

ACMSF Forward Work Plan 2018/19

Last reviewed October 2018

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>Horizon scanning workshop for members to assess emerging microbiological issues of concern and rank issues in terms of strategic priority and urgency</p>	<p>Workshop was held in January 2018</p> <p>Committee will consider follow-up to the above workshop at the October 2018 plenary meeting.</p>	<p>List of outputs from the workshop including short-listed priorities for more in-depth consideration.</p>
2	<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>

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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>	Working group activities are continuous.	Surveillance Working Group/Committee comments on survey protocols and survey results for consideration by FSA in their microbiological food surveillance activities.
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>EFIG¹ update will be provided at the May and October 2018 and January 2019 meetings.</p>	ACMSF provides comments on the updates it receives for the FSA's consideration.
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.

¹ Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group

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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 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.
8	<p>Ad Hoc Group on <i>Campylobacter</i></p> <p>In June 2015, the FSA and ACMSF agreed that as it was 10 years since the Committee issued its last report on <i>Campylobacter</i> in the food chain, an expert subgroup should be set up to revisit this area and provide a more up to date picture, given that reducing <i>Campylobacter</i> in chicken was a key strategic priority for the Agency in recent years.</p>	The group presented its draft report at the January 2018 plenary meeting. Comments made on report at the meeting are being considered and report will subsequently be issued for public consultation.	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.

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9	Social science research relating to microbiological food safety risks	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.	ACMSF to note updates and provide comments if desired.
10	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.
11	Changes to plant protection product MRLs: potential impact on food safety	<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 the 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. Establishment of a group is on hold.</p> <p>Committee to be updated on recent activities on the above subject at the October 2018 meeting.</p>	ACMSF to consider the evidence in this area with respect to impacts on food safety and to provide advice to the FSA.

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12	FSA Surveillance Strategy	The Committee will receive a presentation on the Food Standards Agency's new approach to food surveillance.	ACMSF to note this approach to food surveillance and provide comments if desired.
13	FSA's guidance on vacuum and modified atmosphere packed chilled foods	Committee to consider current evidence on vacuum and modified atmosphere packed chilled foods in the past 10 years and the ongoing work at the Quadram Institute.	ACMSF assessment on whether to refresh it advice on this subject.
14	Shiga toxin producing <i>E. coli</i> (STEC) in food	The FSA will ask the Committee (at the October 2018 ACMSF meeting) to review its opinion on 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.
15	Risk assessment outputs	Committee to revisit its approach to how it expresses risk assessment outputs.	Improved consistency and clarity in framing risk assessment outputs.
16	African swine fever – risk assessment related to exposure via the food chain	A draft risk assessment will be presented to the Committee at the January 2019 meeting on the risk to consumers from African swine fever via the food chain.	The Agency is looking for endorsement of this assessment and the overall risk via the food chain from the Committee.