

ACMSF Forward Work Plan 2012/13

Last reviewed January 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	Time line
1	Horizon scanning	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. ACMSF catering members have been gathering intelligence to inform discussion on this topic.	<p>The Committee will consider Changing food preparation techniques in the hospitality sector, their work to address it and an appropriate timescale in January 2012.</p> <p>The Committee will continue to undertake horizon scanning to identify potential future microbiological risks at 12-18 month intervals. New/emerging horizon scanning topics will be discussed in May 2012.</p>
2	Potential approaches to ACMSF risk assessments	The Committee welcomed the use of a more formal risk assessment framework in their assessment of the risks from <i>M. bovis</i> in	The Committee will consider risk assessment approaches in January 2012.

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		unpasteurised milk and milk products. The Secretariat has undertaken to present options for future approaches to risk assessment for discussion by the Committee.	
3	Use of source segregated composts and anaerobic digestates in UK agriculture. Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) reports.	<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 WRAPs risk assessment on the quality, safety and use of digestate in UK agriculture in September 2011. A subgroup of Members have agreed to provide comment on the report.</p>	<p>The Committee will consider the revised report on use of source segregated composts by May 2012.</p> <p>The Committee will agree its comments on the digestates report in January 2012.</p>
4	Internalisation of pathogens by plant hosts	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.	A presentation will be given at the May 2012 meeting and views of the Committee sought.
5	Toxoplasma in the food chain	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	An amended final report addressing any consultation responses will be presented to the Committee for endorsement in May

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		for consultation.	2012.
6	Foodborne Viral Infections	<i>The Ad Hoc</i> Group on Foodborne Viral Infections are currently gathering evidence for their report.	The subgroup is expected to present its draft report to the Committee by January 2013.
7	Newly Emerging Pathogens	<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 foodchain from Bovine Neonatal Pancytopenia (BNP).</p>	<p>Continuous.</p> <p>The subgroup will meet to discuss BNP and report back to the Committee by May 2012.</p>
8	Microbiological Surveillance of food	The Surveillance Working Group will continue to provide advice as required in connection with the FSA's microbiological food surveillance programme and any other surveillance relevant to foodborne disease.	<p>Continuous.</p> <p>The Group will consider the protocols for forthcoming surveys on <i>Campylobacter</i> in chicken and <i>Listeria</i> in cooked meat by December 2012.</p>

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9	Developing trends in relation to foodborne disease.	The Committee will continue to receive updates on research, surveys, investigations, meetings and conferences of interest.	<p>EFIG¹ updates will be provided at the January and May 2012 meetings.</p> <p>The Committee will be updated on current activities in relation to the microbiological safety of sprouted seeds in January 2012.</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 May 2012.</p> <p>The results of research to estimate the burden of foodborne disease will be presented to the Committee in September 2012.</p>
10	International and EU developments on the microbiological safety of food	The Committee will continue to be 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.	EFSA's scientific opinion on STEC and seeds/sprouted will be discussed in January 2012.

¹ Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group

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11	Microbiological Incidents and outbreaks	The views of the Committee will be sought where necessary and updates provided on outbreaks of significance.	As issues arise.