

STAKEHOLDERS DISCUSSION GROUP ON FOOD CHEMICAL OCCURRENCE DATA

11th Meeting



11 June 2024

09:00-13:00

Minutes agreed on 29 July 2024

Location: Online via MS Teams

Attendees:

○ **Discussion Group Members:**

Organisation	Name
AESGP	Mihai Ionita
CAOBISCO	Alquati Eleonora
Cefic, the European Chemical Industry Council	Prieto Arranz Miguel Angel
ECF	Lamberti Giovanni
EU Specialty Food Ingredients	Pesce Francesco
EUPPA - European Potato Processors' Association	Piccione Alessandro
EUROMALT aisbl	Corivaud Nurra
Euromilk	Corivaud Fanny
European Commission	Verstraete Frans
European Commission	Poustkova Ivana
European Dairy Association	Libertini Maria
FEDIOL, EU vegetable oil and protein meal association	Stavropoulou Angeliki
FEFAC	Bouxin Arnaud
Food Supplements Europe	Coppens Patrick
FoodDrinkEurope	Terzi Luca
FoodDrinkEurope	Rodarte Alejandro
ICGA-Europe	Corivaud Christophe
NATURAL FOOD COLOURS ASSOCIATION (NATCOL aisbl)	Zeugin Fabienne
Specialised Nutrition Europe (SNE)	Héjjas Kata
Specialised Nutrition Europe (SNE)	Kraehenbuehl Karin
Specialised Nutrition Europe (SNE)	Hejjas Kata
Spirit Europe	Gregori Mario
Tea & Herbal Infusions Europe - THIE	Rostami Farshad
UNESDA Soft Drinks Europe	Commarmond Patrice

○ **European Commission:**

Frans Verstraete

○ **EFSA:**

IDATA Unit: Giuseppe Triacchini (Chair), Fabrizio Abbinante (IDATA HoU); Sofia Ioannidou (IDATA DGO Team Leader), FACCHINI Chiara Selene, FLAMINI Vittoria, GIBIN Davide, GÓMEZ RUIZ José Ángel, GUTIERREZ LINARES Alicia, JOSHESKI Martin, MALDONADO Andrea, MARCHESE Emanuela, MAST Tinne, MEDINA PASTOR Paula, MITOULA Vaia, MORTALI Francesco, NIFOROU Krystalia, PASINATO Luca, RADOVNIKOVIC Anita, SALVATORE Stefania, TARD Alexandra, ZORMPAS Alexios

MESE Unit: José Ángel Gomez Ruiz

FIP Unit: Alexandra Tard

RAL Unit: Vanessa Descy



1. Welcome, adoption of the agenda, quick tour of self-presentation of the participants

The Chair welcomed the StaDG Members that are online and all the other participants in the room (EFSA Staff)

Apologies not received from absent invitees.

After a quick tour-de-table with a short self-presentation of all the participants the agenda of the 11th meeting has been adopted without changes

2. Food additives and flavourings re-evaluation programme: updates on work programme and calls for data

The new FAF panel with mandate 2024-2029 was introduced. It will first meet in July.

The work for 2024 for the FAF Panel (mandate 2018-2024 and mandate 2024-2029) is shared between re-evaluation of additives already authorised and follow-up opinions after the EFSA re-evaluations, applications for new additives or modification of already authorised additives, flavourings (new and already authorised) and the revision of the guidance for food additives submission. Apart from the revision of the guidance for food additives submission, which is a self-mandate, all other topics work with WGs.

As the previous years, the number of applications is quite high (currently 17 on-going). Until end 2024, are scheduled for adoption 9 opinions. In addition, there are also new application combined with the re-evaluation (3, of which 2 are also scheduled to be adopted by end 2024).

Regarding the flavourings area, there are currently 2 applications for new flavourings (one should be adopted by the end of the year). There are currently 5 revisions for flavourings on-going with one scheduled for adoption in 2024.

Concerning additives, the follow-up opinions should address the recommendations from the re-evaluation opinion (e.g silver). In addition, some opinions should also consider the population of infants < 16 weeks of age (e.g. silicon dioxide).

The re-evaluation opinions for 2024 are related to sweeteners and saccharins should be adopted this year. The next sweeteners opinions to be adopted should be acesulfame K, sucralose and maltitols.

The timelines for the revision of the guidance for food additives submission was shared.

A final point was presented concerning the calls for data.

As each year, the open call for food additive occurrence data in food and beverages intended for human consumption is on-going, deadline June 2024. Its aims is to collect analytical data, with this year priority given to several additives/group of additives (Malic acid (E 296) and malates (E 350-352), Fumaric acid (E 297), Succinic acid (E 363), Calcium disodium ethylene diamine tetra-acetate (Calcium disodium EDTA) (E 385), Glutamic acid (E 620) and



glutamates (E 621-625), Tartaric acid (E 334) and tartrates (E 335-337, E 354), Lycopene (E 160d))

Another call is more targeted to industry and is requesting data to support re-evaluation (technical data, impurities, manufacturing process, biological and toxicological data, use and use levels). The priority list of additives is more or less the same as for the open call. It should be launched soon.

3. Update on recent and current uses of food additives and chemical contaminants data

Few slides were presented to provide examples of the use of data submitted by industry in recently published and on-going scientific opinions on chemical contaminants and food additives, in particular sweeteners. During the presentation it was stressed the relevance of these data to complement the monitoring data submitted by Member States. As an example, it was mentioned the Scientific opinion on the update of the risk assessment of mineral oil hydrocarbons in food, published in September 2023, where the data provided by food associations represented 3.5% of the total data used.

4. Data collection on food additives/food flavourings under the monitoring programme

EFSA presented an update of the data collection on food additives/food flavourings under the monitoring programme. The mandate that EFSA received from the European Commission was introduced, where scientific and technical assistance is requested in the preparation to implement the common methodology on the monitoring of food additives and food flavourings. The tasks to be performed under this mandate were also described.

The new data collection shall allow the collection of analytical data, use levels data, and presence data, including data reflecting natural occurrence or from sources other than food additive or food flavouring use. The new system was presented, highlighting the main differences with previous data collections on these domains, and given an overview of how the different types of data could be submitted through the new system.

The new data model to collect use levels data, that has already shared with the stakeholders (Member States and industry), was taken as an example to describe some of the variables that will be submitted using the template or reporting tool.

Next steps of the monitoring programme were also presented, specifically the pilot phase, the priority list for 2025 and 2026, the resources to be used, the report and timelines of the data collection.



5. Update on the activities of the Advisory Group on Data

The Advisory Group on Data has been renewed for a 3-years mandate in 2024. Objectives, organigram and organization of the group were shared. The AGoD principles were also discussed: among those feature prominently that of collaboration and togetherness. These principles are reflected in the projects endorsed by AGoD, that promote these principles across the EFSA Food Safety ecosystem. In the conversation that ensued it was suggested to maintain the stakeholder involved through updates on the evolution of the projects and the AGoD activities.

6. EFSA Rebuild Data Framework project – overall status – outcome of the surveys

EFSA presented the progress of Rebuild project, that aims at creating a new modern data collection and analysis system in accordance with the EFSA Strategy 2027.

To identify the challenges and requirements, EFSA ran several elicitation activities and among these: an online survey was launched in June 2023 and communicated to over 300 stakeholders.

A response rate of 45% was registered, covering all countries and scientific domains.

The major findings and the relevant figures of the survey analysis regarding: the data preparation, transmission, validation and error management, as well as terminology management were presented.

The requirements were clustered and relate to the following aspects: flexibility and scalability, tools to support stakeholders in data preparation and management, improvement of the error management system, the need for a connected and automated system.

The next steps of the Rebuild DF project and the 2 waves of analysis and implementation were described.

Currently, EFSA is engaged in the technical analysis of the new system, for which the blueprint is expected to be delivered by Autumn 2024.

After that, the system will be implemented and piloted with volunteering stakeholders in March 2026.

7. Occurrence data submission to EFSA – FEDIOL contribution and perspective

FEDIOL, the vegetable oil and protein meal association, is a regular data provider and shared their experience with submitting data to EFSA. Considering the importance of real-world data for a robust risk assessment, FEDIOL has in place a systematic approach for screening the EFSA annual calls and EC



monitoring recommendations to decide what data to collect in addition to continuous calls. Details on the FEDIOL internal process of how data is collected, handled, and submitted to the EFSA DCF system was presented. The presentation highlighted also the challenges of such a resource-intensive process which is only a small part of the association's activities, especially the last years due to different reasons. FEDIOL thanked the EFSA staff for their support and responsiveness during data submission and suggested some further improvement of the system and the timing.

8. Chemical monitoring data collection timelines

EFSA provided background information on how the decision was taken for the harmonised timelines in the ChemMon data collection, indicating the involvement of the ChemMon data Network members and the European Commission. EFSA gave a short overview of the tasks that must be taken care of after the closing of the data collection and before the opening of the next year's data collection, including the storing and use of the reported data.

9. EFSA sharing of documentation and self-training material.

The new MS Teams Channel "*Knowledge exchange on data collection with Industry*" has been introduced by EFSA as a new collaborative group composed by industrial companies/representatives and other associations to facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge related to different data collections such as food additives (FA), food flavourings (FF), and chemical contaminants. The posts on the Guidance for reporting usage level of FA/FF and the call for data on Contaminants 2024 have been mentioned as examples of the typical posts on the new Teams Channel. Training material related to the data preparation and data collection operations have been prepared and shared in the "Files" area of the "*Knowledge exchange on data collection with Industry*" Team.

10. Final questions and discussion – AOB

Quality assurance process for data submitted by stakeholders was discussed in relation to the exposure assessment. EFSA detailed the verification and assessment procedures for submitted data. Data is obtained from both industries and Member States, and the quality of the datasets are first assured by the automated validation process performed by the DCF during data submission. This validation process practically realizes a built-in quality screening system designed to detect errors and reject files if necessary. Once the data don't violate any of the validation rules and meets the required standards, can be uploaded to the EFSA data warehouse by a proactive action of the data provider. People in charge in each Organization (Data Validators) can then validate and accept the data definitely in the EFSA Data Warehouse,



completing the data collection process. After submission of the datasets into DCF, potential outliers are identified and discussed with the respective parties to ensure data reliability. For food additives, EFSA focuses on the food categories where the additive is authorised and may consider natural sources or carryover.

It has been specified that EFSA does not incorporate literature data into the exposure assessment, except only as a secondary option for high-level exposure estimations when data from the data warehouse is insufficient. EFSA stressed the importance of having high-quality data in the data warehouse for accurate risk assessment purposes.

EFSA proposed to communicate through email alongside the existing Teams channel to ensure that all participants receive the relevant information.

Inclusion of two additional data elements in the data collection process for food supplements has been notified, i.e. the daily dose and the weight of a consumption unit. This data would ensure an improved exposure assessment for food additives, contaminants and substances used in food supplements. EFSA acknowledged the limitations of the current food consumption data and mentioned that internal discussion is ongoing to implement these data elements in the use level data model.

EFSA requested feedback on the self-training material shared via Teams to identify technical issues and concerns in order to use this information to prepare additional supporting materials and mini guidances based on the feedback from data providers.

EFSA highlighted relevance of ongoing projects initiated by AGOD aiming to develop tools that facilitate the reporting of data to EFSA, e.g. mapping terminologies from different countries and industries against EFSA's terminology. EFSA agreed to take actions to facilitate easier data submission, conduct a scientific evaluation of simplified methods, improve the data collection system, and enhance communication with stakeholders.

11. Conclusion of the meeting

After showing and commenting the results of the survey "comments and suggestions on the previous meeting" circulated with the doodle for selecting the best date of the 11th meeting, the chair thanked all the participants and pre-announced that an option to have a second hybrid meeting (live+online) in Brussels was under evaluation by EFSA. More details to be given after the internal evaluation by IDATA unit and decision based on budgets.