

Introduction and Questions

This is a paper for discussion. This does not represent the views of the Committee and should not be cited.

Introduction

1. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is considering the current advice and monitoring programme for marine biotoxins and whether there is a need to update or change existing legislative standards. The main purpose of this work is to identify any emerging marine biotoxins in UK waters, including increased occurrence due to rising temperatures as a result of climate change. The views of the Committee on the Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) were sought on whether the identified emerging marine biotoxins could pose a risk to human health.
2. A scoping paper and a summary paper were presented to the COT in 2023 and 2024 respectively ([TOX/2023/59](#); [TOX/2024/25](#)). These provided an overview of emerging marine biotoxins with summaries of any available toxicological information, occurrence data with an emphasis on UK waters, estimated adult exposures to the marine biotoxins and any additional relevant information. The Committee decided that it was not possible to conclude on the risks of the emerging biotoxins due to a lack of information, most notably toxicologic studies, without which deriving health-based guidance values (HBGVs) was not feasible.
3. A numerical risk ranking was proposed by the Committee and discussed in March 2025 ([TOX/2025/15](#)) to assist in prioritisation of the marine biotoxins. The numerical approach thereby proposed scores for each group of biotoxin according to four categories of evidence: toxicological data, occurrence data, human case reports, and regulation/monitoring.
4. Biotoxin groups that were ranked in the previous discussion paper using analogues to fill data gaps have been removed as the Committee noted there was insufficient evidence to use analogues to draw conclusions about the occurrence of biotoxins without monitoring data for example. In addition,

considerations on regulation has been excluded from the ranking approach as this paper discusses emerging marine biotoxins only.

5. The draft statement (Annex A) includes background on emerging marine biotoxins, the risk ranking approach taken, discussions of the uncertainties underlying the approach and changes the Committee requested at the last meeting. Overall, the risk ranking was successful in distinguishing some biotoxins as high or low risk and considerations on the conclusions on the prioritisation of the emerging marine biotoxins have been included.

Questions for the Committee

The Committee are asked to consider the following questions:

- a) Are Members content with the layout and structure of the statement?
- b) Do the Committee have any comments on the content of the statement, e.g., is the level of detail on the risk ranking sufficient?
- c) Do the Committee have any other questions?