

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD

INFORMATION PAPER

Update from other Scientific Advisory Committees

Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs (ACAF)

Since January 2011, ACAF has held two meetings, on 2 March and 1 June 2011. Main items discussed at each meeting are shown below:

2 March 2011

At its March 2011 meeting the committee:

- received a presentation from FSA officials on the recent German dioxin incident. Following the presentation Members were invited to consider ways of minimising the risk of a similar incident occurring in the UK. Members agreed that until the results of investigations that were being carried out by the German authorities and the action proposed by the European Commission were known, they could not provide advice. It was agreed that this issue would be reconsidered at the Committee's next meeting on 1 June 2011.
- the Committee considered the issue of sustainability in relation to the production and use of feed. The Committee agreed that this was a complex area. However, it agreed to pursue work on the feed safety implications of the use in animal feed of co-products from other industries. Members agreed that when considering this work area it should stay within the bounds of ACAF's remit, without duplicating work being carried out by other government departments or by other scientific advisory committees.
- members were provided with an oral update from the ACAF Secretariat on progress to implement the recommendations of the quinquennial review of the Committee that took place in the latter part of 2009. The Committee noted that all the recommendations had been actioned.

1 June 2011 meeting

At the meeting held on 1 June the following issues were discussed:-

- the Committee received an update presentation from a Defra official on developments in respect of the EU TSE Regulation. The Committee was informed that the European Commission had in 2010 published its TSE Roadmap 2 – "A strategy paper on Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies for 2010-2015".

The document outlines areas where future possible changes to EU TSE-related measures could be made, underlining that any amendments will assure a high level of food safety, be stepwise, and be supported by scientific advice. The strategic goals include reviewing specific measures of the total feed ban when certain conditions are met. This includes consideration of lifting the ban on the use of non-ruminant processed animal protein (PAP) in non-ruminant feed, without lifting the existing prohibition on intra-species recycling, subject to robust channelling controls for PAP and the availability of validated analytical tests to determine the species origin of PAP in feed.

The Commission is seeking views on a draft legislative proposal to make these changes. The Committee was supportive of the Commission's initiative, but raised some issues relating to the availability of validated analytical tests. The Committee requested further updates on progress of this area of work, in order to provide advice to assist the UK negotiating line.

- Members also received an update on the German dioxins incident that came to light in December 2010. They noted that investigations into the cause of the incident by the German authorities and the European Commission were continuing. It is important that any new measures suggested by the European Commission as a result of this incident should be proportionate to the risk.
- the Committee also considered potential feed safety gaps in the feed sector to prevent a similar incident occurring in the UK. Members suggested three main work areas, identification of feed businesses, awareness/competence of feed business operators and imports. These will be explored with a view to providing advice.
- The Committee also, considered developments involving feed additives. It agreed that the risks related to the use of additives in water can be higher than the equivalent use in feed.

Next Meeting

The next ACAF meeting will be held on 28 September 2011.

Recruitment

On the 14 April 2011 a News Release was issued announcing the re-appointment of the ACAF Chair and four Members to the Committee for a further term.

A link to the News Release is at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2011/apr/reappointment5acaf>

Additionally, interviews for three vacancies on the Committee (toxicologist, animal nutritionist and feed manufacturer) took place on 3 June 2011. The three successful candidates will be announced after approval from the FSA Chairman and UK Agriculture Ministers has been received.

Committee on Toxicity (COT)

The minutes and papers for COT meetings held on 1 February and 22 March can be found on the COT website at: <http://cot.food.gov.uk/cotmtgs/cotmeets/>

Agenda items from the March meeting included:

- Second arm results from FSA-funded research study T05029 - The Effect of Soy Phytoestrogen Supplementation on Thyroid Status and Cardiovascular Risk Markers in Patients with subclinical Hypothyroidism: a Randomized Double Blind Crossover Study - TOX/2011/10

COT Members were presented with pre-publication results from the second arm of this study. Their views on the relevance of the results were sought.

- Review of the phytoestrogens research programme – T05 - TOX/2011/11

Paper TOX/2011/11 contained summaries of the previous reviews and details of the three T05 projects that were ongoing at the time of the last review (T05029, T05028 & T05030). Members were asked for specific comments on the usefulness of the outcomes of T05028: Dietary and biomarker prospective study of phytoestrogens in breast cancer and T05030: Investigation of the phytoestrogen intake of a group of postmenopausal women previously treated for breast cancer. Members were also invited to provide recommendations for future research funding on phytoestrogens.

- Third draft COT statement on dietary exposure to phthalates – Data from the Total Diet Study (TDS) - TOX/2011/12

Members were provided with a further revised draft statement incorporating the Committee's discussions from their February meeting for discussion.

- Fifth draft COT statement on Idiopathic Environmental Intolerance (IEI) - TOX/2011/13

This draft statement incorporated the Committee's discussions from previous meetings. The finished statement is now available on the COT website: <http://cot.food.gov.uk/cotstatements/cotstatementsyrs/cotstatements2011/cot201103>

- Information paper on Aggregate and Cumulative Risk of Pesticides: an On-Line Integrated Strategy (ACROPOLIS) - TOX/2011/14

Members were provided with an information paper outlining details of this three year European Union project to develop a framework for cumulative and aggregate risk assessment of pesticides that is scientifically sound and accessible to all those involved in risk assessment and risk management in Europe.

Date of next meeting

The next COT meeting will be on 28th June. The agenda and papers for this meeting can be found on the COT website at:

<http://cot.food.gov.uk/cotmtgs/cotmeets/cotmeet2011/cotmeet28jun2011/cotagendapers28jun2011>

General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS)

GACS had an open meeting on 3 March 2011. Items discussed at the meeting included:

- Report from the Agency Chief Scientist - FSA strategic evidence needs and evidence management – challenges and ideas
- Science in the Scientific Advisory Committees
 - Report from Professor Peter Gregory, Chair of the ACNFP, on challenges and cross-cutting issues in the safety assessment of novel foods
 - Summary of SAC activities and forward agendas – to identify areas that would benefit from cross-SAC working
- Food and You Survey – presentation on the results of Wave 1 from Professor Peter Jackson, acting Chair of the SSRC and Dr Siân Thomas, FSA Social Science Research Unit
- FSA Science and Evidence Strategy – proposed revisions to the Strategy were agreed by GACS and the FSA Board in March and the updated Strategy has now been published
- Report from the Working Group on risk assessment and risk management
- Presentation on the Global Food Security Initiative Research Strategy by Dr Paul Burrows, BBSRC
- Report from Professor David Coggon on the outputs of the Working Group on data and funding from other sources - the framework produced by the Working Group was agreed by GACS and endorsed by the FSA Board in March; and the FSA launched a full public consultation on the framework on 12 May, with a closing date of 4 August.¹

The agenda, papers and draft minutes of the open meeting are available on the GACS website – <http://gacs.food.gov.uk/gacsmeets/>

GACS annual report

¹ See link for further details on the consultation:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/consultations/ukwideconsults/2011/frameworkonuseofexternaldata>

GACS annual report is planned for publication at the beginning of July. The GACS Chair will give his annual report to the FSA Board in person at the open Board meeting on 12 July.

Date of next meeting

The next GACS meeting is on Wednesday 9 November 2011.

Social Science Research Committee (SSRC)

The SSRC has appointed a new Chair, 4 expert members and 1 lay member. Further details are available at: <http://ssrc.food.gov.uk/aboutus/ssrcnewstaff>

The SSRC held its 7th meeting on the 24th March. Agenda items included an update on the Food and You survey, work contributing to the review of meat controls, commissioning evidence reviews and a discussion on the Agency's forward evidence plan. The Committee were also given a presentation on the Agency's new Food Framework for commissioning social science research.

The Food and You survey, the Agency's new flagship survey on public attitudes and behaviours was published on the 3rd March. Further details can be found at: <http://www.food.gov.uk/science/socsci/surveys/foodandyou/foodyou10> The SSRC were instrumental in setting up this new and robust source of social science evidence.

**Secretariat
June 2011**