

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD
COMMITTEE'S REPORTING LINES TO GOVERNMENT AND ITS TERMS OF
REFERENCE**

Reporting lines

1. With the setting up of the Food Standards Agency (FSA), food safety and other interests of consumers in relation to food became the responsibility of the Agency. An effect of this is that the ACMSF, which previously advised UK Health and Agriculture Ministers, is now required to advise the FSA.
2. In order to enable the Agency to assume the responsibilities previously discharged by Health and Agriculture Ministers (in relation, for example, to appointing and remunerating ACMSF members, and defraying ACMSF expenditure) it has been necessary for the Secretary of State to direct that the ACMSF should be treated as if it had been established, and its members appointed, by the FSA. A copy of the Direction made under Paragraph 7, Schedule 2 to the Food Standards Act 1999 is at Annex I for information.

Terms of reference

3. The Committee's terms of reference need to be redrawn to reflect the fact that it now reports to the FSA. The current terms of reference are :-

“To assess the risk to humans of microorganisms which are used or occur in or on food and to advise Ministers on the exercise of powers in the Food Safety Act 1990 relating to the microbiological safety of food.”

4. As noted in the ACMSF's Report of Progress 1990-92, Ministers decided more specifically that the Committee's work would be to :-

- advise on public health aspects related to microbiological food safety;

- review available information on the incidence of human foodborne illness due to microorganisms and to provide expert assessment, including advice on particular consumer concerns;
- provide expert advice on the threat to human health arising from particular pathogens, including newly-identified microorganisms, and on the degree to which the presence of such microorganisms merits regulatory or other intervention;
- advise on public health-related research matters, including work on virulence, epidemiological needs and lessons to be learned from outbreaks of foodborne disease; and
- advise on the results of food surveillance and the possible human health implications of the results.

5. The FSA proposes that these principles should be encapsulated in the following amended 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.”

6. Members' comments are invited.

Secretariat
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From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Ms Gisela Stuart MP

DIRECTION UNDER PARAGRAPH 7 SCHEDULE 2 TO THE FOOD STANDARDS ACT 1999

The Secretary of State under section 5(4) and Schedule 2 paragraph 7 of the Food Standards Act 1999 ("the Act"), hereby directs that the following non-statutory advisory committees should each be treated as if they had been established by the Food Standards Agency under section 5 of the Act and their respective members appointed in accordance with paragraph 3(1) of Schedule 2 to the Act:

- The Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes;
- The Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food;
- The Food Advisory Committee;
- The Ad Hoc Expert Group on Vitamins and Minerals.

This Direction shall have effect immediately.

Signed by authority of the Secretary of State for Health.

Date 5th June 2000

Signed Gisela Stuart

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department of Health