Netherlands Food and Consumer
Product Safety Authority
Ministry of Agriculture,
Nature and Food Quality

Risk assessment: precaution, protocols and the scientific discourse

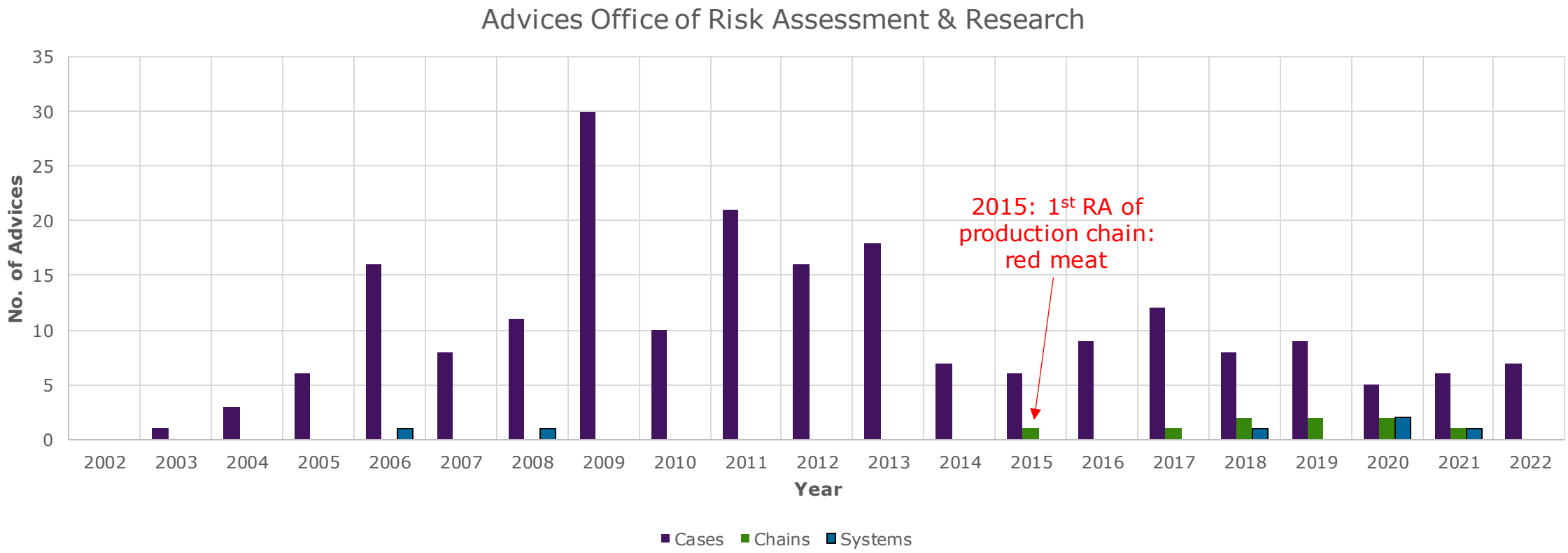
Dick Sijm

Office of Risk Assessment & Research

Office of Risk Assessment & Research (BuRO)

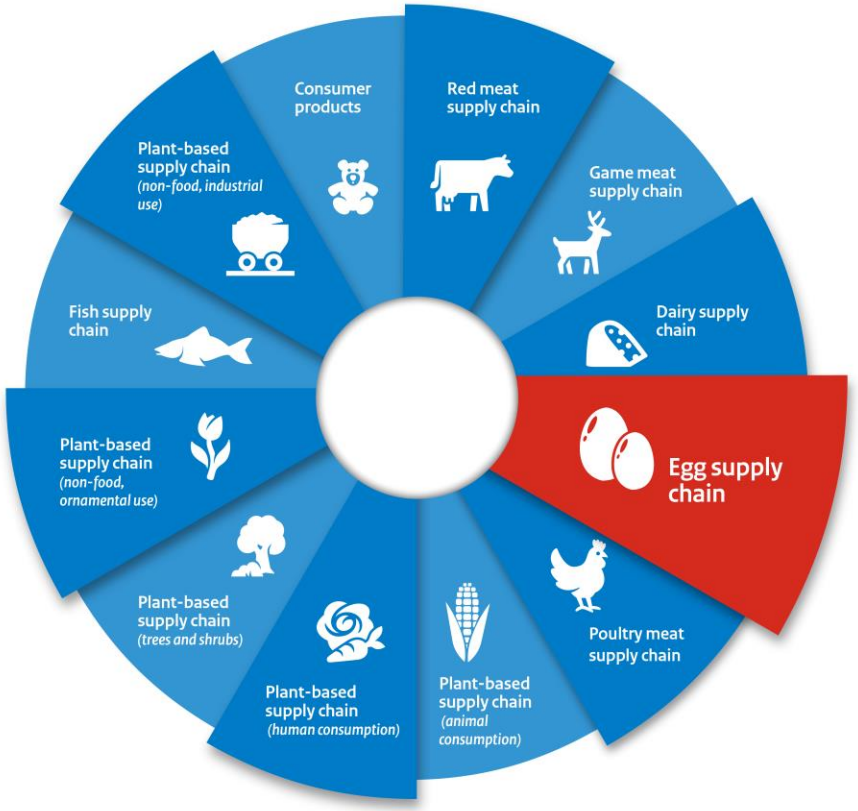
- Established in 2002 (as was EFSA)
- Law on independent risk assessment NVWA, in 2006:
  - Set of requirements for risk assessment (RA)
  - "Chinese wall" between RA and risk management, as in General Food Law
  - Advice to 1) ministry of Public Health, 2) ministry of Agriculture, Nature & Food Quality, and/or Inspector General-NVWA
  - Food safety and consumer safety at the core, animal welfare promised to the Parliament, too, yet not officially included in the Law
  - Independence, quality and transparency as key performance indicators
  - External *Advisory Board* who supervises scientific quality and independence

Number of advices, 2002-2022



Observations & recommendations Advisory Board (2006-2022)

- From performance to societal impact
- Peer review process required
- Novel experimental research required (creating new data where needed)
- From small, actual cases to bigger systems or production chains:
  - From one → multiple public values
  - From production chains to targeted approaches



Developments & challenges (for MS and EFSA)?

- Precaution or actual risk OR MRL versus proportionality?
- Integration RA with data science and analysis
- Trends and future scenarios
- RA and social sciences, including risk communication
- Continuous focus on individual cases, or on chains of events of (dis)similar risks?
- What is most 'cost' effective approach in terms of public health gain (or environmental gain or animal welfare gain, etc.?
  - In addition to MRL for PFAS, also RA of Σ (PFAS, dioxins, pesticides, and others) AND impact of (human) health AND (proposed) risk mitigation measures!?

Relevant literature:
Krewski et al. (2022). Principles of risk decision-making.
Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health, Part B, 25:5, 250-278,
DOI: 10.1080/10937404.2022.2107591