

Summary of SAC Activity and key issues discussed in the last 6 months

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Summary

1. This paper contains a summary of activity in the following SACs over the last 6 months along with observations on issue that may be of interest to the Council from Science Council members who attend these committees.

1.1 Science Council members are asked to:

- Consider the update and feedback from their fellow members and;
- Discuss any topics that they consider will be beneficial following up.
- Consider whether they would be willing to represent Science Council at SACN.

Introduction

2. Science Council members attend the following SACs as observers:

- **Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP):** Claire Nicholson
- **Advisory Committee on Microbiological Safety in Food (ACMSF):** Prof Jonathan Wastling
- **Advisory Committee for Social Science (ACSS):** Prof Sandy Thomas
- **Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT):** Prof John O'Brien
- **Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COC):** Prof John O'Brien
- **The Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COM):** Prof John O'Brien
- **Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN):** N/A

2.1 Their role is to participate in these meetings and make note of issues that may be of interest to the Science Council and report these back to the plenary.

Discussion

3. Annex 1 contains the feedback provided by Council members that attended meetings of these SACs with their thoughts on topics that may be of interest to the Science Council.

3.1 Annex 2 of this paper contains an update of activity for the SACs listed above.

3.2 Annex 3 contains a list of upcoming scheduled meeting dates for SACs which Science Council members attend.

3.3 The SACN has said that it is happy for a member of Science Council to attend their public sessions as an observer. Secretariat will be engaging with members after this meeting to find who would like to take this role.

3.4 Science Council members are asked to consider attending SAC meetings only where this is likely to benefit the Science Council or alternatively have catch-up meetings with the Chair of their assigned SAC if this would be a more time and cost efficient way to establish the key issues of interest being discussed by SACs

Recommendation(s)

4. Science Council members are asked to:

- Consider the update and feedback from their fellow members and;
- Discuss any topics that they consider will be beneficial following up.
- Consider whether they would be interested to represent Science Council at SACN.

Annex 1: Science Council attendee feedback on SAC key topics

ACSS (Sandy Thomas)

- **26 January 2022:** No key topics flagged. Presented update to ACSS plenary on Science Council activity.

ACMSF (Jonathan Wastling)

- **9 February 2022:** No key topics flagged

ACNFP (Claire Nicholson)

- **2 February 2022:** See key points below.
- **30 March 2022** (could not attend): See key points below.
 - The ACNFP continues to see many applications for CBD products. Two new applications were considered at the meeting in February and a further new application in March

- The ACNFP also has dossiers for new proteins:
 - In February the ACNFP considered Barley Rice Protein
 - In March (at the meeting I could not attend), Mung Bean protein was considered again after the applicant supplied more information
- For traditional foods the ACNFP considered a dossier for Bambara.

COT (John O'Brien)

- **8 February 2022:** See key points below.
- **29 March 2022:** See key points below.
- **10 May 2022:** See key points below.
 - Long running issue is inadequate characterisation of test materials (e.g. for microplastics, nanomaterials and some food supplements).
 - Difficulty of extrapolating from in vitro, and in vivo animal studies to the human risk assessment.
 - Food supplements prove an assessment challenge with multiple products with different formulations on the market (and from internet).
 - Looked again at the safety of turmeric and curcumin supplements. Some products on the market have reports of hepatotoxicity but unclear whether due to turmeric or local contaminants or rare reactions.
 - Risk assessment of chemical mixtures: discussed application of additional assessment factors called mixture assessment factors (MAFs). More work needed, especially focusing on realistic mixtures.
 - COT Position Paper on Bamboo composites in food contact materials published.
 - Has devoted meeting time to discussion of: food contact materials; cadmium in the maternal diet; effects of excess vitamin A on maternal health; risk assessment of cow's milk in the context of plant-based alternatives; Statement on the potential effects of excess vitamin D intake during preconception, pregnancy and lactation; effects of lead on maternal health; and microplastics.

COC (John O'Brien)

- **2 March 2022:** See key points below.
- **2 March 2022** (Joint with COM): See key points below.
 - Discussed more nuanced way to describe carcinogenic potential of chemicals instead of a binary yes or no. In particular, a dynamic cancer risk model (from Harrison & Doe, 2022) was used as a basis of

examining the multiple processes that can change cancer risk.

- The COC revisited the use of biomarkers in carcinogenic risk assessment (given growing availability of human biomonitoring data and lab tools such as next generation sequencing and digital tools like exposome explorer).

COM (John O'Brien)

- **1 March 2022:** See key points below
- **2 March 2022** (Joint with COC): See key points below.
 - Discussed a COT/COC/COM scoping document on Biological Relevance and Statistical Significance for interpretation of tox studies. Flagged journal bias for positive studies and the need to have access to raw data and more information on data transformations.
 - Bigger theme of study reliability and relevance as thousands of papers need to be screened in advanced of SAC statements and positions. A systematic approach is valuable, as any study limitations should be identified before relying only on statistical significance in drawing conclusions.
 - The use of genomics in genotoxic hazard characterization is an area the COM identified for further work

Annex 2: Summary of SAC Activity over the last 6 months

Scientific Advisory Committees (SAC) Summary of recent activities

This document summarises the recent activity of the FSA's Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs). We highlight topics discussed at the most recent meeting and agenda items for the next meeting.

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Advisory Committee for Social Science (ACSS)

Updated: April 2022

Last meeting: 26th Jan 2022 (8th plenary, open session).

Key agenda items:

- FSA updated on key projects within the Analytics Unit, including new work programmes: Behavioural Trials and Wider Consumer interests
- Updates on working group activity
- A proposal for an economics working group was discussed.
- Update from Prof. Sandy Thomas on working group outputs from the Science Council, and recruitment.
- Strategy team presented the emerging FSA strategy and the ACSS secretariat reported an initial assessment of how well ACSS expertise, and the FSA social science research plan, address key strategy topics.

Minutes and papers are available on the [website](#).

Working group highlights:

- The Climate Change and Consumer Behaviour working group held a second stage workshop with stakeholders in February, as part of their work exploring the impact of changes in consumer behaviour motivated by climate change concerns (a summary of this work is available [here](#)).
- The *Assurance* working group have commissioned a piece of work to develop a 'good science' quality assurance toolkit to support the production of high-quality research.

- The *Kitchen Life 2* working group continues to support the research project Kitchen Life 2.
- Membership and chair of the working group to support the *Wider Consumer Interests* has been decided. Members are now working on developing terms of reference for the group and scoping possible activity/input.
- Terms of reference for a new working group supporting the economics function in the FSA analytics unit, are under development.

The **next open meeting** of the ACSS will be 20th July 2022.

Chair: Professor Susan Michie

Secretariat: acss@food.gov.uk

Website: <https://acss.food.gov.uk/>

Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP)

Updated: June 2022

Last meeting: 30 March 2022

- One traditional food dossier on Bambara Ground Nut was assessed; Several aspects of the food and its production were highlighted as having insufficient information to complete an assessment. These will be highlighted to risk managers for consideration on whether reasoned safety objections should be raised triggering a further review.
- The Mung Bean protein dossier returned for further assessment. Information was requested in particular to understand any implications for consumers with legume allergies.
- Agreement reached on the formation of a new subgroup of ACNFP and COT to examine cross-cutting issues on CBD (reserved business).
- A new dossier on extracted CBD and a returning dossier on synthetic CBD (reserved business) were also examined.
- The committee considered a work timeline on food and feed made from or of Precision Bred Organisms (PBO, formerly known as Genome Edited Organisms – GEO) suggested by FSA Policy for the upcoming ACNFP GM/GE subgroup (reserved business).

Next meeting: 8th June 2022

A busy agenda including the first opinions under the new novel foods process. As well as seeking to progress several dossiers on a range of novel foods.

Chair: Dr Camilla Alexander-White

Secretariat: acnfp@food.gov.uk

Website: <https://acnfp.food.gov.uk/>

Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF)

Updated: 8 June 2022

The Committee's last meeting was on 09 February 2022. The issues they considered include:

- [Pathogen Surveillance in Agriculture, Food and the Environment \(PATH-SAFE\)](#): The committee received a presentation and discussed this project commissioned to track foodborne pathogens and antimicrobial resistant microbes in all four nations of the UK.
- [Food Standards Agency's Kitchen Life 2 Project](#). The committee was updated on the FSA's ongoing study on food safety behaviour in kitchens.
- [100th Meeting of the ACMSF – Reflections](#). Members reflected on the work of the committee over the years and had a forward look discussion on future work areas.
- [UK Food Security Report 2021](#) (published in December 2021). The committee discussed this report focussing on chapter related to foodborne disease and incidents.
- FSA surveys on frozen breaded/battered chicken products. The committee was updated on the survey of Salmonella, E. coli and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) on frozen part-cooked breaded or battered products at retail sale in the UK and social science survey on consumer handling of frozen breaded products. This item was considered in closed session.
- Subgroup updates. The subgroups on toxin-producing Clostridia in food, incidents and antimicrobial resistance provided updates on their activities (see draft meeting minutes below).

Draft minutes of the February 2022 meeting is available on the committee's [website](#).

The committee has recently setup a subgroup on animal feed. Group was established to review risk assessments produced by Animal and Plant Health Agency on the risk of introducing Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs) into UK livestock from proposed changes to animal feed regulations. This ACMSF subgroup will be disbanded when the Advisory Committee of Animal Feedingstuffs is reactivated.

Information papers sent to members include:

- [ACMSF Work plan](#)
- [Update from other Committees](#)
- [Items of interest from the literature](#)
- [Food and You Survey - Wave 3](#)
- Botulism in cattle, sheep and goats literature update (available on request)

Next meeting: 23rd June 2022 (this will be a horizon scanning workshop).

Chair: Professor Bill Keevil

Secretariat: acmsf@food.gov.uk

Website: <https://acmsf.food.gov.uk/>

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

Updated: May 2022

Last meeting: 10th May 2022.

Topics discussed included:

At their **May** meeting the Committee discussed items including the potential risk from exposure to microplastics by the inhalation route, potential approaches to mixture risk assessment for future UK REACH assessments and a paper introducing a proposed update to the COT statement on the cabin air environment. They also heard a presentation on the regulation of food contact materials.

The Committee continued work on draft statements considering the potential effects of vitamin D exposure levels in formula fed infants and children and lead in the maternal diet.

- **Next meeting:** 12th July 2022

Chair: Professor Alan Boobis

Secretariat: cot@food.gov.uk

Website: <https://cot.food.gov.uk/>

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

Updated: April 2022

Last meeting: 2 March 2022

Topics on the agenda included:

- Hydroxyanthracene derivatives in supplements
- Horizon scanning
- Annual report
- Update to guidance statements including biomarkers, interpretation of cancer risk characterisation and alternative approaches

Next meeting:

21 July 2022

Further meetings:

17 November 2022

Chair: Professor David Harrison

Secretariat: COC@phe.gov.uk

Website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/committee-on-carcinogenicity-of-chemicals-in-food-consumer-products-and-the-environment-coc>

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

Updated: June 2022

Last meeting: 9 June 2022

Topics discussed included:

- Draft document on how the committees evaluate the relevance and reliability of data when assessing a chemical of concern
- Review of titanium dioxide genotoxicity
- Scoping document – the use of biomarkers in genotoxicity risk assessment
- EFSA's assessment of the genotoxicity of acrylamide

Next meeting:

13 October 2022

Further meetings:

-

Chair: Prof Gareth Jenkins

Secretariat: COM@phe.gov.uk

Website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/committee-on-mutagenicity-of-chemicals-in-food-consumer-products-and-the-environment>

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN)

Updated: May 2022

Last meeting: 11 March 2022

Topics discussed included:

- Feeding children aged 1-5
- Nutrition and COVID-19

Next meeting: Thursday 16 June 2022;

Topics to be discussed include:

- Feeding children aged 1-5
- SACN framework for the evaluation of evidence

Further meetings:

SACN horizon scan – Friday 17 June 2022

SACN meeting - Friday 11 Nov 2022

Chair: Professor Ian Young

Secretariat: SACN@phe.gov.uk

Website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/scientific-advisory-committee-on-nutrition>

Annex 3: Confirmed plenary meeting dates for Scientific Advisory Committees (SACS) over the next 12 months

Dates scheduled as of 9 June 2022

Science Council (SC)

- 8 December 2022
- TBA

Advisory Committee on Social Science (ACSS), Prof Sandy Thomas (observer)

- 20 July 2022
- TBA

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

Prof John O'Brien (observer)

- 12 July 2022
 - 13 July workshop
- 6 September 2022
- 25 October 2022
- 14 December 2022

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

Prof John O'Brien (observer)

- 21 July 2022
- 17 November 2022
- TBA

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

Prof John O'Brien (observer)

- 13 October 2022
- TBA

Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP),

Claire Nicholson (observer)

- 7 September 2022
- 16 November 2022
- TBA

Advisory Committee on Microbiological Safety in Food (ACMSF),

Prof Jonathan Wastling (observer)

- 9 February 2022
- 23 June 2022
- 20 October 2022
- 9 February 2023
- 22 June 2023
- 19 October 2023

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN),

TBA (observer)

- TBA