

# ACMSF Report 2020

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## Chapter 3: A Forward Look

### Future work programme

124. The Committee will keep itself informed of developing trends in relation to foodborne disease through its close links with the FSA, FSS, PHE and Defra. We will continue to respond promptly with advice on the food safety implications of issues referred to the Committee by the FSA.

125. The Committee will work with the FSA in taking forward the recommendations in the Ad Hoc on non-proteolytic *C. botulinum* and vacuum and modified atmosphere packaged foods report.

126. The cross-SAC group setup to consider the effect on microbiological food safety of the changes made to the maximum residue levels for quaternary ammonium compounds and biocidal actives will continue to collaborate with industry to obtain relevant evidence that can be used to assess the impact of these changes on food safety.

127. At the FSA's request, the subgroup on microbiological risk assessments in relation to food incidents will review the FSA's risk assessments if this is needed.

128. The Working Group on AMR will continue to provide advice to the FSA on issues relating to AMR and the food chain.

129. The Committee, through its standing Surveillance Working Group, will continue to provide advice as required on the Government's microbiological food surveillance programme and any other surveillance relevant to foodborne disease.

130. The Working Group on emerging pathogens will keep a watching brief on developments concerning the risks to human health from newly emerging or re-emerging pathogens through food chain exposure pathways.

131. Details of the Committee's work plan for 2020/21 can be found at Annex II.

## **Annex I**

### **Papers Considered by ACMSF in 2020**

| <b>PAPER<br/>NUMBER</b> | <b>NAME OF PAPER</b>     | <b>MEETING<br/>NUMBER</b> | <b>DATE OF<br/>MEETING</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>ACM/1320</b>         | Matters arising          | 96 <sup>th</sup>          | 30 January<br>2020         |
|                         | ACMSF Terms of Reference |                           |                            |
| <b>ACM/1321</b>         |                          | 96 <sup>th</sup>          | 30 January<br>2020         |

|                 |                                                                                                         |      |                 |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------|
| <b>ACM/1322</b> | Ad Hoc Group on non-proteolytic Clostridium botulinum and vacuum and modified atmosphere packaged foods | 96th | 30 January 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1323</b> | Tickborne Encephalitis virus risks to public health                                                     | 96th | 30 January 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1324</b> | Food and You Survey: Wave 5 Findings                                                                    | 96th | 30 January 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1325</b> | Areas of Research Interest                                                                              | 96th | 30 January 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1326</b> | Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group                                                              | 96th | 30 January 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1327</b> | Proposed Horizon Scanning Workshop                                                                      | 96th | 30 January 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1328</b> | Dates of future meetings                                                                                | 96th | 30 January 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1329</b> | Update on estimates of norovirus burden (Members Use Only/reserved business)                            | 96th | 30 January 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1330</b> | Literature review on botulism in cattle, sheep and goats                                                | 96th | 30 January 2020 |

## ACMSF Work plan

|                 |                                                                                                                                                                   |                  |                 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| <b>ACM/1331</b> |                                                                                                                                                                   | 96th             | 30 January 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1332</b> | Update from other Committees                                                                                                                                      | 96th             | 30 January 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1333</b> | Items of interest from the literature                                                                                                                             | 96th             | 30 January 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1334</b> | ACMSF's report on multidimensional representation of risks                                                                                                        | 96 <sup>th</sup> | 30 January 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1335</b> | EUROBAROMETER report for the UK 2019                                                                                                                              | 96th             | 30 January 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1336</b> | EFSA Scientific Opinion: Whole genome sequencing and metagenomics for outbreak investigation, source attribution and risk assessment of food-borne microorganisms | 96th             | 30 January 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1337</b> | Matters arising                                                                                                                                                   | 97th             | 22 October 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1338</b> | Horizon Scanning Workshop Output                                                                                                                                  | 97th             | 22 October 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1339</b> | Review of the ACMSF report on vacuum packaging and associated processes                                                                                           | 97th             | 22 October 2020 |

|                  |                                                                                                                    |      |                 |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------|
| <b>ACM/1340</b>  | Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group                                                                         | 97th | 22 October 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1341</b>  | STEC Research in Scotland                                                                                          | 97th | 22 October 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1342</b>  | Dates of future meetings                                                                                           | 97th | 22 October 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1343</b>  | Annual update on the FSA's Antimicrobial resistance programme                                                      | 97th | 22 October 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1344</b>  | ACMSF Work plan                                                                                                    | 97th | 22 October 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1345:</b> | Update from other Committees                                                                                       | 97th | 22 October 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1346</b>  | : Items of interest from the literature                                                                            | 97th | 22 October 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1347</b>  | Risk assessment: coronavirus risk to UK consumers via shellfish and crops grown on land treated with sewage sludge | 97th | 22 October 2020 |

|                 |                                                                                                                                           |      |                 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------|
|                 | Risk Assessment: risk of food or food contact materials and surfaces being a source or transmission route of SARS-CoV-2 for UK consumers? | 97th | 22 October 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1348</b> |                                                                                                                                           |      |                 |
|                 | FAO guide to ranking food safety risks at national level                                                                                  | 97th | 22 October 2020 |
| <b>ACM/1349</b> |                                                                                                                                           |      |                 |

## Annex II

### ACMSF Forward Work Plan 2020/21

Last reviewed October 2020

This work plan shows the main areas of ACMSF's work over the next 12 to 18 months. It should be noted that the Committee must maintain the flexibility to consider urgent issues that arise unpredictably, and discussions scheduled in the work programme may therefore be deferred.

### ACMSF Terms of reference

To assess the risk to humans of microorganisms which are used, or occur, in or on food, and to advise the Food Standards Agency on any matters relating to the microbiological safety of food.

| Topic | Progress | Expected Output |
|-------|----------|-----------------|
|-------|----------|-----------------|

## **Horizon scanning**

Workshop was held in June 2020.

Horizon scanning workshop for members to assess emerging microbiological issues of concern and rank issues in terms of strategic priority and urgency

The Committee will consider at the October 2020 plenary meeting the finalised version of the output from the June horizon scanning workshop.

List of outputs from the workshop including short-listed priorities for more in-depth consideration.

## **Newly Emerging Pathogens**

The Newly Emerging Pathogens Working Group provides advice Continuous. on the significance and risks from newly emerging or re-emerging pathogens through food chain exposure pathways.

The Committee to draw the FSA's attention to any risks to human health from newly emerging pathogens via food.

## **Microbiological Surveillance of food**

The Surveillance Working Group provides advice as required in connection with the FSA's microbiological food surveillance programme and any other surveillance relevant to foodborne disease.

Working group activities are continuous.

Surveillance Working Group/Committee comments on survey protocols and survey results for consideration by FSA in their microbiological food surveillance activities.

## **Developing trends in relation to foodborne disease**

The Committee receives updates on research, surveys, investigations, meetings and conferences of interest.

As issues arise.

Updates will be provided based on the October 2020 and January 2021 Epidemiology of Foodborne Infections Group (EFIG) meetings.

ACMSF provides comments on the updates it receives for the FSA's consideration.

## **International and EU developments on the microbiological safety of food**

The Committee is updated on issues of relevance and significant developments at an EU and international level on microbiological food safety, such as EFSA opinions and Codex Committee on Food Hygiene meetings.

As issues arise.

ACMSF to note updates and provide comments if desired.

## **Microbiological incidents and outbreaks**

The views of the Committee will be sought where necessary and updates provided on outbreaks of significance.

As issues arise.

ACMSF assessment of the risks in relation to significant microbiological outbreaks/incidents.

**Antimicrobial  
resistance**

ACMSF's role through its Working Group on AMR is to assess the risks to humans from foodborne transmission of antimicrobial-resistant microorganisms and provide advice to the FSA.

The subgroup considers developments and emerging issues in relation to antimicrobial resistance and the food chain. Working group activities are continuous.

Summaries of discussions and recommendations are provided at plenary meetings.

ACMSF assessment of the key risks to the food chain which may have consequences for human health and identification of key research or surveillance gaps in relation to the food chain.

**Social science  
research relating to  
microbiological  
food safety risks**

The Committee will receive updates on the findings of social science research which may have a bearing on the assessment of microbiological food safety risks.

ACMSF to note updates and provide comments if desired.

**FSA Board's New  
Approach in  
relation to Rare  
Burgers**

The Committee will be updated on work the FSA is undertaking following the FSA Board's decision on rare burgers.

Committee to be kept informed of progress and to contribute to the work where appropriate.

**Changes to plant protection product MRLs: potential impact on food safety**

Members were alerted to the issue of changes to maximum residue levels (MRLs) for chlorate residues in food, quaternary ammonium compounds (QACs) and biocidal actives which are used as disinfectants/sanitiser in the food industry at previous plenary meetings. The Committee agreed to the FSA's suggestion to setup a cross SAC working group to facilitate a full discussion to take place.

ACMSF to consider the evidence in this area with respect to impacts on food safety and to provide advice to the FSA.

Committee will receive an update on the group's activities when this is available.

**Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland Risk Analysis guidelines**

The Committee will be updated on the FSA and FSS's risk analysis guidelines at a future plenary meeting.

ACMSF's comments on the risk analysis guidelines for FSA and FSS to consider.

**Tickborne Encephalitis virus risks to public health**

Committee will be asked to comment on a draft assessment of public health threats (risk to the food chain at a national level) from tickborne encephalitis virus at a future meeting.

The Agency is looking for endorsement of this assessment and the overall risk via the food chain from the Committee.

**Review of the  
ACMSF report on  
vacuum packaging  
and associated  
processes**

Committee will discuss the subgroup on non-proteolytic *C. botulinum* and vacuum and modified atmosphere packaged foods recommendation for the ACMSF report vacuum packaging and associated processes published in 1992 to be reviewed and to identify priority areas of work for consideration at the October 2020 meeting.

The Agency is seeking priority areas for the proposed review of this report.

**STEC Research in  
Scotland**

Committee will receive a presentation from Food Standards Scotland on STEC research in Scotland at the October 2020 meeting.

ACMSF to note findings and provide comments if desired.

## **Annex III**

### **Terms of Reference and Membership of the Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food, its Working Groups and its *Ad Hoc* Groups**

#### **Terms of reference**

##### **ACMSF**

To assess the risk to humans from microorganisms which are used or occur in or on food and to advise the Food Standards Agency on any matters relating to the

microbiological safety of food.

### **Surveillance Working Group**

To facilitate the provision of ACMSF advice to government in connection with its microbiological food surveillance programme and other surveillance relevant to foodborne disease, particularly in relation to the design, methodology, sampling and statistical aspects; and to report back regularly to the ACMSF.

### **Newly Emerging Pathogens Working Group**

To assemble information on the current situation on this topic in order to decide whether there is a potential problem in relation to the microbiological safety of food; and to recommend to the ACMSF whether the Committee needs to undertake further action.

### **Antimicrobial Resistance Working Group**

- To brief ACMSF on developments in relation to antimicrobial resistance and the food chain and identify evidence that will assist the group in assessing the risks.
- To review key documents and identify the risks for the UK food chain and relevant aspects of the feed chain in relation to antimicrobial resistance which may have consequences for human health.
- To comment on progress in understanding the issue of antimicrobial-resistant microorganisms and the food chain since the ACMSF produced its report in 1999 and subsequent reviews in 2005 and 2007, including the relevance of any outstanding recommendations.
- To highlight key research or surveillance gaps in relation to antimicrobial-resistant microorganisms and the food/feed chain and identify those which are considered a priority.

## **ACMSF subgroup on non-proteolytic *Clostridium botulinum* and vacuum and modified atmosphere packaged foods**

Review the Food Standards Agency guidelines for the shelf-life of vacuum and modified atmosphere packaged foods and the risk posed by non-proteolytic *C. botulinum*, and other pathogens where appropriate, from these foods. This group will consider the 1992 ACMSF Report on Vacuum Packaging and Associated Processes, but it is outside the scope of this group to review that document.

- Specifically review the industry funded risk assessment of botulism from chilled, VP/MAP (Vacuum Packed/Modified Atmosphere Packed) fresh meat held at 3°C to 8°C.
- Where appropriate consider other risk-related evidence relevant to this topic made available to the FSA and the ACMSF during the lifetime of the group.

## **Subgroup on microbiological risk assessments in relation to food incidents**

Reviews the FSA's risk assessments in relation to incidents

## **Subgroup on quaternary ammonium compounds and biocides used in food processing**

Setup to review evidence on Food Business Operators concerns on the implications of changes to the maximum residue levels for QACs, biocidal actives and chlorate residues on food hygiene and safety.