



# Communications activities on zoonoses

EFSA Stakeholder consultative platform meeting  
Parma, 29-30 June 2011

# What are zoonoses?

- Infections or diseases that can be **transmitted** (directly or indirectly) **between animals and humans**

## Various ways of transmission

- Consumption of contaminated food or drinking water = food-borne zoonotic diseases
  - *Salmonella, Campylobacter, Listeria*, viruses
- By vectors, e.g. mosquitoes, fleas, ticks = vector-borne zoonotic diseases
  - Lyme disease, West-Nile disease
- Direct contact or close proximity to infected animals = non-food-borne zoonotic diseases
  - Avian influenza, Q fever

# Zoonoses in the EU and EFSA's role

- Significant **public health threat** (+320.000 human cases reported yearly)
- Joint efforts by EC, the Member States and EU agencies have led to a decrease in salmonellosis cases by almost 50% in 5 years

## EFSA's role

- **Independent scientific support and advice** on human and animal health aspects of zoonoses => used by risk managers in setting policies and defining control options

## Main tasks

- **Collection and analysis of data** on zoonotic agents in animals, food and feed
- **Assessment of risks** for the food chain
- **Recommendations** for prevention and reduction

# Recent communications activities: *E. coli* outbreak

## *Support to the European Commission*

3 June **EFSA/ECDC health advice** published on the website

8 June **EFSA/ECDC urgent reports** on STEC in vegetables and monitoring of VTEC strains in foods & from outbreaks including **press release and updated health advice**

26 June **EFSA sets up task force** to coordinate investigations to track down the source of any contaminated sprouted seeds in EU.

**News stories** 25 and 26 June

## *Key communications issues in a major outbreak*

- **European level coordination** between risk assessors (ECDC, EFSA, ERL, EMA, JRC) and risk managers (EC, MS) in outbreak investigation and risk communication
- **International cooperation**

# Communications activities on zoonoses

May 2010 – June 2011

- 2 press releases
- 7 web news stories
- 48 media queries (of which 40 in May-June 2011 due to E. coli)
- 1 interview (on E. coli)
- Regular articles in EFSA's newsletters
- Regular updates of dedicated pages on EFSA website
  - ➡ Publication of Community Summary Report on zoonoses and food-borne outbreaks (March 2011)
    - 70 articles in media, 99% reported on EFSA key messages

# Press release: Annual EU summary report on zoonoses and food-borne outbreaks

- 70 articles in the media
- 99% of articles reported at least one of key messages

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## EFSA and ECDC zoonoses report shows Salmonella in humans falls for fifth consecutive year

Press Release  
22 March 2011

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) have published their annual report on zoonoses[1] and food-borne outbreaks in the European Union for 2009. The report shows *Salmonella* cases in humans fell by 17% in 2009, marking a decrease for the fifth consecutive year. The report also shows that between 2008 and 2009 the number of laying hen flocks infected with *Salmonella*[2] fell by 9%.

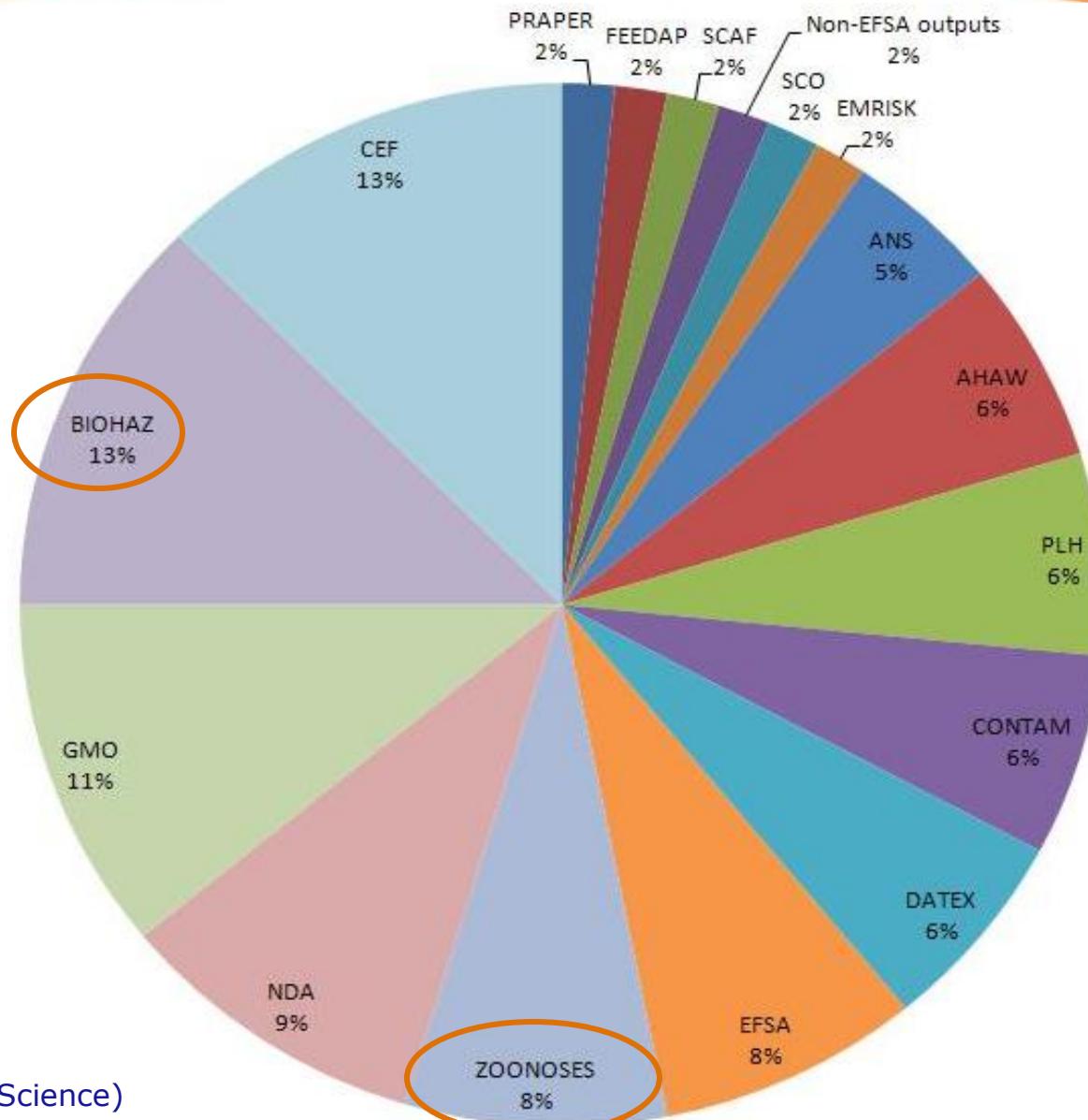
Campylobacteriosis remained the most reported zoonotic disease in humans, showing a slight increase with 198,252 cases in 2009 compared to 190,566 in 2008 (+4%). In foodstuffs, *Campylobacter*, which can cause diarrhoea and fever, was mostly found in raw poultry meat; and in live animals, it was found in poultry, pigs and cattle.

"The fall in *Salmonella* cases in humans is a great achievement and indicates that the control measures put in place by EU Member States and the European Commission are working. EFSA, in cooperation with its partners, will continue to support all efforts to reduce all zoonotic diseases across the EU," said Hubert Deluyker, EFSA's Director of Scientific Cooperation and Assistance.

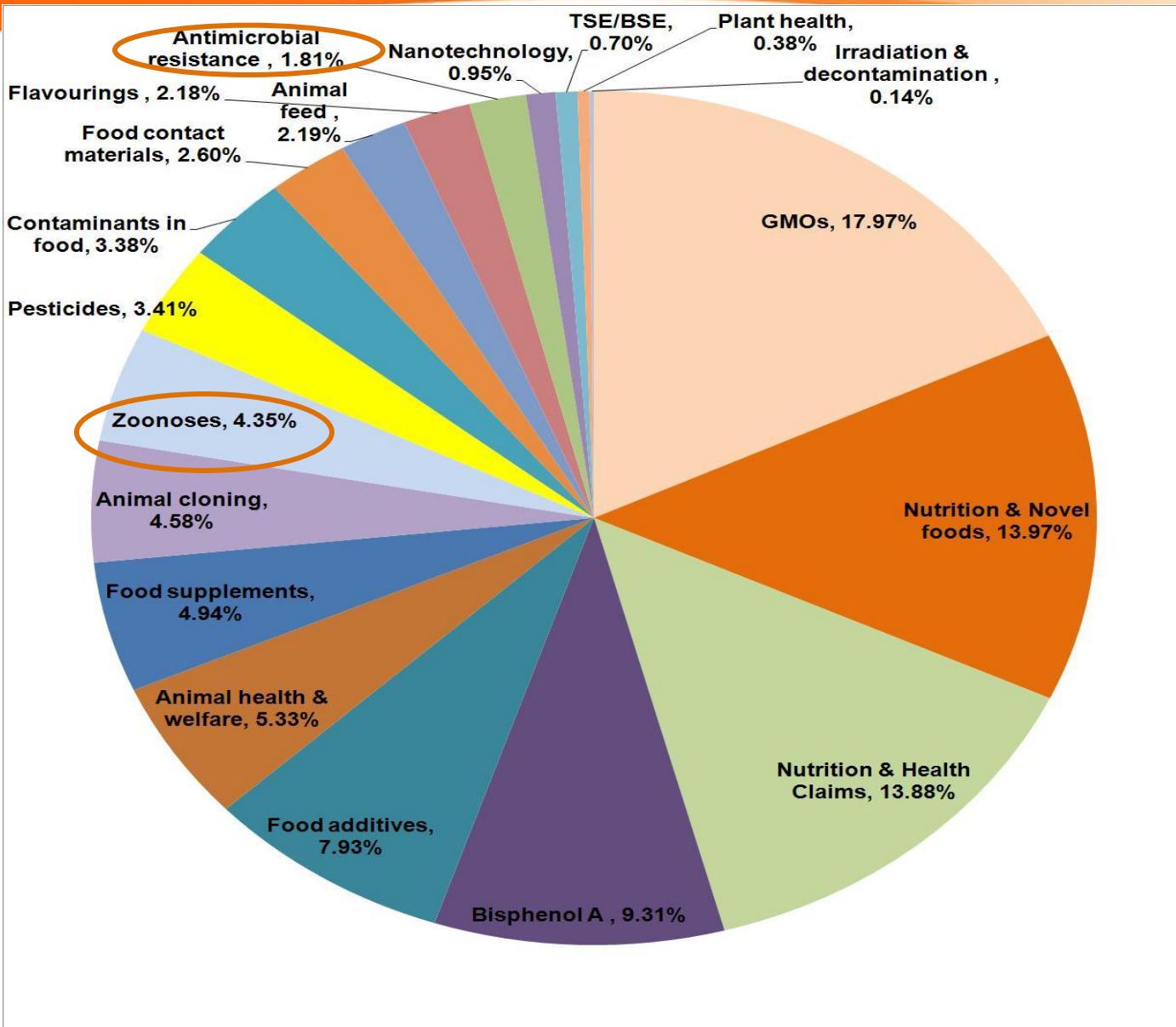
See also

- ▶ Topic: Food-borne diseases
- ▶ Biological monitoring homepage

# Share (%) of press releases/web stories in 2010



# Media coverage (%) per issue - 2010



# Challenges and opportunities for communication

## **Challenges**

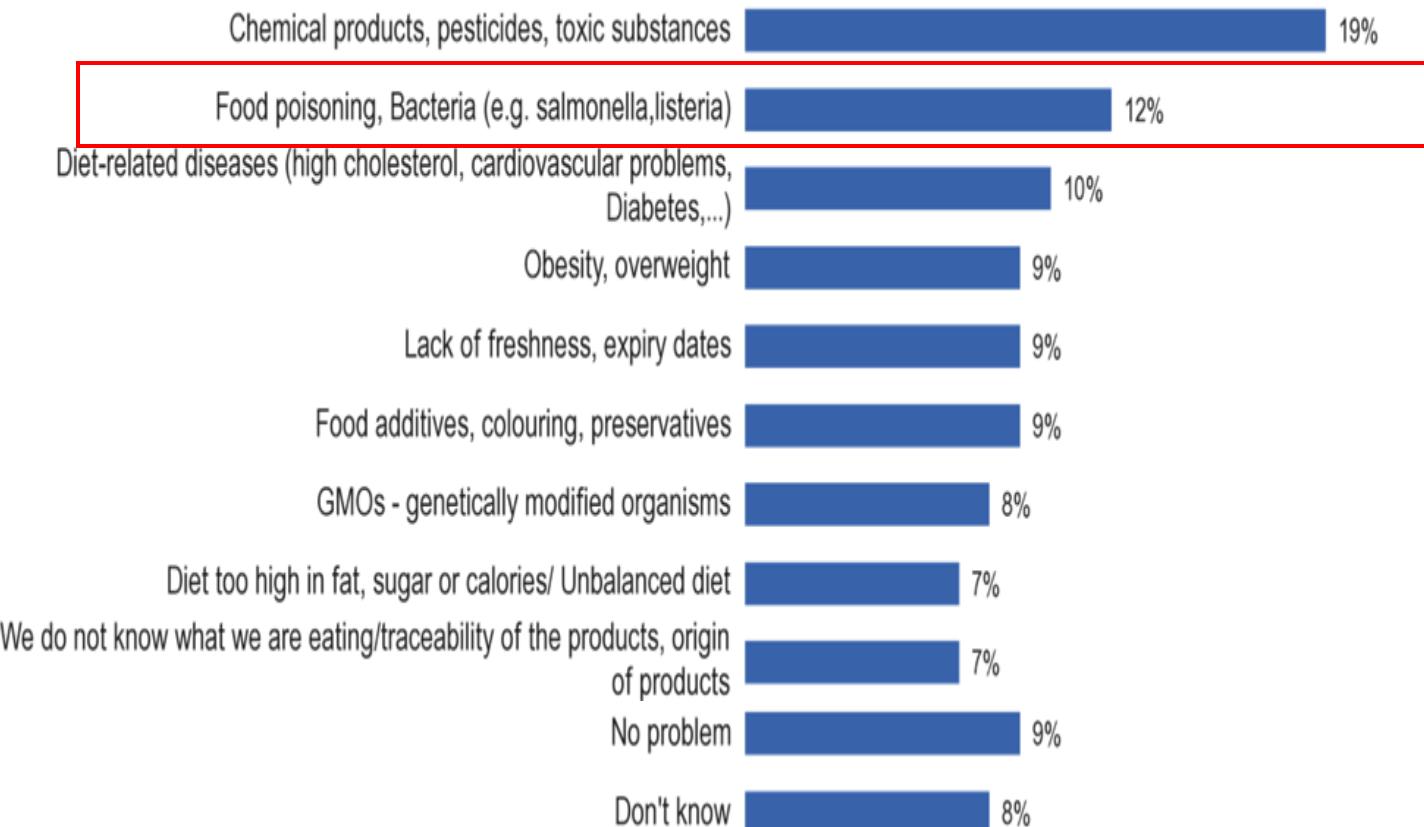
- Impact of zoonoses and the successes already achieved **not well known** among EU consumers
  - more concerned about chemical hazards
- **Less media coverage** than for many other areas
  - Positive news travels less well
  - Significant media coverage on annual Community Summary Reports – country angle

## **Opportunities**

- Important **public health threat**, concerns wide variety of actors in EU: risk managers, risk assessors, Member States, stakeholders etc.
- **Positive outcomes**: joint efforts have led to reduction of Salmonella in humans and animals
- **Trust** among EU consumers

# EU consumers more concerned about chemical than biological hazards

## Chemical products, pesticides and other toxic substances are the major concerns

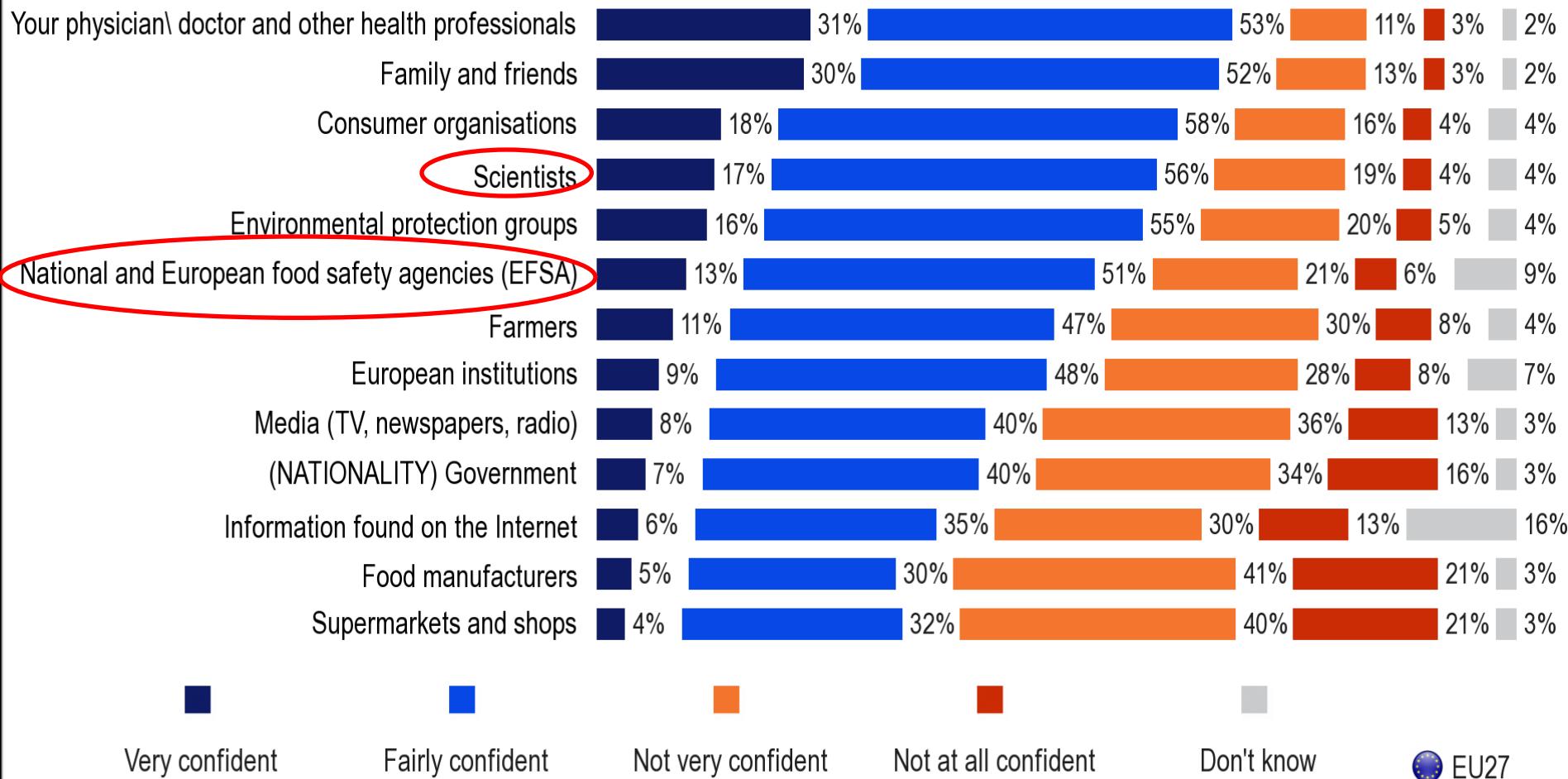


EU27

Source: 2010 Eurobarometer on Food-related Risks

**QF3:** Could you tell me in your own words, what are all the things that come to your mind when thinking about possible problems or risks associated with food and eating?

# Risk perceptions: Who do consumers trust?



# Moving forward in risk communications: Thematic approach

## Integrated communications plans:

- across all tools and channels
- themes reflecting both consumer concerns & public health priorities
- continuous “campaign” approach with key milestones (eg. zoonoses: annual report, baseline surveys, opinions of BIOHAZ, AHAW,...)
- covering all relevant aspects of EFSA’s work in an area



Rabies

Why important?

Leptospirose



BSE

Rabies

Not Important?

Close contact

Anti-microbial resistance?



ECDC Role?

What is it?

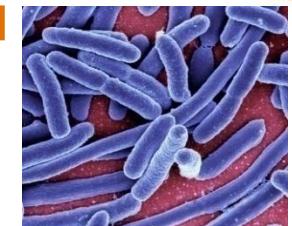
Campylobacter

Vector-borne

What: EFSA Role?



E. coli



Deadly?

Dangerous?  
Listeriose

Salmonella

Food-borne Q Fever



Harmless?

Brucellose

Clostridium

How transmitted?

Cysticercus

Rabies

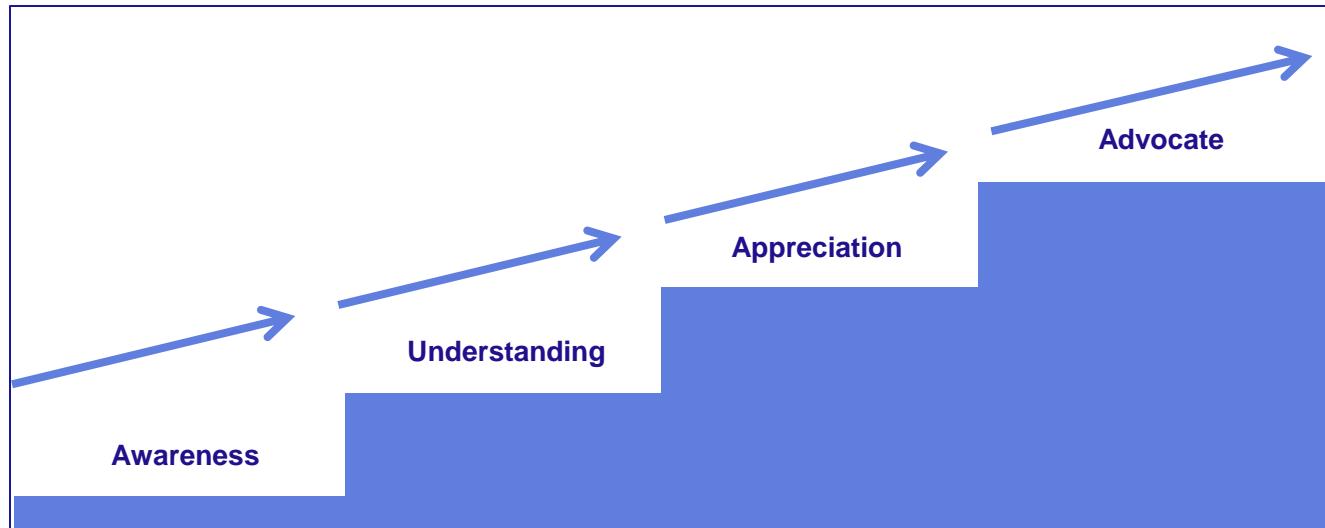
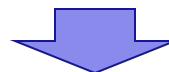
How: EFSA helps

Trichinella

# Thematic approach: Zoonoses

## AIM:

Help our target audiences to become aware, understand, appreciate and advocate our work and how we cooperate with others in the area of zoonoses



# Integrated communications approach to zoonoses

- Increase impact & effectiveness
- More meaningful, relevant communications, i.e help users better understand context & rationale for EFSA's work
- Targeted communications to key audiences (through website, specialised media, newsletters)
- Opportunity to strengthen co-operation
- More efficient/effective use of resources

- Communicate the benefits, results, impact of EFSA's work over time
- Move focus from individual outputs to "key issues"
  - Integrating all outputs in a given area but focusing on those which provide "news" value
- More effective use of website to better explain overall work and structure thematic approach (e.g. new topics and sub-topics)
- New tools (eg fact sheets, videos, leaflets with MS...)

# Focal areas and upcoming main outputs 2011-2013

## Key focal areas:

2011-2012

Salmonella

Antimicrobial resistance

2013 ->

Listeria

Campylobacter

- EU Summary Reports on zoonoses, food-borne outbreaks and antimicrobial resistance 2010-2013
- Food-borne viruses – July 2011
- Public health impact of setting new targets of *Salmonella* in turkeys - March 2012
- *Listeria* baseline survey in ready-to-eat foods (cheeses, salmon and meat products) - 2013

# Questions for discussion by our group

- Successes scored and hurdles faced in risk communications
- In your experience, what are the most effective ways of being informed about EFSA's work?
- When EFSA proactively communicated on a topic that is of direct relevance to your organisation what do you do with this information?
- How can EFSA work more effectively with you in order to strengthen outreach and coherence of risk communications?
- Recommendations for EFSA