

Update on actions taken subsequent to COT advice - Paper for information

This is a paper for discussion.

This does not represent the views of the Committee and should not be cited.

Background

1. During 2022, COT statements and lay summaries have been published on vitamin A, vitamin D, cadmium and iodine in the maternal diet. A position paper on bamboo composites in food contact materials the final report of the joint COC/COT Working Group on Synthesising Epidemiological and Toxicological Evidence (SETE) was also published.
2. COT opinions are frequently cited by the relevant Government Departments and Agencies in dealing with correspondence. For example, following the decision to fortify flour with folic acid which was announced in September 2021, the COT's advice from 2019 has been used in correspondence and briefings surrounding this topic.
3. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) routinely uses the Committee's conclusions and opinions in risk assessments following food safety incidents, responding to queries from consumers and in assessing emerging risks. For instance, the Committee's evaluation of lead has been used extensively to inform the risk assessment of a recent incident involving lead in products derived from breast milk.
4. This paper contains brief information on other actions taken subsequent to completion of recent COT discussions. This should be read in conjunction with the draft text of the Annual Report (paper TOX/2023/07), which provides the background.

COT Evaluations

Dioxins

6. Following the discussion of the EFSA opinion on dioxins and the COT's recommendations to undertake their own review, a successful business case was made and the review is currently under way.

NAMs Road map

17. The draft version of the COT / FSA UK New Approach Methodologies Roadmap has been referenced and included in various scientific conferences and workshops. The draft roadmap is forming part of the work of the recruited computational fellow and the PhD student at the FSA working on predictive toxicological methods using *in silico* tools. The Cross Whitehall group on NAMs which was part of the work around the roadmap has now had two meetings.

Maternal diet

18. A poster giving an overview of the maternal diet work was presented at the British Toxicology Society Annual Congress in 2022.

Aflatoxin (RESERVED)

19. The COT reviewed the potential risk of aflatoxin in foodstuffs at the new proposed Codex Alimentarius maximum levels. The advice obtained from the COT was presented at the 15th session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF15) meeting in May 2022, and remains reserved as it related to developing policy.

Ochratoxin A (RESERVED)

20. The COT reviewed the potential risk of Ochratoxin A in spices at the new proposed Codex Alimentarius levels. The advice obtained from the COT was presented at the e 15th session of the Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCF15) meeting in May 2022, and remains reserved as it relates to developing policy.

Chronic Dietary Exposure

21. Following the discussion by the COT of the draft FSA/HSE/VMD report on approaches to chronic dietary exposure assessment for chemicals in food, the draft report was also discussed and commented on by the Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP) and the Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food (PRiF). The draft report has now been revised, taking on board the comments received, and finalised. It will be published shortly.

Potential approaches to address unintentional mixture risks for future UK REACH assessments

22. The EA/UKHSA report “Evaluation of the potential approaches to risk assessment of unintentional chemical mixtures for future UK REACH assessments” was published following comments from COT and Defra’s Hazardous Substances Advisory Committee (HSAC) in August 2022, and is available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-potential-approaches-to-risk-assessment-of-unintentional-chemical-mixtures-for-future-uk-reach-assessments>

23. In December 2022, a stakeholder workshop was hosted by Defra to discuss options for addressing unintentional mixtures under UK REACH. The report and the outputs from this workshop will be considered by Defra to inform the development of policy options.

Regulated Products

Bread and flour regulations

24. The COT assessed the exposure of fortificants: calcium carbonate, iron, niacin and thamin (vitamin B1) in non-wholemeal flour at current levels and the proposed levels outlined in the bread and flour regulations ([Regulation \(EU\) No 1169/2011](#)). The advice obtained from COT has been shared with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) which will inform them on the risk to human health from the proposed increased fortification in non-wholemeal flour.

Vitamin D in infant formula

25. The COT assessed the implications of an increase in the minimum permitted levels of vitamin D in infant formula. The advice obtained from COT has been shared with the Nutrition Labelling Composition and Standards Group which will inform them on the risk to human health from the proposed increase in

fortification.

Bamboo composites

26. The COT position paper on bamboo composites is being used to inform a call for information on these products which will be launched shortly.

Ocean Bound Plastic

27. The COT discussion of ocean bound plastics was used to inform a call for information on these materials. The results of this are being collated.

Working Groups

Synthesising Epidemiological and Toxicological Evidence Working Group (SETE)

28. Following the publication of the final report and guidance of the SETE Working Group on the current practise of the Committees to integrate different evidence streams in November 2021 a journal article has been written and submitted for publication.

EFSA and other public consultations

29. The COT have submitted comments to EFSA on the draft opinion on Bisphenol A, the review of existing Health Based Guidance Values for Copper, nitrosamines and the genotoxicity of acrylamide.

Questions for the Committee

30. Do Members have any questions or comments?

Secretariat

January 2022