

The Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP) 2018 Report

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1. Foreword

I am delighted to present the 2018 Annual Report of the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP).

This report covers safety assessments of notifications of traditional novel foods under Regulation (EU) 2015/2283, carried out from 1 January 2018. This is a new role for the Committee from the revised Novel Food Regulation. Which has provided an opportunity to consider how the knowledge and experience of the Committee can be applied in the new traditional foods from third countries authorisation process. This process focus' on what can be learnt from the experience of communities that have eaten the food traditionally and any risks associated with moving foods to a new population.

The content of this report also reflects the role the committee has in advising the Food Standards Agency on genetically modified (GM) foods, novel Foods (NF) and novel food processes (NFP).

To fulfil its role, the ACNFP has an impressive membership of highly qualified experts in a wide range of disciplines. This includes scientific specialisms, two consumer representatives and an ethicist. This report details the number and variety of notifications that have been considered by the Committee.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Committee members for their expert advice, continued hard work and support throughout the year and to commend particularly the hard work of the Secretariat whose assistance and support is invaluable to the effective operation of the Committee

Professor Peter Gregory
July 2018

2. Introduction

The primary role of the ACNFP during 2018 has been the safety assessments of notifications on traditional novel foods under Regulation (EU) 2015/2283.

Under the Novel Food Regulations (EU) 2015/2283, a novel food continues to be defined as a food that does not have a significant history of consumption within the European Union before 15 May 1997. Traditional novel foods are a subset of a novel foods requiring regulatory approval that refer to foods that are traditionally consumed anywhere outside of Europe. The revised regulation, which came into full effect on the 1st of January 2018, provides a number of changes in light of scientific and technical advancement since the original regulation was put in place in 1997. This includes a change to the handling of full novel food applications under the EU system. Full dossiers are now assessed through a centralised procedure by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

The Novel Food Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 aims to provides a simplified route for manufacturers to bring traditional novel foods to the market by making a notification in accordance with the regulation. The notification does not require as much information as full novel food application, on the basis that history of safe use for 25 years in a third country provides information to inform the assessment. Traditional food notifications must demonstrate the food to be safe not misleading to consumers or would not place consumers at a nutritional disadvantage

Under Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 a company planning to market a traditional novel food must submit a notification on the novel food to the European Commission via an E-portal. Once the notification has been accepted it is forwarded to all Member States and EFSA who have up to four months to raise any duly reasoned safety objections on placing the traditional food on the market. If no objections are raised, the food can be authorised and placed on the new Union list. If objections are raised, the applicant will need to submit a traditional food application, addressing the concerns raised. This application would be evaluated for safety by EFSA.

The ACNFP has an ongoing role in assessing traditional food notifications using ther Committee’s skills and experience. The views of the ACNFP are provided to risk managers at the FSA to inform the UK position on the notification. During the year three traditional food notification were assessed.

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3. Traditional Food Applications

a) Notifications on Traditional Foods

In 2018, three traditional food from third countries notifications were validated under Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 by the EU and passed to Member States and EFSA for review. These notifications for Fonio, Haskap berries and Sorghum Syrup, were assessed by the Committee and their advice passed to risk managers at the FSA to inform the UK position on these dossiers. The notifications are detailed in Table 1.

Details of the issues that were raised by the Committee can be found in the minutes of the relevant meetings on the [ACNFP website](#). Minutes can be found under the section **ACNFP Meetings** → [ACNFP meetings in 2018](#).

Table 1: Traditional Novel food notifications considered by the Committee during 2018

Novel food (Applicant)	Meeting discussed	Outcome	Comment
Fonio (<i>Digitaria exilis</i>) Obà Food Sri	April,	Authorised	ACNFP raised questions over the quality and completeness of the information to inform a thorough assessment. The UK did not raise duly reasoned safety objections.
Haskaps (<i>Lonicera caerulea</i>) Soloberry Ltd	April,	Authorised	ACNFP raised questions over the quality and completeness of the information to inform a thorough assessment. The UK did not raise duly reasoned safety objections.
Sorghum Syrup Sorghum Zrt	July	Authorised	The ACNFP raised questions over the quality and completeness of the information to inform a thorough assessment. The UK did not raise duly reasoned safety objections.

4. Other Issues

In 2018 the ACNFP was consulted on several topics relating the scientific work of the FSA and how this is managed. The topics included communication of risks and uncertainty, consideration of how the ACNFPs advice under the new traditional food assessment procedure should be shared with the public, as well as updates on ways of working to support the revised role for FSA’s Scientific Advisory Committees when the UK leaves the EU.

Details of the issues that were raised by the Committee can be found in the minutes of the relevant meetings on the [ACNFP website](#). Minutes can be found under the section **ACNFP Meetings** → [ACNFP meetings in 2018](#).

Table 2: Other Issues

Issue	Meeting discussed	Comment
Traditional Food Assessments Review	April	The committee considered the approach to assessing traditional foods in the UK.
Summaries of Traditional Foods	June	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.
Traditional Food Assessments	November	To update the Committee on the work to improve the consistency of applications under the traditional food notifications in the European Union.
Communication of Risk and Uncertainty	June	The Committee considered and provided input on the draft principles for the SACs on communicating risk and uncertainty developed by the Science Council working group.
Update on the approach to considering traditional food dossiers at EU level	November	The Committee received an update on the discussions at EU level on the handling of notifications of traditional foods from third countries.
Future of SACs	November	To update the Committee on the work the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has been undertaking to develop its scientific capability, considering the changing demands on risk assessment brought by the UK’s exit from the EU.
Future Ways of Working	November	To input on the ways of working of the committee and agree overarching principles for the handling of GM food and feed and Novel Food assessments in future.
Advice Paper	November	The committee considered a table that summarized the advice given by the committee between April 2014 and December 2017.

5. Open Workshop

In 2018 the ACNFP ran an open workshop to highlight the work of the Committee and to seek input from stakeholders on emerging issues of interest to the Committee. The workshop outlined the role of the ACNFP, detailing the changes to the novel food regulations whilst also covering the topics of insects, functional foods, fermented products and traditional foods from third countries. The format included presentations and discussion groups.

Details of the issues that were raised in the discussions can be found in the minutes of the relevant meetings on the [ACNFP website](#). Minutes can be found under the section **ACNFP Meetings** → [ACNFP meetings in 2018](#).

Table 3: ACNFP Open Meeting

Topic Covered	Talk Outline
Roles and Responsibilities of the ACNFP	Introduction on the role of the ACNFP, highlighting major work since the last workshop, and outlining the purpose of the workshop.
Novel Food New Regulations	Introduction into the new novel food regulations which came into force on 1 st of January 2018.
Bioactive fermented foods	The discussion group considered bioreactor derived products including future trends in the area.
Insects	The discussion group considered the consumption of including the potential microbiology issues, , consumption patterns and which insects are consumed in different world regions and how this could inform future consumption in the EU.
Functional foods, Food Ingredients and Supplements	The discussion group considered functional foods, and what we can learn from past authorisations (plant phytosterols). The group considered the relationship with the health claims regulation and how they apply the criteria for authorisation of novel foods should be informed by the nature of these types of food
Traditional Foods from Third Countries	Traditional food from third countries including data required for risk assessments and emerging new foods which may need to be assessed.

6. ANNEX 1 – Information about the Committee

(a) ACNFP – remit, membership and list of Members' interests, code of conduct and interactions with other committees.

6.1. REMIT

The Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes is an independent body of experts whose remit is:

"to advise the central authorities responsible, in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland respectively on any matters relating to novel foods and novel food processes including food irradiation, having regard where appropriate to the views of relevant expert bodies"

Officials of the Food Standards Agency provide the Secretariat. As well as formal meetings, the Committee periodically organises workshops on specific topics related to its remit.

6.2. MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The membership of the Committee provides a wide range of expertise in fields of relevance in the assessment of novel foods and processes. A list of the membership during 2018, together with the names of the FSA assessors can be found overleaf.

In common with other independent advisory committees the ACNFP is publishing a list of its members' commercial interests. These have been divided into different categories relating to the type of interest:

Personal: a) direct employment or consultancy;
 b) occasional commissions;
 c) share holdings.

Non-personal: a) fellowships;
 b) support which does not benefit the member directly e.g. studentships.

Details of the interests held by members during 2018 and a copy of the code of conduct for ACNFP members can be found on the following pages.

6.3. Membership of the Committee during 2018

6.3.1. Chairman

Professor Peter Gregory BSc, PhD

Emeritus Professor of Global Food Security at the University of Reading.

6.3.2. Members

Dr Anton Alldrick BSc. Hons, PhD

Special Projects Manager at Campden BRI.

Dr Camilla Alexander-White BSc (Hons) DPhil CChem MRSC ERT (Toxicologist)

Programme Manager in Chemical Regulation, Royal Society of Chemistry

Professor Michael Bushell BSc, PhD (Microbiologist)

Emeritus Professor of Microbiology in the Microbial Sciences Department at the University of Surrey.

Professor Susan Duthie BSc, MSc, PhD (Nutrition Scientist)

Head of the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences, The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen

Dr Hamid Ghoddusi BSc, MSc, PhD

Head of the Microbiology Research Unit at the London Metropolitan University.

Nichola Lund LLB (Consumer Affairs Representative)

Trading Standards Officer with the North East London Metrology Partnership.

Dr Rohini Manuel MB BCh BAO, MSc, MD, FRCPath (Microbiologist and Mycologist)

Consultant Medical Microbiologist at the Public Health Laboratory London, National Infection Service, Public Health England.

Professor John Mathers BSc, Dip. Nutr, PhD (Nutritionist)

Professor of Human Nutrition and Director of the Human Nutrition Research Centre at Newcastle University

Mrs Rebecca MacKenzie BSc, MSc

Specialist Adult Allergy Dietitian, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, St Mary's Hospital, Paddington.

Professor Harry McArdle BSc, PhD (Nutritionist)

Emeritus Professor of Biomedical Sciences at the Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health, University of Aberdeen, Honorary Professor of Biological Sciences, Nottingham University.

Professor Clare Mills BSc, PhD (Plant Science and Allergy Expert)

Professor of Molecular Allergology, at the Manchester Institute of Biotechnology, and Division of Infection, Immunity and Respiratory Medicine, School of Biological Sciences, University of Manchester.

Ms Claire Nicholson BA and MBA (Consumer Affairs Representative)

Independent Consumer Advisor to the FSA and other food industry organisations.

Professor Christopher Ritson BA, MAgrSc (Ethicist)

Emeritus Professor of Agricultural Marketing and former Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Biological Sciences, Newcastle University.

Dr Lesley Stanley MA(Oxon), PhD

An independent consultant in biomedical science and investigative toxicology

6.4. ACNFP Members' Interests during 2018

Member	Personal Interests		Non-personal Interests	
	Company	Interest	Company	Interest
Emeritus Professor Peter Gregory	NIAM EMR	Director	None	
	Peter Gregory Consulting Ltd	Director		
	Royal Horticultural Society	Trustee		
	Rank Prize Nutrition Committee	Member		
Dr Anton Alldrick	Campden BRI	Employee	None	
Dr Camilla Alexander-White	Royal Society of Chemistry	Employee	None	
	MKTox	Sole Trader		
	LHASA Ltd Scientific Charity	Director/Trustee		
Emeritus Professor Michael Bushell	Abbott Laboratories, Chicago	Consultant	None	
Professor Susan Duthie	Trustee of Aberdeen Science Centre		None	
Dr Hamid Ghodduzi	Occasional ad hoc consultancy	Personal	EFSA	CEP Panel Member
Mrs Nicola Lund	Chartered Trading Standards Institute of (CTSI)	Member	None	
Dr Rohini Manuel	None		None	None

Personal Interests		Non-personal Interests		
Member	Company	Interest	Company	Interest
Professor John Mathers	Editor-in-Chief, British Journal of Nutrition	Chair	Royal Society Newton Advanced Fellowship	Panel Member
	Rank Prize Funds Nutrition Committee		BBRSC	Research funding
			MRC	Research funding
			Northumbria NHS Foundation Trust	Research Funding
			British Nutrition Foundation	Trustee
			BBRSC Basic Bioscience Underpinning Health	Member
			Rank Prize funds	Trustee
			ESRC Understanding Society Governing Board	Member
			Estavayer Lait S.A Switzerland Scientific Advisory Board	Member
Emeritus Professor Harry McArdle	None		EFSA	Novel Foods Working Group
			Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN)	Member
			EFSA	NDA Panel Member

Personal Interests			Non-personal Interests	
Member	Company	Interest	Company	Interest
Mrs Rebecca McKenzie	Specialist Adult Allergy Dietitian Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust St Mary's Hospital, Paddington London	Employee	None	
Professor Clare Mills	React Biotech Ltd	Spin-out Company Director with founder shares	FSA	i) Occasional external reviewer. ii) PI on FSA funded project T07062 iii) Col on FSA funded project TRACE
			BBSRC	i) Member of Priming Food Partnership steering group ii) Grant Holder iii) CASE students sponsored Genon and Waters Corp
			MRC	ICASE student sponsored by Waters Corp

Personal Interests		Non-personal Interests		
Member	Company	Interest	Company	Interest
			Embassy of Saudi Arabia	PhD student funding
			Newton fund	PhD placement with the Agricultural University of Beijing cofounded with the Chinese Scholarship Council
			EU funded research	CHANCE and IFAAM projects
			University of Nebraska Food Allergy Research and Resource Programme, USA	Joint PhD student
			Industry funded research Novartis DBV Technologies Ltd	

Personal Interests			Non-personal Interests	
Member	Company	Interest	Company	Interest
			React Biotech Ltd	<p>Consultancy (through the University) for scientific advice and time given as board member</p> <p>Research projects to develop quality assurance testing to support Pharma GMP.</p>
			<p>EFSA – allergenicity self-task group of the GMO panel</p> <p>European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology</p> <p>Anaphylaxis Campaign</p>	<p>Acting as a Scientific Expert</p> <p>Chair of the Food Allergy Interest Group</p> <p>Member of the Corporate Food Industry Panel</p>
Ms Claire Nicholson	<p>Red Tractor Farm Assurance</p> <p>Current and future meat controls stakeholder group (FSA)</p>	<p>Independent Director for Consumer Interests</p> <p>Consumer representative</p>	Smedvigcapital	<p>Partner's shareholding and employment. May invest in food businesses.</p>

Personal Interests			Non-personal Interests	
Member	Company	Interest	Company	Interest
Professor Chris Ritson	Food Ethics Council	Trustee Director	None	
Dr Lesley Stanley	Edinburgh Napier University (zero hours lecturing contract)	Employment	None	
	University of Oxford School of Medicine, Zhejiang University, China	Fee- paid work		

6.5. Code of Conduct

A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NOVEL FOODS AND PROCESSES (ACNFP)

6.5.1. Public service values

The Members of the ACNFP must always:

- observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the advice they provide and the management of this Committee;
- be accountable, through the Board of the Food Standards Agency and Health Ministers, to Parliament and the public for its activities and for the standard of advice it provides.

The Board of the FSA and Health Ministers are answerable to Parliament for the policies and performance of this Committee, including the policy framework within which it operates.

6.5.2. Standards in Public Life

All Committee Members must:

- follow the Seven Principles of Public Life set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (page 19);
- comply with this Code, and ensure they understand their duties, rights and responsibilities, and that they are familiar with the function and role of this Committee and any relevant statements of Government policy. If necessary members should consider undertaking relevant training to assist them in carrying out their role;
- not misuse information gained during their public service for personal gain or for political purpose, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms, businesses or other organisations;
- not hold any paid or high profile unpaid posts in a political party, and not engage in specific political activities on matters directly affecting the work of this Committee. When engaging in other political activities, Committee members should be conscious of their public role and exercise proper discretion. These restrictions do not apply to MPs (in those cases where MPs are eligible to be appointed), to local councilors, or to Peers in relation to their conduct in the House of Lords.

6.5.3. Role of committee members

Members have collective responsibility for the operation of this Committee. They must:

- engage fully in collective consideration of the issues, taking account of the full range of relevant factors, including any guidance issued by the Food Standards Agency or Health Ministers;
- in accordance with Government policy on openness, ensure that they adhere to the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (including prompt responses to public requests for information); agree an Annual Report; and, where practicable and appropriate, provide suitable opportunities to open up the work of the Committee to public scrutiny;

- not divulge any information which is provided to the Committee in confidence;
- ensure that an appropriate response is provided to complaints and other correspondence, if necessary with reference to the sponsor department; and
- ensure that the Committee does not exceed its powers or functions.
- Individual members should inform the Chairman (or the Secretariat on his or her behalf) if they are invited to speak in public in their capacity as a committee member.

Communications between the Committee and the Board of the Food Standards Agency will generally be through the Chairman except where the Committee has agreed that an individual member should act on its behalf. Nevertheless, any member has the right of access to the Board of the FSA on any matter that he or she believes raises important issues relating to his or her duties as a Committee member. In such cases the agreement of the rest of the Committee should normally be sought.

Individual members can be removed from office by the Board of the FSA, if they fail to perform the duties required of them in line with the standards expected in public office.

6.6. The Seven Principles of Public Life

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

3. Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interests.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

6.7. The role of the Chairman

The Chairman has responsibility for providing effective leadership on the issues above. In addition, the Chairman is responsible for:

- ensuring that the Committee meets at appropriate intervals, and that the minutes of meetings and any reports to the Board of the FSA accurately record the decisions taken and, where appropriate, the views of individual members;
- representing the views of the Committee to the general public; and
- ensuring that new members are briefed on appointment (and their training needs considered), and providing an assessment of their performance, on request, when members are considered for re-appointment to the Committee or for appointment to the board of some other public body.

6.8. Handling conflicts of interests

The purpose of these provisions is to avoid any danger of Committee members being influenced, or appearing to be influenced, by their private interests in the exercise of their public duties. All Members should declare any personal or business interest that may or may be perceived (by a reasonable member of the public) to, influence their judgement. A guide to the types of interest that should be declared can be found on page 21-22 of this report.

(i) Declaration of interests to the Secretariat

Members of the Committee should inform the Secretariat in writing of their current personal and non-personal interests, when they are appointed, including the principal position(s) held. Only the name of the organisation and the nature of the interest are required; the amount of any salary etc. need not be disclosed. Members are asked to inform the Secretariat at any time of any change of their personal interests and will be invited to complete a declaration form once a year. It is sufficient if changes in non-personal interests are reported in the annual declaration form following the change. (Non-personal interests involving less than £1,000 from a particular company in the previous year need not be declared to the Secretariat).

The register of interests should be kept up-to-date and be open to the public.

(ii) Declaration of interest and participation at meetings

Members of the Committee are required to declare any direct interests relating to salaried employment or consultancies, or those of close family members, in matters under discussion at each meeting. Having fully explained the nature of their interest the Chairman will, having consulted the other members present, decide whether and to what extent the member should participate in the discussion and determination of the issue. If it is decided that the member should leave the meeting, the Chairman may first allow them to make a statement on the item under discussion.

6.9. Personal liability of Committee members

A Committee member may be personally liable if he or she makes a fraudulent or negligent statement which results in a loss to a third party; or may commit a breach of confidence under common law or a criminal offence under insider dealing legislation, if he or she misuses information gained through their position. However, the Government has indicated that individual members who have acted honestly, reasonably, in good faith and without negligence will not have to meet out of their own personal resources any personal civil liability which is incurred in execution or purported execution of their Committee functions save where the person has acted recklessly. To this effect a formal statement of indemnity has been drawn up.

6.10. Different types of interest

The following is intended as a guide to the kinds of interests that should be declared. Where Members are uncertain as to whether an interest should be declared they should seek guidance from the Secretariat or, where it may concern a particular product which is to be considered at a meeting, from the Chairman at that meeting. If Members have interests not specified in these notes but which they believe could be regarded as influencing their advice they should declare them. However, neither the Members nor the Secretariat are under any obligation to search out links of which they might reasonably not be aware. For example, either through not being aware of all the interests of family members, or of not being aware of links between one company and another.

6.11. Personal Interests

A personal interest involves the Member personally. The main examples are:

- Consultancies and/or direct employment: any consultancy, directorship, position in or work for the industry or other relevant bodies which attracts regular or occasional payments in cash or kind;
- Fee-Paid Work: any commissioned work for which the member is paid in cash or kind;
- Shareholdings: any shareholding or other beneficial interest in shares of industry. This does not include shareholdings through unit trusts or similar arrangements where the member has no influence on financial management;
- Membership or Affiliation to clubs or organisations with interests relevant to the work of the Committee.

6.12. Non-Personal Interests

A non-personal interest involves payment which benefits a department for which a member is responsible but is not received by the member personally. The main examples are:

- Fellowships: the holding of a fellowship endowed by industry or other relevant body;
- Support by Industry or other relevant bodies: any payment, other support or sponsorship which does not convey any pecuniary or material benefit to a member personally, but which does benefit their position or department e.g.:
- a grant for the running of a unit or department for which a member is responsible;

- a grant or fellowship or other payment to sponsor a post or a member of staff or a post graduate research programme in the unit for which a member is responsible (this does not include financial assistance for undergraduate students);
- the commissioning of research or other work by, or advice from, staff who work in a unit for which a member is responsible.
- Members are under no obligation to seek out knowledge of work done for, or on behalf of, industry or other relevant bodies by departments for which they are responsible, if they would not normally expect to be informed. Where members are responsible for organisations which receive funds from a very large number of companies involved in that industry, the Secretariat can agree with them a summary of non-personal interests rather than draw up a long list of companies.
- Trusteeships: any investment in industry held by a charity for which a member is a trustee. Where a member is a trustee of a charity with investments in industry, the Secretariat can agree with the member a general declaration to cover this interest rather than draw up a detailed portfolio.

6.13. Definitions

For the purposes of the ACNFP 'industry' means:

- Companies, partnerships or individuals who are involved with the production, manufacture, packaging, sale, advertising, or supply of food or food processes, subject to the Food Safety Act 1990;
- Trade associations representing companies involved with such products;
- Companies, partnerships or individuals who are directly concerned with research, development or marketing of a food product which is being considered by the Committee.

'Other relevant bodies' refers to organisations with a specific interest in food issues, such as charitable organisations or lobby groups.

In this Code 'the Secretariat' means the Secretariat of the ACNFP

6.14. FSA Good Practice Guidelines for The Independent Scientific Advisory Committees (Revised and updated July 2012)

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR THE INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEES

INTRODUCTION

The Government Chief Scientific Adviser's *Guidelines on the Use of Scientific and Engineering Advice in Policy Making*¹ set out the basic principles which government departments should follow in assembling and using scientific advice. The key elements are to:

- **identify early** the issues which need scientific and engineering advice and where **public engagement** is appropriate
- draw on a **wide range of expert advice** sources, particularly where there is uncertainty;
- adopt an open and transparent approach to the scientific advisory process and publish the evidence and analysis as soon as possible;
- **explain publicly the reasons for policy decisions**, particularly when the decision appears to be inconsistent with scientific advice; and
- **work collectively** to ensure a joined-up approach throughout government to integrating scientific and engineering evidence and advice into policy making.

The *Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees*² and the *Principles of Scientific Advice to Government*³ provide more detailed guidance on the operation of scientific advisory committees (SACS) and their relationship with their sponsor Departments.

The Food Standards Agency's Board adopted a **Science Checklist** in 2006 (updated in 2012) that makes explicit the points to be considered in the preparation of papers and proposals dealing with science-based issues, including those which draw on advice from the Scientific Advisory Committees (SACS).

These **Good Practice Guidelines** were drawn up in 2006 by the Chairs of the independent SACs that advise the FSA based on, and complementing, the Science Checklist. They were updated in 2012 in consultation with the General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS).

The Guidelines apply to the SACs that advise the FSA and for which the FSA is sole or lead sponsor Department:

Advisory Committee on Animal Feeding stuffs
Advisory Committee on Microbiological Safety of Foods
Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes

¹ <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/bispartners/goscience/docs/g/10-669-gcsa-guidelines-scientific-engineering-advice-policy-making-pdf>

² <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/BISPartners/GoScience/Docs/C11-1382-code-of-practice-scientific-advisory-committees.pdf>

³ <http://www.bis.gov.uk/go-science/principles-of-scientific-advice-to-government>

Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment ⁴
Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment ⁵
Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment ⁶
Science Council
Social Science Research Committee

For the SACs with a shared sponsorship the Guidelines apply formally to their advice to the FSA; they may opt to follow them also in advising other sponsor Departments.

These committees share important characteristics. They:

- are independent;
- work in an open and transparent way; and
- are concerned with risk assessment and/or science governance, not with decisions about risk management.

The Guidelines relate primarily to the risk assessment process since this is the main purpose of most of the SACs. However, the SACs may, where appropriate, comment on risks associated with different risk management options, highlight any wider issues raised by their assessment that they feel should be considered (distinguishing clearly between issues on which the SAC has an expert capability and remit, and any other issues), or any evidence gaps and/or needs for research or analysis.

In addition, GACS and SSRC may advise the FSA on aspects of the governance of risk management, or on research that relates to risk management.

Twenty-nine principles of good practice have been developed. However, the different committees have different duties and discharge those duties in different ways. Therefore, not all the principles set out below will be applicable to all of the committees, all of the time.

The SACs have agreed to review their application of the principles annually and report this in their Annual Reports. Compliance with the Guidelines will also be covered in the annual self-assessments by Members and annual feedback meetings between each SAC Chair and the FSA Chief Scientist.

ACNFP self-assessment against the Good Practice Guidelines

Issue	Compliance?	Notes/Comments
<p>Defining the problem and the approach</p> <p>1. The FSA will ensure that issues it asks an SAC to address are clearly defined and take account of stakeholder expectations in discussion with the SAC Secretariat and where necessary the SAC Chair. The SAC Chair will refer</p>	Yes	ACNFP does this on a routine basis

⁴ Joint FSA/HPA Secretariat, HPA lead

⁵ Joint FSA/HPA Secretariat, HPA lead

⁶ Joint FSA/HPA, FSA lead

<p>to the FSA if discussion suggests that further iteration and discussion of the task is necessary. Where an SAC proposes to initiate a piece of work the SAC Chair and Secretariat will discuss this with FSA to ensure the definition and rationale for the work and its expected use by the FSA are clear.</p>		
<p>Seeking input</p>		
<p>2. The Secretariat will ensure that stakeholders are consulted at appropriate points in the SAC's considerations. It will consider with the FSA whether and how stakeholder views need to be taken into account in helping to identify the issue and frame the question for the committee.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The main role of the ACNFP in 2018 was to assess notifications for traditional foods from third countries. As applications are submitted through an EU process the Committee must comply with EU rules on access to documents. For the same reason, the Committee cannot discuss the documents in public. However, as the assessment of traditional</p>
<p>3. Wherever possible, SAC discussions should be held in public.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>foods is a new process the Committee has discussed how best to share their considerations and seek timely input and this system is in the process of being implemented.</p>
<p>4. The scope of literature searches made on behalf of the SAC will be clearly set out.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The ACNFP periodically holds an open event, which allows Members to discuss relevant topics with members of the public as occurred in February 2018.</p>
<p>5. Steps will be taken to ensure that all available and relevant scientific evidence is rigorously considered by the committee, including consulting external/additional scientific experts who may know of relevant unpublished or pre-publication data.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Committee, with the assistance of the Secretariat also seeks further information and advice from other Committees or individual experts where required.</p>

<p>6. Data from stakeholders will be considered and weighted according to quality by the SAC.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>7. Consideration by the Secretariat and the Chair (and where appropriate the whole SAC) will be given to whether expertise in other disciplines will be needed.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>8. Consideration will be given by the Secretariat or by the SAC, in discussion with the FSA, as to whether other SACs need to be consulted.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>Validation</p>		
<p>9. Study design, methods of measurement and the way that analysis of data has been carried out will be assessed by the SAC</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Secretariat and Committee critically review the methods and statistical treatments used in dossiers and ensure that this is considered in evaluating the contribution the data provides to the assessment.</p>
<p>10. Data will be assessed by the committee in accordance with the relevant principles of good practice, e.g. qualitative social science data will be assessed with reference to guidance from the Government’s Chief Social Researcher.</p>	<p>Yes Where relevant</p>	<p>For complex statistical questions the Secretariat can consult with specialists within the FSA.</p>
<p>11. Formal statistical analyses will be included wherever appropriate. To support this, each SAC will have access to advice on quantitative analysis and modelling as needed</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>12. When considering what evidence needs to be collected for assessment,</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Evaluations of novel foods are mainly based on evidence provided by the applicant,</p>

<p>the following points will be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the potential for the need for different data for different parts of the UK or the relevance to the UK situation for any data originating outside the UK; and whether stakeholders can provide unpublished data. 		<p>including unpublished studies and commercially-sensitive information about manufacturing processes. As this information is submitted via an EU process there are limitations on the information that can be placed in the public domain.</p>
<p>13. The list of references will make it clear which references have been subject to external peer review, and which have been peer reviewed through evaluation by the Committee, and if relevant, any that have not been peer reviewed.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Novel food application dossiers include a list of references which make it clear whether they have been peer reviewed.</p>
<p>Uncertainty</p>		
<p>14. When reporting outcomes, SACS will make explicit the level and type of uncertainty (both limitations on the quality of the available data and lack of knowledge) associated with their advice.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>ACNFP complies with items 14 to 17 – outcomes are critically evaluated, and uncertainties are identified.</p>
<p>15. Any assumptions made by the SAC will be clearly spelled out, and, in reviews, previous assumptions will be challenged.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Committee’s assessment focuses on safety and it does not address any nutrition or health benefits that may be claimed for the novel ingredient or for foods that contain it. Nutrition or health claims may only be made if they are specifically authorised under EU Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006.</p>
<p>16. Data gaps will be identified and their impact on uncertainty assessed by the SAC.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>17. An indication will be given by the SAC about whether the evidence base is changing or static, and if appropriate, how developments in the evidence base might affect key assumptions and conclusions.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>Drawing conclusions</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>ACNFP complies with this – uncertainties and interpretations</p>

<p>18. The SAC will be broad-minded, acknowledging where conflicting views exist and considering whether alternative interpretations fit the same evidence.</p>		<p>are identified clearly in the Committees opinions.</p>
<p>19. Where both risks and benefits have been considered, the committee will address each with the same rigour, as far as possible; it will make clear the degree of rigour and uncertainty, and any important constraints, in reporting its conclusions.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
<p>20. SAC decisions will include an explanation of where differences of opinion have arisen during discussions, specifically where there are unresolved issues, and why conclusions have been reached. If it is not possible to reach a consensus, a minority report may be appended to the main report, setting out the differences in interpretation and conclusions, and the reasons for these, and the names of those supporting the minority report.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The final opinions are adopted by consensus, identifying the key issues and generally explaining the reasoning behind the Committee's conclusions.</p>
<p>21. The SAC's interpretation of results, recommended actions or advice will be consistent with the quantitative and/or qualitative evidence and the degree of uncertainty associated with it.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>22. SACs will make recommendations about general issues that may have relevance for other committees.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>Communicating SAC's conclusions</p>		
<p>23. Conclusions will be expressed by the SAC in clear, simple terms and use the minimum caveats consistent with accuracy.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	

<p>24. It will be made clear by the SAC where assessments have been based on the work of other bodies and where the SAC has started afresh, and there will be a clear statement of how the current conclusions compare with previous assessments.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>25. The conclusions will be supported by a statement about their robustness and the extent to which judgement has had to be used.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>26. As standard practice, the SAC secretariat will publish a full set of references (including the data used as the basis for risk assessment and other SAC opinions) at as early a stage as possible to support openness and transparency of decision-making. Where this is not possible, reasons will be clearly set out, explained and a commitment made to future publication wherever possible.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>27. The amount of material withheld by the SAC or FSA as being confidential will be kept to a minimum. Where it is not possible to release material, the reasons will be clearly set out, explained and a commitment made to future publication wherever possible.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
<p>28. Where proposals or papers being considered by the FSA Board rest on scientific evidence produced by a SAC, the Chair of the SAC (or a nominated expert member) will be invited to the table at the Open Board meetings at which the paper is discussed. To maintain appropriate separation of risk assessment and risk management processes, the role of the Chairs will be limited to providing an independent view and assurance on how their</p>	<p>N/A</p>	

<p>committee’s advice has been reflected in the relevant policy proposals, and to answer Board Members’ questions on the science. The Chairs may also, where appropriate, be invited to provide factual briefing to Board members about issues within their committees’ remits, in advance of discussion at open Board meetings.</p> <p>29. The SAC will seek (and FSA will provide) timely feedback on actions taken (or not taken) in response to the SAC’s advice, and the rationale for these.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	
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6.15. Financial Statement

ACNFP is an independent SAC but does not have resources of its own. The operation of the Committee is funded by the FSA. In the period of this report, costs for this support (covering Members expenses and fees and administrative cost for the meetings) were £30,000.