

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MICROBIOLOGICAL SAFETY OF FOOD

HORIZON SCANNING

1. The ACMSF held a preliminary discussion on horizon scanning at its 59th meeting on 8 June 2006 on the basis of ACM/782. The aim was to identify previously highlighted topics or emerging issues which might merit detailed attention by the Committee in the short to medium-term.
2. During the course of the discussion on 8 June, Members put forward some suggestions of what potential new microbiological risks might emerge. Additional suggestions were provided after the meeting.
3. At the Chairman's request, Members prioritised their suggestions in order to inform the Committee's further consideration of this issue on the 28 September. Suggestions received are at Annex A and the most popular topics for consideration are highlighted in bold.
4. In summary, priorities identified by Members for further consideration are:

Food safety/processing – impact of fresher products and milder processing conditions; novel processing techniques, bacterial stress responses and food safety; temperature control

Agriculture/food production – changes in agriculture and food animal production including growth promoters in poultry, use of terminal decontaminants; prevention of bacterial contamination and colonisation

Vulnerable groups – listeriosis in the elderly population and children under 6 months (not weaned)

Imported foods – antibiotic resistance, ESBLs

Biocides – review of kitchen and cleaning products containing biocides and whether they promote antibiotic resistance in bacteria relevant to human health

Norovirus – including pigs and calves as potential reservoir of noro and sapoviruses and the impact on public health

Schools – implications on food safety of the new standards for school meals; loss of culinary skills in relation to the National Curriculum on food technology

5. Members' views are invited on the topics identified and any other candidates for possible consideration by the ACMSF. Members are

also asked to consider the mechanism by which further work in these areas should be carried out.

Secretariat
September 2006