

**Guidance on the safety and shelf-life of vacuum and modified atmosphere packed chilled foods with respect to *Clostridium botulinum***

**Third meeting of Food Standards Agency VP/MAP Guidance drafting group 18<sup>th</sup> April 2007, Room 531 Aviation House.**

**Present**

Kaarin Goodburn (KG)	CFA
Mike Peck (MP)	IFR
Mike Stringer (MS)	CCFRA
Alec Kyriakides (AK)	BRC
Jenny Morris (JM)	CIEH
Kevin Woodfine (KW)	FSA, PPD
Kathryn Callaghan (KC) (Chair)	FSA, MSD
Ian Smith (IS)	FSA, MSD

**Apologies**

Maurize Rossi (MR)	Sealed Air
Paul Cook (PC)	FSA

**Chair's introduction**

1. The chair welcomed members to the third meeting of the Drafting Working group. The group met to consider further revision of the draft guidance and to finalise content and format of the decision tree.

**Minutes of last meeting and matters arising**

2. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed subject to the following changes:

Page 3, para. 21. FBO should be spelt out in full 'Food Business Operator'.

Para. 23 include action point 'MP to provide form of wording for question/answer on combining cooked ingredients and implications for product shelf life.

Para. 25, delete EU contact Maija Hatakka.

Para 26 CRL should be spelt out in full – Central Reference Laboratory. Add sentence stating that 'at present there is no National Reference Laboratory (NRL)'

Para 27 delete sentence 'Clearly there is a potential risk of foodborne botulism with this type of product; demonstrated by the number of cases in mainland Europe' Add sentence 'Therefore in the view of the working group there is no justification for an RIA'.

Para 29 amend sentence to read '4 decimal reduction or other'. Delete 'estimated cost 50 – 100K'

Para 29, amend second bullet to 'Predictive modelling – use new and existing data from research in software tool. Extend Combase Predictor to a four factor model to include Nitrite, using existing research data on the effect of heat temperature and incubation temperature on time to toxin formation, to develop a new software tool. The highest priority is the need to include the non-proteolytic *C. botulinum* nitrite model'

Para 29 amend third bullet lethal rate temperature range to 'between 90 and 98°C'.

### **Consideration of revised guidance**

3. The drafting group agreed that the sections on enforcement and food law should be aimed specifically at Food Enforcement Officers. The Q&A sections on 'the key aspects of the guidance' and 'key control measures' should be deleted as they are implicit in the scope of the guidance.
4. Foods of high priority for attention should be made transparent in the guidance rather than by reference to other documents. The risk assessment table of chilled foods on page 29 of the ACMSF report on VP and associated processes will be reproduced in full.
5. Agreed that the decision tree should appear mid-way through the document after the Introduction and Scope of the Guidance sections. The background section on specific controlling factors will be moved to Annex 1, with the more general local authority advice appearing in Annex 2. Specific enforcement guidelines are moved to Annex 3 for ease of reference.
6. Agreed that para. 6 ('What is Non-Proteolytic *C. botulinum* and foodborne botulism?') should include further examples of high risk foods.

**Action: MP to provide list of foods**

7. Agreed that para. 6 ('Combination of Factors') should include a definition of the term 'protection factor of 6'.

**Action: MP to draft definition of 'Protection Factor'**

8. Agreed that a para. should be included on the contamination risk associated with cold fill with cooked ingredients in a high risk environment.

**Action: AK to draft form of words**

**Consideration of decision tree: To determine whether a shelf-life of greater than 10 days may be applied to a VP or MAP product**

9. After a lengthy discussion the decision tree was greatly simplified, with consideration given to the shelf-life of ingredients and finished product without a further heat process, and re-wrapping of bulk product.

**Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Wed 30<sup>th</sup> May 2007 starting at 10.30am.