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European Food Safety Authority

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Contents

In brief

Foreword

EFSA looks to the future

Since EFSA was established in 2002, much has changed – and will continue to change – in the environment in which it operates. Global issues such as climate change, food security, scientific and technological innovation, socio-demographic trends, international trade and travel, and changes in the regulatory environment have changed the context in which we work and increased our workload. Although our core mission of providing a scientific evidence base in support of European food safety policy is unchanged, we cannot ignore the evolving operating environment. That is why we have devoted significant time and resource over the past months to formulating a vision for the future, which analyses the drivers of change and gives us a firm foundation for our planning over the coming five years.

The resulting Strategic Plan 2009-2013 reflects not only the inputs of EFSA staff and Management Board, but also those of partners, stakeholders and other interested parties who have contributed to the extensive consultation process that took place in 2008. The final version has benefited from the expertise and perspective provided by European institutions and agencies, national food safety agencies, international organisations, stakeholders and the general public.

Six key, high-level objectives have been identified in the Plan and they are summarised as follows:

1. An integrated approach to delivering scientific advice, field to plate
2. The timely, high-quality evaluation of products, substances and claims subject to regulatory authorisation
3. The collation, dissemination and analysis of data in the fields within EFSA's remit
4. EFSA positioned at the forefront of risk assessment in Europe and internationally
5. Reinforce confidence and trust in EFSA and the EU food safety system
6. Assure the responsiveness, efficiency and effectiveness of EFSA

Latest publications

New Scientific Colloquium reports now available in print

The latest reports from EFSA's series of Scientific Colloquia are now available in print.

The topics covered include:

> Environmental Risk Assessment of Genetically Modified Plants - Challenges and Approaches (June 207 in Tabiano, Italy).

> Nutrient Profiling for foods bearing Nutrition and Health Claims (October 2007 in Parma, Italy)

> Pest risk assessment - Science in support of phytosanitary decision making in the European Community covered in December 2007 in Parma, Italy

The next in the series, 'Acrylamide carcinogenicity - New evidence in relation to dietary exposure' from the meeting in Tabiano in May 2007, will be available soon.

EFSA's Scientific Colloquia aim to achieve a better understanding of the fundamental scientific issues related to risk assessment on food and feed. They are designed to provide ample opportunity for an interactive exchange of expert views. They are sufficiently informal to allow for substantial debates if needed, whilst also being adequately structured and managed to enable participants to reach conclusions and make recommendations, as appropriate.

To obtain copies, please contact the EU bookshop.

EFSA's 2009 Management Plan, also adopted by the Management Board at the same time, is a practical realisation of these objectives. As our priorities will continue to evolve and urgent emerging issues oblige us to remain flexible and responsive, the Strategic Plan is intended to be a living, dynamic document that will be revisited regularly. Through this newsletter I would like to thank once again all those who contributed to the preparation of the Plan.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle
EFSA Executive Director

In focus

EFSA quickly responds to dioxins in Irish pork

Two days after the European Commission asked EFSA for its advice on the risks to human health due to the contamination of Irish pork by dioxins, the Authority issued its statement.

Dioxins are persistent man-made chemical contaminants usually formed by industrial combustions and chemical processes that can enter the food chain. High levels of dioxins can be a risk to human health and their toxicity is related to the amount accumulated in the body over many years, the so-called body burden. Dioxin levels in pork and pork products depend on the fat content, because dioxins accumulate in the fat. The longer the exposure and the higher the fat content, the more dioxins accumulate and stay in the body.

EFSA based its statement on a limited data set using certain assumptions. EFSA assumed that exposure to the raised levels began in September 2008 and that effective measures had been taken in December to remove this excessive exposure. In other words, the contaminated products had been removed from the market.

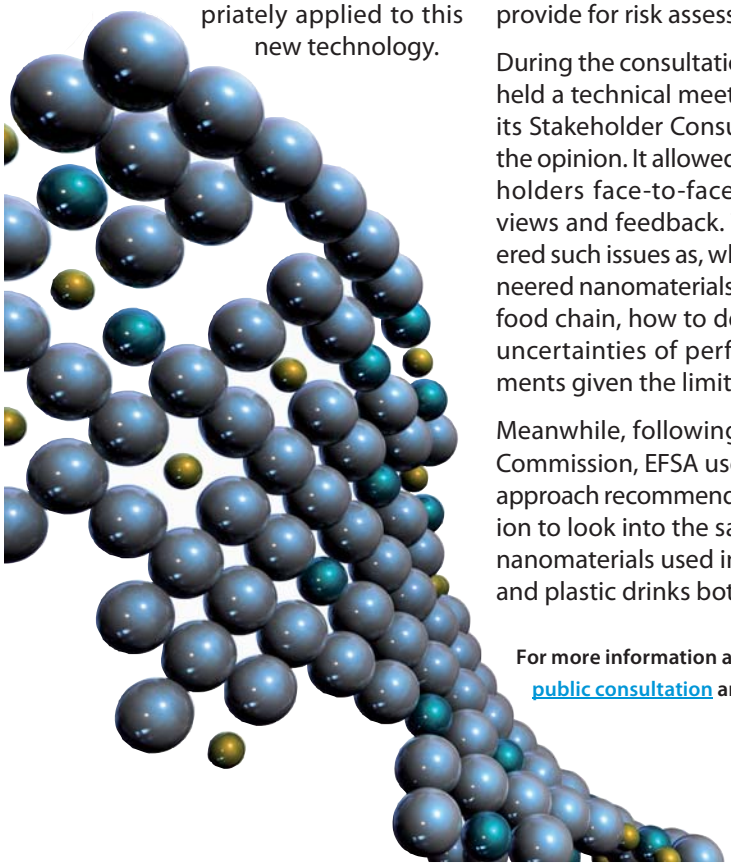
In the statement issued on 10 December 2008, EFSA concluded that adverse health effects were unlikely for this single event. This was based on the most likely scenario of someone eating an average amount of Irish pork everyday for the 90 days the incident occurred, of which 10% was contaminated at the highest recorded concentration of dioxins. If this happened the amount of dioxins that would accumulate and stay in the body over time would increase by about 10%. And in a very extreme case, if someone ate a large amount of Irish pork each day over the same period, and all of it was contaminated at the highest recorded concentration, it would still not necessarily lead to adverse health effects.

For more information.

Stakeholders respond to EFSA's nanotechnology public consultation

EFSA received some 200 comments from 30 organisations and individuals in response to its public consultation on the Authority's draft opinion on the risks nanotechnology poses to food and feed safety. The consultation closed on 1 December 2008.

The consultation that began in October 2008 sought to collect views on its draft opinion on the approaches used to assess the risks of using nano applications in the food chain. It aims to see whether existing approaches can be appropriately applied to this new technology.



Having taken into account the comments received during the consultation, EFSA's Scientific Committee adopted the opinion at its plenary meeting of 10-11 February, subject to the changes proposed during the discussions.

When finalised, the opinion will help the 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. It will also indicate to applicants the data they would need to provide for risk assessments.

During the consultation period, EFSA also held a technical meeting in Brussels with its Stakeholder Consultative Platform on the opinion. It allowed EFSA to brief stakeholders face-to-face, and to exchange views and feedback. The discussion covered such issues as, what constitutes engineered nanomaterials introduced into the food chain, how to detect them, and the uncertainties of performing risk assessments given the limited information.

Meanwhile, following requests from the Commission, EFSA used the case-by-case approach recommended in the draft opinion to look into the safety of two specific nanomaterials used in food supplements and plastic drinks bottles.

For more information about the public consultation and technical meeting.

Evaluating health claims: EFSA's progress to date

The European Commission has sent EFSA an updated list of 4,185 main functional health claims - such as 'calcium is good for bones' - under Article 13 of the EU's Regulation on nutrition and health claims.

EFSA has screened them and has identified those which require further information before evaluations can start. It has also indicated which claims will be evaluated, and by when.

The evaluations that EFSA is doing, form part of the EU's regulation on nutrition and health claims. EFSA is providing the scientific advice to support the Commission and Member States draw up a 'positive list' of permitted 'function' health claims in the EU by January 2010.

In July 2008, the Commission asked EFSA for advice on a list of 2,870 health claims, each comprising of a food component, a health relationship and an example of wording. The draft list was the result of a consolidation process, carried out by the Commission, after examining 44,000 claims supplied by Member States. The list was

Latest publications

EFSA 2009 Work Plan

As the cornerstone of the EU risk assessment system for food and feed safety, EFSA will continue to provide risk managers in European institutions and EU Member States with scientific advice on existing and emerging risks. It will remain committed to the core standards of scientific excellence, openness, transparency, independence and responsiveness, based on the most recent scientific methodologies, information and data available.

In line with EFSA's strategic plan 2009-2013, the 2009 Work Plan highlights what it aims to achieve this year. It will further streamline procedures and increase its presence and visibility in Member States and globally. Prospective highlights include more advice on nanotechnology, assessments on nutrition and health claims, evaluations of flavourings, as well as developing and promoting harmonised risk assessment approaches.

For more information

Latest publications

Annual Zoonoses report now available

EFSA and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) have published their Community Zoonoses Report for 2007, which analyses the occurrence across the European Union of infectious diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans.

The report shows that although figures varied considerably nationally, *Campylobacter* infections still topped the list of zoonotic diseases in the EU and that the number of cases due to *Salmonella* infections in humans fell for the fourth year in a row. Cases of Listeriosis remained at the same level, following a significant increase in past years.

For more information.

In focus

then updated in November and December 2008, with further claims submitted by Member States and some amendments to previously submitted claims.

The list of claims was published on EFSA's website in January 2009, indicating which claims have been sent back and why, and the deadlines for evaluating the remaining claims.

By July 2009, EFSA will have evaluated about 1,000 claims, originally submitted in July 2008, which have not been modified. Another 470 claims will be evaluated by November 2009, from those submitted in July 2008 but amended, and new claims sent in November 2008. Deadlines for the remaining 2,700 claims – new claims from December 2008, claims sent earlier but then amended and those in need of need further information – still need to be set.

For more information.

New chair for EFSA's stakeholders' platform

Members of EFSA's Stakeholder Consultative Platform, including representatives of consumer, industry and environmental groups, have elected Andreas Varlamos as the new Platform chair.

"I am honoured that Members have put their confidence in me and I intend in turn to demonstrate that trust in chairing the Stakeholder Platform," said Mr Varlamos. *"I believe it is important the Platform plays its part in shaping EFSA's vision and mission, and contributing to their achievements, particularly at a time when EFSA is reviewing its stakeholder policy. Good relations between public institutions such as EFSA and stakeholders are crucial in order to deliver real benefits for the people of the EU."*

Mr Varlamos is a member of the management board of the Greek consumer association 'The Quality of Life', (EKPIZO) and a member of the European Consumers' Organisation, BEUC.

EFSA's Management Board agreed to create the Stakeholder Consultative Platform on 20 June 2005. The Platform, composed of EU-wide stakeholder organisations working in areas related to the food chain, regularly meets to assist EFSA in the development of its overall relations and policy with stakeholders. The meeting provides a platform for honest exchange of opinions and ideas.

In 2008, the Stakeholder Platform has been particularly involved in key issues, such as health claims, animal cloning and nanotechnology, by holding technical meetings on these topics.

For more information.

New EFSA body coordinates pesticide risk assessments

EFSA has set up a new committee to further strengthen its role in reviewing the safety of active substances used in pesticides together with the European Commission and EU Member States.

"The committee will provide a platform for cooperation and consultation between the different actors involved in pesticide risk assessment in the EU," said Hubert Deluyker, Director of Scientific Cooperation and Assistance at EFSA. *"It will be responsible for planning and monitoring the safety review process from beginning to end – in other words, from the initial application for a certain active substance to be authorised*

through to the publication of a conclusion by EFSA on the safety of that substance."

"The main aim is to further streamline the peer review process and clearly define priorities in the face of an ever-growing workload and a changing regulatory environment. In 2007, for example, EFSA published conclusions on 20 different active substances but in 2008 that figure is due to rise to 60 – in other words a three-fold increase year-on-year," he continued. *"At the same time, challenging new deadlines are being discussed which would put further pressure on the peer review system."*

The Pesticide Steering Committee was fully operational from 1 January 2009. It comprises experts responsible for the pesticide risk assessment process nationally, and EFSA and European Commission representatives.

The committee will help to ensure the best possible use of resources, increase efficiency and further strengthen consumer protection. It will help prevent duplication and will promote the exchange of information between EFSA, the Commission and Member States at every stage.

For more information.

Building bridges

EFSA and Commission's research institutes agree to cooperate further

A cooperation agreement signed between EFSA and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), in Brussels on 10 November, will advance scientific cooperation and the development of international standards in food and feed safety.

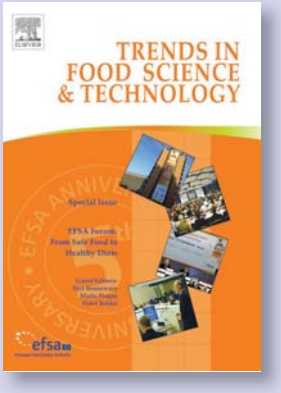
"EFSA is delighted to strengthen its cooperation with the JRC in areas such as GMOs, BSE, the effects of climate change on food safety and feed additives," said EFSA's Executive Director Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle at the signing ceremony. *"The scientific research and related technological expertise of the JRC and its institutes play an important role in the European food safety system. Our increased cooperation will help keep EFSA's work at the forefront of scientific knowledge and expertise."*

The signed agreement sets out how the JRC and EFSA will strengthen their cooperation. The aim is to ensure that additional data are provided for risk assessment, that harmonised standards are applied to data generation and that analytical best practices are shared. EFSA and the JRC will also continue to work closely in identifying problem areas impacting upon European consumers and in developing innovative scientific solutions.

Possibilities will be created to enhance

Latest publications

EFSA features in Trends in Food Science and Technology



A special issue of the scientific journal Trends in Food Science and Technology on EFSA's 5 Year Anniversary was published in November 2008 and is now available.

This special issue features food safety issues discussed during the Scientific Forum held in Brussels in November 2007, on the occasion of EFSA's 5-Year Anniversary. The articles in this issue provide a good understanding of what EFSA does, of what it achieved over the first five years, and of what challenges lie ahead.

For more information.

Events

Workshop on pesticide persistence in soils

12-14 May 2009, Ispra, Italy

EFSA will run a workshop on pesticide persistence in soil on 12-14 May 2009 in Ispra, Italy. The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) will host the event at their premises in Ispra.

The main objective will be to present EFSA's draft of the revised guidance document on persistence of pesticides in soil to EFSA's stakeholders (Member States, industry representatives, consulting companies and others) to collect their feedback during the revision process. In particular, issues linking environmental exposure to assessments of the ecotoxicological effects in soil will be considered. This will also be of great relevance for EFSA's upcoming revision of the Guidance Document on Terrestrial Ecotoxicology.

Around 50-60 stakeholders are expected to attend.

For more information.

Building bridges

staff development and training programmes, and to increase the exchange of scientists. There is also a provision for greater exchange of scientific and technical information, and the hosting of joint seminars and conferences.

The JRC's seven research institutes host six Community Reference Laboratories. These labs, created under EU law, help national authorities keep food and feed free from dangerous substances. Areas that EFSA cooperates closely with these labs include feed additives, genetically modified food and feed, heavy metals, mycotoxins, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and food contact materials.

For more information.

EFSA visits Finnish food safety authority

During EFSA's visit to the Finnish Food Safety Authority, Evira, on 18-19 November 2008, EFSA attended Evira's seminar on health claims. The event allowed EFSA the opportunity to present its work on nutrition, particularly health claims, as well as learn how the EU health claims regulation is been implemented by the Finnish authorities. Equally, the seminar allowed stakeholders, and in particular applicants, to have an exchange of views with EFSA on how health claims are being evaluated by EFSA.

The visit also allowed EFSA and Evira to exchange views, discuss priorities and their respective work programmes, as well as hear about Evira's activities, including its Focal Point arrangements. Other topics discussed during the visit included biological hazards, zoonoses, and animal health and welfare.

During the visit EFSA's Executive Director, Catherine Geslain-Laneélle, and Riitta Maijala, EFSA Director of Risk Assessment gave presentations. Sinikka Turunen, from EFSA's Management Board and Secretary General of the Finnish Consumers' Association, and Seppo Salminen, Director of the Functional Food Forum at the University of Turku and member of EFSA's Panel on dietetic products, nutrition and allergies were also present.

For more information.

EFSA at first ever international risk assessment conference

On 13-14 November 2008, EFSA attended the first international conference on risk assessment 'Global Risk Assessment Dialogue' in Brussels, Belgium.

Among the topics discussed were the role of risk assessment in decision making, international dialogue on risk assessments, the risk assessment risk-management interface, current policies and key issues.

In particular, participants focused on expressing and communicating uncertainties in risk assessment/risk assessment terminology, emerging issues and challenges, and exposure assessment.

The 182 participants ranged from around the world, coming from as far away as Australia, China, Japan, Russia, Canada and the US. The European Union was represented by agencies such as EFSA and the European Environment Agency, various European Commission Directorates-General, the European Parliament, and the University of Sussex and Cefic, for the European chemical industry. Representatives from the World Health Organisation also attended.

The second conference will be held in 2010.

For more information.

Interagency meeting shares best risk assessment practices

Risk assessors from many EU scientific committees and panels gathered in Parma on 4-5 November 2008 to share experiences and best practices in risk assessment. This will further help improve the quality of and the communications about risk assessments, and ultimately support risk managers in their decision-making.

Participants considered scientific issues of common interest related to risk assessment, such as transparency, terminology, and identified areas and topics for further cooperation, such as nanotechnology, emerging risks, international dialogue, data sharing, and sharing of practices.

This was the 4th annual meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of European Commission and Agency Scientific Committees, and Panels involved in risk assessment. The meeting was attended by representatives from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the European Environment Agency, the European Chemicals Agency, the European Medicines Agency, the Commission's Directorates-General for Health and Consumers, and for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, and EFSA.

For more information.

Call for experts

Sign up to EFSA's online database of scientific experts

EFSA's database of scientific experts is a valuable tool to harness the wide scientific excellence that is available in the European Union, and beyond, and to further enhance EFSA's high quality scientific advice.

Experts from Europe and worldwide, in a wide range of scientific and expert fields, such as food and feed safety, nutrition, toxicology, chemistry, animal health and welfare, are invited to apply. The full list of the expertise being sought is indicated in the online application form.

This open invitation to scientific experts is being made within the context of EFSA's strengthened policy on transparency and independence for selecting experts to assist EFSA with its scientific work.

The database will become a 'pool' of expertise from which EFSA will select the best scientific experts to provide support to its Scientific Committee and Panels, corporate networks (e.g. Advisory Forum and Focal Points) and respective Working Groups. The expert database will also be available to all EU Member States who may use it to identify experts for their own scientific activities.

This expert database, officially launched on 5 June 2008, has been set up to further reinforce EFSA's capacity to deliver high-quality independent scientific advice and to assist the Authority with its growing workload. It will also contribute to reinforcing EFSA's responsiveness in providing risk assessment advice to Europe's decision-makers.

For more information.

Consultations

Public consultation on guidance on the evaluation of pest risk assessments prepared by third parties to justify EU phytosanitary measures

EFSA is seeking comments from interested parties through a public consultation on a guidance document it has drafted on evaluating pest risk assessments prepared by third parties to justify phytosanitary measures taken under European Union (EU) law.

The guidance concerns the evaluation of pest risk assessments by EFSA's scientific Panel on Plant Health when providing independent scientific advice on the risks posed by plant pests that can cause harm to plants and plant products in the EU. The guidance document describes the process and criteria used for evaluating pest risk assessments.

The comments received during the consultation will help shape the final guidance document.

The deadline for submitting comments is 2 March 2009.

For more information.

Building bridges

Meeting to explore EFSA from a European and a Danish perspective

EFSA and the Danish National Food Institute held a conference on European and Danish food safety on 20 November 2008 in Copenhagen.

EFSA's Executive Director, Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, outlined EFSA's objectives and strategy. Participants also heard about scientific exchange and networks, EFSA's relevance to Denmark, and how Danes contribute to EFSA's scientific work. The Danish Focal Point, the interface between EFSA and those involved in food safety in Denmark, also presented itself.

120 scientists and participants from food authorities, industry and consumers organisations attended.

For more information.

Chinese delegation visits EFSA

On 12 January 2009, EFSA received a visit from Mr Zhang Min Yuan, the deputy director general of China's Ministry of Health, and a delegation of eight Chinese officials. It was an opportunity for them to hear about EFSA and how it works, and how it cooperates with European Union Member States, and internationally with countries beyond the EU. Equally, Chinese officials explained the food safety arrangements in China and exchanged views on possible cooperation. During the visit EFSA was invited to visit counterparts in China.

EFSA and climate change on World Food Day

The health effects of climate change on food and water safety and nutrition were the subject of a seminar, held in Rome, Italy, on 14 October. The event brought together the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the European Commission, Italian ministries and agencies, and EFSA to discuss the challenges posed by climate change.

Climate change will have considerable implications for risk assessment bodies, such as EFSA, which could be asked to give scientific advice on emerging food safety risks linked to climate related changes such as the distribution and spread of diseases, and changes to crop production.

The seminar was held to mark this year's World Food Day, which addressed the challenges of climate change and bioenergy.

For more information.

Scientific highlights

EFSA evaluates TSE risk from small ruminants' milk

Milk and milk products from flocks of sheep and goats affected by classical scrapie, and from sheep and goats in general, could expose animals and humans to the causal agents of this small ruminant's Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE), according to a recent EFSA opinion.

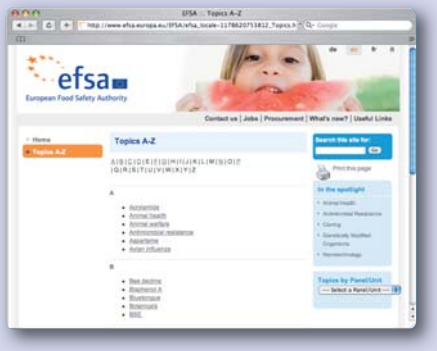
"These new findings have implications for animal health. With respect to possible human exposure, we should keep in mind that, with the exception of BSE, TSEs in animals have not been found to affect human health," said Professor Dan Collins, chair of the EFSA Panel on Biological Hazards that is behind the opinion.

The opinion updates EFSA's previous statement, which concluded that milk from small ruminants was unlikely to present a TSE exposure risk, provided it was from clinically healthy animals.

In this current opinion, EFSA noted that milk from ewes with classical scrapie could contain the causal agents of this animal TSE, even when the ewes appear healthy.

Webwatch

More information, less confusion



EFSA has made it easier to find information on the different topics it deals with.

The new alphabetical topics index presents all the latest thematic information on a given topic, such as cloning, nanotechnology or nutrition and health claims. Ultimately, by making information easier to scan, it will help goal-driven users to quickly find information on the topic they are interested in, without first having to search across the EFSA website.

In each topic, users can find information contextualising EFSA's work, and about EFSA's role and its ongoing work in the area, and the relevant EU legislation. There will also be links to and from the relevant Scientific Panel and/or scientific unit concerned, plus scientific documents, press releases, and events and meetings.

For more information.

Profile

Prof Dr Ralf Reintjes

Prof Dr Ralf Reintjes is the Head of the Emerging Risks Unit at EFSA since July 2008. The unit provides support to the Scientific Cooperation and Assistance Directorate.

Prof Reintjes is a trained medical epidemiologist. He studied medicine in Germany and Switzerland, public health in the UK, and epidemiology in The Netherlands. Over the years he has worked throughout Europe and internationally.

He holds a full professorship for Epidemiology and Public Health Surveillance in Hamburg, Germany and is associate professor for Infectious Disease Epidemiology in Tampere, Finland. He has published extensively in the fields of epidemiology, surveillance and health systems research.

Scientific highlights

EFSA pointed out that as the prevalence of classical scrapie, and the production of milk from sheep and goats vary greatly between Member States, so will the potential risk of exposure.

EFSA recommended that more research should be carried out to assess the exposure risk from milk to other TSE agents, in particular in the case of the atypical scrapie and BSE agents, and to evaluate what would happen to these TSE agents if, and when, milk from affected sheep flocks or goat herds is processed for consumption as milk or other dairy products.

To date, only one single case of naturally occurring BSE has been identified in goats and none in sheep.

EFSA's study follows the European Commission's request for its opinion on a recent scientific article which concluded that classical scrapie can be transmitted to genetically susceptible lambs through milk. The Commission also asked EFSA to update, if considered necessary, the current risk assessments on human and animal exposure related to TSEs from milk and milk products from sheep and goats.

For more information.

EFSA assesses possible risks of melamine in food from China

Following the contamination in China of certain food products with melamine, a substance not used in food, EFSA's scientists issued a statement saying that if adults in Europe were to consume chocolates and biscuits containing milk powder contaminated with melamine, they would not exceed the TDI (Tolerable Daily Intake) of 0.5 mg/kg body weight, even in worst case scenarios.

The European Commission requested EFSA to focus its assessment on biscuits and chocolate which contain milk powder as such products can be imported from China. EFSA developed theoretical exposure scenarios based on European consumption figures of biscuits and chocolate. In the absence of available data for contaminated milk powder, EFSA also used the highest value of melamine, reported in Chinese infant formula as a basis for worst case scenarios.

Children with a mean consumption of biscuits, milk toffee and chocolate made with such milk powder would also not exceed the TDI. However, in worst case scenarios with the highest level of contamination, children with high daily consumption of milk toffee, chocolate or biscuits containing high levels of milk powder would exceed the TDI. Children who consume both such biscuits and chocolate could potentially exceed the TDI by up to more than three times.

High levels of melamine can primarily affect the kidneys. EFSA applied the TDI of 0.5 mg/kg body weight for melamine in a specific case of pet food contamination in 2007.

At the time, EFSA stressed that it is not known at the moment whether such theoretical high level exposure scenarios could occur in Europe.

For more information.

EFSA sets out goals for contributing further to animal health in Europe

Animal health covers not only animal diseases, but also the critical relationship between animal welfare and disease, as well as its relevance to public health. In October EFSA adopted a paper on EFSA's role in improving animal health in Europe.

The paper sets out EFSA's objectives to further reinforce EFSA's integrated approach on animal health in the context of the EU's Animal Health Strategy for 2007-2013. As a result EFSA has identified six main goals for future work in animal health. These are to:

1. Deliver the best scientific advice at the right time and in the most appropriate manner for risk managers.
2. Decrease the time needed for scientific advice by enabling rapid data exchange between EFSA and relevant partner organisations, including Member States and the European Commission's Food and Veterinary Office and Community Reference Laboratories.
3. Provide scientific support and analysis for EU surveillance programmes for animal diseases, zoonoses and animal welfare.
4. Provide scientific support for EU crisis preparedness.
5. Avoid unnecessary divergence in opinions between EFSA and other relevant organisations such as national authorities.
6. Mobilise and coordinate scientific expertise throughout the EU on issues within the remit of EFSA.

For more information.

Bisphenol A and medical disorders - EFSA's assessment

EFSA's assessment of an American study linking urinary bisphenol A (BPA) concentrations to certain medical disorders in adults, found insufficient evidence for a causal link, according to an EFSA statement released in October 2008.

The statement follows a request from the European Commission for EFSA's assessment of the study after it was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

EFSA concluded that this study does not provide sufficient proof for a causal link between exposure to BPA and the health conditions mentioned in the study, heart disease, diabetes and elevated liver-enzyme activities. The authors themselves had also noted that the link was not established. Therefore, EFSA considers that there is no need to revise the Tolerable Daily Intake of 0.05 mg/kg body weight (bw)/day that it set following EFSA's comprehensive BPA risk assessment in 2006.

For more information.

Profile

Nicoline Le Gourierec

Since September 2008, Nicoline Le Gourierec is Head of EFSA's Human Resource Unit. This unit supports all other units in recruitment, payroll and personnel administration, training and career development, and staff welfare. She also coordinates the newly created internal communications post.

Before EFSA, she was Head of Personnel at the European Patent Office in Germany. She has also been Director of Corporate Career Development at the Lafarge Group Headquarters in Paris; Human Resource Manager for Reader's Digest in France; HR project leader at the research centre of Ciments Français (now Italcimenti); as well as a consultant with Bernard Krief, an executive research company.

She holds a Doctorandus title (Master's degree) in Social Sciences from the University of Amsterdam, specialising in the science of education. She contributed to a research project, concerning educational methods aimed at maintaining highly-gifted children in public schools, a method that has been effectively implemented in several pilot schools.

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Scientific outputs

Number of scientific opinions, statements and other scientific documents per panel/ unit from September to December 2008.

Scientific area of expertise	Scientific Opinions	Scientific statements, reports and other scientific documents
Animal health and welfare (AHAW)	8	-
Food additives and nutrient sources (ANS)	12	
Biological hazards (BIOHAZ)	3	1 scientific report
Food contact materials, enzymes, flavourings (CEF)	16	3 statements
Contaminants (CONTAM)	4	
Feed additives (FEEDAP)	12	12 guidance documents
Genetically modified organisms (GMO)	5	
Nutrition (NDA)	37	-
Plant health (PLH)	1	1 draft guidance document
Plant protection products (PPR)	2	-
Scientific Committee	0	2 scientific reports
Pesticides (PRAPeR)	-	43 pesticide conclusions, 19 reasoned opinions on MRLs
Zoonoses	-	2 scientific reports, 2 data collection reports
Assessment methodology	-	1 statement, 1 scientific report , 1 statistical report
Data collection exposure	-	2 data collection reports
Scientific cooperation	-	2 data collection reports, 2 technical scientific reports

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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