

Paper 14.3 ACSS Secretariat Update (March 2025)

Summary

This paper is for information and provides an update to members on ACSS activity. Key meeting dates and topics of discussion for other FSA SACs are presented in Annex A, Annex B present SAC guidance on handling classified documents.

Meeting actions from 13th ACSS plenary meeting.

Action	Status
Action 13.1: The final output from phase 1 of the Spending Review 2024/25 (SR25) work to be shared with members.	Completed
Action 13.2: The UPFs scoping review to be shared with members for comment.	Completed
Action 13.3: Secretariat to arrange a meeting with ACSS members in the early autumn to explore evidence gaps across Research and Evidence Programmes	Completed
Action 13.4: Social Science forward look paper to be shared with members when final.	Completed

Action 13.5: Secretariat to share Science Updates to the FSA board when published.	Ongoing – ‘Science Updates’ are produced annually for the December Board Meeting.
Action 13.6: SH to provide relevant research contacts to Social Science team.	Completed
Action 13.7: KL2 team to consider drafting a bespoke academic engagement output.	This was considered by the team and put on hold due to resourcing/prioritisation

Recruitment

We sought 4 new members in this years recruitment campaign. Unfortunately, there have been delays to the recruitment process, and formal offers of appointment have not yet been made. We expect to be able confirm new membership in the coming weeks.

Government Security Classifications

Security classifications are applied to HMG information and indicate its sensitivity (in terms of the likely impact resulting from compromise, loss or misuse) and the appropriate degree of protection, as outlined in Principle One of the Government Security Classifications policy (GSCP). Principle Three of the GSCP details that everyone working for or on behalf of government is personally responsible for protecting and accountable for the handling of any information they have access to or share.

There are three classification tiers: OFFICIAL, SECRET, and TOP SECRET, which are indicated clearly at the top of a document. Science Advisory Committee (SAC) members are unlikely to be asked to consider documents marked SECRET or TOP SECRET, but may have sight of documents marked OFFICIAL. The SAC admin hub has produced guidance (Annex B) to support members correctly handle such documents (and those marked as SECRET or TOP SECRET). ACSS Secretariat will continue to flag if classified documentation is sent for comment. Please contact the Secretariat should you have any questions on this.

DEFRA's Social Science Expert Group (SSEG)

The Chair and Secretariat continue to meet regularly with SSEG. We are planning a joint event around “Food systems futures: System challenges, policy solutions and threats” to be held at the British Academy on the 13th May. We’d be grateful if members can hold this date. We are working with the SSEG, and analytical colleagues in DEFRA and the FSA, to firm up the agenda and expect the day to cover DEFRA’s Food System Strategy, alongside joint work to develop a food systems tool to enable us to explore policy and regulatory options.

Ad hoc requests

ACSS members have undertaken a number of ad hoc tasks to support the work of the Analytics team since the last plenary. Thank you to those members who have taken on these tasks, which, has included early input into work around the evaluation of provision of allergen guidance, and peer review of a report around consumer perceptions of cell cultivated products.

Forward Look

In the coming months, working groups will be undertaking a variety of tasks to support analytics at the FSA. As outlined in paper 14.3, this includes: feeding into work exploring potential impacts of changes to the meat charging scheme ([Understanding Regulatory Change \(URC\) Working Group](#)), supporting activity around evidence translation and measuring impact ([Assurance Working Group](#)), providing expert input in the 2025 Spending Review project ([Economics Working Group](#)), and continued support around the development of our consumer surveys ([Wider Consumer Interests \(WCI\) Working Group](#)). Each group meets quarterly, as set out in table 1.

Table 1: 2025 ACSS Meetings

Meeting	Date(s)
URC Working Group	2 nd June, 1 st September, 1 st December
Assurance Working Group	5 th June, 4 th September, 4 th December

- Gateway meetings 17th April, 17th July, 16th October,

WCI Working Group 23rd June, 22nd September, 22nd December

Economics Working Group 2nd June, 1st September, 1st December

Induction for new members April TBC

Joint Systems event (with SSEG) 13th May (in person, at the British Academy)

15th ACSS Plenary September TBC

Annex A: SAC meetings and Key agenda items

Science Council

Last open meeting: 15th March 2024. Key discussion items included:

- A workshop for invited experts to agree the “50 key research questions on the future of food safety”.
- The questions have been included in the FSA research question list, which will be used to prioritise the contents of future ARIs and Research and Evidence programmes.

Next open meeting: March 2025

Advisory Committee on Novel foods and processes (ACNFP)

Last meeting: 5-6th February. Key discussion items included:

- THC draft statement on delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol
- Open session on Cell Cultivated Products discussing the associated hazards and their uncertainties and how these applications will be assessed.

Next Meeting: April 2025

Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF)

Last meeting: 24th October 2024. Key discussion items included:

- Raw pet food survey.
- IID3 update
- PATH-SAFE

Next meeting: March 2025

Advisory Committee on Animal Feeding stuffs (ACAF)

Last meeting: 18th December. Key discussion items included:

- Review of numerous dossiers, including: Biominc C and Enterasure conc
- Review of internal safety assessment for Balancius muramidase
- Review of the Qualified Presumption of Safety (QPS) approach as part of the Guidance framework and its validity for the assessment of GB applications.

Next meeting: March 2025

Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT)

Last meeting: 4th February 2025. Key discussion topics included:

- A joint position paper from the ACNFP & COT on establishing a Safe Upper Limit for delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (Δ 9-THC) and its precursor as contaminants of hemp-derived products and CBD novel foods Draft Statement (Reserved).
- A draft Committee Advice Document on the recycled poly (ethylene terephthalate) decontamination process for use in the manufacture of materials and articles in contact with food RP 1862 (Reserved).

In addition, they reviewed 2 requests for comment on EFSA's Public Consultations:

- The EFSA Panel on Food Additive and Flavourings (FAF) 'Draft guidance on the preparation of an application for authorisation of a food additive submitted under 4 Regulation (EC) No 1331/2008' TOX/2025/05.

- EFSA Draft Guidance for Public Consultation: Draft guidance document on the submission of data for the evaluation of the safety and efficacy of substances for the removal of microbial surface contamination of foods of animal origin intended for human consumption [TOX/2025/08](#).

Next Meeting: March 2025

Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COC)

Last meeting: November 2024, to discuss horizon scanning.

Next meeting(s): March 2025

The Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COM)

Last meeting: June 2024. Key discussion items included:

- Horizon scanning- presentations on Computational methods and mutagenicity and on Artificial Intelligence and mutagenicity data.
- Guidance statement on the use of Quantitative Structure Activity Relationships (QSAR).

Next meeting: TBC

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN)

Last meeting: November 2024. Key discussion items included horizon scanning, processed foods, sweeteners, plant-based drinks.

Next meeting: March 2025