ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NOVEL FOODS AND PROCESSES

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FOURTH MEETING HELD ON 14th of November

ACNFP Secretariat
6th Floor
Clive House
70 Petty France
London
SW1H 9EX

These Minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its next meeting.

DRAFT/ACNFP/135/Min

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FOURTH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NOVEL FOODS AND PROCESSES, HELD ON 14th NOVEMBER 2018 IN THE GRANGE ROCHESTER, 69 VINCENT SQUARE, LONDON, SW1P 2PA

Present	Professor Peter Gregory – **Chairman**
	Dr Anton Alldrick Dr Camilla Alexander-White Professor Susan Duthie Dr Hamid Ghoddusi Ms Nichola Lund Professor John Mathers Mrs Rebecca McKenzie Professor Clare Mills Ms Claire Nicholson Professor Christopher Ritson Dr Lesley Stanley
Apologies	Professor Michael Bushell Professor Harry McArdle Dr Rohini Manuel
Assessor	Colin Clifford
Observer	Erin Oliver
Secretariat	Ruth Willis - **ACNFP Secretary** Alison Asquith – **Minutes** Ceyhun Güngör Louisa Williams

Members are required to declare any personal interest in matters under discussion. Where Members have a particularly close association with any item, the Chairman 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.

1. Apologies and announcements

Three members sent apologies for non-attendance; no comments were received from these members.

The Chairman welcomed Erin Oliver who was an observer from the FSA in London. Apologies were received from the observer in Scotland and observers in the FSA offices in Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Chairman congratulated Dr Hamid Ghoddusi on his appointment to EFSA's CEP Panel (Contact Materials, Enzymes and Processing aids)

The Chairman reminded Members of the need to announce any commercial interests in the business of the Committee, prior to the discussions on each item.

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2. Minutes of the 134rd Meeting DRAFT/ACNFP/134/Min

The Committee agreed that the minutes were a true record of the 134rd meeting of the ACNFP held on 25 April subject to amendments.

3. Matters Arising

The Secretary reported on the work being done in European forums to improve the quality of traditional food dossiers submitted by applicants. Following the April meeting, members of the Committee fed back their views on what they considered were the important areas of the EFSA guidance that applicants should address in dossiers to facilitate the assessment, and where they would like to see improvements in future notification dossiers.

4. Sorghum Syrup ACNFP/135/1

The Committee considered a notification dossier for traditional food, syrup of *Sorghum bicolor*. The syrup is the juice extracted from crushed sorghum stalks that is further processed and used in the USA. The applicant intends to market sorghum syrup as a natural sweetener wherever honey would be used.

The Committee raised concerns that the composition of the food was insufficiently detailed. For example, the Committee was not clear whether the fructose, glucose, and sucrose was 75% of the carbohydrate composition or 75% or the novel food. It questioned what the rest of the product and/or novel ingredient was composed of. The Committee was also unclear whether the novel food was a juice or a syrup.

The Committee was unclear whether the product in the notification was the same one that was already on the market in the USA for which it was agreed there was a long history of use outside the EU. Members sought clarification on where the novel food

was to be manufactured and the sorghum grown. This raised questions on the extent to which the potential for heavy metal contamination or pesticide residues had been considered and managed. The description of the manufacturing process suggested any heavy metals in the product would be concentrated; this could be a safety issue. The Committee also noted there was no safety management information, and no manufacturing specification. The view was the novel food may not be unsafe providing checks and balances are put in place. The Committee noted pesticides and mycotoxins were not being monitored.

In the context of the potential for the product to be nutritionally disadvantageous, the Committee was concerned this product may increase the level of sugar in the diet which would increase obesity. It questioned whether the novel food would replace sugar already in the diet or whether it could be a new source. Although the Committee accepted that Sorghum syrup was a traditional food, this novel food was processed and may not be consumed in the traditional way.

The applicant had highlighted the potential for the juice with its high sugar content to be vulnerable to microbiological contamination but had not considered the shelf life of the product. The Committee noted there was potential for the conditions in the product to support the growth of bacteria and mould spores. The applicant had not provided any information on whether pathogens were present or how the potential for growth of microorganisms would be managed. Importing the syrup may introduce new issues, for example, of storage; pH was not described in the notification dossier - this was felt to be significant to assess the potential for *Clostridium botulinum* growth.

The potential for allergenicity was considered and the Committee viewed the risk as likely to be low. However, it was suggested that it would have been useful to confirm this using the experience in the USA.

The Committee commented that key aspects of the EFSA's guidance on composition, and any variation in composition had not been provided. Of concern was that literature searches to explore available information on known risks such as allergenicity, toxicity, and microbiology were not provided. Also absent was the methodology that the applicant had used to conduct the searches they had made to inform risk assessors that evidence had been sought and not found. This was felt to be important information to allow the Committee to validate that the safety had been demonstrated. The Committee noted that the applicant had not in their view provided enough information to demonstrate safety of the novel food.

The Committee advised the FSA that while no safety risks were identified, they had concerns that there was insufficient data in the dossier to support the depth of assessment felt to be appropriate. The Committee commented there were too many links to internet sites which contained general information which were not specific to this product.

Action: The Committee's advice would be used to inform the UK's view in responding to the Commission on this application.

5. Summaries of Traditional Foods ACNFP/135/2

The Committee considered an approach for making its advice to the FSA on traditional food notifications public while balancing openness and the FSA and ACNFP's obligations to protect some forms of information.

At its previous meeting, the ACNFP considered this issue and members were supportive of making the advice the Committee gave to the FSA public with an opportunity for the public to provide input. This was felt to be important for traditional foods where populations in the UK may have experience of the foods and how they can be used safely from their cultural heritage.

Members considered a summary that had been developed by the Secretariat and considered the document should be a summary of the Committee's advice to the FSA. The FSA based on the advice of the committee will develop its the risk management advice to be communicated to the European Commission. The Committee agreed the format of the summary which should reflect both the positive and negatives of the notification dossier to inform future dossier development and to provide a balanced assessment of the information provided. A clear conclusion of the Committee's advice to the FSA should also be included.

Following consultation with the public, the Committee should see the feedback. The consultation should be put on the appropriate ACNFP web page following the Committee and Chair of the ACNFPs clearance.

The Committee suggested, to help applicants, the FSA should produce a laypersons interpretation of EFSA's guidance on the data required for a traditional food's notification dossier.

Action: The Secretariat to implement the approach proposed following validation with relevant colleagues within the FSA.

6. Annual Report ACNFP/135/3

The Committee reviewed both the Annual Report for 2017, which was agreed subject to amendments, and comments received on the Good Practice Guidance which the Committee agreed continued to be met by the ACNFP.

Action: The Secretariat to finalise the 2017 Report and publish it on the ACNFP website.

7. Risk and Uncertainty Principles.

The Committee considered a document on the principles for establishing and communicating risk and uncertainty and the final recommendations of the Science Council Working Group which established the principles.

At the first meeting of the Science Council the FSA Chair Heather Hancock introduced the need for the FSA to establish a strategic framework for risk assessment, managing scientific judgements on evidence, and communicating risk and uncertainty to stakeholders.

The Committee considered the document was a good draft but could be finetuned. The document focused only on health risks and uncertainty and there was felt to be a gap in relation to considering nutrition. One of the risks identified by the ACNFP when assessing novel food applications in its meetings has been the replacement of foods with less nutritious novel foods.

The Committee considered the Science Council Working Group had not drawn on the knowledge which already exists on, for example, consumer acceptability. It noted the public will accept some risks, but these may be different from the risks accepted by the FSA. It was commented that it would have been beneficial if the previous work on risk communication and uncertainties in food assessments had been more clearly used as a starting point.

On the Principles, members commented that these didn't clearly define the difference between hazards and risks which was important in the context of the approach to assessments internationally. It was recognised this could be a question for the future in how the FSA manages risk assessment of regulated products such as novel foods.

The Committee was concerned that the risk and communications section in the document was unclear. Members acknowledged that it could be difficult to articulate risks and it could be difficult to communicate where risks and uncertainties came from. Concerns were raised that the document was too defensive and concentrated on defending the Government rather than informing consumers. Members urged the FSA to learn from its wealth of experience in communicating risks and uncertainties effectively to consumers. They were keen that the FSA be confident in its role in educating consumers and industry and continued to follow the principles developed following the BSE crisis. It was suggested that there was an opportunity for government to show leadership in this area.

The Committee felt that risk managers in businesses and more widely have issues when communicating to stakeholders and consumers in a cultural context that undermines the value of expert opinion in web pages and blogs on the internet. It gave the example of the risk communication challenges about MMR and the consequences this has had for disease risks.

The Committee also highlighted the importance of considering the different customers of FSA advice. It was noted that the needs of businesses and consumers may be different. This challenge was felt to be becoming more acute as the way people gain the information to inform their decisions has changed.

The Committee was interested in how the principles would apply to the ACNFP and was interested in holding a workshop to examine this.

> *Action: The Secretariat will forward comments, made by the Committee, to the Science Council Secretariat for inclusion in their wider discussions.*

8. For Information

8.1 EU Update — Oral

The Committee noted the oral briefing.

8.2 SACS Update — Oral

The Committee was informed of a meeting to be held in August, to be attended by the Chairs of the FSA's Scientific Advisory Committees and hosted by the Chief Scientific Officer of the FSA.

9. Any other Business

The Secretary gave an update on risk assessment in the FSA.

10. Date of next meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for 26 September although it may not be needed. The date of the meeting and the venue will be confirmed.