

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD

Update from other Scientific Advisory Committees

Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs (ACAF)

ACAF held its last meeting on 3 June 2010 in York. David Maxwell of Vivergo Fuels Ltd gave a presentation on biofuel production and the impact on the feed sector. Members agreed to review and update ACAF's position paper on the impact of biofuel production on the safety, composition and availability of animal feed.

Following this, a discussion was held on a paper proposing items to be included in an industry guide aimed at minimising the amount of packaging material in feed produced from recycled human food. It was agreed that observations in this area should be sent to the European Commission with a recommendation that the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) undertake a risk assessment of packaging residues in feed.

Members were updated on developments concerning the use of trace element additives to fortify animal feeds in preparation for discussion at a future meeting when they will be asked to consider issues relating to copper and selenium toxicity in animals.

The committee discussed recent developments on maximum residue limits (MRLs) for nicarbazin products. Members were informed that recent EFSA opinions proposed MRLs in the tissues of broilers. It is expected that the European Commission will propose legislation on this issue. In the future, ACAF (in liaison with the Veterinary Residues Committee) may be called upon to provide advice on coccidiostat residues in feed and food once MRLs have been established.

The next ACAF meeting is on 22 September 2010. Items on the provisional agenda are:

- Climate change impact on feed production.
- Copper and Selenium toxicity in dairy cattle.
- Vitamin 'D'.
- Forward work plan and horizon scanning.

Recruitment

Interviews for a new microbiologist took place on 19 January 2010. Professor Stephen Forsythe was successful and will take up his appointment with effect from 1 September 2010.

Committee on Toxicity (COT)

The next meeting of the Committee on Toxicity will be on 14th September 2010. The Agenda can be found at: <http://cot.food.gov.uk/>.

Agenda items include:

The systematic review of epidemiological literature of Para-Occupational exposure to pesticides and health outcomes:

- a. Additional Evaluation of data
- b. Draft Statement

An appraisal of a "State of the Art on Mixture Toxicity" commissioned by the European Commission, DG Environment

Methanol – effects of inhalation exposure to occupational levels

Occurrence of mixed halogenated Dioxins and Biphenyls in UK Food: Preliminary results

Further information on the use of NHANES data.

Recruitment

In April 2010 two new consumer representatives were recruited: Derek Bodey and Robert Smith. Additionally, two new scientific members, Dr John Thompson and Professor Brian Houston were recruited. In July, interviews were held to fill further vacancies. The successful candidates are yet to be announced.

General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS)

GACS Annual report

The Committee's second annual report for the period 2009/10 was published in July and is available on the GACS website: <http://gacs.food.gov.uk/>.

The GACS Chair provided his annual report to the FSA Board on 20 July and Board members praised both the content and presentation of the report. The Board were pleased with the progress made, and endorsed the Committee's future plans. The presentation slides are available online and the meeting is also online to watch or listen to on the Agency website:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/aboutus/ourboard/boardmeetings/>

October 2010 meeting

Possible agenda items for the upcoming GACS meeting on 19 October 2010 include:

- A discussion on science in the SACs, including a presentation on the Food Issues Survey from the acting Chair of the Social Science Research Committee
- A presentation on the findings of the Foresight project 'Global Food & Farming Futures'
- A brief update from the COT Chair on any follow-up activities in relation to the COT workshop on uncertainty and variability in risk assessment (including any examples of dealing with uncertainty provided by SACs)
- A report from the Working Group that is preparing a response to the Soil Association and Organic Trade Board regarding concerns raised about the Agency-funded systematic review of nutrient content of organic and non-organic foods
- A report from the Working Group on risk assessment and risk management
- A report from the Working Group considering the issues in relation to use of data and funding from other sources, such as industry and NGO's
- A report from the Agency's Chief Scientist

The final agenda and papers will be available on the GACS website in advance of the meeting.

Dates for GACS meetings in 2011

The GACS meetings will be held on Thursday 3 March and Wednesday 9 November 2011.

Social Science Research Committee (SSRC)

SSRC will hold its 6th meeting on 7 October 2010. Since the last meeting a Working Group on Meat Controls has been established and consideration of the Agency's Science Checklist and its applicability for Social Science Research is underway. Both of these workstreams, in addition to an update on the work of the Social Science Research Unit, analysis and dissemination of wave 1 of the Food and You survey and development of wave 2 of this survey will be discussed.

Any member wishing to attend the meeting on 7 October should e-mail SSRC@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk to reserve a place.

The Agenda and Papers will be published on the SSRC website (www.ssrc.food.gov.uk) by 23 September 2010.

Secretariat
September 2010