RAC Meeting Minutes (September 1, 1999)

DRAFT MINUTES
12:00 - 1:30
4700 River Road, Riverdale, Maryland

(submitted for representative review Sept 3, 1999 with request for revision by September 13, 1999)

All agencies except USDA-CSREES , USDA - ARS, and NMFS were represented. Dr. Karen Hulebak (USDA FSIS), co-chair of the policy council, was also in attendance.

I. Implementation of Annual Plan

Discussion: Dr. Long (FDA JIFSAN) led a review of the annual plan.

Goal 1: Finalize RAC Charter

This has been accomplished. Copies were distributed to representatives.

Action: Please forward copies to your policy representative and your charter signator.

Goal 2: Initiate membership from additional agencies

This has been accomplished with the addition of USDA CSREES, USDA APHIS, DOD VSA, EPA OPPTS, and EPA ORD.

Goal 3: Conceptualize and guide the development of comprehensive comparative risk analysis approaches to assist in interagency strategic planning for Food Safety

1. Prepare and present risk ranking options to the President's Food Safety Council (PFSC)

Discussion: Dr. Long reported that the recommendation had been put forward by the PFSC in their recent report to the National Academy of Sciences, but was not formally presented to them. He also noted that the recommendation had been presented to the RAC policy council.

Action: Dr. Hulebak will assess whether this presentation is still needed.

2. It was unknown whether a 2001 funding request by FDA had survived the budget exercise.

Action: Dr. Rouse (FDA RAC support) will follow up.

3. Convene interagency group of economists to assist the ERS.

Action: This is currently underway, led by Dr. Roberts (USDA ERS), but awaiting CDC data release. EPA, CDC, USDA, and FDA economists are working together on this project.

4. Review and evaluation of methodology for comparative risk rankings.

Action: Dr. Rouse will contact professionals in this field and access feasibility of a presentation to the RAC at the December quarterly meeting.

5. The working group on this project currently includes Dr. Roberts, Dr. Rouse, Dr. McElvaine (USDA ORACBA), Dr. Choffnes (EPA OPPTS), Dr. Schaub (EPA OW), Dr. Whiting (FDA CFSAN), Dr. Kuschler (ERS RAC support), Dr. Rulpe (NMFS), Dr. Nardinelli (FDA RAC support), and Dr. Long.

Goal 4: Participate in the Risk Assessment Clearinghouse Activities:

1. Guide the development of the technical workshop agenda and participate in the workshop.

Action: This meeting occurred on Sept. 2, 1999. Dr. Long will prepare a summary report.

2. Assist in drafting the Clearinghouse framework document

Action: Dr. Fineblum (UM Clearinghouse Coordinator) will present revisions recommended at the workshop and solicit further input.

3. Facilitate the incorporation of agency-specific databases:

Action: A plea was made to agencies to focus on what their agencies might be able and willing to provide, beginning with a review of their own websites to look for appropriate linkages.

4. Promotion of the Clearinghouse concept and usefulness at conferences, meetings, etc.

Action: Dr. Fineblum will coordinate this activity

5. Contribute completed analyses, methods and models

Action: All agencies should investigate as mentioned above.

6. The workgroup for the Clearinghouse currently includes Dr. McElvaine, Dr. Whiting Dr. Roberts, Dr. Choffnes, Dr. Schaub, Ms. Coleman, Dr. Severin (DOD VSA), Dr. Ruple, Dr. Walderhaug (FDA RAC support), and Dr. Long.

Goal 5: Advise the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research (JIFSR) on current and planned Federally-funded research that focuses on, or materially may contribute to, food safety risk assessment

1. Develop operational definitions for risk-assessment related research for use by JIFSR and advise on how to capture risk assessment related research in existing inventories

Action: Dr. Esteban (CDC) will contact Bill Wagner, interim Director of JIFSR, to initiate dialogue.

Goal 6: Provide guidance towards the development of enhanced investigatory techniques for outbreak epidemiology designed to provide data for risk

1. Advising current federally-funded programs designed to identify outbreaks amenable to enhanced investigatory techniques, and monitoring and reviewing progress at quarterly RAC meetings.

Action: A presentation of the first year progress report and second year plans will be presented by the National Center for Food Safety and Technology at the next quarterly meeting of the RAC. RAC representatives are urged to invite appropriate

agency experts to attend this part of the RAC meeting. Dr. Armstrong (FDA NCFST) will take the lead. Expansion of this effort to include chemical hazards was raised by Dr. Choffnes and discussed.

2. Formation of a workgroup has been recommended. Membership tentatively includes Dr. Lang, Dr. Gaylor (FDA NCTR), Ms. Coleman, Dr. Armstrong, Dr. Long, Dr. Esteban, and Dr. Walderhaug.

Goal 7: Improve the basic understanding of dose-response relationships for foodborne hazards, with an initial emphasis on microbiological hazards

1. Internet posting of Aug 4, 1998 meeting transcripts.

Action: Dr. Rouse has prepared a web-based proceedings. All participants have been given the opportunity to make revisions. Dr. Fineblum will post these proceedings by October 1, 1999

2. Active solicitation of comments via listserves, direct mailing to meeting participants.

Action: Dr. Fineblum will address with input from the dose-response workgroup

3. Plan and conduct at least one organism-specific workshop on dose-response as a follow-up to the August 4, 1998 workshop.

Action: Dr. Long will convene a meeting of the dose-response workgroup to study options and develop a draft workshop plan.

4. Review dose-frequency software developed by FDA.

Action: Ms Coleman will initiate this review

5. Evaluation of current federal research activities initiated by the RAC

Action: Although not discussed, key RAC members will be invited to an upcoming annual review.

6. Dr. Choffnes will join the workgroup, which currently consists of Dr. Lang (NIH), Dr. Gaylor, Ms. Coleman, Dr. Long, Dr. Schaub, and Dr. Miliotis (FDA RAC support).

Goal 8: Provide leadership in the development of risk communication approaches for foodborne hazards and potential interventions.

1. Review and evaluation of methodology for risk communication approaches

Action: Invite Dr. Connely (USDA/ JIFSAN) to next quarterly meeting to review ongoing efforts.

2. Assist agencies in reviewing their analyses of the effectiveness of the "Fight BAC" campaign, food handling labels, thermometer use for hamburgers, raw oyster consumption risks, or other risk communication efforts.

Action: Invite Dr. Connely to next quarterly meeting to review ongoing efforts.

Goal 9: Provide leadership to improve application of risk assessment models and methods to identify interventions from farm-to-table to control pathogens and other hazards, and to estimate their likely impact (both probability and consequence).

Action: There was some confusion over the specific working plans to achieve this goal. RAC members are asked to address comments about it to Dr. Long.

II. Planning for Public RAC Quarterly Meeting

Discussion: The RAC Charter provides for one annual public meeting that coincides with a RAC quarterly meeting. Dr. Long described two basic types of public meetings - the first being a regular quarterly meeting with an opportunity for public comment at appropriate intervals; the second being a series of presentations on topical issues by RAC representatives that is open to the public and allows opportunity for public comment.

Action: It was tentatively decided that the public meeting should occur in March of 2000 in conjunction with a Society of Toxicologists Annual Meeting. Options for the specific meeting format were discussed, but no conclusions were reached. Funding issues were raised but not resolved. A working group including Dr. Choffnes, Ms. Coleman, Dr. Esteban, Dr. Roberts, and Dr. Long was formed to develop a draft agenda for the public meeting and the next quarterly meeting.

III. Request for formal recognition of a liaison role for European Union.

Discussion: A draft paragraph that describes a proposed formal liaison relationship between the RAC and a parallel body in the EU was presented by Dr. Long. The paragraph notes that any such formal liaison would require amendment of the RAC Charter. Significant concerns were raised by RAC representatives.

Action: Dr. Long will speak with the original requesters (FDA, USDA, and EPA representatives to the Transatlantic Economic Partnership Action Plan on regulatory cooperation) and ask them to present background to the full RAC via teleconference. RAC Policy Council representatives will also be invited to attend.