

ACMSF Forward Work Plan 2016/17

Last reviewed October 2016

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>The Committee will be asked to revisit the outcome of the January 2015 horizon scanning workshop for members to reassess the identified emerging microbiological issues of concern and ranked issues in terms of strategic priority and urgency.</p>	<p>Outcomes from workshop were considered at the June 2015 ACMSF meeting. Members agreed to set up groups on: <i>Campylobacter</i> and Genomics. These were ranked as the priority areas that needed immediate attention. Ad Hoc Group on <i>Campylobacter</i> was set up in November 2015. The group has had three meetings between May and September 2016. They are working towards producing a report by Spring 2017.</p>	<p><i>Campylobacter</i>: ACMSF's update on the Second <i>Campylobacter</i> report published in 2005 and an assessment of progress made (by the FSA) in addressing the Committee's recommendations in the 2005 <i>Campylobacter</i> report.</p> <p>Genomics: ACMSF assessment of the effect of the genomics revolution on outbreak investigations.</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's final report was approved for publication at the plenary meeting held in June 2016.</p>	<p>ACMSF's assessment of the risks that may be associated with consumption of shell eggs and an indication whether these risks have changed since the ACMSF's 2001 report.</p>
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>	<p>Continuous.</p>	<p>The Committee to draw the FSA's attention to any risks to human health from newly emerging pathogens via food.</p>
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>	<p>Surveillance Working Group/Committee comments on survey protocols and survey results for consideration by FSA in their microbiological food surveillance activities.</p>

	Topic	Progress	Expected Output
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 June 2016 and January 2017 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 Working Group to consider antimicrobial resistance and food chain issues in more detail. The subgroup has four meetings planned for 2016. 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	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.
13	Changes to plant protection product MRLs: potential impact on food safety	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 the October 2015 and January 2016 meetings. The Committee agreed to the FSA's suggestion to setup a cross SAC working group to facilitate a full discussion to take place. Establishment of a group is on hold.	ACMSF to consider the evidence in this area with respect to impacts on food safety and to provide advice to the FSA.
14	Zika virus	A revised draft risk assessment will be presented to the Committee in January 2017 on the risk to consumers from Zika virus via food imported from Zika-endemic countries.	The Agency is looking for endorsement of this assessment and the overall risk via the food chain from the Committee.
15	Systematic review to increase the understanding of the role of food production, processing and consumption in the development and spread of antimicrobial resistance	Study expected to be published in November 2016.	ACMSF to comment on systematic review findings.

	Topic	Progress	Expected Output
16	Risk assessment outputs	Committee to revisit its approach to how it expresses risk assessment outputs.	Improved consistency and clarity in framing risk assessment outputs.
17	Foodborne Viral Infections (Initial response to the ACMSF virus report)	The Ad Hoc Group on Foodborne Viral Infections report was published in March 2015. Committee to be updated on the ongoing response to their report (An update on viruses in the food chain) at the October 2016 meeting.	Update on progress being made on the report's recommendations.
18	VTEC associated with the food chain	Public Health England will update the Committee on VTEC associated with food (surveillance, trends in outbreaks, recent developments and use of WGS).	ACMSF to note updates and provide comments if desired.
19	<i>Mycobacterium avium</i> subspecies <i>paratuberculosis</i> – Draft risk assessment related to exposure via the food chain	A risk assessment will be presented to the Committee in October 2016 on the risk to consumers from <i>Mycobacterium avium</i> subspecies <i>paratuberculosis</i> via the food chain.	The Agency is looking for endorsement of this assessment and the overall risk via the food chain from the Committee.