

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD

INFORMATION PAPER

Update on work of other advisory committees

At a previous meeting of the Committee, Members received a paper (ACM/515) providing information on the work of various other advisory committees. This paper provides a brief update of the work of the following committees :-

- Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN)
- Food Advisory Committee (FAC)
- Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP)
- Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs (ACAF)

Secretariat
November 2001

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION (SACN)

Background

On 22 February the Food Standards Agency and the Department of Health announced the formation of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN), a UK-wide, independent advisory committee set up to replace the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food and Nutrition Policy. The Committee advises the Agency and Government Health Departments throughout the UK and is supported administratively by a joint secretariat at the Agency and the Department of Health.

Committee Members

The sixteen Committee appointees cover a wide range of nutritional expertise and include nutritionists; clinical specialists covering maternal and child health, and health of older people; specialists in epidemiology, public health, dentistry as well as an interested lay member and a consumer advocate. SACN is chaired by Professor Alan Jackson.

Terms of Reference

SACN's advice to Government covers scientific aspects of nutrition and health including the following:

- Nutrient content of individual foods and advice on diet as a whole, including the definition of a balanced diet, and the nutritional status of people;
- Monitoring and surveillance of the above;
- Wider public health policy issues including conditions where nutritional status is one of a number of risk factors (e.g. cardiovascular disease, cancer, osteoporosis and/or obesity);
- Vulnerable groups (e.g. infants and older people) and inequality issues;
- Research requirements for the above.

Meetings

The Committee has met twice so far this year (June and September). A further meeting is planned for 10 December 2001. SACN plans to meet three to four times a year, with one open meeting planned per year to coincide with the launch of its Annual Report.

Work programme

The Committee has agreed to look at the following issues as part of its current work programme;

- 'The Role of Iron in Human Nutrition',
- 'Salt',
- 'Metabolic Disturbances in Obesity and Development of Chronic Disease'

- 'Revision of Dietary Reference Values (DRVs) for the UK'.

The Committee has agreed to the setting up of the following Subgroups and Working Groups.

- **Working Group on Iron**; *to review the dietary intakes of iron in its various forms and the impact of various dietary patterns on the nutritional and health status of the population and to make proposals.*
- **Subgroup on salt**, to assess the evidence base, which currently underpins the Government's initiatives in relation to dietary salt has shifted since the publication of the Report of the Cardiovascular Review Group of COMA (1994).
- **Subgroup on Risk Assessment**; to discuss the most appropriate format for risk assessment for use by the Committee.

THE FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FAC)

The Committee met on 26 July 2001 and discussed :-

- Distance Selling : Sales of Food and Feed via the Internet or Mail Order
- Sucralose : Application for National Authorisation

The Committee also met on 1 November and discussed :-

- Draft FAC Review of Distance Selling 2001
- Draft FAC Review of Food Labelling 2001

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NOVEL FOODS AND PROCESSES (ACNFP)

The ACNFP met on 13 September 2001 and discussed the following :-

- **Open Meeting** : the Committee discussed the organisation of its Open Meeting due to be held on 14 November in Birmingham.
- **Factsheets** : the Committee further discussed three factsheets on Antibiotic Resistance Markers, Substantial Equivalence and Cholesterol Lowering Products, these will be included in the ACNFP's corporate brochure.
- **FoE Report** : the Committee discussed further the Friends of the Earth Report – "The Great Food Gamble".
- **Oilseed rape** : the Committee discussed safety data for Monsanto's Oilseed rape.

- **Cottonseed** : the Committee discussed safety Data for Monsanto's Insect protected and Roundup Ready Cottonseed.
- **Updates** : the Committee was updated on T25 Maize, High Pressure Processing, and the FSA's Review of Scientific Advisory Committees.

The full minutes of this meeting can be found on the FSA website at : www.foodstandards.gov.uk/committees/acnfphp.htm#7

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL FEEDINGSTUFFS (ACAF)

The ACAF held its eleventh meeting on 25 September when it discussed :-

- **GM Food and Feed** – The Committee discussed two EC proposals on GM Food and Feed and on the Traceability and Labelling of GMOs. It noted that the EC proposals were broadly in line with ACAF's own recommendations in its recently published Report on Animal Feed Labelling. Much of the discussion focussed on the proposal to link GM labelling to the use of GM technology rather than to the detectable presence of GM protein or DNA in the food or feed. This sparked a lively debate with the majority of members favouring feed being labelled as GM if any ingredient, enzyme or additive used in it was derived from GM technology regardless of the presence or absence GM protein or DNA.
- **Ban on Feeding own Species Material to Animals** – The Committee confirmed its advice that the feeding of own species material to animals should be prohibited were this represented a risk of transmitting disease and it recognised the aesthetic and ethical objections to this practice. It went on to discuss four exemptions to the current EU-wide ban proposed for blood products, gelatin, hydrolysed proteins and dicalcium phosphate. The Committee will await the results of SEAC's risk assessment in this area.
- **The Use of Fish Meal in Animal Feed** – Members noted that the feeding of fish meal to ruminants was banned in Great Britain from 1 August because of the risk of contamination with meat and bone meal (MBM). ACAF confirmed its earlier advice that fish meal itself was safe to feed to livestock. It urged more progress on research into methods for detecting MBM in fish meal as an effective detection method was the key to any future relaxation of the ban.
- **Imports of Meat and Other Animal Products** – The Committee discussed responses to its letter to the Food Standards Agency, and other relevant organisations, about the possibility of differing standards of production being applied to meat from within and outside the EU. ACAF will issue position paper on the subject.
- **Other Issues** – The Committee also agreed its work plan for the forthcoming year, discussed EC proposals for organic feedingstuffs

legislation and commented on the Agency's Review of Scientific Advisory Committees.