

ACMSF Forward Work Plan 2019/20

Last reviewed October 2019

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.

	Topic	Progress	Expected Output
1	<p>Horizon scanning</p> <p>Horizon scanning workshop for members to assess emerging microbiological issues of concern and rank issues in terms of strategic priority and urgency</p>	<p>Workshop was held in January 2018</p> <p>Horizon scanning workshop was held in January 2018 where the Committee highlighted and shortlisted key issues for consideration.</p> <p>At follow-up discussions it was agreed to setup a subgroup to consider a two-dimensional approach in defining risk assessment outputs.</p> <p>Other topics that had high numerical ranking in terms of urgency include:</p>	<p>The Ad Hoc Group on Risk Assessment will produce a 2D risk assessment report for the FSA's consideration.</p>

	Topic	Progress	Expected Output
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased raw fruit and veg consumption and outbreaks associated with fresh fruit, veg and bagged salads • Joined up effort needed on areas of waste and food safety • Understanding the microbiological risks of new packaging • Possible changes in <i>modus operandi</i> for SACs including ACMSF in terms of resources and expertise and possible need to respond to an increasing number of fast paced issues • Loss of technical expertise/skill base and EU National reference labs disappearing (being out of the EU network) • Do ACMSF assessments have a life span e.g. non-proteolytic <i>C. botulinum</i> in chilled foods? 	

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2	<p>Newly Emerging Pathogens</p> <p>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.</p>	Continuous.	The Committee to draw the FSA's attention to any risks to human health from newly emerging pathogens via food.
3	<p>Microbiological Surveillance of food</p> <p>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</p> <p>The Committee receives updates on research, surveys, investigations, meetings and conferences of interest.</p>	<p>As issues arise.</p> <p>Updates will be provided based on the June and December 2019 EFIG¹ meetings.</p>	ACMSF provides comments on the updates it receives for the FSA's consideration.

¹ Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group

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5	<p>International and EU developments on the microbiological safety of food</p> <p>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.
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>	As issues arise.	ACMSF assessment of the risks in relation to significant microbiological outbreaks/incidents.
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>	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.

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8	<p>Ad Hoc Group on <i>Campylobacter</i></p> <p>In June 2015, the FSA and ACMSF agreed that as it was 10 years since the Committee issued its last report on <i>Campylobacter</i> in the food chain, an expert subgroup should be set up to revisit this area and provide a more up to date picture, given that reducing <i>Campylobacter</i> in chicken was a key strategic priority for the Agency in recent years.</p>	<p>The group's draft report was issued for a 10-week public consultation in March 2019. Report was considered (and approved for publication) by the full Committee at the June 2019 plenary.</p> <p>As the FSA asked for the subgroup's assistance in the prioritization of the report's recommendations, members will receive an update on this.</p>	<p>ACMSF's update on the Second <i>Campylobacter</i> report published in 2005. Report was published on the ACMSF's webpage in September 2019.</p>
9	<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>ACMSF to note updates and provide comments if desired.</p>
10	<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>

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11	Changes to plant protection product MRLs: potential impact on food safety	<p>Members were alerted to this issue of changes to maximum residue levels (MRLs) for two quaternary ammonium compounds (QACs), chlorate and biocidal actives which are used as disinfectants/sanitiser in the food industry at their October 2015, January 2016 and January 2017 meetings. The Committee agreed to the FSA's suggestion to setup a cross SAC working group to facilitate a full discussion to take place.</p> <p>Committee will receive an update on this issue at the October 2019 meeting.</p>	ACMSF to consider the evidence in this area with respect to impacts on food safety and to provide advice to the FSA.
12	FSA's guidance on vacuum and modified atmosphere packed chilled foods	<p>Committee to consider current evidence on vacuum and modified atmosphere packed chilled foods in the past 10 years and the ongoing work.</p> <p>ACMSF at the June 2019 plenary meeting members agreed to setup a subgroup to consider this issue. Group is expected to produce its report early in 2020.</p>	ACMSF assessment on whether to refresh its advice on this subject.
13	Botulism in Cattle, Sheep and Goats	A systematic literature review will be presented to the Committee concerning botulism in cattle, sheep and goats. ACMSF published reports on these issues in 2006 and 2009.	ACMSF to consider the evidence in this systematic literature review and provide advice to the FSA.

	Topic	Progress	Expected Output
14	<p>Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland Risk Analysis guidelines</p> <p>FSA and FSS are drafting risk analysis guidelines in preparation for the UK's Exit from the EU.</p>	<p>The Committee will be updated on the FSA and FSS's risk analysis guidelines at the October 2019 plenary meeting.</p>	<p>ACMSF's comments on the risk analysis guidelines for FSA and FSS to consider.</p>
15	<p>Risk assessment for the use of <i>Mycobacterium bovis</i> BCG Danish Strain 1331 in cattle: Risks to public health</p>	<p>ACMSF commented on this risk assessment in 2015. Animal and Plant Health Agency has considered these comments and made additions to the risk assessment in the form of an addendum and would like ACMSF's views on the changes that has been made. This will be presented to the Committee at the October 2019 plenary meeting.</p>	<p>ACMSF will comment on the revised risk assessment particularly on the issue of ingestion of Cattle BCG via the food chain through the consumption of minced beef and raw milk from vaccinated cattle.</p>