

ACMSF Forward Work Plan 2012/13

Last reviewed May 2012

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>The Committee considered horizon scanning at its January 2011 meeting. Four areas were considered based on cross-cutting themes, these were: risks presented by changes in underlying agricultural, sourcing, processing and production factors. The Committee agreed to prioritise consideration of changing food preparation techniques in the hospitality sector that may impact on microbiological food safety.</p>	<p>In January 2012 ACMSF catering Members presented the Committee with their findings on this topic.</p> <p>Following consideration of the ACMSF catering members' findings the Committee referred the issues that emerged from its discussions to a subgroup for further deliberation. Group to update the Committee in May 2012 and expect to produce a paper by January 2013.</p>	<p>An ACMSF paper assessing the microbiological risk to consumers associated with changing food preparation techniques in the hospitality sector. Paper will be forwarded to the FSA for consideration.</p>

	Topic	Progress	Expected Output
2	<p>Potential approaches to ACMSF risk assessments</p> <p>The secretariat has undertaken to present options for future approaches to risk assessment for discussion by the Committee</p>	<p>At the January 2012 meeting the Committee was supportive of the proposed risk assessment framework presented by the Secretariat.</p> <p>The Committee will consider a paper on risk assessment output terminology at its May 2012 meeting.</p>	<p>An agreed risk assessment framework for future working of the Committee.</p>
3	<p>Use of source segregated composts and anaerobic digestates in UK agriculture. Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) reports</p>	<p>ACMSF provided comment on WRAP's report on the use of source segregated composts in agriculture at its September 2010 meeting. A revised version of the report will be provided for ACMSF approval.</p> <p>ACMSF received a presentation on WRAP's risk assessment on the quality, safety and use of digestate in UK agriculture in September 2011. The Committee has responded to the report, providing specific comments.</p>	<p>A response from the ACMSF on the WRAP risk assessment reports. Responses will be forwarded to WRAP.</p>

	Topic	Progress	Expected Output
4	Internalisation of pathogens by plant hosts	<p>The Committees' views have previously been sought on food safety advice in relation to fresh produce. Research on the internalisation of foodborne pathogens in plant hosts and any implications for advice on their safe preparation will be considered by the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee will receive a presentation on this issue at its May 2012 meeting.</p>	ACMSF views on key evidence gaps and research required to establish the implications for human health.
5	Toxoplasma in the food chain	<p>The <i>Ad Hoc</i> Group on Vulnerable Groups have drafted their risk profile on toxoplasma in the food chain. The Committee approved the draft for consultation.</p> <p>An amended final report addressing any consultation responses will be presented to the Committee for endorsement in May 2012.</p>	An ACMSF report outlining a risk profile for toxoplasma in the food chain. Report and recommendations will be forwarded to the FSA.
6	Foodborne Viral Infections	<p><i>The Ad Hoc</i> Group on Foodborne Viral Infections are currently gathering evidence for their report.</p> <p>The subgroup is expected to present its draft report to the Committee by January 2013.</p>	An ACMSF report on foodborne viral infections highlighting risks to consumers and identifying any research and surveillance gaps. Report and recommendations will be forwarded to the FSA.

	Topic	Progress	Expected Output
7	<p>Newly Emerging Pathogens</p> <p>The Newly Emerging Pathogens Working Group provides advice on the significance and risk from newly emerging or re-emerging pathogens through foodchain exposure pathways.</p>	<p>Continuous</p> <p>The Working Group on Newly Emerging Pathogens will continue to keep a watching brief on developments concerning the risks to human health and CTX-M extended-spectrum beta-lactamase (ESBL) producing <i>E.coli</i> in the food chain.</p> <p>The group will also consider any human health risks through the food chain from Bovine Neonatal Pancytopania (BNP). The subgroup will met to discuss BNP in February and will report back to the Committee by May 2012.</p>	<p>The Committee to draw the FSA's attention to any risk to human health from ESBL producing <i>E.coli</i> in the food chain.</p> <p>An ACMSF statement on human health risks through the food chain from BNP.</p>
9	<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>Continuous.</p> <p>The Group will consider the protocols for forthcoming surveys on Campylobacter in chicken and Listeria in cooked meat by December 2012.</p>	<p>Surveillance Working Group comments on survey protocols and survey results for consideration by FSA in their microbiological food surveillance programme.</p>

10	<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 updates will be provided at the January and May 2012 meetings.</p> <p>The findings from research into food safety behaviours in the home will be presented at the May 2012 meeting.</p> <p>An update on the outcomes of the workshop on the Application of Molecular Epidemiology to Investigations of Outbreaks will be provided in September 2012.</p> <p>The results of research to estimate the burden of foodborne disease will be presented to the Committee in September 2012.</p> <p>The report on ESBLs produced by the Joint Working Group of DARC and ARHAI will be presented to the Committee in September 2012.</p>	<p>ACMSF comments on the updates it receives for the FSA's consideration.</p>
----	--	---	---

¹ Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group

11	<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 food hygiene meetings.</p>	As issues arise.	ACMSF to note updates and provide comments if desired.
12	<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>	As issues arise.	ACMSF assessment of the risks in relation to significant microbiological outbreaks/incidents.