

Meeting

Matters Arising from the 21 October 2021 Meeting

The attached schedule records action taken on matters arising from the Committee's ninety-ninth meeting held on October 2021 and previous meetings.

Secretariat

February 2022

RECORD OF ACTION TAKEN ON MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE NINETY-NINETH MEETING

ACM/MIN/99 Topic and action required	Actions
---	----------------

Minutes of 98th meeting

Members approved the minutes of the 98th meeting as an accurate record (subject to correcting some typos) and asked these to be posted on the ACMSF website.

Para 4.1

Actioned.

Literature update on Botulism in cattle, sheep and goats from 2006 to 2019

Reference linked to Böhnel and Gessler 2013: clarification to be provided on whether paper talked about the presence of botulinum toxin in the milk of asymptomatic cows or symptomatic cows. Clarification also needed on toxin types. If there were toxins present in the milk of asymptomatic cows, that would be quite significant particularly if the toxins were of the types A, B or E.

Para 7.6 bullet 2

Actioned. Revised literature review has been circulated (paper ACM/1386 refers).

Correction needed on how the following terms: “strains”, “serotypes” and “subtypes” have been used in the review.

Para 7.6 bullet 3

Actioned. Revised literature review has been circulated (paper ACM/1386 refers).

Para 7.6 bullet 4 “Heat resistant” (bottom of page 29). Paragraph talks about type B spores are more heat resistant than type A spores and gives a reference but that study looked at the heat resistance of the toxin not spores. Correction to be made in document.

Actioned. Revised literature review has been circulated (paper ACM/1386 refers).

Para 7.6 bullet 5 Page 30 (Line 778): “From the literature identified, it is not clear exactly how C. botulinum spores get into milk....” It was suggested that a good reference for this point is the book written by Alec Kyriakides that discussed the ways that spores can contaminate milk coming from faecal material across contamination. Reference to be inserted in the document.

Actioned. Revised literature review has been circulated (paper ACM/1386 refers).

Botulism in cattle, sheep and goats

Update on recommendations from the ACMSF Botulism in Cattle, Sheep and Goats reports

Para 7.9 bullet 1

Recommendation 8.7 (Samples collected during clinical investigations should be archived to assist with the development of further assay systems). Members felt that Animal and Plant Health Agency's (APHA) response "samples are collected from clinical investigation as they do not get many cases in a year and the samples are only kept for a very limited time and so there is no archive of samples" was unacceptable. APHA to be asked why samples are not archived.

Actioned. See paper ACM/1387 (APHA response to ACMSF botulism in cattle, sheep and goats reports recommendations).

Para 7.9 bullet 2

Guidance to stakeholders (recommendations 8.10 and 8.11), on the use and disposal of poultry litter and messages to broiler farmers with respect to biosecurity should be on prominent locations on the appropriate government departments website for easy access for interested parties. Secretariat to convey committee's view to the relevant government departments (FSA, APHA, Defra and devolved agriculture departments).

Actioned. See paper ACM/1387 (APHA response to ACMSF botulism in cattle, sheep and goats reports recommendations).

Para 7.9 bullet
3

Committee queried APHA's response to recommendation 8.15. "There's little evidence of other toxins causing botulism in the UK and there is watching brief on botulism. The committee felt current monitoring system is deficient in terms of not following up on some of the small number of outbreaks that are reported. Secretariat to relay committee's comments to APHA.

Actioned. See papers ACM/1387 (APHA response to ACMSF botulism in cattle, sheep and goats reports recommendations) and ACM/1388 (Emergence of suspected type D botulism in ruminants in E&W (2001 to 2009) associated with exposure to broiler litter).

Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group

Para 8.3 bullet
1

Following discussions on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on human infections, UKHSA (Dr Larkin) mentioned a study that contrasted the drop in norovirus with the Campylobacter levels in recent months stating that the committee would find the study findings interesting. Copy of paper to be sent to members.

Actioned. See paper ACM/1389: Differential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on laboratory reporting of norovirus and Campylobacter in England: A modelling approach.

Para 8.3 bullet
8

The reasoning behind the FSA's Survey of infectious intestinal disease in the UK carried out by Ipsos MORI was questioned as it was felt it was not a comprehensive approach in collecting data compared to the previous IID studies and the forthcoming IID3. Study was commissioned to collect data to estimate the impact of the pandemic on IID and foodborne disease. Outcome of these studies will be presented to the committee for discussion at a future meeting.

Work in progress.
Presentation on study to be provided at a future meeting.

Salmonella Typhimurium in humans

(24% of human isolates were S Typhimurium) and incident rate in pigs (first quarter of 2021 had 21 incidents compared to 18 incidents in 2020 and below 10 in previous years) which reveals a picture of continuous increasing incidents of S Typhimurium. Salmonella in Livestock report in 2020 also suggests that there has been a greater than 10% increase in overall Salmonella in incidents in pigs over that period of time. When a similar query on this pathogen was raised at the last committee meeting APHA attributed the increases to the system used to collect data and indicated that they were considering a more structured survey of Salmonella prevalence across the pig industry. Dr Wyllie agreed to seek up to date advice on this matter for the committee.

Para 8.3 bullet
9

Work in progress. Steve
Wyllie to provide.

Food and You 2 - Wave 1

Para 9.6 bullet
1

On the issue of whether consumers hygiene with food have improved, the FSA will share the findings of a tracker survey they have been running throughout the pandemic that has been monitoring behaviours during the pandemic with the committee.

Actioned. See FSA's response at Annex I.

Annex I

Food and You 2 - Wave 1

The reports from the FSA's Covid-19 tracker are published on the FSA website: <https://www.food.gov.uk/research/research-projects/the-covid-19-consumer-research>

To date we have published four separate reports covering April 2020 to March 2021. The tracker has now retired but we are planning to publish a final report in the coming months.

Each report has a section on food safety and hygiene in the home. The latest report indicated that food safety behaviours have remained relatively stable over time, however respondents who reported cutting or skipping meals for financial reasons were more likely to eat certain foods past the use by date compared to those who hadn't cut or skipped meals. This suggests the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on food insecurity may have led to more people eating food past the use by date.

This was something we also observed in a small qualitative study conducted in June 2020. This study found that several participants noted that they 'stretched' labelling advice like use-by and expiry dates to stretch their budgets out, often also seeking out 'close to date' food.

FSA Analytics Unit

