

**ACM/852**

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

**INFORMATION PAPER**

**Sustainable Development and Scientific Advisory Committees**

The attached paper updates Members on the Food Standards Agency's policy on sustainability.

**Secretariat  
June 2007**

## **Sustainable Development and Scientific Advisory Committees**

### **Background**

1. The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to meet their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations. It is about achieving economic, social and environmental objectives at the same time, as well as taking a wider and more long-term look at the impacts of our actions.

### **Government Policy on Sustainability**

2. The UK Government is committed to sustainable development and it sets out its vision in its latest Sustainable Development Strategy “Securing the Future” published in 2005. This document outlines five principles of sustainable development:
  - Living within environmental limits;
  - Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society;
  - Achieving a sustainable economy;
  - Promoting good governance; and
  - Using sound science responsibly.

### **The Agency’s Policy on Sustainability**

3. The Agency is also committed to sustainable development. In October 2004 the Board agreed the following position statement:

“The Agency’s remit is to protect the interests of consumers in relation to food, both now and in the future. In doing so the Agency will take sustainable development into account in all of its activities and policy decisions.”

4. To assess the sustainability of individual policies and activities a set of questions has been devised. These aim to identify the economic, social and environmental impacts of the proposed action. Environmental impacts include effects on biodiversity and so the Agency’s sustainability assessment should also meet our obligations under the statutory biodiversity duty. Guidance for staff has been developed to help identify the impacts and determine the relative sustainability of the options being considered. The Guidance to Staff and further information on the agency’s sustainable development policy can be found on our website at:  
[www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/how\\_we\\_work/sustainability/](http://www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/how_we_work/sustainability/)

### **The role of Scientific Advisory Committees**

5. The role of the Agency’s scientific advisory committees is to provide expert advice to the Agency on areas within their remit. They are generally set

up with very specific remits and expertise, often focussing on risk assessment. It is not the role of advisory committees to advise on the sustainability of options being recommended or advice being given to the Agency. The Agency will carry out its own sustainability assessment, drawing on expert sustainability advice from a variety of sources as necessary. However, committees should be aware of the principles of sustainable development and the Agency's policy in this area. There may be occasions when they may wish to note any impacts of their advice in areas outside of their expertise for further consideration by others.

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**Standards and Sustainability Branch**