

ACMSF Forward Work Plan 2021/22

Last reviewed October 2021

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.

| No | Topic | Progress | Expected Output |
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| 1 | Horizon scanning Horizon scanning workshop for members to assess emerging microbiological issues of concern and rank issues in terms of strategic priority and urgency | Workshop was held in June 2020. The committee was updated on a number of areas raised at the workshop at the April 2021 plenary meeting. Further updates will be provided at future meetings. | List of outputs from the workshop including short-listed priorities for more in-depth consideration. |
| 2 | Newly Emerging Pathogens The Newly Emerging Pathogens Working Group provides advice on the significance and risks from newly emerging or re-emerging pathogens through food chain exposure pathways. | Continuous. | The committee to draw the FSA's attention to any risks to human health from newly emerging pathogens via food. |

| No | Topic | Progress | Expected Output |
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| 3 | <p>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.</p> | 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. |
| 4 | <p>Developing trends in relation to foodborne disease The Committee receives updates on research, surveys, investigations, meetings and conferences of interest.</p> | As issues arise. Updates will be provided based on the January, June and December 2021 EFIG ¹ meetings. | ACMSF provides comments on the updates it receives for the FSA's consideration. |
| 5 | <p>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.</p> | As issues arise. | ACMSF to note updates and provide comments if desired. |

¹ Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group

| No | Topic | Progress | Expected Output |
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| 6 | <p>Microbiological incidents and outbreaks</p> <p>The views of the Committee will be sought where necessary and updates provided on outbreaks of significance.</p> | <p>As issues arise.</p> | <p>ACMSF assessment of the risks in relation to significant microbiological outbreaks/incidents.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Antimicrobial resistance</p> <p>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.</p> | <p>The subgroup considers developments and emerging issues in relation to antimicrobial resistance and the food chain. Working group activities are continuous.</p> <p>Summaries of discussions and recommendations are provided at plenary meetings.</p> | <p>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.</p> |
| 8 | <p>Social science research relating to microbiological food safety risks</p> | <p>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.</p> <p>Committee to consider findings from the FSA's Food and You 2 Survey at the October 2021 meeting.</p> | <p>ACMSF to note updates and provide comments if desired.</p> |
| 9 | <p>FSA Board's New Approach in relation to Rare Burgers</p> | <p>The Committee will be updated on work the FSA is undertaking following the FSA Board's decision on rare burgers.</p> | <p>Committee to be kept informed of progress and to contribute to the work where appropriate.</p> |

| No | Topic | Progress | Expected Output |
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| 10 | Changes to plant protection product MRLs: potential impact on food safety | <p>Members were alerted by industry 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.</p> <p>Subgroup has been setup to review evidence on the implications of changes on food hygiene and safety.</p> <p>Committee will receive an update on the group's activities when this is available.</p> | ACMSF to consider the evidence in this area with respect to impacts on food safety and to provide advice to the FSA. |
| 11 | Botulism in Cattle, Sheep and Goats | The committee will be asked to comment on the FSA's revised systematic literature review concerning botulism in cattle, sheep and goats at the October 2021 meeting. ACMSF published reports on these issues in 2006 and 2009. | ACMSF to consider the evidence in this revised systematic literature review and provide advice to the FSA. |
| 12 | Subgroup on toxin-producing Clostridia in food Review the risk posed by botulinum toxin producing Clostridia in foods | The committee will be updated on the activities of the group. They are working towards publishing a report in 2022. | A report which updates and builds on a previous ACMSF report on "Vacuum Packaging and Associated Processes" that was produced in 1992. |
| 13 | FSA's Foodborne Disease Policy Framework | The committee will be asked to comment on the FSA's foodborne disease policy framework. | ACMSF to comment on the framework for the FSA's consideration. |

| No | Topic | Progress | Expected Output |
|-----------|--|-------------------|--|
| 14 | Regulated products subgroup To carry out risk assessment on regulated products in relation to microbiological safety of food | As issues arises. | ACMSF risk assessment on regulated products. |