# GENERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE

## PAPER GACS 10-5 For discussion

Agenda item 4 31 October 2012

**Science in the Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs):**

**Action by FSA in response to SAC advice**

1. At its 9th meeting the Committee asked that a regular report on actions taken by FSA in response to advice from the SACs be included in future discussions on Science in the SACs.

2. This is the first report to GACS on this issue.

**The Committee is asked to:**

(i) **Comment on** the FSA's performance both in acting on SAC advice and reporting back to the SACs on progress

(ii) **Consider** whether the information at Annex A is a suitable format for future reports on progress on SAC recommendations

(iii) **Consider** if there is a need for consistency across the SACs in capturing recommendations/actions for the FSA

(iv) **Consider** if there is a need for consistency across the FSA in reporting back to SACs on progress on their recommendations.

**Origin of paper**

Issues arising from the Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs); and the review of science governance at the FSA.


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## Issue

1. This paper provides the first report to the GACS on action taken by the FSA in response to advice from the Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs).

## Background

2. Part of the GACS' role is to help in developing good practice for SAC work and advise on how the FSA makes use of scientific evidence.

3. At its 9th meeting, in considering the conclusions of a review of science governance in the FSA, the Committee asked that a report on progress on the SACs' recommendations be included in future papers on Science in the SACs. This would help the GACS to track FSA performance on progress with recommendations for research and other SAC recommendations and advice.

4. A summary of advice from the SACs and the actions taken by the FSA in response is provided in Annex A. It includes the six SACs for which the FSA provides the lead secretariat, and advice arising from SAC work during 2010 to 2012, with recommendations for research highlighted. Also included are any significant earlier pieces of advice for which a response from FSA is outstanding. The ACNFP table is different in that it lists advice given to the FSA on novel food applications submitted to Member States between 2005 and 2009, and the subsequent actions taken.[1]

## Discussion

5. In preparing the paper our overall impression has been that each SAC has a different approach for capturing and reporting committee recommendations and advice. This is in part due to the varying nature of the issues considered by SACs, and in part due to the different styles used in recording Committees' meeting minutes:

    a. SACs' conclusions are not always articulated as 'recommendations' as such, as they also provide advice, risk assessments and comments.

    b. Some items considered by SACs do not generate any specific advice for the FSA, for example when they consider updates on an area of interest or if the advice is for another government department.

    c. In some cases the advice from the Committee may mean that no action is required by the FSA, for example if the Committee reviews new evidence and decides it does not need to change its original position.

[1] This paper was discussed at the ACNFP September 2011 meeting. The next annual report to ACNFP is planned for November 2012 and the GACS secretariat did not wish to duplicate the ACNFP secretariat's work in preparing the new paper. GACS will be provided with the November 2012 paper if required as soon as it is available.

6. Although it is apparent that SAC secretariats endeavour to keep the SACs updated on issues that they have provided advice on, they use different combinations of methods to do so (including: 'matters arising' papers, information papers, written reports and oral updates at meetings; ad hoc and/or regular email updates; explaining the actions taken in response to SAC advice in Committees' annual reports; and periodic formal reports or reviews on actions taken in response to advice).

7. There is no formal or consistent approach to reporting back to SACs on progress, and for those outside the SAC Secretariat or the relevant FSA science/policy team, this can make tracking FSA progress more difficult.

8. Members will wish to comment on how useful they find the information in the paper, and how the FSA is performing with regards to progress and reporting back on the SAC recommendations (**see Annex A**). The Committee may also wish to comment on what good practice looks like, both in capturing SACs' advice, and in reporting back to the SACs on progress.

**The Committee is asked to:**

(i) **Comment on** the FSA's performance both in acting on SAC advice and reporting back to the SACs on progress

(ii) **Consider** whether the information at Annex A is a suitable format for future reports on progress on SAC recommendations

(iii) **Consider** if there is a need for consistency across the SACs in capturing recommendations/actions for the FSA

(iv) **Consider** if there is a need for consistency across the FSA in reporting back to SACs on progress on their recommendations.

**ANNEX A: SAC recommendations for the Food Standards Agency**

## 1. Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs (ACAF)

| Date | Issue considered by the SAC | SAC response/advice | Any action for FSA, progress | Progress reported back to the SAC? |
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| June 2010 | Packaging material in animal feeds | The Committee agreed that there is a need for a risk assessment to be carried out on the presence of packaging material in feeds and what factors need to be taken into account in the preparation of such an assessment. | Agency officials working to agree sampling and analysis methodology and a de facto tolerance level. | Ongoing reports provided at meetings in Dec 2010, Sep 2011, Dec 2011, Mar and Jun 2012. The Secretariat intends to provide an update presentation at ACAF's January 2013 meeting on work the Agency has carried out in developing a methodology. |
| June 2011 | Sustainability aspects of feed production and use | The ACAF Chair said that the use of co-products should be based on scientific evidence, and that ACAF could recommend to sponsoring Government Departments where research should be directed. A Member said that if the Committee was to consider the safety of co-products then this work should include the restrictions on the use of non-ruminant processed animal proteins (PAP) in animal feed. | Item has yet to be progressed. | |

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| September 2010-2011 | Copper supplementation in feed for cattle | The Committee considered there was a level of uncertainty regarding the incidence of copper over-supplementation in dairy cattle. It was agreed further research in this area might be useful. The Committee endorsed a guidance document for the feed industry in March 2011. | Currently copper containing compounds are being reassessed by EFSA as part of its reassessment of authorised feed additives. EFSA may recommend reductions in the maximum permitted levels for some or all copper containing feed additives. Any such reduction would be expected to significantly reduce copper inputs into feed. It may be up to five years before EFSA completes its review. If such reductions are not made to the maximum permitted levels we do not regard the possible over supplementation of copper as primarily a consumer safety issue and that any research might be carried out by feed business operators. | Yes, through updates at meetings (March, June and September 2011 and by email 3 November 2011. |
| June 2011 | As a result of the German dioxin incident in December 2010 the Committee was asked to consider potential safety gaps in the feed sector to prevent a similar incident occurring in the UK. | The Committee suggested three main work areas to be explored with a view to providing advice.<br>The Committee provided information on the types of establishments which may not be registered by enforcement authorities. | Agency officials preparing paper on imports in liaison with local authorities and trade interests. | Committee has considered papers on identification of feed businesses (Dec 2011); and on competence of feed business operators (March 2012).<br><br>A final paper on imports will be presented at the Committee's meeting on 16 January 2013. |

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| September 2011 | Salmonella contamination of animal feed | The Committee agreed to re-endorse the line taken by UK officials in negotiations using a HACCP-type approach, as considered by the EFSA and as set out in the UK Code of Practice. | Following the advice from ACAF, the FSA continued with the agreed policy. | At ACAF's December 2011 meeting, Committee was provided with information on action they had tasked the Secretariat to undertake. |
| December 2011 | Contamination of the food chain by brominated flame retardants | The Committee commented on further work that the Agency could undertake on this subject, such as investigating where the entry points for contamination might be for foods that were found to contain high levels of BFRs during food surveys, notably farmed fish and dairy products. The Committee also recommended that the Agency should consider including feed in any future investigations. | Awaiting final publication of EFSA Opinion on brominated flame retardants.<br><br>Colleagues in Animal Feed and Animal By Products Branch will be assisting colleagues in Chemical Safety Division with suggestions for research work. | Yes – Committee were made aware of EFSA opinions on brominated flame retardants. |
| 2010-2012 | Biofuels | The Committee revised its position paper on biofuels in March 2012. The Committee recommended that the Agency carries out research on the presence of impurities and contaminants in biofuel feedstocks and co-products that are intended for animal feed. | The FSA considered it would be a disproportionate use of public resources to commission specific research into this area at this time. However, the Agency is providing funding to local authorities' (LAs) enforcement offices to perform additional checks on levels of undesirable substances in feed products that would include those derived from biofuel production and related industries (e.g. beer and whisky production). | Yes – the committee was provided with a link to the published revised position paper via email on 6 March 2012.<br><br>Any data obtained from LAs or the feed industry regarding biofuel-derived feeds that are relevant and significant will be reported back to ACAF. |

## 2. Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF)

| Date | Issue considered by the SAC | SAC response/advice | Action for FSA, progress | Progress reported back to SAC? |
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| March 2010 | The possible health risks to consumers of meat and dairy products from animals with evidence of *Mycobacterium bovis* infection | ACMSF's opinion was that the current evidence had not shown a need to change the existing ACMSF risk assessment on meat and confirmed the risk was very low. | ACMSF advice provided to Board in July 2010. No further action for FSA. | Progress reported back through subsequent papers on *M. bovis* and milk and milk products. |
| September 2010 | The possible health risks to consumers associated with *Mycobacterium bovis* and milk and milk products | The Committee view in response to the questions posed by the FSA was that the risk from pasteurised milk and milk products contaminated with *M. bovis* has changed but in milk that is properly pasteurised the risk remains acceptably low. | ACMSF advice provided to Board in November 2011. No further action for FSA. | Committee updated through matters arising in Jan and May 2012. |
| March 2010 | Risk to human health associated with foodborne viral infections especially with reference to norovirus | The Committee agreed to establish a subgroup to review foodborne viral infections. It was considered important that food remained the foremost issue for discussion by the subgroup as this was the remit of the ACMSF. Subgroup expected to produce draft report by January 2013. | Subgroup work ongoing, not yet reported to FSA. | Updates on sub group meetings provided to main Committee at plenary meetings. |
| March 2010 and September 2011 | Use of source segregated composts and anaerobic digestates in UK agriculture. Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) reports (WRAP request brought to the Committee by the FSA) | ACMSF provided comments on report on the use of source segregated composts in agriculture and report on the quality, safety and use of digestate in UK agriculture. | ACMSF's comments have been forwarded to WRAP by FSA. No further action for FSA. | ACMSF updated on progress via matters arising in January 2011 and May 2012. |

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| March 2010 | Literature review on microbiological hazards associated with biltong and similar dried meat products | The Committee's advice was that there was insufficient evidence for the FSA to provide advice to food producers and local authorities on the production of biltong. It was highlighted that more experimental evidence was required on the effect of processing techniques before risks should be fully assessed. There was also a need for clarification on outbreaks said to be associated with biltong to ensure that the epidemiology about the source of infection was accurately modelled and source identified. | Advice noted by the FSA, maintaining a watching brief. Research not a priority for taking forward at this time. | N/A. |
| September 2010 | Possible health risks from consuming chicken liver pâtés | The Committee noted that there was a need to understand more about *Campylobacter* and chicken liver contamination. It was highlighted that cooking liver to a core temperature of 70°C for 2 minutes should kill the *Campylobacter* present but there may be a need to consider liver as comminuted meat rather than a whole meat in the context of delivering appropriate food safety messages. | Advice noted by the FSA. Work in relation to outbreaks/illness linked to *Campylobacter* and chicken liver pate is ongoing. | No update yet provided. |
| June and Sept 2011 | *Mycobacterium bovis* and the possible health risks associated with unpasteurised milk and milk products | The risk of human TB infection acquired from unpasteurised milk and milk products has changed with the increase in *M. bovis* in cattle.<br>The risk to human health from *M. bovis* in unpasteurised cows' milk and milk products is very low.<br>The risk to human health from *M. bovis* in unpasteurised sheep, goat and buffalo milk and milk products is likely to be very low but due to a lack of data on these species there are more uncertainties associated with this assessment. | Outcome of the ACMSF's risk assessment was reported to the FSA Board November 2011. Advice has formed part of the FSA's current review of controls on raw drinking milk. FSA action ongoing. | ACMSF informed of Board's decision and next steps via matters arising in January and May 2012. |

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| January 2011 | Health risks to consumers associated with unpasteurised milk and unpasteurised cream for direct human consumption | The Committee's advice was that given the evidence presented it could not justify a need to change its recommendation that pasteurisation is an important control measure in reducing the risks from consumption of raw milk. It was highlighted that if data on changing sales routes is gathered there may be a need to review the risks from raw drinking milk. | Outcome of the ACMSF's risk assessment was reported to the FSA Board November 2011. Advice has formed part of the FSA's current review of controls on raw drinking milk. FSA action ongoing. | ACMSF informed of Board's decision via matters arising in January and May 2012. |
| January 2012 | Microbiological safety of sprouted seeds | There was no disagreement to the FSA's proposed controls for sprouted seeds but the Committee highlighted that as it had not been able to review all the relevant data it was not in a position to rank the risks from sprouted seeds relative to other food safety risks.<br><br>Some members were selected to provide further advice on this issue. | Advice noted by the FSA, FSA actions in relation to sprouted seeds ongoing. | ACMSF updated on this issue via matter arising in May 2012 and information paper ACM/1086 circulated to members in September 2012. |
| May 2012 | Internalisation of pathogens by fresh produce | Research needs were identified. These included further work to determine the prevalence, concentration and viability of pathogens (including viruses) in fresh produce in both field and experimental conditions and research to look at the fate of these organisms after harvesting. It was also recommended that where fresh produce is implicated in outbreaks of disease it may be possible to investigate if pathogens had been internalised in the produce. Further investigations to look at variations with different species types, growth conditions and phenotypic response was also recommended by the Committee. | Research recommendations noted by the FSA and used to inform development of research requirements for 2012/13 research round. FSA actions ongoing. | ACMSF will be updated through January 2013 matters arising. |

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| May 2012 | Toxoplasmosis and food | ACMSF *Ad Hoc* Group on Vulnerable Groups produced a risk profile in relation to toxoplasma in the food chain. It was forwarded to the FSA in May 2012 and published in September 2012. | The FSA is considering the recommendations included in the report and will publish an action plan responding to the report's recommendations in due course. | ACMSF informed of the publication of the report via email dated 4 September 2012 and will be updated through January 2013 matters arising. |
| May 2012 | Safety of food from cattle affected by Bovine Neonatal Pancytopenia (request brought to the ACMSF by the National Expert Panel on New and Emerging Infections: NEPNEI) | ACMSF Newly Emerging Pathogens Working Group agreed a statement on BNP which was endorsed by the full ACMSF in May 2012. In the statement the Newly Emerging Pathogens Working Group concluded that on the basis of the available evidence there were no identifiable microbiological risks associated with meat and milk from BNP affected animals. The group also considered the immunological risk to human health associated with BNP and the food chain and concluded this was very low based on a number of identified factors. | ACMSF comments passed to NEPNEI by FSA. No further action for the FSA. | ACMSF will be updated through January 2013 matters arising. |
| March and April 2012 | Microbiological Surveillance of food | ACMSF Surveillance Working Group considered the protocols for the FSA surveys on *Campylobacter* in chicken and listeria in cooked meat. | The FSA used the comments in further development of the surveys. | Update provided to ACMSF at the May 2012 full Committee meeting. |

## 3. Committee on Toxicity of chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT)

| Date | Issue considered by the SAC | SAC response/advice | Action for FSA, progress | Progress reported back to the SAC? |
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| 2010 | FSA-funded research on joint endocrine effects of multi-component mixtures of food contaminants and additives | The COT advised its recommended approach of assuming dose additivity would be adequately protective of public health. COT advised there would be limited value in pursuing further *in vitro* work. | Further research has not been commissioned in this area, in line with the COT recommendation | COT members are routinely invited to our research workshops to review ongoing research |
| 2010-11 | Variability and Uncertainty in Toxicology of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment. | The COT report published in 2007 concluded that the development of a framework for transparent expression of uncertainty in hazard characterisation would enable the COT and other committees that perform toxicological evaluations to improve communication of the sources of variability and uncertainty in their risk assessments. | The FSA commissioned a research project to review existing approaches to qualitative evaluation and expression of uncertainties and assess their suitability for routine use by the COT and other committees. The project developed a framework in consultation with COT. FSA subsequently commissioned research to assess the COT's draft uncertainty framework from a social science perspective. The COT agreed there was no immediate need to revise the framework in light of the research report and Committee discussions. | COT has again discussed this in light of other activities and agreed to keep a watching brief on developments, e.g. at EFSA |
| March 2010 | Methods of analysis for shellfish toxins | The COT advised on methods of analysis for shellfish toxins, and the scope to replace use of the mouse bioassay in the UK monitoring programme for these toxins by alternative approaches that do not require testing in live animals. | As a result of the COT recommendations, the fully quantitative HPLC method for testing PSP biotoxins under the UK Monitoring Programme has been extended. | Updates provided at the February 2011 and February 2012 meetings |

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| September 2010 | Mixtures – an appraisal of a report on "State of the Art Report on Mixture Toxicity". | The COT agreed it should review and comment on the EFSA statement on mixtures, which was expected to be available in June 2011. | The expected opinion from the PPR panel does not seem to have been published | |
| December 2010 | Occurrence of mixed halogenated dioxins and biphenyls in UK food | COT statement: COT concluded that the measured levels of mixed halogenated dioxins in food did not indicate a health concern; further research on PXDDs, PXDFs and dioxin-like PXBs not a priority. | No action required | |
| March 2011 | Timing of introduction of gluten into the infant diet | Joint SACN and COT statement | The COT statement will contribute to the SACN review of complementary and young child feeding | Reported at the February 2012 meeting |
| March 2011 | The effects of chronic dietary exposure to methanol | COT statement: from the evidence available COT concluded that amounts of methanol consumed through food, including from aspartame, would not result in build up of formate and so are unlikely to cause harmful health effects. Further research on dietary methanol not a high priority. | COT statement used in responding to a petition calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to take action to bring about a ban on the use of free methanol released by aspartame and to run an awareness campaign amongst health professionals to alert them of free methanol present in our diet. | Reported at the February 2012 meeting |
| September 2011 | WRAP risk assessment on anaerobic digestates | The Committee commented on the risk assessment | COT views were reported to Defra | |
| December 2011 | FSA-funded research and other progress on mixtures of pesticides and similar substances. | The Committee discussed the conclusions that could be drawn from the research project reports and what the priorities should be for future research. | Further research priorities will be considered after the review of the risk assessment research programme in October 2012 | Review was chaired by COT deputy chair |
| April 2012 | FSA phytoestrogens research programme: | COT statement identified the need to consider further research on potential effects in individuals with compensated hypothyroidism to address outstanding uncertainties | Further research priorities will be considered after the review of the risk assessment research programme in October 2012 | Review was chaired by COT deputy chair |

## 4. General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS)

| Date | Issue considered by the SAC | SAC response/advice | Any action for FSA, progress | Progress reported back to SAC? |
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| October 2008 - present | Access to external scientific expertise | To develop a 'community of expertise' for the committee or the Agency to draw on for advice on particular topics, such as cross-cutting issues;<br>March 2010 – progress setting-up of 'Network of Experts', subject to members' comments, & report back to GACS<br>Nov 2011 – consider how best to use the SACs in development of the Register of Specialists | In progress. Basic central register of specialists in place reported at GACS meeting November 2011. Work on the register had made progress and plans to expand it were reported at GACS meeting March 2012. | Updates reported at every open meeting |
| September 2009 | Measures of success for FSA science | GACS developed Performance Indicators for the Agency's science and recommended further work by the Agency to support their implementation | In progress. Progress reported in GACS work plan in November 2011 & March 2012: FSA is reviewing performance indicators within the wider projects to implement new systems for commissioning and managing evidence and other projects in FSA | Updates reported at every open meeting |
| September 2009 | Advise on/co-ordinate HS on cross-cutting science issues | Secretariat to produce a more concise report of the horizon-scanning workshop for the Committee to consider; consider seeking wider input, for example from industry, and placing report on the website to stimulate discussion.<br>March 2010 – produce a summary report of main action points & progress to date following the GACS Horizon Scanning workshop, pending production of full reports; Prioritise the actions coming out from the GACS HS workshop, to ensure momentum was maintained. | Reported at March 2010 meeting – progress on hold due to other priorities; to be completed end June 2010<br>Reported at October 2010 meeting – summary report (including section on main actions and progress) was circulated to Members in September and published on the GACS website shortly after the 19 October meeting. | March 2010 and October 2010 meetings |

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| September 2009 | High-level view on research priorities/gaps to inform Strategic Plan and Science Strategy | Reflect GACS' views in the implementation plan for the Review and the developing Science and Evidence Strategy; Review the draft Science and Evidence Strategy in line with Members' comments, before seeking opinions on an amended version in a consultation with stakeholders | Completed – reported at March 2010 | March 2010 meeting |
| March 2010 | Monitoring the performance of SACs | Agency CS to seek GACS views on a process for assessing the performance of SAC Chairs and members | Completed. Covered in CS report to GACS October 2010. Committee's views sought by correspondence in November 2010 and new process in place from January 2011. | October 2010 meeting |
| March 2010 | Advise on/co-ordinate HS on cross-cutting science issues | The Agency should liaise with Defra to learn from their futures modelling work and any scenarios developed which are relevant to the Agency's work. | Complete. Reported at October 2010 that the FSA is liaising with Defra on this; and in October 2011 (CS Report) that FSA was a partner in a Defra-led cross-government Centre for Environmental Risks and Futures at Cranfield | October 2010 meeting |
| March 2010 | Co-ordinate communication with/between SACs in developing good practice for SAC work | To develop some key ideas for a future cross-SAC event and come back to GACS at the next meeting. | No plans for further SAC workshops, in light of the FSA's reducing budget, cross-government restrictions on marketing spend, and development of networking of the wider SAC community by the Government Chief Scientist. | October 2010 meeting |
| October 2010-2011 | How the Agency makes use of scientific evidence | Develop a clear FSA policy on release of underpinning data including clarifying what is meant by 'underpinning data'<br>Seek GACS views on the FSA policy for release of underpinning data<br>Publish the FSA principles for release of underpinning data. | Actions completed. FSA principles on underpinning data published in December 2011 (views sought from GACS in correspondence prior to November 2011 meeting) | Updates reported at every open meeting |

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| October 2010 | Co-ordinate communication with/between SACs in developing good practice for SAC work | Agency Chief Scientist to explore options for ensuring continued representation of SACN on GACS | March 2011 - Chair of SACN attending GACS meetings as invited observer. | Updates reported at every open meeting |
| March 2011 | How the FSA makes use of scientific evidence | FSA to consider analysis of Food and You Survey results in more discrete age groups | Response provided at November 2011 meeting – initial presentations used broad groups; analysis in other groups is part of the ongoing, detailed analysis | November 2011 meeting |
| March 2011 | Co-ordinate communication with/between SACs in developing good practice for SAC work | FSA to continue to keep GACS updated on separations of responsibility for different aspects of food policy with other government departments | Ongoing. Update provided in CS report to November 2011 meeting | November 2011 meeting |
| March 2011 | How the FSA makes use of scientific evidence | FSA to bring papers to GACS on evaluation; and how the Agency commissions and manages research | Paper on evaluation at GACS November 2011 meeting. GACS agreed to subsequent proposal from WG on Strategic Evidence that a paper on research was not needed. | November 2011 meeting |
| March 2011, November 2011 | Sharing data and funding | Share framework for sharing data or funding with GO Science<br>Chief Scientist to write to Professor Sir John Beddington with the final version of the framework. | Actions completed | Reported at November 2011 and March 2012 meetings |
| March 2011 | Monitoring the performance of SACs | FSA to incorporate an assessment of adherence to the principles laid out in the Royal Society Report in future quinquennial reviews of SACs | Action completed; reported at November 2011 | November 2011 meeting |
| March 2011 | Engagement/collaboration | Keep GACS informed of developments on the Global Food Security Initiative | Ongoing; update at November 2011 | November 2011 meeting |

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| November 2011 | Workshop on the Application of Molecular Epidemiology to Investigation of Foodborne Disease Outbreaks | FSA to consider potential contribution to the workshop of the UK-based molecular group and of social scientists | FSA followed up with UK Molecular Epidemiology Group but they did not put forward anyone with expertise in this area. FSA agreed that as the focus of the workshop was on the technological aspects of the issue, social science input was less relevant at this stage. | Update provided at March 2012 meeting |
| November 2011 | FSA Strategic challenge | Report back to GACS on strategic challenge once the tender process is complete | Reported back at March 2012 meeting | Reported back at March 2012 meeting |
| November 2011 | High-level view on research priorities/gaps to inform Strategic Plan and Science Strategy | FSA to develop and implement the ideas in the paper from the Strategic Evidence Working Group, reflecting GACS' comments and report back on progress, using the WG as a sounding board between meetings | Reported back at March 2012 meeting. | Reported back at March 2012 meeting |
| November 2011 | Review of science governance | FSA to reflect GACS' comments in carrying out the review and report back at the next meeting | Reported back at March 2012. Comments from March GACS meeting reflected in revised proposals, which were then agreed by FSA Board July 2012 (GACS Chair present); GACS informed by email update. | Reported back at March 2012 |
| November 2011 | Monitoring the performance of SACs | FSA to consider GACS' comments on streamlining when planning the next round of reviews of SACs | Reported back at March 2012: FSA will take GACS comments into account when it develops plans for the reviews once the current round is completed in 2012/13 | Reported back at March 2012 |
| November 2011 | How the FSA makes use of scientific evidence | FSA to provide GACS with an example of a completed evaluation for information and keep GACS informed about the FHRS evaluation | Information requested provided as an Annex to matters arising paper at March 2012 | Reported back at March 2012 |
| March 2012 | FSA Strategic challenge | FSA Chief Scientist team to reflect GACS comments in proceeding with the Strategic Challenge to maximise input from SMEs, including working with TSB | In progress. Reflected in approach to 2012 call. GACS informed by email update when call issued. | Reported back at October 2012 |

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| March 2012 | Co-ordinate communication with/between SACs in developing good practice for SAC work | FSA Chief Scientist to underline to FSA Science Leads the importance of providing feedback to SACs on the response to their advice | Complete. | Reported back at October 2012 |
| March 2012 | How the FSA makes use of scientific evidence | FSA Chief Scientist team to consider lessons from Relu for FSA's research, with regard to assessment of interdisciplinary proposals | Complete. Relu Director provided a summary report on FSA interaction with Relu. This is fed into discussions on future collaborations. | Reported back at October 2012 |

## 5. Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP)

The table summarises advice given to the FSA on novel food applications submitted to Member States between 2005 and 2009, and the subsequent actions taken (this paper was discussed at the ACNFP September 2011 meeting; the next annual report to ACNFP is planned for November 2012).

| | Novel Food | MS | ACNFP Advice | Latest ACNFP advice | Outcome of overall risk assessment | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Phosphated Distarch Phosphate | UK | Initial Opinion in favour of authorisation | Feb 2011 | MS objections referred to EFSA; positive opinion issued 2010 | 2011 Authorised (UK Abstained) |
| 2 | Synthetic Lycopene | Netherlands | Comment in relation to test material used in safety studies | Jan 2007 | MS objections referred to EFSA; positive opinion issued in 2009 | 2009 authorised (UK abstained)[2] |
| 3 | Noni – Extension of use | | | | | |
| 4 | Sucromalt | Netherlands | Minor comments only | Nov 2009 | No objections to Initial Opinion | 2010 authorised (by consensus) |
| 5 | Ice Structuring Protein | UK | Initial Opinion in favour of authorisation | July 2007 | MS objections referred to EFSA; positive opinion issued in 2009 | 2009 authorised |
| 6 | Baobab fruit pulp | UK | Initial Opinion in favour of authorisation | July 2007 | MS objections: Applicant able to answer | 2009 authorised |
| 7 | Glucosamine from A niger | UK | Initial Opinion recommended additional assessment of effects on glucose metabolism; addressed in EFSA opinion | Nov 2009 | MS objections referred to EFSA; positive opinion issued in 2009 | Pending<br>*Applicant in dialogue with EFSA* |
| 8 | Echium Oil | UK | Initial Opinion in favour of authorisation | July 2007 | MS objections: Applicant able to answer | 2009 authorised |
| 9 | Krill Oil | Finland | Objections were addressed following provision of additional information by the applicant. | Sept 2007 | MS objections referred to EFSA; positive opinion issued in 2009 | 2009 authorised |
| 10 | Conjugated Linoleic Acid Rich Oil (2 applications) | Spain; Ireland | Objections<br>• oxidative stress<br>• stability | Feb 2011 | MS objections referred to EFSA; positive opinion issued in 2010 | Pending<br>*Concerns about risk assessment and an appropriate risk management strategy* |
| 11 | Policosanol | Belgium | Endorsed the unfavourable initial opinion<br>• inadequate safety data<br>• possible anti-aggregation effects on platelets, | Sep 2008 | MS objections<br><br>*No update available* | |

[2] 1 of 4 lycopene applications. The UK abstained in all cases due to concerns that the proposed uses would, together with dietary intake and food additive uses of lycopene, lead to certain population groups exceeding the Acceptable Daily Intake.

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| 12 | Lycopene rich oleoresin from tomatoes (use in FSMP) | Netherlands | Agreed with favourable initial opinion but highlighted possible effect of increased beta-carotene levels | Sep 2008 | EFSA adopted an ADI for lycopene in 2008 | 2009 authorised (UK abstained)[1] |
| 13 | cis-9-Cetyl Myristoleate Rich Complex | Italy | Agreed with the unfavourable initial opinion<br>• insufficient toxicological studies<br>• cholesterol intake | Apr 2009 | MS objections referred to EFSA; negative opinion issued in 2010 | Pending<br>*Commission will draft a decision in due course* |
| 14 | Licorice Root Extract | Belgium | Objections<br>• blood coagulation and oestrogen-like effects | Jul 2010 | MS objections<br><br>EFSA positive opinion issued in 2011 | Pending<br><br>*Commission will draft a decision in due course* |
| 15 | Bovine Lactoferrin | Belgium | Objections<br>• iron availability<br>• insufficient toxicological data | Sep 2008 | Substantive MS objections<br>*No update available – company may have ceased trading* | |
| 16 | Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA) Rich Algal Oil (Extension of Approval) | UK | Initial Opinion in favour of authorisation | Sep 2008 | MS objections: Applicant able to answer | 2009 authorised (UK In favour) |
| 17 | REV-7 Chewing Gum Base | Netherlands | Objections<br>• fate during gut transit (later answered by the applicant) | Feb 2010 | MS objections referred to EFSA; positive opinion issued in 2011 | Pending<br>*Commission will draft a decision in due course* |
| 18 | Chitin Glucan | Belgium | Objections<br>• allergy | Apr 2009 | MS objections referred to EFSA positive opinion issued in 2010 | 2011 authorised (UK abstained) |
| 19 | Synthetic Lycopene | Ireland | Referred to EFSA as there was an ongoing assessment of synthetic lycopene (see 2) | Not considered | EFSA;<br>positive opinion issued in 2009 | 2009 authorised (UK abstained)[1] |
| 20 | Astaxanthin | Finland | Objections<br>• long term exposure, in particular by certain groups of the population | Feb 2009 | MS substantive objections<br>*Commission likely to request an opinion form EFSA* | Pending |
| 21 | beta-glucan rich extract from *Lentinus edodes* | UK | Initial Opinion in favour of authorisation | Sep 2008 | MS objections referred to EFSA' positive Opinion issued in 2010 | 2011 authorised (UK In favour) |
| 22 | Black Bean extract | UK | Initial Opinion in favour of authorisation | Sep 2009 | MS objections referred to EFSA; positive opinion issued 2011 | Pending<br>*Commission will draft a decision in due course* |

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| 23 | Sardine Peptide Product | Finland | Objections<br>• lack of toxicological data<br>• product is medicinal in UK | Apr 2009 | MS objections referred to EFSA; positive opinion issued in 2010 | 2011 authorised<br>(UK abstained) |
| 24 | Bovine Lactoferrin | Belgium | Objections<br>• iron availability<br>• insufficient toxicological data | Sep 2008 | Substantive MS objections | |
| 25 | Arracacha Root | Spain | Objections<br>• potential allergen (celeriac cross reactivity) | Sep 2010 | Substantive MS objections<br>*Commission likely to request an opinion form EFSA* | Pending |
| 26 | Bee Venom | UK | Could not establish safety concerns in regard to allergic reaction / sensitisation | April 2010 | No objections to Initial Opinion | 2010 rejected<br>(by consensus) |
| 27 | Magnolia Bark Extract | UK | Initial Opinion in favour of authorisation | Jul 2010 | No objections to Initial Opinion | Pending<br>(by consensus) |
| 28 | Soya phospholipids | Finland | Minor comments only | | MS objections: Applicant able to answer | 2010 authorised<br>(by consensus) |
| 29 | Yeast beta-glucans | Ireland | Objections<br>• test material used for the safety studies<br>• possible immune stimulatory effects | Feb 2010 | MS objections: Applicant able to answer<br>EFSA Positive Opinion 2011 | Pending<br>*Draft Decision required re-write* |
| 30 | Guar Gum | France | Minor comments only | Jul 2010 | No objections to Initial Opinion | 2010 authorised<br>(by consensus) |

## 6. Social Science Research Committee (SSRC)

| Date | Issue considered by the SAC | SAC response/advice | Any action for FSA, progress | Progress reported back to the SAC? |
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| 2010-12 | Food and You survey | The survey was developed under recommendation from the SSRC and an Advisory Group including members of the committee have overseen the project from commissioning.<br>(SSRC commented on the emerging findings of wave one of the survey and discussed the future direction of the survey, including the decision not to include a panel element. SSRC supported the development of wave 2 of the survey, including carrying out a thorough review of the questionnaire and advising on the best approach to sampling.) | Staff in the Social Science Research Unit (SSRU) manage the projects and ensure that the Advisory Group is involved at appropriate stages. | Updates are provided at each meeting. There is an oral update provided by an Advisory Group member and, where appropriate, an accompanying paper. |
| 2010/11 | Future Meat Controls | The SSRC Working Group has recommended a programme of research drawing upon, and adding to, that already available from within the Agency and more broadly, in order to address the issues of how to secure effective regulation whilst instilling public confidence through transparency and engagement. This resulted in the commissioning of a project for which an Advisory Group was established (the Advisory Group includes members of the SSRC). The project will provide the FSA with a better understanding of how Official Controls are delivered in the slaughterhouse, the environment in which this happens and how behaviours and relationships in slaughterhouses impact on food safety and animal welfare. | Staff in the SSRU manage the project and ensure that the Advisory Group and /or Working Group are involved at appropriate stages. | Updates are provided at each meeting. There is an oral update provided by an Advisory Group member and, where appropriate, an accompanying paper. |
| 2010/11 | Establishing a framework for commissioning Social Science Research | Members of the Committee provided oversight in establishing the framework | Review the use of the framework and feed back the outcome of this review. | This is planned for between meetings through the monthly Update to members. |

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| 2010-12 | Drawing on wider expertise as appropriate to provide independent critique on social science based evidence | The SSRC reviews the membership of the Register of Specialists on an annual basis, to ensure the expertise meets the current needs of the FSA. | New members are added to the register on an *ad hoc* basis. | The SSRC considers the Register of Specialists annually (at the spring meeting). |
| 2010-12 | Advising how social science can best contribute to meeting the Agency's strategic aims | Comments on the Forward Evidence Plan and participation in recent horizon scanning activity.<br>The Committee recommended how the Science Checklist could be amended to take greater account of social science evidence. | Comments on the forward evidence plan are considered and acted upon – e.g. the kitchen practices project was scoped out following comments from the SSRC at their 7th meeting. This resulted in the formation of an Advisory Group including SSRC members.<br>The outputs from the horizon scanning activity will be provided for comment as part of monthly updates and will contribute to:<br>(i) Shaping the agenda of the SSRC<br>(ii) Developing the Agency's future research portfolio<br>(iii) Contribute to the Agency's future work on strategic direction<br>Views of the SSRC were taken into account in revised science checklist which is now published | The SSRC received updates from Advisory Group members at each meeting. Where an Advisory Group is not established but there is interest by an individual in a project they are encouraged to e.g. peer review specifications, appraise proposals and peer review outputs.<br>Horizon scanning will be discussed at GACS – the chair will provide an update for members following this – and discussed at the next meeting.<br>Members were informed that their comments informed the development of the new science checklist. |

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| 2011/12 | FSA commissioned a qualitative study into food safety practices in the domestic kitchen (known as Kitchen Practices project) | Ideas for this project were developed following a discussion at the 7th SSRC meeting on the Forward Evidence Plan. Members of the SSRC were invited to form part of an Advisory group for the project and have provided advice from inception, through reporting of the pilot phase and will continue to advise on key developments throughout the life of the project. | Staff in the SSRU manage the project and ensure that the Advisory Group are involved at appropriate stages. | Updates are provided at each meeting. There is an oral update provided by an Advisory Group member and, where appropriate, an accompanying paper. |
| 2011/12 | Evaluating the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme/ Food Hygiene Information Scheme (FHRS/FHIS) | The SSRC have been involved with this project throughout its development, and so a representative was included on the Advisory Group. | Staff in the SSRU manage the project, alongside other Analysts from the Analysis and Research Division. They ensure that the Advisory Group are involved at appropriate stages. | Updates are provided at each meeting. There is an oral update provided by an Advisory Group member and, where appropriate, an accompanying paper. |
| November 2011 | The role of social sciences in presenting uncertainty in risk assessment | The Committee produced an advice paper for other scientific advisory committees providing further suggestions about how best to engage with the public on uncertainty and risk | The SSRU facilitated this work and managed a project that underpinned it. | Members have been informed that COT were appreciative of the advice note and it has subsequently been published. |