

Final Minutes - Item 10: Second draft report of the Plant based drinks Working Group (Reserved) - TOX/2024/28

The item was previously being treated as reserved.

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1. Dr Meera Cush raised a personal, not direct interest as she had worked on a project on soya-based foods for elderly people that was commercially funded. This did not exclude her from participating in the discussion. No other interests were declared.
2. The draft report of the joint COT -SACN Working Group has now been discussed by both SACN and COT on several occasions. Following discussions at the May meetings of the two Committees, and the most recent discussions of the joint SACN/COT working group in May, the draft WG report has been significantly restructured. The revised version was attached at Annex A to paper TOX/2024/28
3. At their meeting on 19th June, SACN discussed the draft report and were content to sign it off for publication, subject to some revisions on the nutritional aspects and final checks to ensure consistency. Attached at Annex B to paper TOX/2024/28 is the cover paper received by SACN which contained a table setting out the current timelines and a table outlining the most significant changes that have been made to the draft report to date.
4. COT Members were asked to consider the revised report and focus in particular on the toxicological aspects of the report and in particular whether these had been fully covered, whether the decision making and triage process was clear and appropriate, i.e. what was included in the benefit-risk assessment using the BRAFO method and why, whether the overall conclusions made sense

and if they had any additional research recommendations.

5. It was hoped that it would be possible to publish the report for “peer review of the scientific content” on July 23rd prior to the Parliamentary recess.

6. The Chair noted that the overall conclusion had been amended following previous review by SACN.

7. It was confirmed that, although the Committee was aware of issues relating to allergy for both cows’ milk and plant-based drinks, it was outside the scope of the report.

8. Members reviewed the toxicological sections of the report. Members noted that table 5.6 was formatted differently to table 5.2 and the Secretariat confirmed that these tables have now been formatted to match.

9. It was confirmed that paragraph 5.73 has been amended by SACN. This paragraph now noted that the Working Group were unable to perform a full quantitative analysis for the tier 2 BRAFO assessment. COT Members were content with the proposed wording.

10. Members noted that paragraphs 5.71 – 5.76 should reflect what is in paragraph 6.19. It was suggested that table 7.1 and reference to ‘current recommendations’ should be placed earlier in the report as the ‘new recommendations’ are an addition to these, and not a replacement of them.

11. Members also noted a number of minor editorial errors.

12. Members agreed that the draft report could be published for consultation subject to the suggested minor revisions. The SACN Chair confirmed that COT’s comments on the report did not raise any issues from their perspective. The draft report will now go out for consultation and a revised version would be presented to the Committee later in the year following the consultation.