

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NOVEL FOODS AND PROCESSES**

**OPEN EVENT**

**Issue**

The Committee is asked to review both the format and content of the Open Event which took place in February 2018. Views from members are sought on how future events can be improved taking into consideration the feedback forms from delegates who attended the event.

**Background**

1. A summary of the feedback forms from the Open Event in February 2018 is attached at **Annex A**.
2. Verbal comments from delegates who attended the Open Event were all very positive.

**Committee Action Sought**

3. The Committee is asked to:
  - Consider the comments in the feedback forms and to suggest any improvements for future Open Events.
  - Consider the summary of the breakout groups and comment on whether this is an accurate reflection of the comments made.

**Secretariat  
April 2018**

**Annex Attached**

**Annex A: Summary of Feedback Forms from the Open Event in February 2018.  
Annex B: Summary of small group discussions**

## Feedback From the Open Event held in February 2018

16 Evaluation Forms were received by the ACNFP secretariat at the end of the meeting and by post. The event was attended by 29 people. The number of evaluation forms received represents 55% of the delegates who attended.

The forms have been summarised as follows:

### 1. How useful did you find the meeting

Box No.	1 (Extremely useful)	2	3	4	5 (Of little use)
No of Responses	7	6	2	1	0

There was a positive response from the delegates with a large majority of responses being either box 1 and 2

### 2. Did you find the presentations useful.

Yes - 16  
No - 0

### 3. Did you find the smaller group discussions useful.

Yes – 16  
No - 0

This was a very positive response from delegates. Almost all the delegates found the presentations useful and the smaller group discussions.

### 4. Was the organisation of the meeting satisfactory?

Yes – 16  
No – 0

### 5. Will you attend further workshops?

Yes – 16  
No - 0

All the delegates who replied were keen on attending further workshops.

## **6. How did you find out about the event.**

Most delegates had found out about the open event through the FSA website, a few had been informed by colleagues or their Manager. Only one had found out about the event through Eventbrite – an events management website. The ACNFP secretariat, in line with Government policy did not pay for publicity, and only publicised the Open meeting through Eventbrite, FSA and ACNFP websites.

## **7. Comments and Additional Improvements (These relate to individual comments unless otherwise stated).**

Delegates made very few comments on additional improvements. The comments were:

### **a) Prior to the meeting**

- A name list of all attendees and their organisations would be useful.
  - *We have always provided this in the past. This year we used Eventbrite – an event organisation website. Unfortunately this information while mandatory was not completed when delegates registered. We will consider how we can gather this information effectively for future events.*

### **b) Format:**

- No comments received on the format of the meeting.

### **c) Presentations**

- Useful if presenters introduced themselves – it is the first time I have attended an event.
- Overhead projector slides were a little blurred.
- Difficult to hear at the back – a microphone for speakers would be beneficial.
  - *We will look at logistical arrangements to see if this can be addressed in future.*
- The pace was too fast – it was difficult to take in all the information
  - *We are considering how to structure the event so that regulatory information is repeated in different ways so people can pick up core messages in a way that is meaningful for them. We would also consider whether to do more of an introduction if attendees are less familiar with novel foods to build knowledge more generally.*

### **d) Discussion Groups**

- Have two discussion groups
- Slighter longer time for discussion groups (2 comments)
  - *Groups were smaller than planned as 11 people who had registered didn't show on the day. The Secretariat is reviewing the registering process to reduce no shows.*

#### **e) General Comments**

- The best yet (verbal comment)

#### **Suggestions for topics at the next ACNFP open workshop**

- Traditional food uses
- Insects
- Clean/cultured meat
- Nanotechnology
- Effect of EU Exit on Regulations when known
- Invite other Competent Authority Officials to present in order to have a different view on how they deal with current issues highlighted in the UK eg Nanotechnology, cultured meat, insects.
  - *The Secretariat will consider this suggestion but this may work more effectively if we arrange events for specific sectors. For example if arrange something for the insects sector it would be useful to involve colleagues, working on legislation for animal productions so they receive a holistic view.*

**Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP): Open Meeting on 22 February - Small Group Discussions**

The purpose of the discussions was to provide a platform for stakeholders and the Committee to discuss issues of current interest to the Committee and inform the Committee of stakeholder's views and concerns.

A summary of the four breakout discussions is provided below:

**Note of traditional foods group**

The holistic discussion on the issue of traditional foods raised the following key points:

- The importance of following the EFSA guidance when developing applications was felt to be key. It was considered as a useful basis for thinking through the potential issues with a traditional food.
- It was flagged that one of the aspects to consider is flagging any potential safety issues and how these could be managed. This would provide reassurance that the assertion that the food is safe is accurate.
- Composition was felt to be important for these assessment to understand the potential food safety risks. Appropriate identification of plants was flagged as a particular issue.
- That allergy will be an important factor as the UK has a more allergic population than some third countries.
- The importance of high quality data was considered and the fact that this needs to support the overall narrative of the food. This was linked to ensuring seasonal variation was captured in the samples provided and that the reason for the variation was understood to show the system was well controlled.
- A case by case approach will be needed to the assessment to reflect that different food. It was likely that to inspire consumer and customer confidence they would be looking for reassurance that a whole food chain assessment had been undertaken. Microbiological risks were likely to be the key factor as there is greater awareness of these risks with foods more widely.
- A question was raised on to what extent supplement can be a traditional foods. It was noted that certain categories of novel food cannot benefit from the traditional foods process as stated in the definition of traditional foods in the regulation.

- There was a short discussion on future trends and it was recognized that South America and the far east were key locations for origin of traditional foods as they look to export botanical products that have been consumed for a long time.
- They also flagged that it would be useful to understand who had already applied for an application to prevent duplication of work where this is unnecessary.

### **Summary of the Insects foods group**

The discussion raised the following points

- It was considered people were quite happy to try insects out but not many people would eat them frequently for example as in-home regular foods.
- As far as an environmental driver was concerned people weren't being encouraged to eat insects.
- Insects are mainly produced by small-medium enterprises. They may be cheaper than meat, but not mass-produced crops such as peas.
- Approval for wild insects may be difficult to obtain as they are not monitored in the same way as farmed insects. Many areas of production will be under HACCP. Safety, such as microbiological issues need to be given detailed consideration.

### **Summary of fermented products foods group**

The discussion raised the following points:

- There are differences between product produced in bioreactors and products produced by other methods.
- There are special circumstances within the fermentation process which may raise different risk assessment needs for example scaling up production may change the final product.
- Gene sequencing is very cheap today and it was suggested could be made mandatory for a risk assessment.
- Some fermented foods target chronic disease control such as diabetes. Bioactive peptides in fermented foods are used in medicines and foods and it was questioned given the complexity of medicines whether they should undergo specific tests. It was considered they should undergo post market monitoring of products.

## **Summary of novel foods in functional foods and food supplements.**

The discussion raised the following points:

- The benefits of functional foods and food supplements may be misleading as they may or may not be of benefit. The benefit of foods/food ingredients is outside the remit of the ACNFP.
- Safety should be the basis of decisions when a food is risk assessed. Substances which may not be beneficial are put into more general products. Questions were raised as to the risk to consumers, as there may be a safety concern.
- Food must be safe for all consumers. Functional foods have a target population so might not be safe for all and the risk management must reflect the risk. Targeting groups is done by labelling and post market monitoring.
- The underlying biological effect of functional foods and supplements has to be taken into account when risk assessments are carried out. The dose and mechanism of action needs to be provided as effects are more severe at higher concentrations. The actual product should be tested not just the active ingredient.
- There is a threshold between benefit and adversity. Benefits cannot be ignored when risk assessing foods, but they shouldn't influence any decision on their safety.
- There may be issues with the quality of data when submitting applications. There are EFSA and OECD guidelines available or the ACNFP secretariat can advise.