

Minutes of the 103rd meeting

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD (ACMSF) - HYBRID MEETING HELD ON 22nd June 2023 (ONE-HUNDRED AND THIRD MEETING)

Present

Chair: Prof. Bill Keevil

Members:

Dr Gauri Godbole

Dr Rohini Manuel

Prof. Peter McClure

Mr Alec Kyriakides

Miss Heather Lawson

Dr Jane Gibbens

Prof. Francis Butler

Prof. Linda Scobie

Dr Edward Fox

Mr Martin Briggs

Prof. Cath Rees

Dr Dragan Antic

Prof. Andrew Page

Dr Inaki Deza-Cruz

Ms Adri Bester

Departmental representative:

Dr Paul Cook (FSA, Risk Assessment Unit)

Dr Steven Wyllie (APHA)

Secretariat:

Dr Anthony Wilson

Dr Elaine Pegg

Dr Johanna Jackson

Ms Azuka Aghadiuno

Presenters:

Dr Paul Cook (FSA, Risk Assessment Unit)

Dr Erica Kintz (FSA, Risk Assessment Unit)

Members of the public: see Annex 1.

1. Chair's introduction

1.1 The Chair welcomed members of the committee and members of the public to the 103rd meeting of the ACMSF.

1.2 He also welcomed the new members Prof. Andrew Page, Dr Roberto Vivancos, Dr Inaki Deza-Cruz, Ms Adri Bester to the committee and asked those attending the meeting (Prof. Andrew Page, Dr Inaki Deza-Cruz, Ms Adri Bester) to introduce themselves.

1.3 The Chair also welcomed Dr Erica Kintz (FSA), who presented agenda item 10, (An update/milestones of IID3) and Dr Paul Cook who presented agenda item 11 (An update on the activities of EFIG). The Chair also noted it was Dr Paul Cook's last ACMSF meeting as he will be retiring in September and thanked him for 25 years of outstanding service.

1.4 As part of the meeting was opened to the public, the Chair mentioned that all of the meeting papers with the exception of the reserved business paper; **ACM/1412** (Update on the activities of EFIG) were available on the ACMSF website. This reserved business paper was for members use only.

2. Apologies for absence

2.1 Dr Wayne Anderson

Prof. Peter Borriello

Mrs Ann Williams

3. Declaration of interests

3.1 The Chair asked members if they wished to declare any potential conflicts of interest associated with the agenda items to be discussed.

4. Minutes of the 102nd meeting

4.1 Typographical errors were discussed and amended accordingly.

4.2 It was requested that on page 11 and 29 of the minutes, that the reference to z values be changed from °C to centigrade degrees as a conscious decision was made by the *Clostridia* subgroup to define them as such and therefore this should be reflected in the minutes.

4.3 It was requested, that on page 24 of the minutes, the reference to sell by date was changed to best before date as the former is not officially used.

4.4 Subject to the above amendments, members approved the minutes of the 102nd meeting as an accurate record and agreed that they should be posted on the ACMSF website. **ACTION.**

5. Matters arising (ACM/1411)

5.1 Dr Anthony Wilson presented ACM/1411 and provided a summary of actions on matters arising from previous meetings. He reported that:

- Action points highlighted in the last meeting were added to the minutes of the 101st meeting accordingly.
- Minutes of the 101st meeting had been posted on the website.
- Robin May had been updated by email on significant delays to the IID3 project due to problems with the HRA ethical approval.
- Regarding the committee's query on a full risk assessment on nisin, the secretariat had liaised with AEJEG (Joint Expert Group on Additives, Enzymes and other Regulated Products) who have raised a similar query and are currently in discussion with the legal team regarding whether the ACMSF's request for a full risk assessment would be justified. The committee will be updated at future meetings as this action progresses.
- The secretariat had arranged a meeting with policy on 6th July 2023 to discuss a number of actions points from the last meeting including:
 - o Modifying FSA guidelines to include in the control actions "a combination of controlling factors which can be shown consistently to prevent toxin production by non-proteolytic *C. botulinum*".
 - o The recommendation that the FSA highlight the importance of temperature control in consumer food hygiene campaigns, together with adherence to recommended Use By dates, to reinforce these critical consumer food safety controls.
 - o Better communication with the public regarding the risks of buying from unregulated food producers.
 - o A handwashing campaign post COVID-19.
- Responses were obtained by the secretariat on actions for the *Clostridia* subgroup.
 - o The Committee had commented in the last meeting that the effect of decreasing pH on botulinum toxin stability was ambiguous. The response stated that the group agreed that the statement in section 5.1.1 regarding the effect of pH on botulinum neurotoxin was not clear and, in addition, came to the conclusion that the information was only peripherally relevant to the food safety issue. In response the statement was removed from the report.
 - o In response to a query on *the Clostridia* subgroup report regarding alternative product methodologies which may encourage FBOs to move away from the use of

heat treatment and how the report may be future proofed to cover this. The subgroup provided the following statement: The subgroup report includes details of many alternative technologies, and their corresponding relationship with regard to control of *C. Botulinum* and other neurotoxicogenic bacteria, that are currently identified by FBOs. Currently none of the new technologies were considered sufficiently developed to warrant specific advice with regard to food safety but, with a view to future proofing, the group report includes a recommendation to remove special emphasis on heat treatment in the FSA guidelines for safety controls for food manufacture.

- The committee was informed by the secretariat that the public consultation of the *Clostridia* subgroup report was underway.
- In response to a query from the committee about the tracking of antidiarrheal pharmacy sales the secretariat informed the committee that neither FSA nor UKHSA track this information. The response from UKHSA concluded that national surveillance in the UK is very different to that in the US not least because we have the NHS but also as we don't have a federal structure.
- In response to requests by the committee for clarification on data included in the EFIG report, an update will be given in the closed session.
- The secretariat also reported that an outstanding action from 101st meeting, to circulate the ACMSF horizon scanning workshop 2022 summary of discussions and outputs had now been completed and that the summary would be shared with UKFSN once it had been published.
- The secretariat had reached out to the APHA representative for an update on an outstanding action from the 100th meeting relating to the storage of samples collected in relation to botulism in cattle, sheep, and goats. However, the APHA representative Dr Stephen Wyllie was unable to provide a response at this time so will follow up after the meeting **ACTION**.
- Outstanding action from the 99th meeting. Re: updated advice on increase in *Salmonella* in pigs. This is still a work in progress and a request will be forwarded to Dr Stephen Wyllie to update the committee on this action point. **ACTION**.

5.2 A committee member inquired why a response had been given to the actions regarding the *Clostridia* subgroup report when it had not yet been through public consultation. Secretariat to follow up. **ACTION**

5.3 It was also highlighted the length of time that it was taking to get a response to the outstanding action from the 100th meeting (relating to the storage of

samples collected in relation to botulism in cattle, sheep, and goats). The secretariat is to work with Dr Stephen Wyllie to obtain a response from APHA before the next meeting. **ACTION.**

5.4 The committee requested that Robin May be approached to determine the reasons behind the delays to the IID3 project to try to prevent them from happening in the future. Secretariat to follow up. **ACTION.**

5.5 A committee member highlighted the time it has taken to circulate the final draft of the ACMSF horizon scanning workshop 2022 summary and asked what actions were being taken on the points raised during the workshop. Secretariat to update the committee on the progress horizon scanning summaries at the next meeting. **ACTION.**

6. Committee update

6.1 Update on the AMR working group:

- Prof. Bill Keevil, as Chair of the AMR working group, gave an update on the group's latest work.
- The last working group meeting was held on 18th April 2023.
- The issues considered during this meeting included:
 - o Effect of climate change on AMR. Presentation given by Kristina Osbjør, The International Centre for Antimicrobial Resistance Solutions, Denmark.
 - o AMR programme review. Update given by Kathryn Callaghan, Food Standards Agency.
 - o A critical review of AMR risks arising as a consequence of using biocides and certain heavy metals in food animal production. Presentation given by Christian James, formerly of the TEC Partnership, Grimsby Institute.
 - o Antimicrobial Resistance in Biofilms Formed During Secondary Food Processing of Meat and Meat Products. Presentation given by John Walshaw, Fera.
 - o AMR Terminology: use of resistance and reduced susceptibility. Update given by Paul Cook, FSA. A paper to be drafted by 3 members of the subgroup on this topic for discussion at the next AMR subgroup meeting.
 - The next meeting will be on the 12th of September 2023

6.2 A committee member asked a question regarding information paper ACM-1414 (Proposed AMR commitments and deliverables) on why the “*Understanding the impact of imported foods on AMR in the UK*” research theme was the only item to not have a comment or rationale. Dr Paul Cook replied that discussions are happening at the trade level about the need for sampling for AMR in imported foods.

7. AOB

7.1 The secretariat brought to the attention of the committee the possibility of a subgroup to look at opportunities for the use of genetic information in risk assessment. It was explained that there is a paper being published by the World Health Organisation in a couple of weeks on ways of incorporating the use of sequence-based information into risk assessment frameworks to respond to food borne outbreaks. Based on the conclusions of that report and discussions with other agencies and departments, we may be bringing a request to the committee between now and the next meeting to consider forming a new subgroup to consider the best ways of incorporating that information into risk assessments.

7.2 A committee member raised the used of phage as a bio preservative in foods and asked if there were guidelines about the use of phage. The query was in relation to a question that came out of a recent science committee meeting on the regulatory framework around the use of phage in food products. The secretariat is to ask for a presentation from the Regulated Products team on this subject at a future meeting. **ACTION.**

8. Question and Answer Session

8.1 No questions were forthcoming.

8.2 Open session closed. The Chair thanked members of the public for their attendance.

Annex 1

List of observers

Name	Organisation
Gail Betts	Campden BRI

Dr Karin Goodburn Chilled Foods Association

Ali Aitchison Eurofins

Gary McMahon Moy Park

Iulia Gherman FSA

Helen Gillen Food and Drink Federation

Chris Baylis Mondelēz International

Monica Mann FSA