working Group to give it a more dynamic and interactive forum to ensure better communication between Scientific Secretariats. This will allow the Secretariats to carry out horizon scanning, discuss cross-cutting issues and issues that involve joint working between the SACs. • The GACS is also taking a more pro-active approach to ensuring communication and co-ordination across SACs. • The Chief Scientist Team is leading a number of strands of work to develop the professional scientific and policy skills of Agency staff including Secretariats and policy customers. • The Agency Chief Scientist and his Team will

	attend SAC meetings more regularly.
<p><u>Recommendation 14:</u> <i>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.</i></p>	<p>The Chief Scientist has reviewed arrangements for assessing Members, Chairs and Committees. The key elements of the proposed process are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process should provide open, evidence-based assurance on SAC performance without disproportionate costs or burdens on Members, Secretariats or the Agency • Annual assessment of Members and Chairs, backed up by 5-yearly reviews of SACs, is needed to inform the annual reporting cycle for SACs Annual Reports and of the Agency Chief Scientist's reports to the Agency Board and to the Government CSA. • Assessment of Members and Chairs to be based on discussion and feedback between the Agency Chief Scientist and SAC Chair, informed by feedback provided to the Chief Scientist from Members, Secretariat and (for Chairs) from the GACS Chair and Secretariat.

Annex 2- ACAF response on the Recommendations of the Quinquennial review of the Committee

No	Recommendation	ACAF response
1.	<i>It is important that ACAF maximises the value that it contributes and continues to provide evidence of its value.</i>	The Committee suggested that Recommendations 1, 6 and 9 are related. It agreed to take this recommendation forward and will do this via annual reports, published documents and other routes. When the Committee commences work on a topic it will identify and agree desired outcomes.
2.	<i>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.</i>	The terms of reference of the Committee are determined by Agriculture Ministers and the FSA. The Committee considered that these were suitably flexible and wide-ranging and did not require amendment given the breadth of issues on which the Committee is required to provide advice. The Committee will identify at the start of each year the key priorities it wishes to take forward. This will be reflected in the Committee's Forward Work Plan.
3.	<i>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.</i>	The Committee is satisfied that its current remit is clear and works well. It recognises that although its main focus is on consumer safety, animal health/welfare issues will inevitably be discussed.
4.	<i>The process for determining the work programme should be improved to ensure that the potential value contributed by ACAF is maximised.</i>	The Committee and Secretariat will work to ensure work areas important to the Agency, Defra and the devolved administrations receive priority treatment.
5.	<i>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.</i>	The Committee notes this recommendation and will take this into account when planning the workload for each meeting.
6.	<i>Completed work should be summarised in terms of outcomes and impact achieved.</i>	See Recommendation 1 above.
7.	<i>The Chair should continue to</i>	The Committee seeks and receives

	<i>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.</i>	data from the FSA, Defra and the devolved administrations to assist in its deliberations. This will continue.
8.	<i>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.</i>	The Committee will continue to utilise the Agency's Science check list.
9.	<i>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.</i>	See Recommendation 1 above.
10.	<i>The Committee should be more explicit in stating the level and type of uncertainty associated with its advice.</i>	The Committee agreed to act on this point. [Note from CST: the COT is working on this issue and any generic aspects relevant to other SACS will be discussed through the GACS]
11.	<i>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.</i>	The Agency will act on this point. [see Annex 1 above for proposed Agency response]
12.	<i>It is recommended that ACAF should work with other committees as appropriate and take proactive steps to consider when that might be appropriate.</i>	The Committee will continue to be proactive in this area and currently has several suitable work areas to process in this manner.
13.	<i>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.</i>	This is a generic issue which is for the FSA/GACS Secretariat to consider. [see Annex 1 above for proposed Agency response]
14.	<i>The FSA should consider an alternative approach to the assessment of ACAF members and introduce an appropriate method of assessing the</i>	This is a generic issue which the GACS Secretariat will consider in liaison with all SAC Secretariats. [see Annex 1 above for proposed Agency response]

	<i>performance of the Chair.</i>	
15.	<i>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.</i>	The Chair, Members, Assessors and the Secretariat are fully aware of their roles. These were clarified at the Committee's open meeting on 3 March 2010.
16.	<i>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.</i>	<p>The Committee considers that, as a UK-wide body, at least one out of London meeting should take place each year. This helps to engage stakeholders from outside the South East of England and demonstrates the Committee's openness, transparency and accessibility. Clearly, budgetary considerations will be taken into account.</p> <p>[ACAF's Secretariat Comment] <i>Positive feedback is always received following out of London meetings. These meetings are valuable in establishing and maintaining a healthy dialogue with a wider audience and increasing the understanding of issues discussed.</i></p> <p><i>The Secretariat will continue to monitor and compare the value of these meetings against the running costs at regular intervals.</i></p>
17.	<i>ACAF should consider whether it may be appropriate to set up additional sub-groups 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.</i>	Where circumstances arise, the Committee will endeavour to set up sub-groups in co-operation with other SACs.