

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

**Update from the Scientific Advisory Committees**

**Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs (ACAF)**

ACAF met on 9 October 2013 in Aviation House. Items discussed at this meeting included:

- Professor Rayman from the University of Surrey and also an ACAF member provided the Committee with a presentation on possible links between iodine levels in food and child development. The Committee learnt that studies carried out among the UK population indicate that there is an iodine deficiency in many pregnant women. The Committee was informed that the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) is also considering the issue of iodine and health. Members agreed that it would be beneficial if both committees worked together on this subject. This is an important issue for ACAF as most of the dietary exposure to iodine comes from consumption of animal-derived foods especially milk and dairy products.
- The Committee was interested to hear about research being undertaken by the Food and Environment Research Agency and elsewhere on insect protein as a future feed material. Members agreed that they would like updates on this work.
- The Committee received a presentation from an ACAF member on how it could improve its interactions with consumers. The Committee agreed it would continue to work with its consumer representative and with FSA officials involved in social science and consumer engagement in order to improve the way ACAF interacts with consumers.
- An official from the FSA's Feed Review Implementation team provided an update on the implementation of the review of official feed controls. This aims to deliver improvements to the existing system of feed law enforcement and was progressing well via the implementation of five work streams. Members noted that a 12-week public consultation on a draft revision of the Code of Practice on Feed Law Enforcement had been launched on 19 September 2013. Meetings with local authorities and other government departments had taken place to discuss better delivery of enforcement activities and the sharing of information.

The Committee agreed that work to improve the delivery of official feed controls was important, and therefore wished to receive regular updates on the work of the implementation team.

- Finally, an official from the FSA provided members with a presentation which provided an update on proposed changes to the official feed and food controls (EU Regulation 882/2004). Members were informed that the Commission's aim is to ensure a more consistent approach to official controls throughout the food and agriculture sectors. The proposed changes also intend to support more sustainable and effective control systems across member states. The Committee agreed that it wished to receive updates on this work.

#### Date of next meeting

The next ACAF meeting is scheduled to take place in Aviation House on 26 February 2014. Provisional agenda items for this meeting include:

- Can feed additives reduce the environmental impact of livestock farming – analysis of the evidence
- Development of new 'super' wheat breed
- Work of the Panel on Additives and Products or Substances used in Animal Feed (FEEDAP)

#### **Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP)**

The last meeting of the ACNFP was held on 20 November. Items discussed included the following novel food applications:

- Buglossoides Oil
- 1-Methylnicotinamide Chloride (1-MNA)
- Ketone Ester
- DHA Rich algal oil from *Schizochytrium*
- D-Ribose
- Extension of use of Phytosterols in fat spreads and fat based emulsions with cooking and baking applications
- Chia Seeds
- Sporopollenin shells from club moss

In addition to carrying out risk assessments on the above applications the Committee discussed a recent article which reported on the potential presence of plant derived DNA sequences in human blood samples. It is suggested these sequences may be derived from DNA fragments large enough to encode entire genes. The Committee was asked to comment on the article and to indicate whether there were any safety concerns in relation to the risk assessment of GMOs.

The meeting on 20 November was followed by a successful open event hosted by the ACNFP. Over 30 members of the public attended representing a range of industries, consumers, enforcement officers and students.

The event consisted of presentations on the work of the ACNFP, followed by discussions in small break out groups on:

- evaluating traditional foods from other parts of the world
- assessing the additive effects of novel ingredients in Food Standards Agency

The event ended with an open discussion on issues relevant to the assessment of novel or GM foods.

The next meeting of the ACNFP will be held on 12 February. The Agenda has not been finalised.

### **Committee on Toxicity (COT)**

COT's last meeting was held on 10 December 2013. The following items were discussed.

1. Assessment of the adequacy of the 10-fold uncertainty factor to allow for interspecies variation in developmental toxicity
2. Potassium salt replacers in vulnerable groups
  - modelling potential potassium intakes by UK population
  - Additional information on children
3. Scoping paper on the obesogen hypothesis
4. SACN Review of vitamin D. Adverse effects of high levels. Vitamin D and primary hyperparathyroidism and granulomatous disease.
5. Third draft statement of potential risks of  $\alpha$ -,  $\beta$ - and  $\gamma$ -hexachlorocyclohexanes in the infant diet.
6. First draft statement on the potential risks from perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) in the infant diet
7. Information paper on the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Integrated Risk Information System Toxicological Review of Methanol

The first COT meeting for 2014 will be held on 4 February. Agenda items are expected to be:

- Draft statement on long-term neurological, neuropsychological and psychiatric effects of low-level exposure to organophosphates in adults

- EFSA Consultation on a draft scientific opinion on the risks to public health related to the presence of bisphenol A (BPA) in foodstuffs
- Potential future discussion items – horizon scanning
- Second draft statement on the potential risks from perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) in the infant diet
- 2013 Annual report of the COT.

### **The Consumer Advisory Panel (CAP)**

The Consumer Advisory Panel exists to provide informed consumer insights and perspectives into FSA policy making.

The CAP met on 4 December 2013. The agenda included the following items:

- The Campylobacter Reduction Programme
- Food Allergy work programme – including research, science and policy activities
- The FSA Strategy 2015–2020, scoping what it will be about, consumer engagement and the process leading to the January 2015 launch of the FSA strategy 2015–2020
- Agency restructuring was not an agenda item but the Chair discussed it briefly

Possible future agenda items may include:

- The process for approving novel foods
- Updates on the FSA strategy 2015 – 2020
- Updates on the Campylobacter Strategy
- Understanding how the consumers and others perceive the FSA mark or recommendation on a product
- Updates on the Raw Drinking Milk consultation
- EU Meat Controls

### **General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS)**

The last GACS meeting was held on 8 October 2013. Meeting papers, presentation slides and draft minutes are available at

<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/committee/gacs/gacs-mins-oct13.pdf>

Agenda items included:

- **High-level challenge and assurance on FSA’s use of science**  
Presentation by Steve Wearne, FSA Director of Policy, and discussion by the Committee, on the FSA’s new high-level science assurance model which included the creation of an external Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA) and a full-time Director of Science, Evidence & Research (DSER).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Note - A follow-up discussion was held on 18th October between Steve Wearne and GACS members – minutes of this discussion are included as an Annex to the GACS 8<sup>th</sup> October meeting minutes

- **Science in the FSA**  
Report on science activities and plans, and discussion
- **Science in the SACs**  
Update on SAC activities and discussion on cross-cutting activities
- **Review of GACS work plan and discussion of ideas for new working groups**  
GACS reviewed its working groups and ideas for new work. It agreed to set up a new Working Group to look at the use of different types of evidence and how these are assessed and weighted.
- **Presentation on FSA intelligence hub**  
Head of Policy and Strategy in the FSA's Chemical Safety Division Terry Donohoe gave a presentation on the FSA project to establish an intelligence hub
- **Report from the Working Group on Data Exploitation**  
Interim report and recommendation
- **Report from the Working Group on the Use of Science in Emergencies**  
Interim report and recommendations

The next GACS meeting will be held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2014. It will be preceded by the GACS annual spring dinner on 18<sup>th</sup> March. Provisional agenda items for the meeting include:

- Report on Science in the FSA
- Science in the SACs - update on SAC activities
- FSA evidence portfolio
- Report from Working Group on Data Exploitation
- Report from Working Group on Use of Science in Emergencies
- Report from new Working Group on Use of Evidence (weighting of evidence)
- Presentation from global food security initiative champion Tim Benton (*to be confirmed*)

The final agenda and papers for the meeting will be published up to 2 weeks in advance on the GACS website.

The autumn GACS meeting is scheduled for 29 October 2014.

**Secretariat  
January 2014**