

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NOVEL FOODS AND PROCESSES

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEES UPDATE

This paper provides Members with an update on the work of the Food Standard Agency's Scientific Advisory Committees and other items of general interest to the advisory committees.

**Advisory Committee on Microbiological Safety of Food**

The next meeting of ACMSF will take place on 26 March 2009. Agenda items are expected to include:

- The HPA will brief the Committee on the changing age pattern of campylobacteriosis in England and Wales.
- The Committee will consider the response to the public consultation on the *Ad Hoc* Group on Vulnerable Groups Report to investigate the incidence of listeriosis in the UK.
- The Committee will receive an update from on the November 2008 meeting of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene.

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

The Committee met on 25 November 2008. The meeting included a discussion on the 2006 UK Total Diet Study of metals and other elements and the Committee requested more explanation of how dietary intakes were estimated. The meeting also included a draft COT statement on the review of the 1998 COT recommendations on peanut avoidance, as well as glucosamine, and EFSA's draft report on nanoscience and nanotechnologies. The minutes of the meeting can be found at:

<http://cot.food.gov.uk/cotmtgs/cotmeets/cot2008/cotmeet25nov2008/cotdraftmins25nov08>

The Committee's next meeting took place on 10<sup>th</sup> February. The following items were scheduled to be discussed:

- polychlorinated naphthalenes and chlorinated paraffins in foodstuffs

- the design, assessment and interpretation of developmental neurotoxicity studies in animals
- glucosamine (association with hepatitis)
- implications of rodent strain differences for toxicity testing

COT also held a one-day workshop in Meriden in the West Midlands on Wednesday 11 February 2009 on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Toxicology.

### **Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN)**

The latest meeting of SACN was on 13 February 2009. The next meeting of the Carbohydrate working group will be on 23 March and the agenda will be announced 2 weeks before the meeting.

### **Advisory Committee on Consumer Engagement (ACCE)**

The ACCE presented a paper to the FSA Board on 10 December 2008, reporting on the extent to which the Agency is engaging effectively with consumers. The paper summarised the Committee's view of the Agency's current performance in this area, and made a number of recommendations for the Board and management.

The minutes of the meetings in 2008 and the board paper will be posted on [food.gov.uk](http://food.gov.uk) shortly.

The ACCE will be meeting again in early April the agenda will include the following discussions:

- How the recommendations from the Board paper will be taken forward
- How they will continue their assessment of consumer engagement within the agency
- A presentation from Professor Roger Jowell

### **Social Science Research Committee (SSRC)**

The SSRC has set up a working group on listeria in the over 60s, following the recent publication of the ACMSF's Ad Hoc Group on Vulnerable Groups' report "*Increased incidence of listeriosis in the UK*", which recommended that the SSRC advise on how the social sciences can help to explain the rise in listeriosis incidence rates, specifically in the over 60s.

The aim of the SSRC Working Group is to provide an interim advice paper to the ACMSF for its March 2009 meeting. The focus of the paper is to set out how the social sciences can help explain what is happening now that could cause listeriosis in this age group and what might need to be done to reduce the number of cases amongst the over 60s - i.e. to inform risk management options/ controls and to help the Agency frame and target its advice.

The group will:

- advise on what existing evidence could be mined and what new research could be commissioned to explore what food older households consume, how they store it and how they prepare it
- focus on the domestic settings ( rather than looking at care homes) but also to consider the role of carers
- consider as a separate group, those aged over 60 who have weakened immune systems due to illness/medication as the majority of reported listeriosis cases in this age group have an underlying medical condition
- consider an international dimension as cases of listeriosis in the over 60s are rising in other countries e.g. Germany, Belgium, Denmark, France and Lithuania

This working group comprises 3 SSRC members with support from the FSA's Social Science Research Unit and the SSRC secretariat. The WG met for the first time in early January 2009 and will be working closely with members of the ACMSF Ad Hoc Group on Vulnerable Groups and the ACMSF secretariat.

**Secretariat  
February 2009**