

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

**Fourth meeting of Food Standards Agency VP/MAP Guidance drafting group 30 May 2007, Room 727 Aviation House.**

### **Present**

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

### **Apologies**

Alec Kyriakides (AK)	BRC
Maurize Rossi (MR)	Sealed Air
Paul Cook (PC)	FSA, MSD

### **Chair's introduction**

1. The working group met to consider ongoing revision to the draft FSA guidance and to agree the content and format of the Decision Tree.

### **Minutes of last meeting and matters arising**

2. Apologies were received from AK, MR and PC. Under matters arising contributions were agreed on 'definition of Protection Factor' from (MP) (rec'd at meeting) and cold filling of ingredients in high risk environments (AK) to draft. There were no additions to the agenda.

### **Consideration of decision tree: Producing products for VP/MAP**

3. Minor editorial changes were agreed and the format changed to portrait. Discussion centred on the wording of the 'Ingredients' box – second para, on the potential for repeated re-heating at 70°C for 2 minutes to extend the 10 day shelf-life. Amended to include reference to a 'HACCP plan to ensure food remains fit for consumption'. This will provide a legal basis for the Food Business Operator to show evidence of appropriate and safe practice. Also added cross references for definition of controlling factors and the ACMSF guidance.

## Consideration of revised guidance

4. The group discussed the branding of the document. The consensus was that although the guidance draws heavily on existing industry and ACMSF guidance/ recommendations, it will be published by the Agency to give advice to Food Business Operators and Food Safety Enforcement Officers. Therefore it should be branded as 'FSA Guidance'.
5. Agreed that the introduction should include a para. on who the guidance is intended for and the structure of the document. Also should include an index and glossary to include terms such as 'Protection Factor', Z value and 'Vac Pac' . Noted that table 1 is adapted from ACMSF table 12. Agreed that the food categories should be ranked high to low priority according to risk. The table will need considerable revision and re-formatting and will be discussed at the next meeting. The level of risk will be based on the controlling factors used, no. of outbreaks and no. of spores present.

**Action: rank food categories high, medium and low risk . IS**

6. The Lethal Rate table was discussed at length. Agreed that the 'Lethal Rate' column should be deleted. The table includes Z values based on ACMSF and CFA data. Concern was expressed over the use of ACMSF Z values below 80°C. The data included in table 1 are therefore limited to the 80°C to 90°C range. The CFA document includes Z values between 90°C and 100°C. Therefore by combining the two the table covers the temp range 80°C - 100°C using the two corresponding Z values. A definition of Z value will be included in the glossary. A footnote on the use of two Z values will be added. The table will be re-drafted and circulated to the drafting group for comment.

**Action: draft definition of Z value and lethal rate table. MP**

7. The group discussed the definition of 'Protection Factor to give a 6 log reduction' contributed by MP and MR. Agreed that MP's contribution should be used. A definition of 'Protection Factor' will be included in the glossary.
8. Agreed that a para. on Nitrite as a controlling factor should be included in Annex 1. The section on controlling factors will be cross-referenced to the decision tree.

## Need for a Regulatory Impact Assessment

9. KC updated the group on discussions at the Agency on the need for a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA). Agreed by Head of Division (HoD) Judith Hilton that the guidance is a consolidation of existing guidance and that consulting stakeholders on the drafting group on development of the guidance, is sufficient without the need for a RIA.

## **Timetable**

10. Still on target for the 27<sup>th</sup> September ACMSF meeting. Comments will be considered by email correspondence with a further meeting to discuss Table 1. The group thought that a 'mini' consultation ahead of the September ACMSF would be considered favourably by the ACMSF. A provisional list of stakeholders was drawn up:

- LACORS – David Lock, including food hygiene focus group
- Various CCFRA members
- Meat Product Liaising Committee
- BMPA
- CFA
- MLC
- Marks & Spencer

## **A.O.B.**

11. There were none.

## **Date of next meeting**

12. No date was set but the next meeting is expected to be in August, after receipt of the consultation comments.