

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON NOVEL FOODS  
AND PROCESSES**

**MINUTES OF THE FIFTY-EIGHTH MEETING  
HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2002.**

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**ACNFP/58/MIN**

**MINUTES OF THE FIFTY EIGHTH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE ON NOVEL FOODS AND PROCESSES, HELD 14  
NOVEMBER 2002 AT THE CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL, CAMBRIDGE**

**Present** Professor Janet Bainbridge - **Chairman**  
Professor Phil Dale  
Professor Ruth Chadwick  
Dr Hilary Close  
Mr Neville Craddock  
Professor James Dunwell  
Dr John Heritage  
Professor Alan Malcolm  
Dr Clive Meredith  
Professor Ian Rowland  
Professor John Warner

**FSA Observer** Ms Elspeth MacDonald (FSA Scotland)

**Secretariat** Dr Sandy Lawrie  
Dr Chris Jones  
Mr Mark Boden  
Mr Adam Hardgrave – **Minutes**

*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.**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Professor Peter Aggett, Professor Peter Lund, Professor Mac Johnston, Dr John Fowler, Miss Jill Brand, Mr Nick Tomlinson (FSA Assessor), and Mr Phil Morgan and Mr Gerry McCurdy (Observers from FSA Wales and FSA Northern Ireland).
- 1.2 The Committee welcomed Dr Sandy Lawrie who is the new Secretary to the ACNFP.
- 1.3 Members were informed that Raj Pal would shortly be leaving the Secretariat on promotion to Animal Feeds Division. The Members joined the Chairman and Secretariat in wishing him luck in his new post.
- 1.4 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.

## **2. Minutes of the Fifty Seventh meeting**

**ACNFP/57/MIN**

Members agreed that subject to the correction of a grammatical error the minutes were a true record of the 57<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ACNFP held on 12 September 2002.

## **3. Matters Arising**

### **3.1 ACNFP Open Meeting**

Members discussed the Open meeting held on 13 November at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

Members felt that the meeting had been very constructive and had raised some very interesting points. One of these was the divergence of views between regulators and consumers as to the wider definition of 'Risk'.

Members also noted that after the meeting a number of members of the audience approached them informally to discuss a range of issues raised in the meeting, and requested that time should be made at the end of future open meetings for informal discussions over coffee.

Minutes for this open meeting will be produced, including responses from the relevant authorities to all the questions put forward for the open session that were outside the ACNFP's

remit, and these will be placed on the ACNFP pages of the FSA website in due course.

#### **4. Iodine in Eggs**

**ACNFP/58/1**

The UK Competent Authority (CA) received an Initial Opinion of the Belgian CA for an application to enrich eggs with iodine on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2002. This initial opinion, along with the dossier, was provided to Members of the Committee for comment. The applicant is of the opinion that this product could be used to alleviate concerns of iodine deficiency, which is prevalent in some Member States.

In their consideration of this novel food the Belgian CA had restricted their assessment to levels of iodine enrichment and concluded that, on the basis of available nutritional and medical data, an unfavourable opinion should be given for this product.

Members noted that the intended level of iodine intake resulting from consumption of one enriched egg exceeded SCF recommended levels.

Members noted that the UK does not have iodine deficiency and that the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) is concerned about high iodine intake by UK consumers, particularly children. Members also felt that enriching eggs should not be permitted, as intake would be very difficult to control.

Members concluded that this product constituted an unnecessary risk to the health of the population and should receive an unfavourable opinion from the UK Competent Authority.

#### **5. Argan oil (Almond Kernel Oil)**

**ACNFP/58/2**

The Commission was notified by the French Competent Authority of the intention of an applicant to place Argan oil on the market in the European Community in accordance with Article 5 of the Novel Food Regulation (EC) 258/97.

The oil, obtained by mechanical extraction of the *Argania spinosa L.* kernel is produced by a conventional process and the applicant, claims that the novel food is substantially equivalent to existing vegetable oils namely peanut and sesame oil.

The French Competent Authority was satisfied that the Argan oil is substantially equivalent to existing vegetable oils but stressed that; the oil should be consumed only as a seasoning; any change in the

method of cultivating the Argan tree or in the process used for extracting the oil would require the product to be re-evaluated.

Members were concerned that although the oil was similar to other oils on the market, the unsaponifiable matter was nutritionally and toxicologically unique and therefore this oil could not be considered as substantially equivalent to other oils on the market.

Members noted that the oil is derived from wild trees, which would be expected to exhibit extensive genetic diversity, first presses would thus be of variable quality. Members were concerned with the quality control and could not be certain that the data presented were based on a representative sample of the oil. Members also noted that no information was provided on the levels of cyanide present in the oil.

Members felt that further data should be obtained on the taxonomy of the tree and the protein present in the oil in order to ascertain allergenic potential and any possible cross reactivity.

The Committee concluded that this product should be subjected to a full safety assessment, as it is not Substantially Equivalent to known oils already on the market. The Secretariat agreed to write to the French Competent Authority and the Commission with the Committees views.

## **6. ACNFP Factsheet**

**ACNFP/58/3**

The ACNFP Secretariat issues a corporate brochure, outlining the work of the Committee, its membership and functions, to interested parties.

At the 57<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ACNFP, Members had asked the Secretariat to produce a new factsheet on the remits of other advisory Committees. Members were asked to approve this new factsheet for inclusion in the brochure.

Members felt that the factsheet could be made more user friendly and it would be better if it included a chart showing how each Committee interacts with the ACNFP.

The Secretariat agreed to provide a revised draft for discussion at the January ACNFP meeting.

## **7. Phytosterols**

**ACNFP/58/4**

Members were asked to comment on two documents produced by the EC Scientific Committee on Food regarding Phytosterols.

The first of these documents gave a view on the generic issue of potential over-consumption of phytosterols. The second was the SCF opinion on the effectiveness of post launch monitoring to monitor consumption levels of 'yellow fat spreads with added phytosterol esters'.

Members felt that the documents were satisfactory but both concentrated on the consumption of yellow fat spreads. Members reiterated their concerns of overconsumption given the large range of phytosterol fortified products currently awaiting clearance under the Novel Food Regulation 258/97. The range of products included soft cheese, snack bars, yoghurts, meats and other milk products such as milkshakes.

Members were also still concerned that although designed for use by older individuals with high cholesterol, these products still had the potential to be consumed by children and pregnant and lactating mothers. It was noted that the current labelling of these products would not necessarily prevent these groups consuming these types of products, particularly as some of the range of products would appeal to young children, and consumers may assume that a healthy adult diet would be suitable for children.

Members noted that public understanding of these products was limited, and that many GP's still had no knowledge of who should consume these types of products.

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Commission has scheduled discussions on the handling of phytosterol fortified products for mid-December 2002.

## **8. T25 Maize**

**ACNFP/58/5**

In September, Members were sent by email nutritional impact data for this line of genetically modified maize. These data were requested in the original safety assessment for T25, carried out in 1996, and consisted of compositional analysis of 95 of the key components of maize. Members were asked to consider whether these data adequately addressed any concerns regarding the impact of the introduced gene on the plant's metabolism and that they were satisfied that the data provided no evidence of unintended effects.

At this meeting, Members considered a draft statement that summarised the data and set out their conclusions.

The Secretariat agreed to revise the statement in the light of Members' comments and to clear the paper through chairman's action prior to publication on the Committee's pages of the FSA website.

**9. Any other business.**

**9.1 Update on Post Market Monitoring Oral Update**

Members were informed that the final report of the feasibility study on Post Market Monitoring of novel foods was expected in January and would be presented to the Committee in the spring.

**9.2 Updates on previous applications Oral Update**

Members were updated on the progress of previous applications.

**9.3 Unilever Phytosterol application Oral Update**

Members were informed that the initial opinion on the Unilever application had been cleared by the Chair and would be forwarded to the Commission shortly.

**10. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for 29 January 2003, in Aviation House.