

ACMSF Forward Work Plan 2017/18

Last reviewed January 2017

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>In October 2016 the Committee revisited 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>In November 2015 Members setup an Ad Hoc group on <i>Campylobacter</i> as it was felt this pathogen needed immediate attention. The group is working towards producing a report by Summer 2017.</p> <p>Following deliberations (at the October 2016 ACMSF meeting) on the outcomes from the January/June 2015 horizon scanning discussions members agreed to setup two groups to consider the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges to microbial risk assessment • Changing controls/risks 	<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>Challenges to microbial risk assessment: ACMSF's opinion on the</p>

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			<p>challenges to microbial risk assessment including omics technologies.</p> <p>Changing controls/risks: ACMSF assessment on the changing controls/risks e.g. new food preparation practices, risky foods and use of QAC sanitizers.</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>	Continuous.	The Committee to draw the FSA's attention to any risks to human health from newly emerging pathogens via food.
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>Committee to consider the findings of the FSA's (Year 3) 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 activities.

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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 June 2017 and January 2018 meetings.</p>	<p>ACMSF provides comments on the updates it receives for the FSA's consideration.</p>
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>	<p>As issues arise.</p>	<p>ACMSF to note updates and provide comments if desired.</p>
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>	<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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7	<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 2017. 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>
8	<p><i>Mycobacterium bovis</i> and possible health risks associated with meat</p>	<p>At the January 2017 meeting 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>
9	<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>
10	<p>FSA Board's New Approach in relation to Rare Burgers</p>	<p>The Committee will be updated on work the FSA is undertaking following the FSA Board's decision on rare burgers.</p>	<p>Committee to be kept informed of progress and to contribute to the work where appropriate.</p>

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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 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.</p> <p>The FSA will update members on ongoing activities on this subject at the January 2017 meeting.</p>	ACMSF to consider the evidence in this area with respect to impacts on food safety and to provide advice to the FSA.
12	Zika virus: risk assessment on the risk to consumers from Zika virus via food imported from Zika-endemic countries	ACMSF considered draft risk assessment in June 2016. Subgroup on Newly-Emerging Pathogens have considered and finalised a revised risk assessment which has been circulated to the full Committee for information.	The Agency is looking for endorsement of this assessment and the overall risk via the food chain from the Committee.
13	A systematic review of Antimicrobial Resistance bacteria in pork, poultry, dairy products, seafood and fresh produce at UK retail level	Study funded by the FSA and carried out by the Royal Veterinary College was published November 2016. RVC to present findings to ACMSF at the January 2017 meeting.	ACMSF to comment on systematic review findings.
14	Risk assessment outputs	Committee to revisit its approach to how it expresses risk assessment outputs.	Improved consistency and clarity in framing risk assessment outputs.