

Summary of minutes of the September 2023 meeting

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD (ACMSF) ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE WORKING GROUP

SUMMARY OF TWENTY FOURTH MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2023

European Committee on Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (EUCAST) presentation on international standards in antimicrobial susceptibility testing: breakpoints, methods and guidance.

1. Professor Gunnar Kahlmeter, Chairperson and Technical Data Co-ordinator of the European Committee on Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (EUCAST) gave a presentation to the Group covering standards of antimicrobial testing and susceptibility which included breakpoints, methods, guidance and terminology. The ACMSF AMR Working Group members appreciated the presentation as it was useful in terms of informing their own paper on defining AMR terminology used in FSA's research and surveillance reports (see below).

Use of AMR terminology used in FSA reports.

2. The issue around the use of AMR terminology in FSA reports has been raised previously. These concerns centred around terms such as "resistance" and "resistant" used to describe bacteria when epidemiological cut-off (ECOFF) values are used to determine susceptibility. It was felt by experts that "resistant" should only be applied when susceptibility is defined using clinical breakpoints especially for foodborne pathogens. It was recognised that many of the FSA's research and survey reports concerning "antimicrobial resistance" as well as the wider literature cite and or use different methods and interpretative criteria, for example, clinical breakpoints and more recently detection of antimicrobial resistance genes through sequencing or a mixture of phenotypic and genotypic methods.

3. The FSA wants to ensure that they and their research contractors are using appropriate terms/definitions. At the 22nd (April 2023) meeting, a small group of AMR members were tasked with defining AMR-related terms including their applicability in different situations and to draft a statement at the start of FSA's AMR-related surveys and research reports which acknowledges some of the issues around the interpretation of terms.

4. At this (24th) ACMSF AMR Working Group meeting, John Threlfall presented to the members the first draft of a discussion paper on AMR terminology used in FSA reports. The AMR Working Group members provided their comments and opinions on the paper. It was agreed that this paper would need to be revised to reflect the comments made by the members and Gunnar Kahlmeter's presentation and will be reconsidered by the Group at the next meeting in January 2024.

Approach to assessing detriment of AMR genes in food risk assessments.

5. In [October 2019](#), the ACMSF recommended that FSA should move towards using a two-dimensional framework for microbiological risk assessment, which considers the probability of the adverse effect occurring alongside the detriment (harm or damage) associated with the severity of the microbiological hazard(s) being considered. Currently, there is no framework for assessing the severity of detriment resulting from the exposure to microorganisms carrying AMR genes.

6. The FSA has been considering options available in assessing detriment of AMR in food. Wioleta Trzaska and Paul Cook (both FSA) jointly presented a discussion paper which proposes a framework/approach to assessing AMR detriment that adopts World Health Organization (WHO) Critically Important Antimicrobials (CIAs) for Human Medicine List, as a reference when assessing severity of detriment. The members provided their views and comments on the framework; overall they felt that the framework/approach was good but required further refinement. The revised AMR detriment framework paper is due to be presented to the members in January 2024.

Update on the development of the next (2024-2029) AMR National Action Plan (NAP), food commitments and deliverables.

7. Kathryn Callaghan gave a presentation on the development of the next (2024-2029) AMR NAP to the working group with a specific focus on the proposed food safety commitments and deliverables. The Group thanked Kathryn for keeping them informed on progress with the new AMR NAP.

Any other business.

8. The Chair informed the group that this is Paul Cook's last ACMSF AMR Working Group meeting as he is retiring from the FSA at the end of September 2023. The Chair thanked Paul for his contribution to this Working Group but also the wider plenary ACMSF over the years. He wished him an enjoyable retirement.

Secretariat

January 2024