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# EFSAnews

# 20 - JULY 2009

## In focus

### EFSA bolsters its approach to public consultations

In June, EFSA's Stakeholder Consultative Platform concluded their discussions and endorsed guidelines on how to strengthen the Authority's approach to public consultation on its scientific outputs. This will further enhance the Authority's transparency, effectiveness and the contribution of public consultations to EFSA's scientific work.

The document reflects on the experiences from over 33 public consultations and major events that EFSA has held so far. The document lays out EFSA's integrated approach on public consultations. It aims to ensure that public consultations follow common criteria and allow for greater public involvement. The document outlines the criteria for identifying the need for a public consultation, the types of scientific outputs on which public consultations can be launched and defines how the outcome of the public consultation process should be reported.

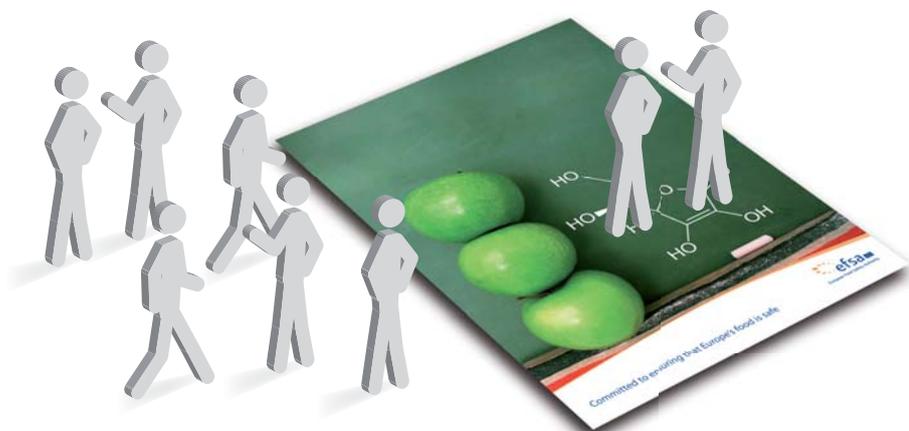
Public consultations can be launched at the start of a risk assessment or before it is finalised. Clear criteria need to be defined to determine when public consultation should be

considered; for instance, when EFSA begins a new area of work and input is sought (e.g. nutrition and health claims). Consultation may also be required for complex, emerging scientific issues where information and data are rare (e.g. animal cloning), or where science has made substantial progress but risk assessment approaches are still being developed (e.g. nanotechnology).

EFSA publishes consultations on its website. In addition, EFSA may follow a more targeted approach to reach all interested parties. This could include engaging the Stakeholder Consultative Platform on key issues, technical meetings or hearings, and using specialised media to reach specific interest groups.

The Authority's Stakeholder Consultative Platform regularly meets to assist EFSA in the development of its overall relations and policy with stakeholders. It is composed of EU-wide stakeholder organisations working in areas across the food chain.

For more information.



## Calls

### External scientific experts sought to review the quality of EFSA's scientific outputs

EFSA published a call to select external reviewers for a working group that will help the Authority evaluate the quality of its scientific work.

In 2007, EFSA proposed a review system to help assess the quality of its scientific activities. The system involves a self review, during the development of opinions, an internal review by senior scientific and communications staff at EFSA, and an external review by high-level independent external experts.

The present call sought to find external experts to help EFSA identify whether in the development of its scientific outputs best assessment practices were followed in collecting, describing, evaluating and interpreting the scientific data. The experts will also assess whether the conclusions and recommendations were supported by an adequate description of the reasoning underlying the interpretation of the data, with due attention paid to any assumptions and uncertainties, and whether the terms of reference were adequately addressed in the conclusions.

In total, 24 external experts will be included in the working group and a reserve list will be created. Three experts will come together in an external review subgroup to cover each of the seven areas of activity: chemical risk assessment and connected fields (2 subgroups), nutrition and novel foods, biological risk assessment and zoonoses data collection, animal health and welfare, plant health, GMOs, risk assessment methodologies and emerging risks. The external evaluation of all the activity areas should be finalised by the end of September 2009.

**The call was launched on 24 April and closed on 29 June.**

For more information.

## In focus

### Lower cadmium intake from food, says EFSA



The assessment of EFSA's Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain (CONTAM) of the human health risks of cadmium in food resulted in a lower tolerable weekly intake (TWI) compared to the one which was previously established. The TWI is the amount of a contaminant which can be consumed every week over a lifetime without an appreciable health risk to consumers.

Based on an analysis of new data, the new level has been set at 2.5 micrograms per kilogram of body weight ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg bw}$ ), roughly the level which also marks the average dietary exposure to cadmium for adults across Europe. Vegetarians, children, smokers and people living in highly contaminated areas, can have a higher level of exposure, up to twice the TWI. The CONTAM Panel concluded that for individuals, the risk of adverse effects from cadmium is very low at the current level of dietary exposure, but it was also stated that at the population level, exposure to cadmium should be reduced.

Cadmium is a heavy metal which enters the environment naturally from, for example, volcanic emissions and the weathering of rocks, as well as from industry and agriculture. It can accumulate in plants and animals. Cadmium is primarily toxic to the kidney, but can also cause bone demineralisation and cancer. Non-smokers are mainly exposed to cadmium from

foods such as cereals and cereal products, vegetables, nuts and pulses, starchy roots and potatoes, as well as meat and meat products. High levels were also found in seaweed, fish and seafood, food supplements, mushrooms and chocolate. However, as these foods are eaten to a lesser extent, they are not major contributors to exposure.

According to EFSA's assessment, vegetarians – who eat relatively high amounts of cadmium-containing food, including cereals, nuts, oilseeds and pulses – were estimated to have an average weekly exposure of up to 5.4  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg bw}$ . Food produced in highly contaminated areas may lead to higher exposure levels. Smoking can also contribute to a similar internal exposure as diet.

Dietary exposure could be higher for children than adults, due to the greater amount of food consumed by children relative to their bodyweight. For children, house dust can also be an important source of overall exposure to cadmium.

The analysis was based on a large number of cadmium studies as well as data on cadmium from 20 different countries, national dietary surveys and EU-wide consumption data collected by EFSA.

For more information.

## Exposure to two common ingredients in energy drinks not a safety concern, concludes EFSA

Exposure to taurine and d-glucuronolactone, two ingredients commonly used in so-called energy drinks, through regular consumption, is not a safety concern, according to a scientific opinion recently adopted by EFSA.

*"This opinion evaluated the safety of these two ingredients as constituents of energy drinks, rather than energy drinks themselves which contain different combinations of a number of different substances,"* said John Christian Larsen, Chair of the EFSA Panel behind the evaluation. *"Looking at the available consumption figures and taking into account new toxicological data, the Panel considered that specific questions previously raised on the safety of these ingredients by the EU's former Scientific Committee on Food [SCF] have been resolved."*

Taurine and d-glucuronolactone occur as natural ingredients in food, and are nor-

mal human metabolites. However, they are also used at much higher levels in energy drinks. The new data confirmed a No Observed Adverse Effect Level (NOAEL) of 1,000mg per kilogram of bodyweight per day for both substances.

EFSA concluded that a sufficient margin of safety exists for mean and high-level regular consumers of energy drinks, drinking on average 125ml (0.5 cans) and 350ml (1.4 cans) per person per day respectively; hence, exposure to taurine and d-glucuronolactone at these levels is not a safety concern.

In the opinion, EFSA noted reports of acute health problems, including fatalities, in young people consuming energy drinks either in very high amounts (e.g. a reported case of someone drinking 1,420ml), in combination with physical exercise or more frequently together with alcohol. EFSA also noted the SCF conclusion that the co-consumption of alcohol and/or drugs reported in most of these cases makes the interpretation of the reported cases particularly difficult. With regard to some recent reports, the Panel considered it possible that the health problems mentioned could be due to the well-known side effects of high caffeine intake, while the assumption of a causal relationship with taurine intake is lacking scientific evidence.

Based on new data from human studies, EFSA considered that cumulative interactions between taurine and caffeine with regard to the loss of water and sodium from the body were unlikely. The Panel also agreed with the SCF conclusion that it was unlikely that d-glucuronolactone would have any interaction with caffeine, taurine, alcohol or the effects of exercise. However, EFSA also concluded that since exposure was based on data reported by the SCF in 2003, current exposure data on the consumption of energy drinks, in particular of adolescents and young adults, may need to be collected.

**For more information.**



## Latest publications

**Strategic Plan 2009-2013 published as a glossy report**



EFSA has published a print version of its Strategic Plan for 2009-2013. The plan, adopted by the Management Board in December 2008, sets out EFSA's medium to long-term strategic direction.

Six key, high-level objectives have been identified in the Plan to help the Authority set priorities over the coming five years as it faces continual change in the area it works, whether they are driven by regulatory, environmental, scientific and technological or global forces.

**For the full document.**

## Latest publications

### Greater scientific cooperation and output doubles, shows EFSA's 2008 Annual Report



EFSA's recently-published Annual Report for 2008, underlines how the Authority has matured and continued to grow last year. The report shows that among EFSA's achievements in 2008, the Authority doubled its scientific output, it significantly expanded scientific cooperation with Member States, and beyond, and it launched its 5-year Strategic Plan.

In 2008, EFSA finalised 489 scientific outputs. These included scientific opinions, reports, guidance documents and statements. Two new scientific panels were also created.

Scientific cooperation was also strengthened. Networks grew to include 1,200 experts, 30 national food safety bodies and almost 400 scientific organisations. EFSA Focal Points were established in all 27 EU Member States, and cooperation agreements were signed with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre.

EFSA mapped out its future direction, priorities and organisation in its Strategic Plan for 2009-2013 to prepare Europe's food safety watchdog for the challenges ahead in the medium- and long-term, such as emerging risks, global warming and globalisation.

For the first time, the Annual Report will also be made available in all EU official languages in the autumn.

For more information.

# Building bridges

## EFSA marks Czech EU Presidency



The Czech Presidency of the EU runs for the first half of 2009. In recognition, EFSA held one of its management board meetings in Prague and also co-organised a major food safety event with the Czechs.

On 30-31 March 2009, EFSA's Management Board met in Prague. During this meeting

the Board approved the nomination of 174 independent scientific experts to renew the Authority's Scientific Committee and eight of its Panels so they can begin work in June/July 2009. The Board also adopted the 2010 Preliminary Management Plan and the Preliminary Draft Budget for 2010.

Also in Prague, on 21-22 April, EFSA's Executive Director, Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, gave a keynote speech at the conference 'Food research in support of science-based regulations: Challenges for producers and consumers'. Over 250 participants attended this event co-organised by the Czech Ministry for Agriculture, the Institute of Chemical Technology and EFSA. The conference included sessions on the EU's position in food safety and international collaboration, food quality and safety control, consumers and food safety issues, new technologies for food production, food safety regulation and research challenges, and the perspectives of food industry in meeting consumer demands.

For more information.

## Spanish food safety agency visits EFSA



The President of the Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition (AESAN), Roberto Sabrido and its Executive Director, Ana Troncoso, visited EFSA on 12 February. During the visit, EFSA and AESAN exchanged views on work programmes and activities but also on joint activities in 2009 and in

the first half of 2010 when Spain will take over the Presidency of the EU. It was also another opportunity for EFSA and AESAN to further build on their existing cooperation.

## From Japan to the US: Putting EFSA's international strategy to work



During March, EFSA put its strategic approach to international activities into practice by hosting a visit from a Japanese delegation and meeting key organisations in the US. The approach, adopted by EFSA's Management Board in January 2009, foresees the Authority continuing to forge ever closer ties with key countries outside Europe.

Accordingly, on 5 and 6 March, EFSA received a visit of a delegation from the Japanese Food Safety Commission, led by Dr Toshio Ohtani, its Deputy Director General. The visit allowed both organisations to become better acquainted and build bridges. To this end, the EFSA Executive Director, Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, and Dr Ohtani exchanged letters stating the intention to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on future cooperation.

The following week, from 9-13 March, an EFSA Delegation, led by EFSA's Executive Director, and the Chair of EFSA's Scientific Committee, Vittorio Silano, went to the US to visit various national institutes. EFSA visited the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Service, and its Center of Epidemiology on Animal Health, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Food and Drug Administration. EFSA also met the Head of the European Commission's Delegation in Washington. The fruitful visits consolidated existing contacts and networks, as well as helped identify relevant areas and contacts for future cooperation. Both parties also gained a better understanding of each other's work.

## EFSA further strengthens its ties with Slovenia

EFSA's Executive Director, Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, delivered the keynote speech at the 'Strengthening Capacity in Food Safety' event on 18 February 2009. The event, in Ljubljana (Slovenia), was jointly organised by EFSA, the Slovenian Institute for Public Health and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food.

The event showcased the importance of EFSA's cooperation with Member States and the tools used to work together in practice. EFSA shared its thoughts on the challenges and opportunities in risk communications. The Slovene Advisory Forum and National Focal Point members presented what was achieved in 2008 and their plans for 2009.

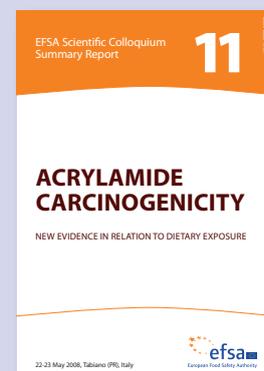


60 participants from national food authorities, industry, consumers, and scientists attended. Also during the meeting, EFSA and Slovenia's Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Food signed the 2009 Focal Point agreement.

For more information.

## Latest publications

Acrylamide carcinogenicity, new scientific colloquium report available



The latest in EFSA's series of scientific colloquium reports has been published. It covers acrylamide carcinogenicity and new evidence in relation to dietary exposure to acrylamide. This was the subject of EFSA's 11<sup>th</sup> scientific colloquium, which took place in Tabiano, Italy, on 22-23 May 2008.

The colloquium was organised to stimulate an open exchange of views and expertise on new information on acrylamide that has become available since the Joint FAO/WHO expert committee on food additives (JECFA) carried out a risk assessment of acrylamide in 2005, classifying acrylamide as a potentially harmful substance in food.

The debate focused on the current state and future challenges regarding the potential toxicity and cancer risk associated with dietary exposure to acrylamide. Acrylamide is a contaminant that can be formed during the preparation of food at high temperatures, particularly in starchy foods such as crisps, french fries and bread.

The report contains the presentations given at the meeting, reports from discussion groups, as well as an overall summary and recommendations.

For more information.

## Events

### Celebrating Europe Week – Festa dell'Europa



#### Parma, 5-10 May 2009

Across Europe celebrations are held on Schuman day (9 May) to mark the anniversary of a key landmark in the development of today's European Union. In recognition, EFSA planned a week of events in Parma from 5-10 May 2009, to showcase and explain Europe, the European food safety system and EFSA's role in it. For the first time both the European Commission and European Parliament were represented at the event which contributed to the promotion of the European parliamentary elections. The events included concerts, quizzes, lectures, school competitions, a cinema festival, a Schuman day celebration, a theatre show and an exhibition area.

The event was organised together with Comune di Parma, Europass and Provincia di Parma with the participation of the European Commission's delegation in Milan, Europe Direct and Collegio Europeo (the College of Europe) and with support from the European Parliament.

Over 5000 people participated in the activities and over 50000 were reached through regional media.

For more information.

## Building bridges

### EFSA talks to stakeholders about health claims and botanicals

EFSA met with organisations representing food supplements manufacturers and suppliers in Europe, on 25 February 2009 in Parma, to discuss its work on nutrition and health claims, and botanicals.

During the technical meeting, EFSA talked to the European Responsible Nutrition Alliance (ERNA), the European Federation of Associations of Health Product Manufacturers (EHPM), and the European Botanical Forum (EBF). They were given an overview of the most recent developments on claims to be assessed by EFSA under the EU legislation on nutrition and health claims, as well as its work on botanicals, such as ginkgo and ginseng, and their derived preparations. Participants also heard about

EFSA's work on developing guidance for the safety assessment of botanicals, and the Authority's assessment of the safety of nutritional substances added to food and food supplements.

*"This was a very good meeting,"* said EFSA's Director of Risk Assessment Riitta Maijala. *"It gave us the opportunity to hear feedback from industry associations on our current work in the area of botanicals and botanical preparations."* She also invited participants to an EFSA meeting on 15 June that took stock of EFSA's work on health and nutrition claims.

For more information.

### EFSA hosts regional schools food safety award ceremony



On 24 March 2009, the award ceremony for the Emilia Romagna regional school competition on the importance of food safety and quality in nutrition took place at EFSA's headquarters in Parma.

This was the second year of the event organised by the regional government of Emilia Romagna and Europass, in cooperation with EFSA and Alimos, an organisation promoting food awareness among

children. The event targeted secondary school students aged 14-18 and was divided into two sections: video/multimedia and graphic design. The winners, a class from the Toschi institute in Parma, were awarded a three-day trip to Brussels to visit EU institutions. Around 130 people attended the event.

For more information.

## EFSA begins Europe-wide research project on bee decline



EFSA has awarded a grant of €100,000 to a consortium of European scientific institutes to study so-called 'Colony Collapse Disorder' (CCD) in honey bees.

The nine-month project began in January 2009. It aims to identify factors which may contribute to CCD and to highlight gaps in scientific knowledge in order to help guide future research. It will also analyse existing bee surveillance programmes and assess the suitability of the data for measuring CCD across Europe.

*"This project will be an important step forward in international efforts to understand and help tackle the reported decline in bee populations, which could have widespread implications not only in environmental terms but also with regard to the food chain,"* said Hubert Deluyker, EFSA's Director of Scientific Cooperation and Assistance. *"I strongly encourage scientists and other interested parties – such as beekeeping associations, for example – to share their valuable scientific data, knowledge and experience with the organisers of this project."*

Honey bees play an important role in the pollination of crops and a decline in bee populations could have a serious impact on agricultural production. Since 2003, there have been reports of serious losses of bees from beehives in Europe, but the true extent of the losses is hard to estimate as data collection is fragmented and surveillance methodologies are diverse. The cause of CCD is not known, although various factors are thought to be responsible including starvation, viruses, mites, pesticide exposure and climate change.

In 2008, EFSA reported on its preliminary survey of the situation in Europe, which drew on information provided by 22 European countries. The survey requested information on honey production, monitoring of chemical residues in honey and existing surveillance programmes for bee mortality, weakening and colony collapse. This project intends to expand on the findings of that report. In line with Article 36 of its Founding Regulation, EFSA regularly provides grants to partner organisations, nominated by the EU Member States, in order to help EFSA in areas such as data collection and other preparatory work for the development of its opinions, as well as providing scientific and technical support. Since the launch of the scheme in 2007, some 25 such grants have so far been agreed or are currently in negotiation, worth a total of around €3.5million.

The bee decline project consortium is led by the Agence française de sécurité sanitaire des aliments (Afssa) in partnership with the UK's Central Science Laboratory (CSL) and the French Institut national de la recherche agronomique (INRA). Five other national institutes will collaborate in the project: the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, the Instituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie (Italy), the Swiss Bee Research Institute, the Agricultural Institute of Slovenia and the Chemische und Veterinäruntersuchungsamt Freiburg (Germany).

For more information.

## Events

### EFSA GMO risk assessment conference



#### Brussels, 14-15 September 2009

EFSA's conference on GMO risk assessment for human health and the environment will take place in Brussels on 14-15 September 2009.

The conference seeks to further clarify EFSA's role and responsibilities concerning GMOs in the public decision process while presenting the latest GMO risk assessments. The event will further strengthen dialogue between scientific experts from EFSA, and Member States and stakeholders. The worldwide aspects of GMO cultivation will also be discussed.

Scientists from Member State risk assessment authorities, risk managers using EFSA scientific advice on GMOs and stakeholders have been invited to attend.

## Consultations

### Public consultation on guidelines for active or intelligent food packaging

EFSA held a public consultation on its draft guidelines on active or intelligent substances used in food contact materials. After adoption, the final guidelines will then be used by applicants submitting dossiers for the Authority to evaluate the safety of these substances.

According to the relevant European regulation, materials and articles in contact with food shall only be authorised at a community level if it is demonstrated that they do not present risks to human health. Following a draft European Commission regulation on active or intelligent food packaging materials, an EU list of substances which can be used in the manufacture of active or intelligent food packaging materials will be drawn up. This list will be compiled after EFSA has conducted a risk assessment and issued its opinion on each substance's safety.

The consultation closed on 22 April.

For more information.

# Scientific highlights

## Revise maximum vitamin A levels in feed for main food-producing animals, recommends EFSA



Maximum levels of vitamin A used in feed for food-producing animals should be revised, according to a recent EFSA opinion. EFSA also recommended monitoring vitamin A in foods of concern such as liver, and providing suitable advice to help consumers avoid excessive intakes.

Vitamin A is an essential nutrient for people and animals, promoting vision, normal growth and development. It is added to feed to meet animal nutrition needs, and maximum levels are set by EU legislation for livestock bred for fattening. The use of vitamin A in feed is relevant for consumers since it remains in food products of animal origin and therefore contributes to people's overall intake.

EFSA looked at consumer exposure to vitamin A from various sources in our diets using studies from several EU countries. It found that a small proportion of the European population is at risk of exceeding the safe upper limit of 3,000 µg per day set in 2002. The greatest risks of exceeding this limit come from eating liver - which contains high concentrations of preformed vitamin A - and from taking vitamin A supplements. Dairy products are also an important source, particularly in north European diets. Eggs make a smaller contribution and fish, and other types of meat, are not a significant source.

Quantitative correlations between the intake of retinol, the most common dietary form of vitamin A, and bone health risk, justifying a lower upper limit for elderly people, could not be established. EFSA's experts considered it advisable for those most at risk of osteoporosis and bone fracture - particularly postmenopausal women - to restrict intake to a lower level of 1,500 µg per day until new data become available. EFSA noted that bone health is affected by various nutritional factors, including vitamin D, calcium, and zinc, which should also be considered when people are given dietary advice.

In its advice to the Commission, EFSA recommended that risk managers consider setting new maximum levels of vitamin A in feed intended for the main food producing animals - pigs, cattle and poultry. These levels would avoid any unnecessary high intakes among consumers without negative effects on animal health and performance. Amongst these recommendations, EFSA proposed setting a level for fattening pigs at around half the current amount allowed by EU legislation.

For more information.

## EFSA rapidly advises on packaging chemical found in some breakfast cereals

Following an alert about the migration of 4-methylbenzophenone (4-MBP), a chemical substance used in printing inks, from packaging into certain breakfast cereals, the European Commission asked EFSA for urgent scientific advice. They asked the Authority to evaluate if 4-methylbenzophenone would be covered by the Tolerable Daily Intake (TDI) on benzophenone and hydroxybenzophenone, and to evaluate the risk of its presence in cereals. This led EFSA to rapidly issue a statement in March.

*"Although the migration of 4-methylbenzophenone from packaging into foods is not desirable, only in the highest exposure scenario considered – regular consumption of products contaminated at the highest levels reported so far – a risk for some children could not be excluded,"* said Riitta Maijala, EFSA's Director of Risk Assessment. *"However, there are important limitations in our knowledge of 4-methylbenzophenone and further data would be needed to be able to fully assess its safety."*

Based on structural considerations, on experimental results on the struc-

turally related substance benzophenone and taking into account uncertainties such as the lack of data on 4-methylbenzophenone, and differences between animals and humans, EFSA concluded that 4-methylbenzophenone is likely to be a non genotoxic carcinogen. The Authority also concluded that there was not enough scientific evidence to apply the previously established group TDI for benzophenone and hydroxybenzophenone to 4-methylbenzophenone.

Based on the limited exposure data available and applying knowledge on the toxicity of a similar substance, benzophenone, EFSA concluded that short term consumption of contaminated breakfast cereals should not pose a risk to most people. However, if 4-methylbenzophenone contamination continued, more data would be needed in order to carry out a full risk assessment.

Following the same request from the European Commission, EFSA re-assessed the TDI on benzophenone and hydroxybenzophenone in May 2009. As a result the consensus was that the benzophenone TDI should increase. EFSA felt this should remove concern over 4-MBP, although it cautioned that more data would be needed if its use were to continue.

For more information.



## Assess food nanotechnology case-by-case, advises EFSA

EFSA has concluded that the use of nanoscience and nanotechnologies in food and feed should be assessed case-by-case. This is one of the conclusions of its scientific opinion adopted in March.

The opinion focused on the use of nanotechnologies, particularly engineered nano materials, in the food and feed chain. It looked at approaches and methodologies available for risk assessment of these

very small particles but does not address any specific applications of particular materials. As a result, EFSA concluded that established international approaches to risk assessment can also be applied to engineered nano materials.

EFSA also found that the current data limitations and lack of validated test methodologies could make risk assessment of

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## EFSA Web Watch

Introducing the 'Ask EFSA' service for website users



'Ask EFSA' steers users to the information they want. It guides users through the most frequently asked questions and the relevant website sections without having to wait for an individual reply. As new issues arise and new questions are posed, the 'Ask EFSA' answers are updated to ensure users receive the most up-to-date information.

Users seeking more specific information can send their questions via 'Ask EFSA'. As before, EFSA will individually answer all the questions it receives as promptly as possible. This new communication channel underlines EFSA's commitment to transparency and responsiveness.

For more information.

## Profile

### Herman Fontier



Herman Fontier joined EFSA as Head of the Pesticide Risk Assessment and Peer Review (PRAPeR) Unit in August 2008. This Unit, within EFSA's Scientific Cooperation and Assistance Directorate, performs risk assessments on pesticides and their residues, considering their impact on human and animal health, and on the environment.

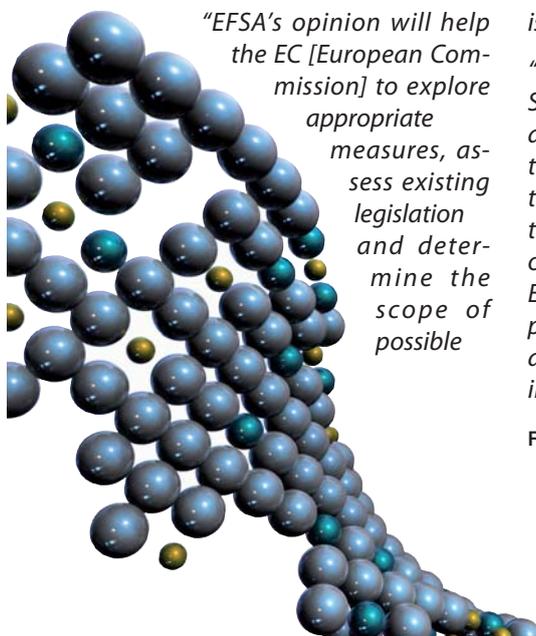
Before joining EFSA, he trained at the University of Ghent as an agronomist, specialising in crop protection. He then worked for some years as an agricultural journalist. In 1987, he joined the Belgian Ministry of Agriculture. From 1991, he became Head of the Ministry's Pesticides section, and then in 2002, Head of the Pesticides and Fertilisers Service at the Belgian Ministry of Public Health.

## Scientific highlights

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specific nano products very difficult and subject to a high degree of uncertainty.

To address this, EFSA recommends additional research and investigation.



*"EFSA's opinion will help the EC [European Commission] to explore appropriate measures, assess existing legislation and determine the scope of possible*

*further requests for scientific opinions from EFSA in this field," said Prof Vittorio Silano, chair of EFSA's Scientific Committee that developed the opinion. "EFSA has already received a small number of such requests and is adopting the case-by-case approach."*

*"This issue will remain a priority for EFSA's Scientific Committee," he continued. "We are establishing a working group of experts to be kept informed of any emerging scientific and other data that will help us deliver the best possible scientific opinions based on the most up-to-date evidence available. EFSA will take a cautious case-by-case approach and looks forward to further data and research becoming available to help inform future scientific opinions."*

For more information.

## EFSA reaches milestone in its pesticides work

In December 2008, EFSA completed its work on the peer review of existing active substances in pesticides on the market in 1993, as foreseen under EU law. As a result, the European Commission can conclude the review process of these substances and decide which active substances may be used in plant protection products throughout the European Union.

The European Commission began the review programme in 1993. Since its establishment, EFSA has played a major role in the process and has assessed the safety of over 120 active substances. EFSA's role in coordinating the peer review will now continue. This work is conducted in close collaboration with scientific experts from the Member States so as to protect human health and the environment in Europe.



EFSA is also the independent risk assessment body responsible within the EU for assessing Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) of pesticides, which are the upper legal levels of residues authorised in or on food or feed. During 2006-2008, the Authority reviewed 280 active substances to assist the Commission in setting some 90,000 MRLs. The finalisation of the review of

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active substances now triggers a full review programme on MRLs established at EU level for 350 active substances in the next couple of years.

In September 2008, EFSA also set up a new Pesticide Steering Committee, comprising representatives from EFSA, the Commission and Member States. It is managing

and planning the overall pesticide risk assessment and MRL programmes. The Committee is also considering ways to further streamline the process in the face of an ever-growing workload and evolving regulatory environment.

For more information.



## Introducing EFSA's family of newsletters

EFSA has a wide range of newsletters, suited to different readers' needs. Available in English, French, German and Italian, they include:

- **EFSA news** – our regular round up of recent EFSA developments
- **Moving Together** – for twice-yearly news on food safety cooperation between EFSA and EU Member States
- **EFSA in focus** – our regular easy-to-read thematic newsletters bringing together related topics to allow readers to choose whether they are most interested in information related to plants, animals or food.

To subscribe, simply email [newsletter@efsa.europa.eu](mailto:newsletter@efsa.europa.eu)

## Profile

### EFSA's Dr Jean Lou Dorne awarded by British Toxicology Society



In recognition of EFSA's Dr Jean Lou Dorne's significant contribution to the field of chemical risk assessment for human health over the past ten years, the British Toxicology Society awarded him the Early Career Investigator Award 2009 in March. Previously he also received the young scientist award at the EUROTOX 2002 conference in Budapest.

Dr Dorne joined EFSA in 2006 where he is now senior scientific officer in the Authority's contaminants in the food chain unit. His current work involves risk assessment of contaminants in food and feed including metals, organic chemicals, natural toxins and veterinary residues.

He is involved in the EU-funded NO MIRACLE consortium, a €11 million project that for the last four years has aimed to develop new methods and tools for the risk assessment of mixtures and tools for the environment and human health. He is also currently co-writing a book on human variability in toxicokinetics and the implications for risk assessment.

In addition, Dr Dorne holds two honorary positions in the UK: visiting reader at the University of Surrey and Senior Research Fellow at the University of Southampton's Department of Human Nutrition. He has also been teaching at the University of Southampton since 1998 and at the University of Surrey since 2002.

# Scientific outputs

Number of scientific opinions, statements and other scientific documents per panel/unit from January to March 2009.

Scientific area of expertise	Scientific Opinions of Scientific Committee/ Panel	Other scientific outputs of EFSA
Animal health and welfare (AHAW)	6	0
Assessment methodology (AMU)	1	5
Food additives and nutrient sources (ANS)	13	0
Biological hazards (BIOHAZ)	7	0
Food contact materials, enzymes, flavourings (CEF)	31	1
Contaminants (CONTAM)	5	1
Data collection & exposure (DATEX)	10	1
Emerging Risks (EMRISK)	-	1
Feed additives (FEEDAP)	7	0
Genetically modified organisms (GMO)	4	0
Nutrition (NDA)	20	0
Plant health (PLH)	0	0
Plant protection products (PPR)	0	2
Pesticides (PRAPeR)	-	19
Scientific Committee (SC)	0	0
Scientific cooperation (SCO)	-	1
Zoonoses (Data collection)	-	4

The aim of this table is to provide an overview of the latest scientific opinions, statements and other working documents adopted by EFSA's Scientific Panels and Units. These numbers vary according to the nature of the question raised, and the type of risk assessment required. Hence,

the number of opinions, statements and other working documents issued by a Panel is not in itself an indicator of productivity. The list of all opinions adopted can be found in the [Register of Questions](#). Summaries and texts of the opinions by Panel are available [online](#).



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