



PROGRESS REPORT 15 DECEMBER 2005 – 24 JANUARY 2006

SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

1. Number of scientific expert meetings

In the period 15 December - 24 January, five plenary (i.e. 2 plenaries of the AHAW and 2 plenaries of the BIOHAZ panel, and 1 plenary of the Scientific Committee), and 37 working group meetings took place. Among the 37 working group meetings, the first meetings were held of an AFC working group on aspartame, a CONTAM WG on hormones in bovine meats, and a CONTAM WG on brominated flame retardants.

	Plenary Panel meetings	Panel Working Group meetings
AFC	0	3
AHAW	2	5
BIOHAZ	2	8
CONTAM	0	5
FEEDAP	0	4
GMO	0	4
NDA	0	1
PPR	1	4
SC	0	3
PRAPeR	0	0
Task Force Zoonosis	0	0
BSE/TSE Expert Group	0	0
TOTAL	5	37

2. PPR Panel

The Opinion of the PPR Panel on the Commission guidance document on estimating persistence and degradation kinetics from environmental fate studies on pesticides, adopted mid-December, recommends to the Commission that, before adopting this guidance document, it should a new chapter on uncertainties, and also to develop software tools and to organise training courses for MS and registrants.

3. Pesticide Risk Assessment (PRAPeR)

Following the final discussion with Member State's experts in November, the EFSA conclusions on the peer review of further 7 existing active substances (dichlorprop-P, fenamiphos, fenitrothion, malathion, metconazole, pyrimethanil and phosalone) of the

2nd stage of review program as well as of one new active substance (metrafenone) were finalized and submitted to the EU-Commission. The 7 EFSA conclusions finalized 14 December were made available on the EFSA website together with the relevant background documentation. No meeting took place during this reporting period.

4. FEEDAP Panel

The FEEDAP Panel continued its efforts to develop guidelines and guidance documents for the assessment of feed additives, following a consultation request from the Commission. The first set of documents submitted by EFSA to the Commission as the consultation outcome have not unfortunately been circulated to the Member States by the Commission, although they are involved in the decision making process.

5. Zoonoses

EFSA's first Community Summary Report on Trends and Sources of Zoonoses, Zoonotic Agents and Antimicrobial Resistance in the European Community in 2004, was published on 21 December 2005. The report covers information on 11 zoonoses as well as food-borne outbreaks collected from all the Member States. A total of over 380.000 zoonoses cases in humans were recorded during the reporting year.

6. EFSA technical meeting with environmental NGO's on genetically modified organisms

EFSA is organizing a technical meeting on genetically modified organisms with environmental non-governmental organisations which will take place on 22nd February. The purpose of the meeting is to share views on scientific and procedural issues related to EFSA's advice and EFSA's scientific opinions on GMOs and EFSA's work in this particular area. The meeting will provide the NGO's with an opportunity to further elaborate on their scientific concerns and to substantiate these concerns with scientific reasoning. Participants at this meeting will be the invited environmental NGOs, experts from EFSA's GMO Panel and EFSA's staff involved in the area of GMOs and related-areas. The meeting is organized jointly with the I&I Department.

7. Announcement of the next science colloquium on the development of food-based dietary guidelines, 21-22 March 2006

EFSA has been asked by the European Commission to provide assistance on the translations of nutrient based dietary advice into guidance intended for the European population as a whole, on the contribution of different foods or categories of foods to an overall diet that would help to maintain good health through optimal nutrition (food-based dietary guidelines –FBDG).

Various approaches to derive FBDG are existing and the objective of the colloquium is to have an open scientific debate on the state-of-the-art of and experience with existing approaches for the development of food-based dietary guidelines. Advantages, limitations and options for the development of various approaches for the development of FBDG will be discussed with experts in the fields, e.g. FBDG may be purely derived from population nutrient reference intake values, or can take account of epidemiological data linking specific food consumption patterns with low incidence of certain diseases.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

8. Media Relations:

Since the last meeting, EFSA has issued six press releases concerning:

- the Management Board review of EFSA's 2006 Management Plan;
- Aspartame (reception of data from the Ramazzini Institute and update on risk assessment);
- the EFSA report on animal diseases transmissible to humans;
- the AHAW opinion on welfare of laboratory animals;
- the public consultation launched by the Management Board on the EFSA evaluation report;
- and the extension of the application date for membership to EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels (application extended to 17th February).

9. Eurobarometer:

A revised draft report was received early January. EFSA and DG SANCO are currently planning a communication approach with plans to disseminate results early February.

10. Website:

EFSA launched an on-line survey on the EFSA website in order to provide input from users and guide further developments.

INSTITUTIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

11. Institutional and international relations

In mid December the Advisory Forum Extranet was launched, all members received their passwords and instructions to log onto the system and meetings papers have been uploaded here. Shortly after the launch the extranet proved useful, when EFSA placed the documents it had received by the Ramazzini institute on Aspartame on the extranet for discussion with the Advisory Forum members. The Extranet will now be developed further to ensure that it reaches its maximum capabilities in relation to sharing documents, collecting information and data from national authorities and providing information from EFSA. The Extranet is a major tool in the on-going work to link and network with national agencies on matters within its remit.

On December 14th a member from the International and Institutional relations Department participated at the RASFF working group meeting. On the agenda of this meeting were the draft report for the system for 2005, operational procedures for the

RASFF and latest developments, confidentiality rules, and the necessity for and progress on setting up of a world wide system.

12. Stakeholder relations

EFSA attended a meeting of the European Food Safety Platform on 16th January 2006 in Brussels. At their request, EFSA briefed members of the Platform on EFSA's Management Plan for 2006, EFSA's review and EFSA's stakeholder consultative platform. In addition to these items, members of the platform were interested in the process of recruitment of the new Executive Director, the renewal of the Management Board and the re-population of the EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels all of which are taking place in 2006. With regards to the EFSA's Management Plan for 2006, the members of the platform were interested in particular on EFSA's self-tasking activities and in particular in knowing how EFSA decides on self-tasking activities. Issues, such as a possible "fees regime" for EFSA and collaboration between EFSA and the European Commission on risk communication issues were also raised at the meeting.

The European Food Safety Platform is an informal platform for food chain partners to discuss and share issues relating to food safety. It initiated its activities last year with the initiative led by CIAA. The core members of the Food Safety Platform are the representative European sector organisations of the 6 main partners in the food chain, this is to say, farmers (Copa Cogeca), agri-food traders (Celcaa), feed producers (FEFAC), food producers (CIAA), retailers (EuroCommerce) and consumers (BEUC).

13. Relations with Italian authorities

As part of its policy of informing the local regional and provincial authorities in Italy about EFSA's work a member of the team delivered a speech at the University of Ancona on 15th December with the title "La sicurezza dei prodotti alimentari: Il ruolo dell'EFSA", in the context was a scientific conference organized by the Region. The next initiative in this respect will be in Modena at the beginning of February in conjunction with the Europass office which was established in 2005 by the Regional and Provincial Authorities to liaise with EFSA.