

GMO(CU) UK Competent Authority Meetings			GMOUKCA/P1A/2015
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Meeting Date:	10 February 2015	Open Govt. Status:	Open
Exemptions:			

**Note of meeting held on 10 February 2015
Redgrave Court / via telecom**

**Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) UK Competent
Authority (UKCA)**

Welcome and apologies

1. This was the first meeting of representatives of the UKCA since completion of the consolidation of the Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) GMO(CU) Regulations. The purpose was to review working arrangements and communications within the UKCA.
2. Representatives from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Scottish Government (SG), HSE (Northern Ireland) and the Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture participated in the meeting. Apologies from the Welsh Government.

Terms of reference (ToR)

3. A draft version of the ToR was agreed with minor grammatical changes. The ToR will be posted on the HSE website.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Agency Agreement

4. A draft version of the MoU between HSE, Defra, Scottish and Welsh Governments, which reflected the new GMO(CU) Regulations 2014, was discussed. Whilst the substance of the MoU was agreed, cross reference to the agency agreement covering the contained use of larger GMOs needed to be added. Further work was requested to streamline and remove duplication from the annex which sets out some of the working arrangements.
5. The current agency agreement and MoU between HSE and HSENI will also have to be reviewed, when the equivalent GMO(CU) regulations come into force in Northern Ireland later in 2015.

GMO(CU) 2014 – post implementation feedback

6. HSE confirmed that the GMO(CU) Regulations 2014 had come into force on 1 October 2014. Revised guidance (L29) had been published and the HSE webpages updated. The Institute for Safety in Technology & Research also published complimentary guidance. The new regulations were positively received by the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee.
7. Only one transitional notification was received. Statistics for downloads of the revised guidance and webpages peaked in July when the draft guidance was published and again in October when the new regulations came into force. The internal GMO notification process had also been revised.

Operational feedback on notifications

8. Feedback was provided on the number of notifications and some individual examples discussed. The average number of notifications received per year is 150, with a peak of 200 notifications in 2014/15. The most common notification relates to the use of viral vectors to transduce mammalian cells.

Scientific Advisory Committee on Genetic Modification (SACGM) Feedback

9. SACGM provide advice to HSE (and the UKCA) on specified contained uses, with particular emphasis on risk assessment and containment/control measures. SACGM is in the process of revising the Compendium of Guidance which is a source of advice for users involved in contained use activities. The revised compendium will reflect changes introduced by the GMO(CU) Regulations 2014. A phased approach would be taken to updating the other parts of the Compendium. SACGM had also been considering the emerging technology of synthetic biology.

Working with other agencies

10. Defra raised awareness of other Government Agencies or Departments (e.g. Veterinary Medicines Directorate) who also have an interest in genetic modification and products thereof. It was agreed that it would be helpful to map the extent and range of interested parties to facilitate communication and joined up working.

Any other business

11. SG explained that their representative may change subject to final confirmation of organisational change.
12. In terms of recording meetings, it was agreed that a short note of the meeting should be drafted for publishing on the HSE website.
13. Members were thanked for their contributions to the meeting, the meeting was then closed.

Date of next meeting

14. The next meeting was provisionally arranged for the 23 June 2015.