

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD

INFORMATION PAPER

Update on the work of other Advisory Committees

As the 5 December meeting, it was suggested that the Committee should receive an information paper giving an update of the work of other advisory committees. The attached paper gives a brief summary on following committees :-

- The Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs (ACAF),
- The Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP),
- Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP),
- Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE),
- Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT),
- Food Advisory Committee (FAC),
- Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- The Veterinary Products Committee (VPC).

Secretariat

March 2001

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL FEEDINGSTUFFS

- 1 The ACAF met on 28 February and discussed:

Animal Feed Labelling

2. The committee continued its review of animal feed labelling, considering the latest draft of its report prepared by the Animal Feed Labelling sub-group. It was agreed that a final draft, amended to reflect the Committee's view, would be circulated shortly to all members for clearance.

The Use of Fish Meal in Animal Feed

3. The ACAF began a short review of the nutritional and other benefits of including fish meal and oil in feed for fish and other animals set, with the cost of controls, against human or animal health risks.

ACAF Annual Report

4. The Committee agreed its first Annual Report subject to a few minor amendments.

ACAF Open Forum

5. It was agreed that the Committee would hold its first open event on 5 July and that Yorkshire would be the preferred location.

GM Sugar Beet Feeding Study

6. The Committee considered an application from Monsanto to use GM sugar beet from existing farm-scale evaluations in a small-scale cattle feeding study. Member were content that the proposed feeding study would not represent a risk to human or animal health but had some suggestions on how it could be made more robust. ACAF will put its comments in writing to the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NOVEL FOODS AND PROCESSES

1. The Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP) met on 25 January 2001 and discussed:

ACNFP Annual Report

2. The Committee considered the first draft of the 2000 Annual report and agreed that subject to some minor amendments it was happy for it to go forward for printing. It is planned that the report will be published before Easter, and on publication it will be placed on the ACNFP WebPages.

Phytosterols

3. The Committee considered the summary application and initial assessment report of the Finnish Competent Authority on the use of phytosterols in frankfurters, cheese and yoghurt.
4. The Committee was unable to agree with the favourable initial opinion of the Finnish Competent Authority. Members noted that unlike previous applications for the use of phytosterols, this application was for a crystalline product and not an ester. Members were concerned that no data were provided on the long-term effects on fat-soluble vitamin and carotenoid absorption in the summary document. Members noted that these data might have been provided in the full dossier but the Secretariat had not been able to obtain this, despite repeated requests.
5. The Secretariat agreed to write to the Finnish Competent Authority and Valio (the company making the application) requesting the full application dossier.

GM Enzyme

6. The Committee considered the GM aspects of an application from the company GM Gist for the powdered and microgranulated forms of an

endoxy lanase preparation derived from a GM *Aspergillus niger* strain XYL-2 and its future progeny on behalf of the COT.

7. The Committee was content with the application but raised a number of points for the COT's attention. These included the need for data to show that no residual enzyme activity or source of allergenicity was in the final food, and that supporting evidence was needed for the claims to genetic stability.
8. The Secretariat agreed to forward the Committee's advice to the COT.

Other items

9. The Committee was updated on a number of issues including the progress of previous applications in Europe and the outcome of the latest Competent Authority meeting.
10. The minutes of this meeting can be found on the ACNFP WebPages at: www.foodstandards.gov.uk/committees/acnfp/acnfp.php.htm. The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 14th March 2001.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PESTICIDES (ACP)

1. At its meeting on 1 March, the ACP discussed a number of items including the human health review of oxamyl; the review of fenitrothrin (forming part of the wider UK review of anticholinesterase compounds); first evaluation of the new active substance cyazofamid ; bioavailability of triazophos from treated apples; correspondence with Friends of the Earth's on their Guide to Pesticide Approvals ; draft guidance on provisional authorisations and the re-registration process under Commission Directive 91/414/EEC. The Committee also considered UK comments on the EU evaluation of benzoic acid and dimethenamid-P for first inclusion in Annex I of European Directive 91/414/EEC.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RELEASES TO THE ENVIRONMENT (ACRE)

1. At its meeting held on 9 November 2000 ACRE discussed the National Seed List hearing for T25 Chardon LL, a variety of genetically modified (GM) maize. ACRE agreed to look at the written representations in detail before giving advice on the issue that had been raised. ACRE also discussed their future work plan agreeing to specifically look at three areas (environmental 'harm'; molecular data requirements and post market monitoring) where the Committee felt that guidance or advice was needed. The Committee also discussed new information in connection with Monsanto's GM soya, the release by Aventis of an unauthorised transformation event as part of its GM beet trials and the Farm Scale Evaluations. The full minutes of this meeting can be found at <http://www.environment.detr.gov.uk/acre/001109m.htm>.
2. The Committee then met on Thursday 25 January 2001 when it discussed two applications to release GM crops under EC Directive 90/220. The applications were from the National Institute of Agricultural Botany for GM herbicide tolerant sugar beet (ref 00/R20/5) and from Aventis for GM herbicide tolerant oil seed rape (ref 00/R33/9). ACRE advised that consent could be issued for both of these applications subject to additional monitoring requirements being met. None of the crops in either application would be used in animal feed. ACRE also discussed an application to market a vaccine under ec REGULATION 2309/93. Further to the meeting on 9 November, ACRE looked in detail at the written representations submitted to the T25 Chardon LL National List hearing. The Committee also received updates from their sub-groups investigating best practice in the design of GM crops and wider biodiversity issues. The minutes of the meeting will be available on ACRE's website in due course.

COMMITTEE ON TOXICITY OF CHEMICALS

1. At its meeting on 6 February, the COT continued its review of dioxins and dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) which began in September 2000. Members' were given presentations by two invited experts -

Professor Rugg from the Institute of Cognitive Development and Professor Kevin Connolly -regarding studies on cognitive development. Members also presented their own assessments of reviews by the EPA in their own areas of expertise. Members have agreed that the COT will form its own opinion on a tolerable intake for dioxin and dioxin-like PCBs and that the recent WHO, SCF and EPA assessments are being used to inform their discussions.

FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. There have been no meetings of the FAC since October. The Committee will next meet on 5 April.

SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

1. SEAC met on 28 November when it considered the Phillips Inquiry Report, particularly its findings on advisory committees. The Committee concluded that there was a need to clarify with Departments the role of SEAC in explaining issues to the public as opposed to giving advice to Ministers; to draw the public's attention to the lack of knowledge in some areas; to be more pro-active in identifying problems that might be discussed, rather than solely relying on Government Departments to draw up the agenda; to be more up to date and open in identifying conflicts of interest; and agreement that SEAC's advice should relate to scientific aspects and that the Committee should not stray or be asked into wider policy areas.
2. SEAC also discussed progress towards launching the Government's National Scrapie Plan and considered other BSE risk reduction strategies. It re-visited its advice that rendering condensate should not be spread on fields and agreed that evidence was needed on the effectiveness of treatment before SEAC could support the spreading of treated condensate on land.

3. Other issues discussed included the transmission of new variant Creuzefield-Jakob (vCJD) via surgical instruments, a new CJD Incidents Panel and the BSE and vCJD epidemiology update.

VETERINARY PRODUCTS COMMITTEE (VPC)

1. The VPC met on 15 February when it considered an application for a UK marketing authorisation for a veterinary medicinal product. The Committee considered and commented upon a VPC position paper on the use of OP and SP (synthetic pyrethroid) dips through showers, sprayers and jetters and its advice will be forwarded to the Licensing Authority.
2. The Committee also considered and commented on the review of SP sheep dip containers.
3. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 15 March 2001.
4. The summary minutes of VPC meetings held since January 2000 are available on the VPC website (www.vpc.gov.uk).