

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD DISCUSSION PAPER

### Literature review on botulism in cattle, sheep and goats: 2006 to 2019

#### Background

1. In June 2004 an *ad hoc* group of the ACMSF was set up to assess food chain issues linked to botulism or suspected botulism in cattle. The group was set up in response to a marked increase in number of reported botulism cases in England, Northern Ireland and Wales in cattle since 2003. The group met seven times over twelve months to consider the potential risk to human health associated with botulism or suspected botulism in cattle. The group also considered the risk to cattle from the spreading of poultry waste on agricultural land. The group assessed a large amount of evidence and produced a set of recommendations and supporting evidence in the form of the 2006 ACMSF report on botulism in cattle.
2. In 2007 the *ad hoc* group was reconvened as botulism cases in sheep emerged. The group met three times to assess whether the recommendations made for cattle in 2006 could be applied to sheep and goats with botulism or suspected botulism, therefore providing further coverage than the original 2006 report. The group also looked at whether advice on poultry litter should also be extended to sheep and goats. The ACMSF report produced as a result of these meetings was published in 2009.
3. At the request of risk managers, the ACMSF have been asked to revisit this topic to identify any new information since the committee's 2006 and 2009 reports. To do this, a systematic literature review was carried out with the review question split into five sub questions which follow the topics of the 2006 and 2009 ACMSF report to allow ease of comparison. Key developments identified since the 2006 and 2009 ACMSF report include;
  - The introduction of *C. botulinum* vaccinations for cattle in the UK.
  - The improvement of laboratory-based diagnosis methods.
  - Asymptomatic cattle may be carriers of *C. botulinum*.
  - Further updates to the link between poultry and animal cases of botulism.

#### The Committee is asked:

- a) To comment on the findings of this literature review (Annex 1).
- b) Consider whether the advice on voluntary restrictions to cattle, sheep and goats, and the potential risk to human health, is still supported.

**Secretariat  
October 2019**