

08/07/2009

Pre-Accession Seminar on Animal Health and Welfare

Hotel Arka, Skopje, 17-18 June

Report

Introduction: This seminar was organised as a part of EFSA Pre-Accession Programme 2009-2010 for Candidate and Potential Candidate Countries. A general objective of this Programme is to further enable the beneficiaries to familiarise themselves with the EU policies and working methods particularly focusing on “from field to plate” integrated approach to food safety.

Relevance of the Seminar to objectives of the Programme:

- The seminar provided the participants with an overall knowledge on the role of EFSA in the animal health and welfare area. Experiences and work of the Member States will contribute to the beneficiaries in better understanding of how this topic is dealt with on the MS national level,
- It provided a platform for networking and information gathering as the first step in the preparation for the future participation in EFSA networks,
- Meeting and discussing food safety topics with representatives from EFSA and EU,

General considerations: At the beginning of the seminar the participants were welcomed by *Mrs. Marina Popovska-Domazetova*, Director of the Food Directorate-Ministry of Health. In her speech she stressed the importance of this seminar for representatives of the competent institutions in her country working on animal health and welfare issues. In a speech that followed according to the agenda *Mr. Goran Kumrić*, Policy Officer in EFSA Legal and Policy Affairs Unit gave an update on work of EFSA, its institutional cooperation and ongoing scientific projects.

Mrs. Greta Nikolovska, Veterinary Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water Economy, the representative of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in EFSA’s Task Force on Zoonoses Data Collection, gave a presentation on the state of art on animal health in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia followed by a case study on Zoonoses data collection and reporting.

The programme continued with a presentation by *Prof. Martin Wierup*, Department of Biomedical Sciences and Veterinary Public Health, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, member of EFSA AHAW Panel who gave a speech on Animal health strategies in Sweden - with special reference to experiences prior and from the entry to the EU.

Mr. Per Have, Senior Scientific Officer, Team Leader for Animal Diseases in EFSA delivered a presentation on EFSA's work on animal health and the Pan-European cooperation. The first day of the seminar ended with an active discussion where many questions were raised both by representatives from the Former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia and the EU.

The second day started with a presentation by *Mr. Dimitar Terzievski*, Veterinary Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water Economy who gave an overview on the state of art on animal welfare in the country. The next speech entitled as Who protects our animals? AW Legislation in Europe was delivered by *Prof. Jörg Hartung*, Director of the Institute for Animal Hygiene, Animal Welfare and Farm Animal Behaviour, University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, member of EFSA AHAW Panel.

Dr. Oriol Ribó, Scientific officer of EFSA's AHAW Unit and the Team Leader for Animal Welfare presented EFSA's work on animal welfare and the challenges ahead. The programme ended with conclusions by the chair of the seminar *Mr. Finn Sheye*, Policy Officer & Pre-Accession Coordinator, Legal and Policy Affairs Unit, EFSA.

Number of participants	38
Institutions represented	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ministry of Health-Food Directorate- Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water Economy - Veterinary Directorate- Regional Veterinary Directorates Gevgelija, Kicevo, Kriva Palanka, Kumanovo, Ohrid, Prilep, Strumica and Sveti Nikole- Faculty of Veterinary Medicine- Faculty of Agriculture- Food industry- Economic Chamber of Macedonia,- Veterinary Ambulance-Prilep- Veterinary Ambulance-Skopje

Conclusions: The seminar has given a comprehensive overview of existing EU and national legislation and at the same time interesting examples of good animal health and welfare practices. It offered a platform for information and knowledge exchange and triggered an active discussion on how the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia should act in order to live up to the EU requirements in the respective area. Both the representatives from competent institutions and stakeholder groups showed interest in learning more on how EFSA works and on experiences from the EU Member States.

There were a total of 26 participants answered to the evaluation questionnaire. Responses to the questions regarding presentation skills of the speakers, the content of speeches and responsiveness to the questions showed that the majority of the participants were satisfied. **76 %** of the participants considered that presentations were on the right level and **80 %** of participants stated that they had enough opportunity to express their opinion. The participants found this seminar was an excellent (**38%**) or very good (**57%**) opportunity for improving their knowledge on this topic. Additional topics they would like to see addressed in future seminars are related to quality of food from animal origin, hygiene standards in food establishments, food allergies and prevention and eradication of rabies and q-fever. Overall, the participants were pleased with quality of the administrative support provided. The majority of participants, **65 %** have stated the overall value of the seminar was excellent while **30 %** have considered it to be very good.