

Joint statement by the Working Group on the Clostridium botulinum Guidance

Joint statement by the Working Group on the Clostridium botulinum guidance to work together and provide resources to deliver agreed outcomes

The members of the Working Group on the [Clostridium botulinum guidance](#) agree to work together:

- to better understand and prioritise the issues surrounding the current recommended 10-day shelf-life for vacuum packed (VP) and modified atmosphere packed (MAP) chilled fresh beef, lamb and pork without the addition of controlling factors. (Consultation Point A)
- to identify options to resolve issues that are identified.
- to aim to resolve priority issues.

The Working Group acknowledge that the FSA and Food Standards Scotland must maintain their commitment to being led by science and evidence during the review of the guidance.

The members of the Working Group agree to work together and to provide resources to aim to deliver the following outcomes:

1. To establish the work plan to be delivered and the ownership of relevant activities.
2. To undertake a review of the international standards and third country national standards for the shelf-life of VP/MAP fresh beef, lamb and pork including:
 - Details of the standards, legislation and guidance applied by other countries concerning the shelf-life of vacuum and modified atmosphere packed chilled fresh beef, lamb and pork.
 - Details of how other countries view the risk of C. botulinum and the need for controls to address that risk.
3. To establish ownership of and enable the provision of appropriate guidance to assist with the application of appropriately validated shelf-life, i.e. use by dates, for vacuum and modified atmosphere packed chilled fresh beef, lamb and pork in particular in respect of C. botulinum.
4. To identify and provide evidence to inform the commissioning of the recommended ACMSF revisit of its [1992 report on Vacuum Packaging and Associated Processes](#), and in particular the risk posed by C. botulinum.
5. To identify evidence to support delivery of a comprehensive review of the 'guidance on the safety and shelf-life of vacuum and modified atmosphere packed chilled foods with respect to non-proteolytic Clostridium botulinum' following the recommended ACMSF review of its 1992 report.

Organisations represented on the Working Group

[Food Standards Agency](#)

[Food Standards Scotland](#)

[British Meat Processors Association](#) (BMPA)

[British Retail Consortium](#) (BRC)

[Chilled Food Association](#) (CFA)

[Northern Ireland Meat Exporters Association](#) (NIMEA)

[Northern Ireland Pork and Bacon Forum](#)

[Provision Trade Federation](#) (PTF)

[Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers](#) (SAMW)