

News story: GC contributes to special edition of international journal

The Government Chemist has been invited to contribute to a special edition on food allergen analysis in the highly respected journal of the AOAC INTERNATIONAL

AOAC INTERNATIONAL (formerly Association of Official Analytical Chemists) is a not-for-profit association founded in 1884 as a forum for microbiological and chemical standard methods used globally to promote trade and to facilitate public health and safety.

The J AOAC Int special edition on food allergens is being guest edited by Bert Popping and Carmen Diaz-Amigo and will contain three papers from the Government Chemist. Michael Walker, Malcolm Burns and colleagues describe the science behind the ground breaking analysis for allergens by ELISA, Molecular Biology, and Protein Mass Spectrometry during the investigation of the almond and mahaleb incidents in 2015. Michael and co-authors Hazel Gowland and John Points discuss managing food allergens in the UK retail supply chain in a second paper. Milena Quaglia, Kate Groves and Adam Cryar assess recovery of food allergens from solid processed matrices applying SI (International System of Units) traceably quantified milk protein solutions and a novel extraction method in a third paper in the special edition.

The special edition will span the globe with contributions from five continents on topics as diverse as food allergen labelling and regulation, quantitative ELISA, targeted and novel mass spectrometry approaches to allergen analysis and analytical devices for use by consumers. The edition will be open access and is expected to be available on the J AOAC International website in December.

Research and analysis: Future of the sea: the future of marine biodiversity

This report summarises the evidence for trends in marine biodiversity and the implications for the UK and the Overseas Territories. It explores:

- the main drivers of biodiversity loss including climate change and overexploitation
- how this loss impacts the benefits that humans gain from the natural environment

It was commissioned as part of the Foresight [Future of the Sea project](#).

Research and analysis: Future of the sea: impacts of sea level rise on the UK

This report summarises the evidence for how sea level rise is expected to affect the UK and the ways to manage increased coastal flood risk. It includes:

- future sea level rise scenarios and associated sources of uncertainty
- current and projected impacts of sea level rise for infrastructure, businesses and communities
- possible responses

It was commissioned as part of the Foresight [Future of the Sea project](#).

Research and analysis: Future of the sea: hazardous chemicals and physical contaminants

This report summarises what is known about the presence of pollution in the UK and its Overseas Territories, and its impacts. It explores:

- the current levels of chemical and physical pollutants (such as radioactivity, noise, light pollutants) and likely future trends
- the implications of pollution for marine biodiversity, fisheries and seafood
- international and regional legislation to regulate pollutants

It was commissioned as part of the Foresight [Future of the Sea project](#).

News story: CMA launches consultation on 2018/19 annual plan

Making sure consumers get a good deal from businesses and that firms treat their customers fairly remains central to the CMA's work.

Across all its work next year, the CMA [proposes](#) to take a particular interest in vulnerable consumers and ensuring that markets can be trusted. It also plans to work with partners, including groups which represent vulnerable consumers, to learn more about how people's circumstances can affect their ability to engage in markets and get a fair deal.

The CMA also plans to better connect the CMA and the role of competition with wider society, by clearly explaining how better competition is good for ordinary people who benefit from better products and services, and good for the economy because it means that the best businesses succeed and grow.

To ensure its practices, interventions and capabilities keep pace with the tech-enabled evolution of business models and practices, the CMA plans to continue to expand its digital analysis capabilities, including by establishing a new digital, data and tech team. In the online world it intends to make sure that organisations which hold significant market power do not abuse it and that algorithms and forms of artificial intelligence do not become enablers of collusions.

There are [proven links](#) between strong competition, higher productivity and economic growth. By prioritising cases in markets which underpin and enable economic growth, and helping to create the conditions which allow innovative businesses that treat their customers well to emerge and succeed, in 2018/19 the CMA can continue to make a valuable contribution to addressing the UK's longstanding problem with low productivity.

In 2018/19, the CMA will continue its preparations for the UK's exit from the EU, building its capacity and capabilities to prepare for a greater role in the review of global mergers and international competition enforcement investigations post-Exit.

The CMA will also increase its presence and capabilities outside London by opening a new, expanded Edinburgh office, ensuring that it is keeping in touch with markets and consumer issues in Scotland.

David Currie, CMA Chairman, said:

With increasing and accelerating changes to the world in which we operate – in the run-up to and beyond the UK's exit from the EU – the coming few years will be ones of opportunity and transformation, for the CMA and the competition and consumer regimes.

The investments we have made since we were formed in 2014 are delivering real results for consumers, and we will continue to invest further so that our capacity and capabilities match our ambition.

We've carried out a wide range of work that makes a real world difference for people every day, as well as helping fair-dealing businesses to thrive and the economy to grow. We have been increasing pace, scale and impact across all our work and our draft priorities show that this is a journey we are committed to continuing in the coming year. We look forward to receiving views on our proposed plans for next year.

The CMA will enter 2018/19 with a substantial volume of ongoing work and is currently running 15 competition enforcement cases, 7 consumer enforcement cases, 11 merger investigations and one market investigation. Most recently, it [provisionally found](#) that a pharmaceutical company abused its dominant position by overcharging the NHS by millions for an essential thyroid drug. Having concluded its [digital comparison tools \(DCTs\) market study](#) in September, it also recently [published the final report](#) in its study into care homes for the elderly, issuing a series of recommendations to make the market work better for residents and their families.