
Stakeholder Discussion Group on Emerging Risks
30th Meeting

This high-level web minutes intend to provide with a summary of the topics presented and discussed at the 30th meeting of the Stakeholder Discussion Group on Emerging Risks

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with minor changes: providing an update on the upcoming EFSA project on food supplements.

3. Introduction to the event

The StaDG- ER Coordinator updated the participants on the follow up actions from the previous meeting.

4. StaDG-ER members - Presentation and discussion of new emerging issues

4.1a Global spread of rat lungworm (*Angiostrongylus cantonensis*) by Nicola King (ESR New Zealand)

In 2021, the parasitic nematode *Angiostrongylus cantonensis* parasite was first detected in rats in mainland Europe (Valencia and surrounding fresh produce farms, Spain). A detection in rats signals that the parasite has become endemic. The presence in the European continent shows there is now potential for further spread and an increase in domestically acquired human cases. The members of the group raised interest on exploring other potential transmission routes (e.g., raw meat feed to cats and dogs) and control measures (e.g., water pasteurisation and chlorination)

4.1a Aichivirus (AiV) as a potential cause of gastroenteritis outbreaks by Nicola King (ESR New Zealand)

Advances in molecular biology have made AiV detection easier and awareness of this virus as a cause of acute gastroenteritis appears to be increasing. Although the virus has been found mostly in shellfish and food surveys have targeted shellfish in these foods, AiV has been also detected in raw and treated sewage, surface waters and groundwaters, suggesting potential for transmission onto food via water. Studies of AiV are needed to generate data that builds a robust picture of transmission routes including determining the role of food and possible human to human transmission.



4.2 EHD (epizootic haemorrhagic disease) - an emerging risk in Europe by Prof Bocanegra (FESASS - European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security)

More than 3000 EHD outbreaks are currently reported in Europe in four countries: France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain with high concerns to be spread to other countries. Climate change and the presence of additional species of culicoides, other than *C. Imicola*, are likely to play a role in the transmission of the disease to northern parts of Europe. Multidisciplinary efforts are necessary for monitoring and control of outbreaks while applying a One health approach. The members acknowledge the existing challenges to develop a commercial vaccine.

4.3 Risk associated to the increase in consumption of *Amanita muscaria* by Rimma Ishimbaeva (AVC - Association of Veterinary Consultants)

Following the outlawing of psilocybin containing mushrooms, an increased quantity of *Amanita* species has been reported to be sold and consumed in Europe where the use of smartphone identification apps may have contributed. Consumption of gummies, powders, tinctures, and capsules containing *Amanita muscaria* extracts in USA is raising concerns from the FDA in the absence of clinical trials, however the group do not have available information on the presence of these products in the European market, other than internet. EU legislation is clear to protect consumers from mushroom poisoning. The issue is therefore considered an enforcement problem.

4.4 Climate change as an Emerging risk driver- COCERAL perspective by Gianluca Nurra (COCERAL AISBL)

The effect of climate change (CC) might impact food security and trade patterns for grains/oilseeds/pulses in an unpredictable way throughout altered capacity to produce and deliver food and feed of minimum quality and safety standards. Data from COCERAL shows a decrease trend on grains and oilseeds yields and an increased prevalence and co-occurrence of mycotoxins. The group identify horizon scanning principles as the way forward to anticipate CC impacts including 360-perception analysis on policies (e.g., EU protein strategy, Green Deal, Farm to fork) new technologies (GM resistant crops) and other influencing factors.

5. StaDG-ER members – Follow up on previous issues discussed

5.1 Recent findings on microplastics in aquaculture fish by Ondina Afonso (EuroCommerce)

The presented study reveals that fibres from textiles was the most common source of microplastic found in sea bass. However, microplastics bioconcentrate in fish but not bioaccumulate. Although microplastics may act as a vehicle of other contaminants, the group is not aware of studies to demonstrate that these contaminants may end up on fish tissues such as muscle and the consequently may trigger a risk for humans.



5.2 Comparative toxicity of conventional versus compostable plastic consumer products by EFSA

A recent in-vitro study shows evidence that biodegradable plastics induce a significant decrease in cell viability (<70%) after 24 h of exposure versus no cytotoxicity induced by conventional plastics. However, the compounds causing this toxicity to remain unidentified. The extraction methods used in the study and the additives added to improve technical characteristics on biodegradable plastics may play a key role in toxicity for which further information and research is needed.

6. Updates on previous issues StaDG-ER members – Follow up on previous issues discussed

6.1 Monitoring trade patterns of different potential fomites and carriers of African Swine Fever (ASF)-virus by Jan Dahl (Copa Cogeca)

Supply chains of feed and feed ingredients can change considerably over time, due to different harvest conditions and economic and political situations. Regular meetings and contacts with feed mills and other stakeholders are necessary to monitor changes and evaluating the consequences of these changes in transmission of the disease. Recent studies and EFSA ongoing projects provide valuable data related to ASF-virus survival on different fomites supporting evaluation of risks for the transmission of ASF.

6.2 Impact of low temperature on African swine fever virus transmission through contaminated environments by Lis Alban (UECBV- European Livestock and Meat Trades Union)

A recent study concludes that ASF-virus survival could reach up to several days at low ambient temperatures inside a truck transporting infected pigs, unless washing and disinfection are done in a professional way. There is a need to implement strict control systems on washing and disinfecting to avoid spread of disease by remaining virus in trucks. However, environmental concerns should be considered with regards to water consumption and disposal of disinfectants.

6.3 Follow-up on the emerging issue ID0419: Public health risk associated with raw meat-based diets (RMBD) for cats and dogs by Maurizio Ferri Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)

From a recent report, it emerges that the UK is facing an alarming increase in the presence of Salmonella in RMBD pet food, raising concerns on potential transmission of Salmonella from pets to humans. The presence of Multiple drug resistance (MDR) Salmonella strains, including those resistant to critically important antimicrobials (CIAs), in dogs, cats, and raw pet food is the most alarming evidence revealed by the report. Despite existing Regulations Animal By-products, it is important to collect more studies and data to assess a potential spill over to livestock.

6.4 TIC Council - Summary of emerging risks triggers that we have identified by SGS DIGICOMPLY by Nicola Colombo (Observer representing TIC Council)

A recent study detected by SGS DIGICOMPLY reveal citrin as a novel food allergen in citrus seeds exhibiting cross-reactivity with cashews and pistachios as a potential



emerging risk requiring further investigation. The systems also identified a new study where Xenobiotic contamination may trigger a new hazard potential for urban agroecosystems which are gaining popularity due to their potential to enhance local food security, reduce food miles, and provide social and ecological benefits.

6.5 Newsletter on emerging risk activities by EFSA

The first issue of the Emerging Risk Newsletter was presented to the members of the group. This has been assembled and reviewed with the help of an editorial board of nominees from EREN and this group (StaDG-ER). Instructions were provided on how to access this intended-to-be biannual e-Newsletter (Emerging Risk updates).

7. Environmental scanning activities

7.1 Update on the Environmental scanning process and the ERAP tool by EFSA

This new EFSA's process constitutes the single-entry point for collecting trends/topics/signals in the areas of food and feed safety, plant health, animal health and environmental aspects. These topics could trigger several actions such as need to develop or amend EFSA's guidance documents or alerting the European Commission on the need for future research or could trigger the need to update EFSA's work-program and possibly strategy if needed. EFSA presented the progress of the development of the Emerging Risk Analysis Platform (ERAP) tool. This platform will provide a central place for members to submit briefing notes, and for further characterising and assessing the possible emerging risks. A call for volunteers was made by EFSA to EREN and StaDG-ER members for a User Acceptance Testing before the platform is deployed around mid-January 2024.

7.2 FFRAUD-ER – an update by Monica Odysseos (PwC)

The scope of this project is to build a computational model that classifies food fraud incidents as food safety issues for EFSA, with the scope to anticipate potential food safety risks linked to food fraud incidents. This includes assembling a labelled dataset and to train, evaluate, test and fine-tune machine learning models to automate the identification of food safety issue. The end-product has been delivered and model refinement phase is ongoing where EFSA gathers sets of food fraud incidents descriptions to be imported into the computational model. The model assesses each food fraud incident and return a food safety label and its confidence level. The outputs are validated by a master annotator (EFSA) to re-train the computational model with the newly validated data. The project will run until January 2025.

7.3 Anticipation of food safety and fraud issues: ISAR – monitoring food prices and commodity flows by Dr Britta Müller (Bavarian State Office for Health and Food Safety)

A topic presentation introduced the early warning system Import Screening for the Anticipation of food Risks (ISAR) developed by the Bavarian Health and Food Safety Authority (LGL). The system reveals the importance of a comprehensive view on the agri-food chain for better anticipation of health risks and fraudulent practices as well as the need to implement multidisciplinary approaches and cooperation among food safety authorities and other bodies to tackle complex challenges. ISAR enables to



systematically monitor commodity flows and prices of imported food. A case study assessing the impact of the Ukraine war on the agri-food chain shows how ISAR can support the identification of vulnerable food stuff.

7.4 Food fraud – proof of concept & Innovation zone by EFSA

A computational model as delivered by the FFRAUD-ER project cannot be used by end users, it requires programming to be usable. EFSA has deployed the model in app-delivery infrastructure (API) and created three user interfaces related to identified use cases to allow user to e.g., try the model a few times with a few food fraud descriptions or validate the model with a larger number of food fraud descriptions. The model API does not store any submitted data, it takes a food fraud description and returns a prediction.

7.5 Update on the EFSA project “Oceans” by EFSA

The ocean’s project aims to build a report on emerging risk associated with blue economy. The study will focus on coastal and open-sea mining, aquaculture and sea transport and trade. The study will permit to build narratives and scenarios which will be linked to relevant drivers to support the sustainability of this ecosystem.

7.6 Preview of the topics on the agenda of the EREN meeting by EFSA

The upcoming meeting will introduce new signals (i.e., Epizootic Haemorrhagic Disease (EHD), Usutu Viruses, Rare elements and ‘Plasticosis’ in sea birds) but also updates on topics already discussed in previous meetings (i.e., blue algae proliferation, Fusarium, Erythritol, Tara flour). The web minutes from this meeting can be found in the EFSA website.

8. AOB/Final discussions & Conclusions

8.1 European Protein Strategy EP Press release by EFSA

The European Parliament has recently approved this strategy to be considered as one of the drivers of interest to EFSA next to climate change considerations. It is therefore important to start analysing data provided by stakeholders to get the broader picture on this new production system and to analyse its challenges and opportunities, what is the meaning for efsa and what is the meaning for colleagues and partners .

8.2 Update on food supplements project

The project aim to establish a community of knowledge on food supplements, other than vitamins and minerals with two primary objectives: 1) analysing possible emerging risks from (nutri)vigilance/monitoring systems in Europe and other accessible sources, such as Toxinfo collections or signals from poison centres, and 2) consider plant-based substances listed in the EFSA Compendium on Botanicals that are predicted to be toxic, investigate whether these substances or the plants containing these substances have been used in/as food supplements within the EU, and if so, whether they could be a health concern for EU consumers. The project was initially foreseen to be outsourced as an EFSA Grant in 2023 but got de-prioritised.



As an alternative solution, the Secretariat is exploring the possibility to have this activity run under the EFSA supported tailor-made activities of the Focal Points.

Location: Venue: [Doubletree by Hilton](#), meeting room Buckeye, 1st floor Brussels & Hybrid

Participants

StaDG-ER Members

No.	Name	Organisation	Attending /Apologies
1	Lauren Tuchman	Association for Natural Medicine in Europe e.V (ANME)	Attending (online)
2	Birgit Roser	AVC Association of Veterinary Consultants	Attending (online)
3	Rimma Ishimbaeva	AVC Association of Veterinary Consultants	Attending (in person)
4	Miguel Angel Prieto Arranz	Cefic (European Chemical Industry Council)	Attending (in person)
5	Gianluca Nurra	COCERAL AISBL	Attending (in person)
6	Jan Dahl	Copa and Cogeca	Attending (in person)
7	Ondina Afonso	EuroCommerce	Attending (in person)
8	Hélène Collignon	European Biostimulant Industry Council (EBIC)	Attending (online)
9	Lea Pallaroni	European Compound Feed Manufacturers' Federation (FEFAC)	Attending (online)
10	Arnaud Bouxin	European Compound Feed Manufacturers' Federation (FEFAC)	Attending (in person)
11	Christian Bruun Kastrup	European Dairy Association (EDA)	Attending (online)
12	Christian Quinet	European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security (FESASS)	Attending (in person)
13	Maria Scherbov	European Food Information Council (EUFIC)	Attending (in person)
14	Lis Alban	European Livestock and Meat Trades Union (UECBV)	Attending (in person)
15	Maurizio Ferri	Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)	Attending (in person)
16	Patrick Coppens	Food Supplements Europe	Attending (in person)



17	Paul Anthony Hepburn	FoodDrinkEurope	Attending (online)
18	Laura Martín Oropesa	FoodServiceEurope	Attending (in person)
19	Jeroen Meeussen	IBMA - International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association	Attending (in person)
20	Christophe Derrien	International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed (IPIFF)	Attending (in person)
21	Mandy Veillette	PETA Science Consortium International e.V.	Attending (online)
22	Kalila Hajjar	Primary Food Processors (PFP)	Attending (in person)
23	Luigi Tozzi	SAFE Food Advocacy Europe (SAFE)	Attending (in person)
24	Bizhan Pourkomailian	Serving Europe	Attending (online)
25	Stefan Ronsmans	Union of European Beverages Associations (UNESDA)	Attending (in person)

External speakers

Name	Organisation	Attending /Apologies
Nicola King	Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR), New Zealand	Attending (online)
Professor Bocanegra	University of Cordoba, representing FESAS	Attending (in person)
Dr. Britta Müller	Bavarian State Office for Health and Food Safety	Attending (online)
Monica Odysseos	PwC Data & Analytics	Attending (in person)
Rozmari Hadjicharalambous	PwC Data & Analytics	Attending (in person)
Andreas Braun	PwC Data & Analytics	Attending (in person)

EFSA

Bernard Bottex, Raquel Garcia Matas, Aikaterini Vlachou, Milen Georgiev, Angelo Maggiore, Georgia Gkrintzali, Martina Kurisova, Costina Avirvarei (Knowledge, Innovation and Partnership Management Unit), Sofie Dhollander, Lina Mur (BIOHAW Unit), Elena Rovesti (FEEDCO Unit)

European Commission / EU representative

Sandrine Amsler, Eleni Gkana, from DG SANTE.

Observers

Nicola Colombo - Global Head of SGS DIGICOMPLY representing TIC Council Liaison
Riccardo Siligato - Joint Research Centre

Apologies were received from:

Name	Organisation
1 Mihai Ionita	Association of the European Self-Care Industry (AESGP)
2 Agneta Sundgren	Copa and Cogeca
3 Sara García Figuera	European Biostimulant Industry Council (EBIC)
4 Nina McGrath	European Food Information Council (EUFIC)
5 Jérémy Belzunces	IBMA - International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association
6 Blanca Suarez	Nanotechnology Industries Association



7 Antoine D'haese SAFE Food Advocacy Europe (SAFE)