

## **Commonwealth Defence Science Organisation (CDSO) Food Study Group (FSG)**

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**Abstract.** The Food Study Group (FSG) under the Commonwealth Defence Science Organisation was established in 1962 to review major items of Defence research programmes and exchange scientific information in the commonwealth countries.

This paper gives an insight into the set-up, terms of reference, membership and the way research programmes are conceived and dealt with.

### **1. Introduction**

The Commonwealth Defence Science Organisation, Food Study Group CDSO (FSG) is one of the specialist groups forming part of the CDSO.

This article provides a background to the setting up of the CDSO (FSG) and to do this it is necessary to begin by giving an outline of the CDSO itself. The Food Study Group is dealt with in detail covering membership, terms of reference and a broad review of how member countries approach research into defence feeding.

### **2. Commonwealth Defence Science Organisation**

#### *2.1. History*

In July 1946 an informal commonwealth conference on Defence Science was convened by the UK to further collaboration in the field of defence science within the commonwealth. This conference recommended that a Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Defence Science (CACDS) should be constituted.

Under its terms of reference the field of activity of the CACDS was confined to scientific research relating to defence and the development of weapons, equipment

and stores up to the testing of experimental prototypes, but did not include the engineering design for production. Within these terms of reference the committee was to :

- (a) consider and review the major items of the defence research programmes of the commonwealth countries and make recommendations,
- (b) keep under review machinery for commonwealth liaison in defence science, including methods of exchange of scientific information and interchange of scientific staff, and
- (c) meet about every 2 years in one of the member countries.

The CACDS was served by a permanent working party in the UK, consisting of representatives of all members and a secretarial staff, to administer the affairs of the committee.

The original member countries were Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the UK.

In the light of experience the CACDS conference of 1961, held at Shrivenham, UK, decided to reorganise the committee, with the object of effecting more efficient co-operation and co-ordination in the field of defence science. It was also decided that the CACDS should be re-named the Commonwealth Defence Science Organisation and that its working party should become the Commonwealth Defence Science Committee.

The CDSO therefore came into existence in 1962 and its terms of reference were based on the recommendations made at the 1961 CACDS conference. These terms of reference were last amended at the 1975 Executive Committee meeting to emphasise that the organisation was an advisory body.

### **3. CDSO Organisation**

The policy of the CDSO is directed by the Executive Committee whose members are the Chief Defence Scientist or other Government nominee of each member country. The chairman of the Executive Committee is elected by members of the committee, but historically the UK representative has always filled this post and continues at present to do so. In the past the Executive Committee has met every 2 or 3 years in various commonwealth countries, but at the 1975 conference it was decided that they should meet as required, to review the objectives of the organisation and machinery for implementing them. This decision was reflected accordingly in the revised terms of reference.

To provide continuity between the meeting of the Executive Committee, the Commonwealth Defence Science Committee meets several times a year in London.

The members of this committee are representatives of member countries, drawn from the staff of their High Commissions in London and the chairman is appointed by the Executive Committee. Again, both historically and currently this post has been held by the UK representative.

### 3.1. *Membership*

Prior to 1969 there were 2 levels of membership; full members played an active role and had representatives on both the Executive Committee and the CDSC, whilst 'papers only' members comprised those who felt unable to take an active part in the organisation, but who wished to receive papers in order to keep abreast of developments. Members were required to pay an annual subscription which depended on their membership category, but when the annual subscription was ceased in 1969 the dual category membership was dropped. Today the CDSO consists only of 'Members' and the extent to which they participate in the organisation's activities is a matter of their own choice. The present membership falls into 3 groups : those who are represented on the CDSC only, and those who are represented on neither but receive all papers.

When members not represented on the Executive Committee have sent delegates to a CDSO symposium, and an Executive Committee meeting has been held at the same time, it has been the policy to invite the leaders of the delegations to attend the Executive Committee meeting, to put forward any points their authorities may wish to make to the Committee.

### 3.2. *Secretariat*

When the organisation was first formed the secretariat was provided on a part-time basis by the United Kingdom. In 1964 a full-time Central Secretariat was set up in the UK with salaries being met from members' annual subscriptions. By 1967 the work load no longer justified a full-time secretariat and the post reverted to a part-time one. When annual subscriptions were ceased in 1969 the UK agreed to continue to provide the part-time secretariat at no charge and continue to do so, the secretariat being provided by the UK Ministry of Defence.

## 4. **Commonwealth Defence Science Organisation (Food Study Group)**

### 4.1. *General*

The Food Study Group (FSG) was originally set up in 1955 to exchange information of defence food research. The majority of FSG activities are concerned with food in relation to military feeding; there is a minor interest in civilian emergency feeding. Meetings of the FSG are held at approximately the same time as those of the Executive Committee, that is, approximately every 2 or 3 years.

#### *4.2. Organisation*

Until 1981 the group's secretariat was provided by the UK Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; this responsibility has been taken over by the UK Ministry of Defence. The Chairman of the group is provided by the host country whenever they meet. He is elected at the first business meeting, then serves in post until the next CDSO (FSG) meeting is held. During each meeting a host country is established for the next meeting. It is from the delegation of this nominated country that a Vice-Chairman is elected; he then normally follows as Chairman on election to that post when the forthcoming meeting is held.

The secretariat publish a Newsletter twice each year through which it is expected that member countries exchange information of mutual interest. Each member country usually produces an Activities Report, and writes a Progress Report to the CDSO FSG before each meeting.

#### *4.3. Terms of Reference*

The FSG reviews its Terms of Reference at each meeting. These were last amended in 1978 and since then read :-

- (a) To exchange information on food research for military and civilian defence purposes.
- (b) To pool knowledge and resources where possible and to facilitate the training of appropriate personnel to participate in such research.
- (c) To prepare progress reports and to make recommendations to the Commonwealth Defence Science Organisation.

#### *4.4. Conduct of CDSO (FSG) Meetings*

Meetings are divided between Business and Technical sessions. At the business meetings members discuss, arrange and agree the orderly running of the group. Technical sessions are open to invite scientific and technical experts from member countries, as well as the host nation. It is incumbent therefore for the host country to hold meetings where it is possible for scientist and experts from Armed Services, other Government bodies and the civilian food industry of the host country to attend. Topics for presentation of papers and discussion are selected and circulated well beforehand.

At the last meeting, held in Australia in 1982 several items were identified as worthy of consideration for study by member countries. These are : (a) Future development of packaging technology in the field of Defence feeding and the need for some degree of standardisation in labelling of food components. (b) Feeding

systems for use in a chemical, biological or nuclear warfare environment. (c) Purification techniques and packaging of water for field and survival situations. (d) Newer food processing methods such as retort heating and flexible packaging of combat rations. (e) Continued development of field feeding systems for 'conventional' warfare. (f) Introduction of rapid microbiological methods for monitoring the safety of foods used by Defence forces. (g) The importance of the human in the elucidation of Defence strategies and the need to consider nutritional anthropology in the development process. (h) The need for further programs aimed at improving food dehydration and compression technologies. The advantages of freeze-drying and their recognition in food forms being incorporated into new field feeding systems.

Discussion on these subjects will form the basis of the technical sessions for the forthcoming meeting to be held in UK in 1985.

It is worth noting that CDSO (FSG) invites observers from the United States to attend the technical sessions of each meeting. The FSG appreciates the value of having these observers at its meetings and acknowledges their contribution to the discussions.

## **5. Member Countries Resources**

There are various approaches by member countries towards research into Defence feeding to meet the terms of reference. Australia, India and Malaya have separate Defence Food Research establishments whose task it is to provide the Defence authorities with solutions to the problems raised, whether in the field of armed service or civilian emergency feeding. Others, such as Canada and the UK, rely upon a combination of Government departments in conjunction with the civilian food industry to achieve the same result as a dedicated laboratory. Here one department or another will monitor all that is being progressed in the food industry generally and initiate individual projects as applicable to its own requirements.

Each country follows its own programme responding to the needs of its own governing agencies. As explained above, FSG members do work on subjects of agreed mutual interest and benefit; the aim being to provide a framework within which interoperability, through understanding if nothing else, can be achieved.