

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

Literature review on botulism in cattle, sheep and goats: 2006 to 2021

Issue

1. A literature review (ACM/1311¹) on botulism in cattle, sheep and goats was completed at the request of risk managers to revisit and identify any relevant scientific literature since the committee's 2006 and 2009 reports on this topic; this review was presented to the ACMSF in October 2019 and a revised version was presented in April 2021, during this meeting the committee raised further comments, the review paper of Annex 1 has been further updated to address the points raised in April.

Background

2. In 2006 the ACMSF produced a comprehensive report which assessed the risk to human health posed by botulism in cattle. This was produced in response to an increase in the number of suspected botulism cases in cattle in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This report concluded that good practice of poultry litter management and disposal be extended to cattle, the report also concluded that the main botulism toxin types that affect cattle are a low risk to human health and that the voluntary restrictions on meat and milk from affected animals should be maintained.
3. In 2007 the subgroup met three times to discuss botulism in cattle, sheep and goats after there were reports of botulism in sheep and produced a report published in 2009. This report concluded that botulism outbreaks in sheep and goats in the UK are uncommon in comparison to cattle, but the number of animals affected by each outbreak could potentially be higher than with cattle and that poultry litter was also found to be a contributing factor to botulism in sheep and goats. It was concluded that the management of poultry litter on farms should be extended to sheep and goat farmers with the same restrictions as those used for cattle.
4. In 2009 the FSA amended advice on botulism to follow the recommendation of the committee. The voluntary restriction of meat and milk from clinically affected cattle was unchanged but the voluntary restriction on cattle from farms with clinically suspected botulism was no longer considered necessary.

¹ <https://acmsf.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/ACM-1311%20Botulism%20in%20cattle%20sheep%20and%20goat.pdf>

5. A literature review on botulism in cattle, sheep and goats was presented to the Committee in October 2019 with the aim of establishing whether there had been any relevant publications in the literature since the 2006 and 2009 committee reports. Comments were made by members which were addressed and presented in a revised paper to the ACMSF in April 2021. The paper has been further revised following some additional points raised by members and this is at Annex 1. In addition the literature search was repeated using the same search terms but with the end date changed to the 14th October 2021. This did not highlight any additional papers of relevance on this issue.

The Committee is asked:

- Whether it is content that its comments from the April 2021 meeting have been addressed, and this review can be signed off or if there are further points to be considered.
- Whether the literature review highlights any particular areas which the committee needs to revisit in relation to their previous recommendations concerning botulism in cattle, sheep and goats.

**Secretariat
October 2021**