

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD
DISCUSSION PAPER
FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY'S AREAS OF RESEARCH INTEREST (ARI)

Issue

The FSA Scientific Advisory Committees have been asked to consider and feedback on FSA areas of research interest research questions formulated by the CSA (Chief Scientific Advisor) team. Members are asked to review and comment on whether the questions accurately reflect R&D needs in the area of microbiological safety of food.

Background

1. In response to the 2015 Nurse review of the UK Research Councils, the government accepted the review's recommendation to provide:
 - a. a more strategic approach to departmental research and development programmes,
 - b. a more sophisticated dialogue with academia,
 - c. documents that set out the most important research questions facing each department.
2. ARI aim to improve how government departments:
 - a. align scientific and research evidence from academia with policy development and decision-making,
 - b. access a wide range of suppliers,
 - c. engage with researchers,
 - d. access stronger policy evidence bases at better value for money,
 - e. share research commissions.
3. In November 2019, a review of Government Science Capability has been published, which includes "*Recommendation 2: All Departments should publish, and refresh annually, Areas of Research Interest documents with a view to encouraging extra-mural activity and collaborations and the commissioning of key R&D. They should be co-developed by Chief Scientific Advisers, Analysts, and Heads of Policy Profession in departments, putting*

scientific thinking at the centre of departmental processes, including policy and operations. The Government Office of Science, with CSAs, should make the documents consistent and ensure they provide potential collaborators with the key information (including the availability of data) that they need to engage effectively with the relevant research questions”.

4. The FSA CSA team has produced a draft document with ARI questions which has been reviewed internally and SERD input is incorporated in the enclosed document (Annex A).

Committee Action Required

- Members are asked to review the FSA ARI draft document (Annex A) and comment whether:
 - Has the CSA team captured all questions the FSA needs to answer – is there anything missing?
 - Has the CSA team included questions that the FSA is not really interested in – are there any redundant questions?
 - Are any of the questions worded in a way that misrepresents the issue – has the CSA team phrased anything wrongly?
- Members are asked if there are any changes that should be made to reflect the work of ACMSF.

**Secretariat
January 2020**

Annexes

Annex A – draft of FSA ARI questions