

Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Process. Minutes of the 166th meeting held on 1st May 2024

These minutes are subject to Committee clearance.

Members are required to declare any personal interest in matters under discussion. Where Members have a particularly close association with any item, the Chair will limit their involvement in the discussion. In cases where an item is to be discussed in their absence, a member may make a statement before leaving.

Attendance

Committee Chair

Dr Camilla Alexander-White Chair

Committee Members

Dr Anton Alldrick

Ms Alison Austin

Professor George Bassel

Dr Mark Berry

Professor Dimitris Charalampopoulos

Dr Meera Cush

Professor Susan Fairweather-Tait

Dr Sophie Foley

Professor Paul Fraser

Dr Hamid Ghoddusi

Dr Andy Greenfield

Professor Wendy Harwood

Professor Huw D Jones

Dr Elizabeth Lund

Professor Harry McArdle

Mrs Rebecca McKenzie

Professor Clare Mills

Dr Lesley Stanley

Professor Hans Verhagen

Dr Maureen Wakefield

Professor Bruce Whitelaw

Associate Members

Dr Kimon-Andreas Karatzas

Dr Antonio Peña-Fernández

Co-Opted Members

Professor Peter Lund PGT

Professor Alastair Macrae PGT

Apologies

Dr Christine Bosch - Associate Member

Dr Cathrina Edwards

Dr Ray Kemp

Dr Lynn McIntyre

Dr Isabel Skypala

Observers FSA

Mr Chris Rundle Head of Regulated Products Risk Assessment

Mr Chris Stockdale Head of Genetic Technology Policy

Mrs Rebecca Lamb Head of Policy Priorities Unit

Observers Defra

Dr Louise Ball Defra

Dr Martin Cannell Defra

Mr Mike Ellis Defra

Observers Devolved Administrations

Mr Xose Alvarez Policy, FSA Wales

Dr Karen Pearson Science, FSS

Secretariat FSA

Mrs Ruth Willis Technical Secretary

Dr Rachael Oakenfull Technical Secretary - PGT Subcommittee

Dr Karin Heurlier - Science Secretariat

Dr Rhys Williams - Science Secretariat

Dr Annalisa Leone - Science Secretariat

Ms Lucy Thursfield - Science Secretariat

Mr Liam Blacklock - Science Secretariat

Ms Victoria Balch - Administrative Secretariat

1. Apologies and Announcements

Apologies were received from Drs Christine Bosch, Cathrina Edwards, Ray Kemp, Lynn McIntyre, and Isabel Skypala who were unable to attend. To note, they provided comments on the draft Precision Breeding (PB) technical guidance (ACNFP166/01 Annex B) ahead of the meeting.

2. Welcome

The Chair welcomed the Members, the representatives from the FSA and from Defra, the observers from the devolved administrations and the Secretariat team. The Chair reminded Members of the need to announce any potential conflicts of interests prior to the discussion.

3. Matters Arising

The Chair informed the Members that minutes of the previous meeting will be reviewed at the next regular meeting in June. The 167th meeting would also provide an opportunity to receive policy updates on novel foods and GM.

4. Workshop on Precision Bred Organisms (Reserved Business)

It was explained to the ACNFP that the FSA science team wrote the Draft PBO Technical Guidance document to a tight deadline in order for it to be developed in time to support the Statutory Instrument on plant PBOs going through Parliament. ACNFP Members provided independent scientific expert review of the Draft PBO Technical Guidance, which is intended for use by applicants seeking authorisation of PBOs for marketing for food and feed use. The Draft PBO Technical Guidance was circulated, and Members provided comments ahead of the meeting.

It was explained to the ACNFP that the intention is for applicants to self-triage their own applications as either being in Tier 1 or Tier 2. Concerns were raised over the FSA delegating to applicants the responsibility of the initial safety assessment and of assigning their applications correctly to Tier 1 or Tier 2. Members suggested based on their experience in food safety that a rigorous and transparent audit would need to be developed for the process to be credible for stakeholders. It was noted that an audit process is under development. While not a specific area for input in the workshop, the views of Members on this aspect were noted and shared with policy colleagues to inform work in this area.

Members were asked to identify whether the draft provides appropriate guidance to enable applicants to self-triage, and sufficient basis for Tier 2 safety review. Members provided recommendation on where the text needed clarification.

The technical review of the draft had identified where changes were required related to data requirements for the self-assessment of nutrition, toxicity and allergenicity by applicants using the guidance, and to data to be provided by applicant for the assessment of Tier 2 PBOs. These were then explored further during the meeting.

Members were further asked to provide specific feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the draft Technical Guidance. Members were favourable to the content of the draft, but acknowledged it was a complex and substantial document, and the layout could be improved to enhance risk communication.

The Secretariat confirmed all the feedback received would be considered in revising the draft, and Members would be contacted individually by correspondence where expert advice on specific specialisms was needed to further refine the draft.

Members acknowledged that the Chair would review the revised version of the draft technical guidance to ensure the input of the Committee's peer review of the document had been accurately captured.

Action: The Secretariat to review the feedback provided by The Committee and make amendments to the draft Technical Guidance before seeking final input by Chair.

5. Any Other Business

The next meeting of the ACNFP will be held as a hybrid meeting on 12th June 2024.