

Minutes of 107th meeting

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD (ACMSF) - HYBRID MEETING HELD ON 24th OCTOBER 2024 (ONE-HUNDRED AND SEVENTH MEETING)

Attendees:

Chair: Professor Bill Keevil

Members: Dr Rohini Manuel

Dr Edward Fox

Ms Claire Tomaso

Dr Nicol Janecko

Professor Cath Rees

Professor Andrew Page

Dr Adri Bester

Professor Linda Scobie

Dr Jane Gibbens

Mr Martin Briggs

Dr Dragan Antic

Dr Inaki Deza-Cruz

Apologies for absence: Dr Wayne Anderson

Professor Francis Butler

Mr Andrew MacLeod

Dr Roberto Vivancos

Secretariat: Dr Anthony Wilson
Dr Lauren Adams
Ms Azuka Aghadiuno
Ms Archana Gadaria

FSA: Dr Wioleta Trzaska
Dr Erica Kintz
Ms Amy Hale
Alison Asquith
Ben Nkeitiah
Kyle Knight
Abrar Jaffer
Sally Lincoln
Elizabeth McHugh

Representatives: Stephen Wyllie (APHA)
Frieda Jorgensen (UKHSA)
Shaun Cawthraw (APHA)
Michael Elliot (APHA)

FSS: Marianne James
Svetlozara Chobanova

Observers: Karen Pearson
Professor Peter Borriello (Science Council)
Paul Cook
Karin Goodburn (Chilled Food Association)
Sam Mellor

1. Welcome

1.1 Professor Charles Keevil (BK – Chair) welcomed attendees to the meeting. New members were introduced to the group: Mr Andrew MacLeod as well as the presenters Dr Shaun Cawthraw (SC) and Dr Frieda Jorgensen (FJ). Peter Borriello (PB) was also introduced as a member of the Science Council and welcomed.

2. Apologies for absence

2.1 Apologies were received from Wayne Anderson (WA), Roberto Vivancos (RV) and Francis Butler (FB).

3. Declaration of interest

3.1 Members were asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest associated with the agenda items to be discussed. No conflicts of interest were declared.

4. Minutes of 106th ACMSF meeting (ACM/MIN/106)

4.1 Members approved the minutes of the 106th meeting. The Chair and members highlighted edits needed before publication on the ACMSF website.

5. Matters arising (ACM/1432)

5.1 Actions raised during the 106th meeting were discussed.

Anthony Wilson (AW) presented ACM/1432. Members approved the minutes of the 106th meeting and these can be published on the ACMSF website.

Action 5.1a: Secretariat to edit minutes and publish online

- Action 5.5 and 5.6 (**complete**)- AW and Lauren Adams (LA) to review and restructure Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group (EFIG) meetings, data presentation and reporting.

It was noted that the actions align with actions 9.10 and 9.11 and can be combined. AW informed members that on the 23rd of September, the secretariat discussed the actions with EFIG members. Concerns were raised regarding sharing of unpublished data with different government departments. EFIG members concluded that preliminary data will not be disseminated wider than the EFIG, unless specifically agreed. Therefore, some constraints may be placed on data shared with ACMSF as part of EFIG updates.

EFIG meetings have also been restructured to focus on farm-to-fork overviews for each major pathogen, and gastrointestinal data relating to outbreaks caused by food has been added to meeting agenda.

- Action 5.7 (**ongoing**)- Erica Kintz (EK) and AW to determine reason for Infectious Intestinal Disease 3 (IID3) study delays to prevent recurrence. The major delay in the first part of IID3 project was the approval process. EK and AW will take it to Robin May (Chief Scientific Advisor) to explain the challenges and what can be done about it to improve the process.
- Action 9.3 (**complete**). EFIG related query regarding available data. AW highlighted challenges around data and APHA dataset that relates to animal feed.
- Action 9.15 (**complete**). Secretariat (LA and AW) added raw pet food to the 107th meeting agenda and policy leads are attending to answer any specific questions.
- Action 12.2 (**ongoing**). ACMSF requested the FSA consider the governing processes of current medicines and healthcare regulatory authorities for the use of phage in various settings. AW highlighted that discussions are happening across departments and specialisms; however, AW was not in the position to comment on whether the FSA have the own phage policies.
- Action 12.3 (**complete**). Secretariat (LA) provided ACMSF with specific questions related to *Listeria* regulation in ready-to-eat (RTE) food. Member responses have been collated and will be published on the ACMSF website in January.

Action 5.1b: Collated responses recorded as report and published onto ACMSF website.

6. Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections

6.1 AW provided an update on group activity.

Information related to EFIG was provided during matter arising section (above). AW restated that on 23rd September 2024, members of the EFIG (from UKHSA, APHA and FSA) met and agreed on new formats for meetings, data sharing and reporting.

7. Sheep survey

7.1 Update sheep survey results presented by Shaun Cawthraw (SC) from APHA

SC presented results from the recently completed survey of microbiological contamination of cull ewes and prime lamb at slaughter in England and Wales (FS900284). [FS900284 Survey of the Microbiological Contamination of Cull Ewes and Prime Lamb at Slaughter in England and Wales | Published in FSA Research and Evidence](#).

- Three interlinked surveys: microbiological contamination of cull ewe and prime lamb carcasses – FSA funded; *Salmonella* in sheep (caecal carriage) – Defra and Welsh Government funded; AMR monitoring in abattoirs in England and Wales – PATH-SAFE and the VMD funded. This presentation was on the first survey "Microbiological contamination of cull ewe and prime lamb carcasses – FSA.
- Reasons for doing this survey: meat is a public concern; a large outbreak in 2017-2018 attributed to consumption of ovine meat and products; Food business operators (FBOs) sampling results are not routinely accessed by the FSA: surveillance enables baseline to be set for bacteria in foods.
- Aims: determine annual prevalence of *Salmonella* spp. on cull ewe and lamb; gather quantitative data on *Salmonella* in caecal samples; establish prevalence of *Salmonella* on cull ewe and lamb carcasses; generate baseline of indicator organisms *E. coli* and Enterobacteriaceae.
- Overall, low prevalence of *Salmonella* on carcasses – 7 out of 1282 samples tested positive; *Salmonella* contamination of the carcasses was about 16 times lower than caecal contamination; too few positives to determine if there is a difference between lamb and ewe; most carcass isolates were sheep-associated types (*S. diarizonae* serotype 61:k:1:5), but 2 out of 7 were of potential public health relevance; level of *Salmonella* Typhimurium in carcasses were low, in caecal samples higher, but majority 10^3 CFU/g; *Campylobacter* contamination more prevalent as 75 out of 366 samples were positive; *Campylobacter* more prevalent on carcasses than *Salmonella*; *C. jejuni* the most frequently isolated type; variable levels of contamination with indicator organism; Enterobacteriaceae (process hygiene criteria) - 2.5 log CFU/cm² daily mean.

7.2 Question and answer discussion

After the presentation, ACMSF members and presenter discussed the results using a question-and-answer structure. SC highlighted that it was unknown whether the data will be available publicly (e.g., online repositories for Whole-Genome Sequencing). In general, it was concluded that *Salmonella* contamination in sheep at slaughter is not a great concern. However, queries were raised

regarding whether participating abattoirs were slaughtering only ovine or other species.

This led to a discussion around potential cross-contamination in abattoirs between different species slaughtered, and the cleaning practices undertaken to eliminate the risk of contamination.

Action 7.2 Secretariat to follow up and circulate clarification to ACMSF.

AW highlighted the usefulness of the results: survey covers a substantial piece of work, that can help the FSA answer specific questions.

7.3 Public forum

At the end of the open session, members of the public observing the meeting were invited to ask questions or provide comments. One observer asked for information regarding guidance and advice for *Listeria* and *Clostridium botulinum* and whether the FSA have a lead on bacteriophage work. AW advised that the FSA would reach out directly on this topic as this was a question for policy colleagues.

Action 7.3: Secretariat to follow up.

8. Sheep survey - Reserved Business

9. Raw pet food survey - Reserved Business

10. IID3 update - Reserved Business

11. PATH-SAFE FBD update - Reserved Business

12. Committee subgroup updates - Reserved Business