

COMMITTEE ON TOXICITY OF CHEMICALS IN FOOD, CONSUMER PRODUCTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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

Background

1. During 2020, COT statements and lay summaries have been published on the potential toxicological risks from electronic nicotine (and non-nicotine) delivery systems (E(N)NDS, an addendum to the overarching statement on the potential risk from chemicals in the diet of infants aged 0 to 12 months and children aged 1 to 5 years and the effect of xenobiotics on the gut microbiome and the effect of the gut microbiome on xenobiotics with reference to chemical risk assessment. A position paper on CBD was also published.
2. COT opinions are frequently cited by the relevant Government Departments and Agencies in dealing with correspondence.
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, in 2020, previous COT advice has been used in relation to vitamins and minerals in supplements and metals and other contaminants in food.
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/2021/10), which provides the background.

COT Evaluations

The potential toxicological risks from electronic nicotine (and non-nicotine) delivery systems (E(N)NDS.

5. The statement was published in September 2020. The statement was forwarded on to DHSC, PHE and MHRA as well as interested parties at time of publication and some media coverage was also received.

Chemicals in the diets of infants and young children

6. The COT was asked by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) to review the risk of toxicity of chemicals in the diets of infants and young children aged 0-5 years. Along with individual reviews which have been published over the

last few years, the overarching statement was published in 2019. An addendum to the overarching statement was finalised and published by COT in early 2020 and will be incorporated in SACNs review of Government recommendations on complementary and young child feeding.

WRAP study on potatoes and acrylamide

7. The COT was asked to provide comments on a draft paper by WRAP which investigated the formation of acrylamide in potatoes at different temperatures. Following the COT discussions, the authors pursued publication within a peer reviewed journal taking on board the comments made by COT members. In August 2020, the authors published the journal article titled 'The impact of home storage conditions on the accumulation of acrylamide precursors in potato tubers' in The Annals of Applied Biology. The publication link is as follows <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/aab.12634>.

In light of the publication of this paper, the FSA policy team are currently undergoing work to consider next steps and possible options available.

Allergen risk assessment for adventitious contamination of soya in wheat flour milled and consumed in the UK

8. Due to the manner by which soybean and other grains, such as wheat, are grown, harvested, stored and transported, adventitious contamination of wheat flour with soya is known to occur. The FSA undertook a risk assessment to update the action level used to address this issue and the COT were asked to review and assure it.

9. The advice from this risk assessment, as assured by the COT, has been shared with the UK Flour Millers trade association (previously know as the National Association of British and Irish Millers) and FSA policy officials to inform discussions on updated risk management approaches.

Cannabidiol

10. The Committee discussed the safety of cannabidiol (CBD) on a number of occasions between 2019-2020, setting out their conclusions to date in a position paper, which was published in July 2020. At the time the review of CBD began, it was considered to be an unauthorised novel food.

11. In February 2020, the FSA set a deadline of 31st March 2021 by which businesses already selling CBD must have submitted a dossier for approval as a novel food to the FSA which must be complete enough for the FSA to validate, enabling them to remain on the market.

12. In February 2020, the FSA published consumer advice on the safety of CBD in CBD food products which drew on the views of the COT discussions.

13. Work is underway in a number of spaces to ensure that CBD products and their potential contaminants can be appropriately analysed.
14. In August 2020, UKAS hosted a workshop CBD Product Approval Event which had webinars for developing and accrediting a validated method for CBD testing.
15. In September 2020 ACNFP Meeting reviewed the COT CBD position paper alongside some examples of CBD dossiers.
16. In January 2021, the Government Chemist [published guidance](#) on analytical limits for controlled cannabinoids in specified products containing CBD. This is part of ongoing discussions (March 2020-present) with LGC discussing some of the COT discussions and position paper highlighting the challenges of product specification and possible contamination.
17. The FSA continues to liaise with other Government departments on this topic.

EFSA and other public consultations

18. The COT have submitted comments to EFSA on:
 - a. The risk to public health related to the presence of ochratoxin in food.
 - b. The risk to human health related to the presence of perfluoroalkyl substances in food.
 - c. The risks for animals and human health related to the presence of glycoalkaloids in feed and food, in particular in potatoes and potato-derived products.
 - d. The update of the risk assessment of nickel in food and drinking water.
 - e. The update of the risk assessment of hexabromocyclododecanes (HBCDDs) in food.
19. The COT also provided comments on the WHO public consultation on the JECFA/JMPR update of Chapter 5 (EHC 240)

Secretariat

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