

ACMSF Report 2020

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Chapter 3: A Forward Look

Future work programme

124. The Committee will keep itself informed of developing trends in relation to foodborne disease through its close links with the FSA, FSS, PHE and Defra. We will continue to respond promptly with advice on the food safety implications of issues referred to the Committee by the FSA.

125. The Committee will work with the FSA in taking forward the recommendations in the Ad Hoc on non-proteolytic *C. botulinum* and vacuum and modified atmosphere packaged foods report.

126. The cross-SAC group setup to consider the effect on microbiological food safety of the changes made to the maximum residue levels for quaternary ammonium compounds and biocidal actives will continue to collaborate with industry to obtain relevant evidence that can be used to assess the impact of these changes on food safety.

127. At the FSA's request, the subgroup on microbiological risk assessments in relation to food incidents will review the FSA's risk assessments if this is needed.

128. The Working Group on AMR will continue to provide advice to the FSA on issues relating to AMR and the food chain.

129. The Committee, through its standing Surveillance Working Group, will continue to provide advice as required on the Government's microbiological food surveillance programme and any other surveillance relevant to foodborne disease.

130. The Working Group on emerging pathogens will keep a watching brief on developments concerning the risks to human health from newly emerging or re-emerging pathogens through food chain exposure pathways.

131. Details of the Committee's work plan for 2020/21 can be found at Annex II.

Annex I

Papers Considered by ACMSF in 2020

PAPER NUMBER	NAME OF PAPER	MEETING NUMBER	DATE OF MEETING
ACM/1320	Matters arising	96 th	30 January 2020
	ACMSF Terms of Reference		
ACM/1321		96 th	30 January 2020

ACM/1322	Ad Hoc Group on non-proteolytic Clostridium botulinum and vacuum and modified atmosphere packaged foods	96th	30 January 2020
ACM/1323	Tickborne Encephalitis virus risks to public health	96th	30 January 2020
ACM/1324	Food and You Survey: Wave 5 Findings	96th	30 January 2020
ACM/1325	Areas of Research Interest	96th	30 January 2020
ACM/1326	Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group	96th	30 January 2020
ACM/1327	Proposed Horizon Scanning Workshop	96th	30 January 2020
ACM/1328	Dates of future meetings	96th	30 January 2020
ACM/1329	Update on estimates of norovirus burden (Members Use Only/reserved business)	96th	30 January 2020
ACM/1330	Literature review on botulism in cattle, sheep and goats	96th	30 January 2020

ACMSF Work plan

ACM/1331		96th	30 January 2020
ACM/1332	Update from other Committees	96th	30 January 2020
ACM/1333	Items of interest from the literature	96th	30 January 2020
ACM/1334	ACMSF's report on multidimensional representation of risks	96 th	30 January 2020
ACM/1335	EUROBAROMETER report for the UK 2019	96th	30 January 2020
ACM/1336	EFSA Scientific Opinion: Whole genome sequencing and metagenomics for outbreak investigation, source attribution and risk assessment of food-borne microorganisms	96th	30 January 2020
ACM/1337	Matters arising	97th	22 October 2020
ACM/1338	Horizon Scanning Workshop Output	97th	22 October 2020
ACM/1339	Review of the ACMSF report on vacuum packaging and associated processes	97th	22 October 2020

ACM/1340	Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group	97th	22 October 2020
ACM/1341	STEC Research in Scotland	97th	22 October 2020
ACM/1342	Dates of future meetings	97th	22 October 2020
ACM/1343	Annual update on the FSA's Antimicrobial resistance programme	97th	22 October 2020
ACM/1344	ACMSF Work plan	97th	22 October 2020
ACM/1345:	Update from other Committees	97th	22 October 2020
ACM/1346	: Items of interest from the literature	97th	22 October 2020
ACM/1347	Risk assessment: coronavirus risk to UK consumers via shellfish and crops grown on land treated with sewage sludge	97th	22 October 2020

	Risk Assessment: risk of food or food contact materials and surfaces being a source or transmission route of SARS-CoV-2 for UK consumers?	97th	22 October 2020
ACM/1348			
	FAO guide to ranking food safety risks at national level	97th	22 October 2020
ACM/1349			

Annex II

ACMSF Forward Work Plan 2020/21

Last reviewed October 2020

This work plan shows the main areas of ACMSF's work over the next 12 to 18 months. It should be noted that the Committee must maintain the flexibility to consider urgent issues that arise unpredictably, and discussions scheduled in the work programme may therefore be deferred.

ACMSF Terms of reference

To assess the risk to humans of microorganisms which are used, or occur, in or on food, and to advise the Food Standards Agency on any matters relating to the microbiological safety of food.

Topic	Progress	Expected Output
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Horizon scanning

Workshop was held in June 2020.

Horizon scanning workshop for members to assess emerging microbiological issues of concern and rank issues in terms of strategic priority and urgency

The Committee will consider at the October 2020 plenary meeting the finalised version of the output from the June horizon scanning workshop.

List of outputs from the workshop including short-listed priorities for more in-depth consideration.

Newly Emerging Pathogens

The Newly Emerging Pathogens Working Group provides advice Continuous. on the significance and risks from newly emerging or re-emerging pathogens through food chain exposure pathways.

The Committee to draw the FSA's attention to any risks to human health from newly emerging pathogens via food.

Microbiological Surveillance of food

The Surveillance Working Group provides advice as required in connection with the FSA's microbiological food surveillance programme and any other surveillance relevant to foodborne disease.

Working group activities are continuous.

Surveillance Working Group/Committee comments on survey protocols and survey results for consideration by FSA in their microbiological food surveillance activities.

Developing trends in relation to foodborne disease

The Committee receives updates on research, surveys, investigations, meetings and conferences of interest.

As issues arise.

Updates will be provided based on the October 2020 and January 2021 Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group (EFIG) meetings.

ACMSF provides comments on the updates it receives for the FSA's consideration.

International and EU developments on the microbiological safety of food

The Committee is updated on issues of relevance and significant developments at an EU and international level on microbiological food safety, such as EFSA opinions and Codex Committee on Food Hygiene meetings.

As issues arise.

ACMSF to note updates and provide comments if desired.

Microbiological incidents and outbreaks

The views of the Committee will be sought where necessary and updates provided on outbreaks of significance.

As issues arise.

ACMSF assessment of the risks in relation to significant microbiological outbreaks/incidents.

**Antimicrobial
resistance**

ACMSF's role through its Working Group on AMR is to assess the risks to humans from foodborne transmission of antimicrobial-resistant microorganisms and provide advice to the FSA.

The subgroup considers developments and emerging issues in relation to antimicrobial resistance and the food chain. Working group activities are continuous.

Summaries of discussions and recommendations are provided at plenary meetings.

ACMSF assessment of the key risks to the food chain which may have consequences for human health and identification of key research or surveillance gaps in relation to the food chain.

**Social science
research relating to
microbiological
food safety risks**

The Committee will receive updates on the findings of social science research which may have a bearing on the assessment of microbiological food safety risks.

ACMSF to note updates and provide comments if desired.

**FSA Board's New
Approach in
relation to Rare
Burgers**

The Committee will be updated on work the FSA is undertaking following the FSA Board's decision on rare burgers.

Committee to be kept informed of progress and to contribute to the work where appropriate.

Changes to plant protection product MRLs: potential impact on food safety

Members were alerted to the issue of changes to maximum residue levels (MRLs) for chlorate residues in food, quaternary ammonium compounds (QACs) and biocidal actives which are used as disinfectants/sanitiser in the food industry at previous plenary meetings. The Committee agreed to the FSA's suggestion to setup a cross SAC working group to facilitate a full discussion to take place.

ACMSF to consider the evidence in this area with respect to impacts on food safety and to provide advice to the FSA.

Committee will receive an update on the group's activities when this is available.

Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland Risk Analysis guidelines

The Committee will be updated on the FSA and FSS's risk analysis guidelines at a future plenary meeting.

ACMSF's comments on the risk analysis guidelines for FSA and FSS to consider.

Tickborne Encephalitis virus risks to public health

Committee will be asked to comment on a draft assessment of public health threats (risk to the food chain at a national level) from tickborne encephalitis virus at a future meeting.

The Agency is looking for endorsement of this assessment and the overall risk via the food chain from the Committee.

**Review of the
ACMSF report on
vacuum packaging
and associated
processes**

Committee will discuss the subgroup on non-proteolytic *C. botulinum* and vacuum and modified atmosphere packaged foods recommendation for the ACMSF report vacuum packaging and associated processes published in 1992 to be reviewed and to identify priority areas of work for consideration at the October 2020 meeting.

The Agency is seeking priority areas for the proposed review of this report.

**STEC Research in
Scotland**

Committee will receive a presentation from Food Standards Scotland on STEC research in Scotland at the October 2020 meeting.

ACMSF to note findings and provide comments if desired.

Annex III

Terms of Reference and Membership of the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food, its Working Groups and its *Ad Hoc* Groups

Terms of reference

ACMSF

To assess the risk to humans from microorganisms which are used or occur in or on food and to advise the Food Standards Agency on any matters relating to the

microbiological safety of food.

Surveillance Working Group

To facilitate the provision of ACMSF advice to government in connection with its microbiological food surveillance programme and other surveillance relevant to foodborne disease, particularly in relation to the design, methodology, sampling and statistical aspects; and to report back regularly to the ACMSF.

Newly Emerging Pathogens Working Group

To assemble information on the current situation on this topic in order to decide whether there is a potential problem in relation to the microbiological safety of food; and to recommend to the ACMSF whether the Committee needs to undertake further action.

Antimicrobial Resistance Working Group

- To brief ACMSF on developments in relation to antimicrobial resistance and the food chain and identify evidence that will assist the group in assessing the risks.
- To review key documents and identify the risks for the UK food chain and relevant aspects of the feed chain in relation to antimicrobial resistance which may have consequences for human health.
- To comment on progress in understanding the issue of antimicrobial-resistant microorganisms and the food chain since the ACMSF produced its report in 1999 and subsequent reviews in 2005 and 2007, including the relevance of any outstanding recommendations.
- To highlight key research or surveillance gaps in relation to antimicrobial-resistant microorganisms and the food/feed chain and identify those which are considered a priority.

ACMSF subgroup on non-proteolytic *Clostridium botulinum* and vacuum and modified atmosphere packaged foods

Review the Food Standards Agency guidelines for the shelf-life of vacuum and modified atmosphere packaged foods and the risk posed by non-proteolytic *C. botulinum*, and other pathogens where appropriate, from these foods. This group will consider the 1992 ACMSF Report on Vacuum Packaging and Associated Processes, but it is outside the scope of this group to review that document.

- Specifically review the industry funded risk assessment of botulism from chilled, VP/MAP (Vacuum Packed/Modified Atmosphere Packed) fresh meat held at 3°C to 8°C.
- Where appropriate consider other risk-related evidence relevant to this topic made available to the FSA and the ACMSF during the lifetime of the group.

Subgroup on microbiological risk assessments in relation to food incidents

Reviews the FSA's risk assessments in relation to incidents

Subgroup on quaternary ammonium compounds and biocides used in food processing

Setup to review evidence on Food Business Operators concerns on the implications of changes to the maximum residue levels for QACs, biocidal actives and chlorate residues on food hygiene and safety.