

ACMSF Forward Work Plan 2020/21

Last reviewed January 2020

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	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 is planned for Spring 2020.	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.

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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>	<p>Working group activities are continuous.</p>	<p>Surveillance Working Group/Committee comments on survey protocols and survey results for consideration by FSA in their microbiological food surveillance activities.</p>
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 2020 EFIG¹ meetings.</p>	<p>ACMSF provides comments on the updates it receives for the FSA's consideration.</p>

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	Social science research relating to microbiological food safety risks	<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 Wave 5 of the Food and You Survey at its January 2020 meeting.</p>	ACMSF to note updates and provide comments if desired.
9	FSA Board's New Approach in relation to Rare Burgers	The Committee will be updated on work the FSA is undertaking following the FSA Board's decision on rare burgers.	Committee to be kept informed of progress and to contribute to the work where appropriate.

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10	<p>Changes to plant protection product MRLs: potential impact on food safety</p>	<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 the group's activities at the January 2020 meeting.</p>	<p>ACMSF to consider the evidence in this area with respect to impacts on food safety and to provide advice to the FSA.</p>
11	<p>FSA's guidance on vacuum and modified atmosphere packed chilled foods</p>	<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>At the June 2019 plenary meeting members agreed to setup an Ad Hoc Group to consider this issue.</p> <p>Group will present its draft report at the January 2020 plenary meeting.</p>	<p>ACMSF assessment on whether to refresh its advice on this subject.</p>
12	<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 a future plenary meeting.</p>	<p>ACMSF's comments on the risk analysis guidelines for FSA and FSS to consider.</p>

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13	ACMSF Terms of Reference	At the January 2020 plenary meeting the Committee will be asked to comment on their terms of reference.	The Committee's comments on their Terms of Reference.
14	Tickborne Encephalitis virus risks to public health	Committee will be asked to comment on a draft assessment of public health threats (risk to the food chain) from Tickborne Encephalitis virus.	The Agency is looking for endorsement of this assessment and the overall risk via the food chain from the Committee.
15	Update on estimates of norovirus burden	The Committee will be updated on the findings of an FSA funded study on the estimation of norovirus burden attributed to the food chain (at the January 2020 plenary meeting).	ACMSF to note update and provide comments if desired.