ACM/1047

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD

DISCUSSION PAPER

MYCOBACTERIUM BOVIS AND THE POSSIBLE HEALTH RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH UNPASTEURISED MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS

1. At its last meeting (June 2011) the ACMSF was asked to consider the risks to human health from *M. bovis* and unpasteurised milk and milk products. Paper ACM/1021 was presented outlining data on human *M. bovis* cases and outbreaks, information on TB control programmes in the UK, the controls on unpasteurised milk and milk products' sales and the potential for *M. bovis* to be present in unpasteurised milk and milk products.

2. The Committee concluded that it was difficult to draw a robust conclusion on the risks to consumers associated with *M. bovis* and unpasteurised milk and milk products based on the data presented. They noted that the risk of human TB infection acquired from unpasteurised milk and milk products had probably changed with the increase in *M. bovis* in cattle but uncertainties around the change in the level of risk were large and difficult to define. Members suggested a number of areas where further data or references would be useful. The Chair suggested a small group of ACMSF Members should consider any additional data provided by the Secretariat/FSA in relation to *M. bovis* in unpasteurised milk and milk products (ACM/MIN/75).

3. Mr John Bassett, Professor David McDowell and Professor Sarah O'Brien met on 24 August to discuss what additional data was required. They suggested the paper was reformatted into a more formal risk assessment framework. The group met again on 09 September to discuss the redrafted document provided by the Secretariat and provided further comments in writing.

4. The risk assessment on the possible health risk associated with *M. bovis* and unpasteurised milk and milk products is attached. The paper has been restructured as a formal qualitative/semi-quantitative risk assessment with the information presented under sections on hazard identification, hazard characterisation, exposure assessment and risk characterisation. Much of the information is reproduced from paper ACM/1021and also from papers ACM/981(Possible risks to consumers of meat and dairy products from animals with evidence of *M. bovis* infection) and ACM/1008 (Health risks to consumers associated with unpasteurised milk and unpasteurised cream for direct human consumption), however in some sections new data is provided.

5. Based on the data presented the risk assessment concludes that the risk to human health from M. *bovis* and unpasteurised milk and milk products is very low.

6. The Chair will introduce the approach used in drafting the risk assessment document and the Secretariat will introduce the data presented in the document.

7. Members are invited to:

    - Comment on the risk assessment document and the data presented.

    - Consider and agree to the conclusions of the risk assessment that:

- The risk of human TB infection acquired from unpasteurised milk and milk products has changed with the increase in *M. bovis* in cattle.

- The risk to human health from *M. bovis* in unpasteurised cows' milk and milk products is very low.

- 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.

Secretariat
September 2011