

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

### **Paper for Information:**

#### **FSA Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs) update – December 2016 meeting**

This paper provides Members with an update on the work of the Food Standards Agency's Scientific Advisory Committees (SAC) and other items of general interest.

Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs (**ACAF**)  
<http://acaf.food.gov.uk/>

The ACAF meeting was held on 27 October 2016.

The 71<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs, held in Aviation House, London on 27 October 2016, gave stakeholders an opportunity to observe the Committee at work and ask questions.

At the Committee's meeting in February 2016 representatives of GAFTA had provided a presentation on the potential risk of refuse derived fuel (RDF) material being stored at ports, awaiting export. The ACAF Secretariat had agreed to gather information from relevant bodies to ascertain whether they were aware of the issue. The FSA Assessor updated the Committee on the enquiries undertaken so far and explained that awareness of the issues had been raised in Brussels and with assurance bodies, and representative enforcement bodies had also been alerted. Additionally, visits had been made to two ports and Defra and DAERA had provided input. Further visits are planned with the view to providing the committee with a final paper at its February 2017 meeting. The Secretariat had also contacted the recently formed 'RDF industry group' and Harriet Parke, (RDF group secretariat) provided the Committee with a presentation on the work of the group adding that the group was seeking to develop a Code of Practice to ensure good practice at each step of the RDF supply chain. The Committee agreed that there was a need for clarity on ultimate legal responsibilities of all involved in the RDF chain. Additionally, they wished to see and comment on the industry code with a view to possible endorsement. At the February 2017 meeting, the Committee will review and make recommendations on this issue.

Geoff Brown, ACAF member, sought the views of the Committee on communication with different sectors of the feed industry in order to emphasise the importance of compliance with maximum permitted levels (MPL) set for trace elements and feed additives in general. Mr Brown noted the issues of potential over-supplementation of animals, through numerous different feed sources (e.g. forage, compound feed, boluses and drenches etc.). In addition, Mr Brown expressed concern at the scale of non-compliance of products, such as those

which exceed MPLs even when used on their own, or products with inadequate labelling, with some internet sales adding to the challenge of compliance. The Committee agreed that this was an important issue and that it could develop several work strands to help mitigate any potential risks.

At its October 2013 meeting the Committee received a presentation from representatives from FERA on research being undertaken regarding the use and exploitation of insects as an alternative protein source. Dr Elaine Fitches (Durham University) provided the Committee with an update on the research being undertaken and commercialisation activities. Dr Fitches said that that nutritional quality of insect larvae was comparable to fishmeal. Extensive safety screening suggests minimal risks and that potential risks can be mitigated through the screening of insect rearing substrates and/or processing of insect meals. Feeding trials suggested that insect meal and/or refined insect protein is a suitable replacement for fishmeal and/or soymeal in fish, poultry and pig diets. Dr Fitches also provided details of consumer perception surveys undertaken to discover whether people would be accepting of insects in animal feed and food and to identify reasons for any objections raised. The surveys were also designed to gain a better understanding of current consumer perceptions about eating animals fed on existing and novel proteins. Both surveys indicated a high support for use of insects in animal feed but also a desire for more information. The Committee was interested to hear about the developments and agreed that it would like to receive further updates.

The Committee also discussed its Forward Work Programme and horizon scanning, prioritising existing entries and identifying further work required before the Programme could be finalised.

After the close of the meeting, delegates were given the opportunity to ask questions of the Committee.

The next ACAF meeting is scheduled to take place in Aviation House, London on 23 February 2017.

Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (**ACMSF**)  
<http://acmsf.food.gov.uk/>

The Committee met on 20 October when the main topics discussed were:-

- an update from Public Health England on VTEC associated with food: a presentation on recent developments including trends in outbreaks and use of whole genome sequencing.
- a draft risk assessment on *Mycobacterium avium* subspecies *paratuberculosis* (MAP) in relation to food.
- an update on the progress made by the Agency and other government departments in implementing recommendations from the ACMSF report on viruses in the food chain.

The Committee also reviewed their last horizon scanning exercise carried out in January 2015 and concluded that the top two issues were challenges to microbial risk assessment from new omics technologies, and changing controls

and risks in the food system (including post-Brexit changes and food recycling).

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 29 January 2017. At this meeting there will be an update on the work of the *Ad Hoc* Group on *Campylobacter* and it is hoped that a first draft of their Report will be available for comment.

#### General Advisory Committee on Science (**GACS**)

<http://gacs.food.gov.uk/gacsmeets/>

The last GACS meeting was held on 24 March 2016. The agenda, papers and final minutes are published<sup>[1]</sup>. The GACS is being replaced by a new FSA Science Council which is being established in response to Recommendation 3 of the Triennial Review. The GACS and its working groups will continue to operate within their current remit until such time as they hand over to the new Council once it is established. There are no further meetings of the GACS planned and the Committee continues to operate by correspondence.

#### **New FSA Science Council**

Recruitment for the new independent FSA Science Council launched on 11 November and closes on 5 December 2016. Further details are available at the following link:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/news-updates/news/2016/15680/applications-open-for-new-independent-science-council>

#### **Meetings of SAC Chairs**

Alongside plans to establish the Science Council, we are also looking to maintain effective communication, engagement and co-ordination across SACs, and particularly between SAC Chairs, as this will no longer happen through GACS meetings. As a first meeting under the new arrangements, we would like to arrange a workshop with SAC Chairs in the first quarter of 2017.

#### **Secretariat December**

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<sup>[1]</sup> <http://gacs.food.gov.uk/gacsmeets/>