

Chair Delivery Plan: Update 1

Background

As incoming Chair of the ACMSF, I outlined a number of aims for the forthcoming 3 years, which were endorsed by the Committee at its meeting in June 2025. This paper develops the aims further with a proposed plan for implementation for any builds from Committee members.

Implementation Plan

Aim 1. An Advisory Committee structured to deliver independent, expert advice on all aspects of the microbiological safety of food across the whole food chain, meeting the needs of stakeholders and providing an enjoyable, value-adding and inclusive environment for members.

1.1. To provide advice in response to requests from the FSA and also on matters that Committee members themselves identify as important

This is business as usual for the Committee and will continue to operate in the current manner with requests from the FSA and input from the Committee members.

Action: No action

1.2. To review the skills and representation of the ACMSF and support a targeted programme of recruitment

The Committee has been through an intensive round of recruitment with a number of new members appointed in recent months. The recruitment for 2025/26, that would ordinarily begin in the summer, has been postponed in favour of extending the term of existing members where they are due to retire from the Committee.

Action: A review of the skills and representation will be presented at the meeting in October 2025 with a recommendation on priorities for the next round of recruitment that will be initiated in summer 2026 and result in appointments in

2027. The Committee will be asked to provide input into the review with the aim of developing a prioritised and targeted recruitment campaign.

1.3. To review the Committee terms of reference and ways of working including its subgroups and Ad Hoc groups to ensure it is fit for the future

The ACMSF Terms of Reference have been in operation for many years and have served the purpose very well. It is timely to review the TOR and the associated subgroups and Ad Hoc groups to ensure they are structured to deliver the expectations of the Committee, its sponsors and stakeholders.

Action: The Terms of Reference and associated subgroups and Ad Hoc Groups will be reviewed and a proposal developed for review at the January 2026 meeting. The Committee will be asked to review and recommend changes to the proposal with the aim of developing an agreed position to implement by June 2026.

Aim 2. The microbiological risk assessment challenges in the years ahead (3-5 year plan).

2.1. To conduct a food system (all sector) engagement exercise to identify and prioritise the key microbiological risks (perceived and actual) identified by stakeholders in order to inform risk assessment for the future.

The ACMSF agenda is predominantly driven by requests from the FSA and also in response to a horizon scanning exercise. There is an opportunity to understand the wider microbiological food safety needs of stakeholders throughout the food system to inform the work plan of the Committee.

Action: A proposal for a multi-stakeholder horizon scanning workshop to identify the microbiological risk assessment challenges will be developed for review by the Committee at its meeting in January 2026. The proposal will consider the content, format, stakeholders, venue and cost. A virtual Ad Hoc Group may be required to develop this proposal. The aim would be to deliver the workshop in June 2026 in line with the normal 2-day meeting to accommodate the horizon-scanning exercise and the ACMSF meeting.

Aim 3. Understanding food production and the microbiological risks.

3.1. To develop and implement a plan to enable Advisory Committee members to explore food production sourcing and supply and increase understanding of the microbiological risks and controls.

The Committee and Secretariat have a wide background of expertise from different disciplines that provide for comprehensive assessment of microbiological risks. Understanding the food sectors presenting the most significant microbiological food safety risks would be helpful in providing informed advice to stakeholders.

Action: The Committee should aim for the October meeting to be held each year in association with a visit to a targeted food production facility aligned to a key microbiological risk of relevance to the Committee's work plan. The proposed priorities are;

- *2026: Chicken farming & processing (ref: Campylobacter spp.)*
- *2027: Sandwiches & prepared salads (ref: Listeria monocytogenes & STEC)*
- *2028: Egg farming & processing (ref: Salmonella spp.)*

The Committee meeting will be held in conjunction with the visit and the aim should be to seek industry sites that can be accommodated to minimise any additional travel, accommodation and catering costs.

The Committee is asked to consider the paper, provide thoughts on further considerations and to agree to its implementation.

Alec Kyriakides. 13th October 2025.