

Paper 11.1 ACSS Secretariat Update (July 2023)

Summary

This paper is for information and provides an update to members on secretariat activity. Key meeting dates and topics of discussion at other FSA SACs are presented in Annex A.

Recruitment

We will be joining the SAC recruitment campaign in the Spring of 2024 and seeking members from Northern Ireland and Wales to improve our representation of the devolved administrations. We would be grateful if members could consider suitable applicants within their networks.

Secretariat staffing and resource

In June 2023, Anya Mohideen will leave the FSA to take up a behavioural science role in DfE. Following an extension of her placement period, Abbie Collins will remain in the secretariat team until September 2023. Kerry Gillespie joined the secretariat team in May. The secretariat continues to be supported by Carol Scott from the SAC Admin Hub team.

SAC Review

The deep review of Science Council and ACSS was published on the 8th June ([Independent Report and Recommendations](#)) alongside the [FSA Response](#). The review made the following recommendations for the ACSS.

A. FSA officials more clearly articulate where the ACSS can best help support the Agency's work.

FSA response: We agree that there could be better sharing of knowledge across the FSA to increase awareness of the purpose of the SC and ASCC and support

both groups in setting the direction of their work. Therefore, we commit to build on the work we already do to further raise the awareness of the SC and the potential roles they could play to support teams across the FSA.

B. ACSS members are paid a flat honorarium, rather than payment by the hour, with the Chair receiving a higher fee.

FSA response: We recognise the potential advantages of a fixed honorarium although also note that this may, in some situations, be restrictive. We are therefore investigating several alternative scenarios for SAC remuneration with a view to simplifying this process and better aligning it with remuneration practices in other departmental SACs.

C. We found that the ACSS played an important role in supporting social science evidence commissioning and interpretation at the FSA and recommend it continues doing this good job in much of its present form.

D. The way the SC and ACSS together provide social science expertise and support to the FSA is reviewed again once our recommendations, if implemented, have had time to settle in.

E. During future recruitment that the ASCC retains its economic analytical function and supports the FSA in expanding capacity in this area.

FSA response to C-E: In the next review cycle, the FSA commits to reviewing the distribution of social science expertise and the interaction of the SC and ACSS with regards to social sciences at the FSA.

The review also recommended that membership of the Science Council is expanded to include social scientists, which will be considered in the next round of SAC recruitment.

ACSS 2022 Annual Report

The ACSS Annual report (covering activity within the 2022 calendar year) is now published on the [ACSS website](#).

Knowledge Sharing and Networking (KSN) event

The ACSS KSN event was held on the 22nd May with over 50 attendees, representing a variety of different universities/research institutions. The day was led by Julie Hill, and following an opening session featuring the Director of FSA

Science (Julie Pierce) and the FSAs Chief Scientific Advisor (Professor Robin May), FSA analysts presented substantive work from across the analytics unit and posed key questions to guide table discussions. A draft output, summarising table discussions, will be shared with attendees before publication on the ACSS website.

Thank you to those ACSS members who attended the day and/or extended the invitation to research colleagues. Special thanks to Dr Hannah Lambie-Mumford and Professor Julie Barnet for facilitating table discussions.

Forward Look

We are continuing to look for opportunities to collaborate with DEFRA's Social Science Expert Group (SSEG). The ACSS chair and secretariat team will attend the SSEG plenary meeting on the 29th June. FSA representatives will present an outline of the Food and You 2 survey and propose possible themes for secondary analysis that SSEG members may be interested in exploring. Following a similar discussion at the July ACSS plenary, we hope to find some areas of crossover that ACSS and SSEG members can work together on, potentially forming a cross SAC working group.

The KL2 working group will be drawing to a close over the summer ahead of the completion of the project and publication of the final report (due September)¹. The activity of the Wider Consumer Interests will also slow following their completion of the Consumer Insights Tracker. This frees up capacity within the committee and, dependent on the outcome of the SSEG collaboration discussions, it may be appropriate to consider setting up a new working group. If so, secretariat will first explore internal strategic needs with FSA colleagues and draft proposal papers for discussion at the next plenary.

1 Secretariat are considering the best way to reflect and assess the impact of working groups once completed, and will be in touch with members in reference to this.

Annex A: SAC meetings and Key agenda items

Science Council

Last open meeting: 8th December 2022, key agenda items included:

- The Chair presented a summary of her activity over the last 6 months.
- The FSA led a discussion of the FSA Science Update 2022 (FSA 22/12/07) to the FSA Board.
- The CSA updated the Council on his recent activity and discussions (including Government Office of Science's review of SACs, changing FSA priorities this year, the Precision Breeding Bill).
- Updates from Science Council members attending Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs) and a proposed streamlining of members' engagement.

Next open meeting: 6th September 2023

Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP)

Last meeting: 26th April 2023. Key topics included:

- An assessment for Magnesium-L-threonate for use as a food supplement was considered for the third time by the Committee. Further information was identified as being needed on identity, composition and production process. The Secretariat will request further information from the applicant.
- Corn Protein, a returning application was reviewed for the second time. Further information was identified as being needed on production process, composition, specifications and ADME / digestibility. The Secretariat to seek further information from the applicant.
- The Committee reviewed further information supplied by the applicant for the lacto-N-fucopentaose I (LNFP-I) and 2'-fucosyllactose (2'-FL) mixture (LNFP- I/2'-FL) application and the 3-fucosyllactose (3'-FL) application and no further queries were raised. The draft Committee Advice document developed had been subject to previous consideration by the Committee and would now be signed off by Chair's action.
- The Committee also reviewed the draft of the Committee Advice document for Calceolol. The Committee provided advice and drafting comments to the Secretariat to inform updating the document for their review at a future meeting.
- The members reviewed three new applications; Dried Miracle Berry, Olive fruit dry extract standardized in hydroxytyrosol and Pasteurised Akkermansia muciniphila. They identified various areas for each dossier where more data were required. The Secretariat will request further information from the applicant.
- The Committee was updated on the work of the PGT Subcommittee, and agreed to the strategy and objectives set for the next two months on the

development of the Precision Breeding framework for authorisation and in particular on data requirements to support the process.

Next meeting: 4th July 2023

Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF)

Last meeting: 9th February 2023. Key topics included:

- The Secretariat has produced an information paper that summarised action taken on points arise from the minutes of previous meetings.
- Members discussed the ACMSF report on botulinum toxin-producing Clostridia and vacuum packaging and associated processes.
- Members were presented an overview of the recent IID COVID survey: [Survey of Infectious Intestinal Disease during COVID-19](#) (ACM/1404).
- Food Standards Scotland presented an overview of a strategic risk assessment on the risk of Listeria in smoked fish.
- Members were updated on the outcome of the EFIG meeting held on 6th December 2022.
- Members received the report on recent microbiological food incidents and outbreaks.
- Members received an update on the current progress on the third study of infectious intestinal disease in the UK project (IID3).

Next meeting: 22nd June 2023

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

Last meeting: 16th May 2023. Key topics included:

- At their May meeting the Committee discussed papers on the final EFSA opinion on BPA and on novel formulations of supplement compounds designed to increase oral bioavailability.
- The committee also discussed reserved papers on: Can coating, Committee Advice on the safety of the extension of use of steviol glycosides (E 960) from stevia leaf extract produced by enzymatic conversion (RP1084) and Committee Advice on the safety of the Approval of Steviol Glycosides (E 960) Produced by *Yarrowia lipolytica* (RP1140).

- The Committee continued their work on a second draft statement on green tea catechins.

Next meeting: 11th July 2023

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

Last meeting: 16th March 2023

- Hydroxy anthracene derivatives (reserved)
- Draft Annual report
- Horizon scanning
- Summary of COC Workshop “Changing the paradigm: How should we assess cancer risk in the UK?” held on 17th November 2023.

Next meeting(s): 20th July 2023

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

Last meeting: 23rd February 2023. Key topics included:

- - A can coating (reserved)
 - Draft Annual report
 - Scoping paper on in vitro biomarkers in genotoxicity
 - Update on progress with titanium dioxide review

Next meeting(s): June 2023

The Advisory Committee on Animal Feeding stuffs (ACAF)

Last meeting: 8th June 2023. Key topics included:

- Minutes discussed from the last meeting, any changes that need to be made have been noted. (ACAF/84/01)
- Dossier for assessment RP859 Chlorophyllins – the application was reviewed and the applicant will be asked to provide further information.
- Dossier for assessment RP1072 Avatec (chickens) - the application was reviewed and the applicant will be asked to provide further information.
- Dossier for assessment RP1101 Actisaf Sc 47 live - the application was reviewed and the applicant will be asked to provide further information.

- Dossier for assessment RP1105 Histidine *E. coli* KCCM 80212- the application was reviewed, and the applicant will be asked to provide further information.
- Reviewed the RFI responses for RP552, RP709, RP746, RP1015, RP1071.
- Draft opinions were evaluated for RP416, RP420, RP791, RP666, RP694, RP748. The members provided feedback on the content and finalised previous opinions.
- The Chair provided a comprehensive presentation on his approach to assessing efficacy in dossiers to train ACAF members and Secretariat and ensure consistency of assessment. Members and Secretariat will carry out a practical exercise to test these principles at the following meeting.

Next meeting(s): 26th July 2023

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN)

Last meeting: 16th March 2023. Key topics included:

- Feeding young children aged 1-5
- Processed foods and health
- Approaches to modelling impact of reduction in meat and dairy intakes on micronutrients intakes and disease risk.
- Draft monitoring proposals for the amendments to the micronutrient levels in the Bread and Flour Regulations 1998

Next meeting(s): 23rd November 2023