

ACMSF Forward Work Plan 2015/16

Last reviewed September 2015

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 unpredicted 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>ACMSF discussion on the outcomes of the January 2015 horizon scanning workshop where members identified current and emerging microbiological issues of concern and ranked the issues in terms of strategic priority and urgency.</p>	<p>Outcomes from workshop were considered at the June 2015 ACMSF meeting. Members have agreed to set up groups on: Genomics and <i>Campylobacter</i>. These were ranked as the priority areas that needed immediate attention.</p>	<p>Genomics: ACMSF assessment of the effect of the genomics revolution on outbreak investigations.</p> <p><i>Campylobacter</i>: ACMSF's assessment of progress made (by the FSA) in addressing the Committee's recommendations in the ACMSF <i>Campylobacter</i> report published in 2005.</p>

	Topic	Progress	Expected Output
2	Eggs	<p>In January 2015 the ACMSF set up an Ad Hoc Group on Eggs to establish the current level of risk to consumers including vulnerable groups from eating raw or lightly cooked shell eggs or their products to determine whether the current FSA advice remains applicable.</p> <p>The subgroup are currently gathering evidence for their report which is expected to be presented (draft report) to the Committee by January 2016.</p>	ACMSF's assessment of the risks that may be associated with consumption of shell eggs and an indication whether the risk has changed since the ACMSF's 2001 report.
3	<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.
4	<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>Committee to consider the findings of the FSA's (Year 2) microbiological survey of <i>Campylobacter</i> contamination in fresh whole UK produced chilled chickens at retail sale when results are available.</p>	Surveillance Working Group/Committee comments on survey protocols and survey results for consideration by FSA in their microbiological food surveillance programme.

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5	<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>EFIG¹ update will be provided at the January 2016 and 30 June 2016 meetings.</p>	<p>ACMSF provides comments on the updates it receives for the FSA's consideration.</p>
6	<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>	<p>As issues arise.</p>	<p>ACMSF to note updates and provide comments if desired.</p>
7	<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>

¹ Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group

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8	<p>Antimicrobial resistance</p> <p>ACMSF published a report on microbial antibiotic resistance in relation to food safety in 1999. Progress on the Committee's recommendations was reviewed in 2005 and 2007.</p>	<p>The Committee were updated on developments and emerging issues in relation to antimicrobial resistance in January 2013 and agreed to set up a subgroup to consider antimicrobial resistance and food chain issues in more detail. The subgroup has four meetings scheduled in 2015. 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>
9	<p><i>Mycobacterium bovis</i> and possible health risks associated with meat</p>	<p>The Committee will be asked to review the risk level classification associated with the consumption of meat from animals with evidence of <i>M. bovis</i> infection. Committee to use the <i>M. bovis</i> and raw milk risk assessment framework. Uncertainties are to be highlighted before risk classification is considered.</p>	<p>ACMSF assessment of risk to human health in relation to the consumption of meat from animals with evidence of <i>M. bovis</i> infection.</p>
10	<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>

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11	Shiga toxin producing <i>E.coli</i> (STEC)	The FSA will ask the Committee (at the October 2015 ACMSF meeting) to consider the risk from STEC in raw and ready-to-eat foods to support decision making regarding the safety of these products.	ACMSF assessment of the amount of information available and employed to determine the current level of risk from STEC.
12	Assessment of the risk of avian influenza viruses via the food chain	The Committee will be asked to revisit the assessment of the risk of avian influenza viruses via the food chain following a number of recent outbreaks on poultry farms in the UK. Revised risk assessment to be presented to the Committee for consideration at the October 2015 ACMSF meeting.	ACMSF will provide the Agency with comments on the risk assessment and an indication on whether the Committee agrees with the risk estimate.
13	Histamine in cheese	Histamine in cheese was recently considered by the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment. The Agency will seek views from the ACMSF on this issue at the October 2015 meeting.	ACMSF's comments on the issue of Histamine in cheese.