

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORATE

PROGRESS REPORT

September - December 2007

Highlights

1. EFSA 5-Year Anniversary – Parma week

A week-long series of events was staged in Parma to mark the Fifth Anniversary of EFSA's inauguration. For the entire week, 1-7 October, a wide range of activities took place at different venues throughout Parma. These included an information stand in the middle of Parma, an inauguration ceremony in Palazzo Ducale, Open-Door sessions at EFSA and the Palazzo Ducale, a Scientific Symposium on Food Safety, Nutrition and Nanotechnology organised in cooperation with the University of Parma, and several music events. Overall, the week's programme was very successful in increasing EFSA's visibility and the events provided a unique opportunity to enhance awareness of its activities among decision makers, stakeholders and the general public in Italy, particularly in the Parma region.

2. EFSA 5-Year Anniversary – Brussels week

The second part of EFSA's Fifth Anniversary celebrations took place in Brussels on November 19-22. Events began with the inauguration of the EFSA exhibition in the European Parliament, where Hans-Gert Pötering, President of the European Parliament, and Robert Madelin, DG for Health and Consumer Protection, delivered the keynote speeches. A poster exhibition in the European Parliament provided information in four languages on EFSA's remit and operations. EFSA also hosted information stands in the Berlaymont and Charlemagne buildings.

The first major scientific event was the two-day Scientific Forum, attended by more than 500 delegates on 20 and 21 November. The various plenary sessions focused on key challenges in risk assessment and the ten parallel sessions covered the main areas of EFSA's work. The other key event on November 22, the European Food Safety Summit, was jointly organised by EFSA, the Portuguese Presidency and the European Commission. It brought together high-level decision makers from Member States, EU Institutions, International Organisations, and non-EU partner countries. Speakers at the Summit included Commissioner Markos Kyprianou, and Jaime Silva, Zofija Mazej Kukovič and Michel Barnier, three Ministers from the current and forthcoming EU Presidencies. The entire Scientific Forum and Summit were webcast live on the EFSA site, attracting almost 2500 viewers from 38 countries.

3. EFSA 9th Scientific Colloquium - Nutrient Profiling for Foods Bearing Nutrition and Health Claims

On 11-12 October 2007, approximately 100 experts, representing a wide range of interests, exchanged views on setting nutrient profiles for foods bearing nutrition and health claims. Representatives from 18 EU Member States, the European Commission, academia, stakeholders (including industry and consumer organisations), the USA, Australia, South Africa and, of course, EFSA, were present. The NDA Panel received valuable input for its work on nutrient profiles which will be taken into consideration when providing advice to the European Commission.

SCIENCE DIRECTORATE

RISK ASSESSMENT DEPARTMENT

4. AFC Panel

The AFC Panel held its 25th plenary meeting on 25-27 September in Parma. Several draft opinions were presented for consideration and adoption by the Panel. Under food additives, the opinion on neotame was adopted. A preliminary discussion on a study from Southampton University on the effect of some colours and benzoic acid on hyperactivity in children was held. The Panel noted that the study was the largest conducted so far on the possible effects of certain food additives on child behaviour. It was concluded that a further detailed assessment of the study is required and will be performed by EFSA's Working Group (WG) on Additives with the support of additional experts in the following fields: psychology and in particular Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), behaviour testing, statistics and allergy.

In the field of flavourings, four opinions on revised Flavouring Groups were adopted. Also a new group, FGE 27, was adopted at the meeting. In the field of food contact materials, a 16th list comprising nine substances was adopted. The Panel was asked to revise its previous opinion on 2-isopropyl thioxanthone (ITX) after a new study was made available. Following this, a statement on ITX has been published on AFC's webpage. Furthermore, draft guidelines on submission of a dossier for the evaluation of a process to produce safe recycled plastic materials and articles for food contact uses, were discussed.

5. AHAW Panel

The AHAW Panel held two plenary meetings during this period (5-6 September and 10-11 October). In September, two scientific opinions were adopted on "Welfare of fattening pigs" and the "Framework of EFSA AHAW risk assessment". In October's plenary, two opinions were adopted ("Welfare of sows and boars" and "Aquatic diseases: fish vectors"). Another opinion on "Pig welfare: tail biting" was adopted at the end of November following the written procedure.

The Panel held a Stakeholder meeting in October 4 on the mandate on "Seal killing and skinning", with the participation of more than 30 organizations. All relevant scientific information provided by the stakeholders was evaluated and considered for the scientific opinion. Concerning the mandate on "Welfare of dairy cows", the Panel organised a meeting on December 4 with experts from the member states invited by the Advisory Forum.

On December 5-7, a plenary meeting is expected to submit five opinions for possible adoption: Seal killing and skinning; Tuberculosis in deer; Aquatic diseases in molluscs; Aquatic diseases in Crustacea; and Zoonoses)

Two calls under Article 36 related to animal welfare and animal disease were evaluated and a final decision is expected in the first week of December.

Representatives of the AHAW Unit gave presentations on the activities of the Panel at the following events: Eurosare Congress – Vienna; National Italian Veterinary Congress – Salsomaggiore; FABRE platform – OIE, Paris; International conference on Zoonoses – Glasgow; Pre-accession Seminar 16-17 October – Croatia and Turkey. It also provided support to the EFSA Forum in the scientific session on animal welfare and the ECDC meeting of the chairs of scientific panels in Stockholm. Furthermore, AHAW staff attended 12 International events related to its activities.

6. BIOHAZ Panel

The BIOHAZ Panel adopted the protocol for the evaluation of *ante mortem* TSE tests in ruminants in September. The adoption of this protocol concludes the preparatory work for the new call for Expressions of Interest for TSE tests. This call was launched by DG SANCO and the BIOHAZ Panel will be involved in the evaluation of the submitted tests.

The following opinions were adopted at the BIOHAZ Plenary meeting of 16-18 October:

- Certain aspects related to the feeding of animal proteins to farm animals (mandate from the European Parliament);
- The monitoring and surveillance of *Toxoplasma* in humans, food and animals;
- The monitoring of verotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* (VTEC) and the identification of human pathogenic VTEC type;
- Public health risks involved in the human consumption of reptile meat.

The opinions on animal proteins and reptile meat were accompanied by news articles on the EFSA website.

At the Scientific Forum on 21 November, a parallel session on microbiological risks was held. The session was chaired by the BIOHAZ Chair, and featured two presentations by BIOHAZ Panel members on “Quantitative Microbiological Risk Assessment (QMRA) at EU level” and “BSE and TSEs and EU-Wide Baseline”, as well as a presentation on EU-wide baseline studies.

The first meeting of a network of contact points involved in Microbiological Risk Assessment (MRA) of foodborne zoonoses and other food microbiology issues was held on 27 November.

7. CONTAM Panel

In the period 1 September to 22 November, the CONTAM Panel met once in plenary (18-20 September) and adopted three opinions:

- Ethyl carbamate and hydrocyanic acid in food and beverages;
- Cross-contamination of non-target feedingstuffs by narasin authorised for use as a feed additive;
- Cross-contamination of non-target feedingstuffs by lasalocid authorised for use as a feed additive.

The latter two opinions are the first in a series of opinions on coccidiostats dealing with the carry-over of such compounds in non-target animal feedingstuffs. The opinion on ethyl carbamate is the first European risk assessment on that substance and currently no community legislation is in place for ethyl carbamate in food and beverages. Taking the outcome of this risk assessment into consideration, the Commission together with Member States must now discuss whether harmonised community legislation is required.

At the beginning of November, the CONTAM Panel also adopted an opinion on chlordane as an undesirable substance in animal feed by written procedure. This was the last in a series of opinions addressing persistent organic pollutants as undesirable substances in animal feed.

The CONTAM Panel received four new requests on:

- Cadmium in food (due June 2008), from the Commission;
- Lead in food (due Dec 2008), from the Commission;
- PAHs in food (due March 2008), from the Commission;
- Uranium in food, particularly mineral water, from Germany.

For the first three requests, WGs have been established and it is noted that the deadlines are very tight. The request on uranium needs further clarification with regard to the terms of reference (TOR).

At the 24th CONTAM Panel meeting (26-28 November), seven opinions were proposed for adoption: four opinions relating to the series of opinions on coccidiostats dealing with the carry-over of such compounds in non-target animal feedingstuffs; one opinion on glucosinolates as an undesirable substance in animal feed; one opinion on nitrate in vegetables and, as requested in the TOR, the risk-benefit profile of nitrate and vegetables; and one opinion on okadaic acid-group toxins, one of a series of marine biotoxin opinions. In the latter opinion, EFSA was asked to assess the current EU limits with regard to human health and to comment on the method of analysis of okadaic acid-group toxins. In the current EU legislation, mammalian tests (mouse bioassay and rat assay) are currently recommended as the reference method. These assays, particular the mouse bioassay, are considered unacceptable in many countries for ethical reasons.

8. FEEDAP Panel

During the period September-November, the FEEDAP Panel held 14 WGs and three Plenary meetings in which 14 opinions were adopted. Two new self-tasks were started by the FEEDAP Panel. The first one relates to the revision of the scientific basis of the functional groups defined under the category “Zootechnical Additives” according to Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003, and proposes, if necessary, new functional groups. The objective of the second self-task is to produce a Guidance Document on the assessment of the compatibility of microbial additives with substances showing antimicrobial activity. A draft has been published on the website for public consultation until 30th November, 2007.

The FEEDAP Unit/Panel organised a conference with stakeholders on “Risk assessment of feed additives in the EU: present and future” in Toulouse on 24-25 October, with around 120 participants, including applicants, industry associations, Member State representatives, the European Commission and the Community Reference Laboratory (CRL). The objectives of the event were: (i) to exchange views on the current risk assessment of feed additives with all parties involved in the process; (ii) to get stakeholder opinions; (iii) to identify stakeholder requirements in improving the risk assessment process; and (iv) to introduce a European approach to the new guidelines for the assessment of additives for use in animal nutrition. One of the five sessions was dedicated to collating the views and expectations of Stakeholders on EFSA’s procedures and in particular those within the remit of the FEEDAP Panel. From this session, a series of recommendations was drawn up to improve the operation of the FEEDAP Unit/Panel and to enhance communication with applicants and stakeholders.

The FEEDAP Scientific Secretariat was invited to participate in the WG of the Standing Committee on Animal Nutrition on 26-27 November, where the last draft of the new guidelines for the assessment of feed additives was presented and discussed.

Several meetings with industry associations and technical hearings took place: EFSA was invited to participate in the General Assembly of the International Association of the European Manufacturers of Major, Trace and Specific Feed Mineral Materials (EMFEMA) held on 23 October in Parma. A member of the FEEDAP Unit made a presentation on “The Authorization Process for Feed Additives: the role of EFSA”.

A series of presentations at symposia and conferences were made by the FEEDAP Panel including:

- EFSA Porta Aperte day;
- Seminar on “EFSA Panels and their tasks”, as part of the pre-accession project on 14-15 November in Parma;
- First International Congress on Food Technology, Quality and Safety in Novi Sad (Serbia) on 13-15 November, with a presentation entitled “EFSA: Its role in Food and Feed Safety in the EU”.

9. GMO Panel

In the period September to November, the GMO Panel had three plenary meetings, in Parma on 12-13 September and 30-31 October, and in Brussels on 22-23 November. At these meetings, the GMO Panel adopted opinions on the risk assessment of the GA21 Maize and LLRice62 applications within the framework of Regulation 1829/2003 and one co-opinion with the FEEDAP Panel on Danisco Xylanase within the framework of Regulation 1831/2003. At the September plenary meeting, the Panel adopted a report from a self-tasking activity on “The safety and

nutritional assessment of GM plants and derived food and feed – the role of animal feeding trials”, and, at the November plenary meeting, a draft report for public consultation on the risk assessment of GM plants for non-food or non-feed purposes.

Eight WG meetings were held on the molecular characterization, food/feed safety, and environmental risk assessment of applications for placing GMOs on the market within the framework of Regulation (EC) 1829/2003. One WG meeting discussed the risk assessment of applications submitted under Regulations (EC) 1829/2003 and (EC) 1831/2003 for co-opinion by the FEEDAP and the GMO Panels (feed additives and biomass for feed purposes).

Two WG meetings were organised within the framework of self-tasking activities: “The assessment of allergenicity of GM food/feed” and “Statistical considerations for the safety evaluation of GMOs”.

On 13 November, a special meeting of the EFSA Advisory Forum was held with GMO experts from national regulatory risk assessment bodies to discuss scientific approaches to GMO risk assessment at national and European levels.

10. NDA Panel

Health Claims

A Scientific Colloquium on nutrient profiles took place on 11-12 October in Parma. The objectives were to convene scientists, experts, and stakeholders to discuss, in light of current scientific thinking, aspects of nutrient profiling that the NDA Panel should consider when providing scientific advice to the European Commission. About 100 delegates involved in nutrient profiling from Member States, academia, consumer and public health organisations, food manufacturers and retailers attended. The report once available will be published on the EFSA website.

In relation to Article 14 of Regulation 1924/2006, two applications relating to child development and health and one application relating to the reduction of disease risk were received from Member States and had undergone a validation procedure.

Food Allergies

Following the June meeting of the WG on Food Allergies, on 15 October the NDA Panel adopted the last seven opinions on ingredients/substances submitted by industries pursuant to Article 6 paragraph 11 of Directive 2000/13/EC in the framework of permanent exemption from mandatory labelling.

Overall, 22 applications have been evaluated by the NDA Panel within the framework of permanent exemption. The permanent exemption procedure is the second of a two-stage procedure, the first being temporary exemption which was completed by the Commission in 2006 following an assessment by the NDA Panel of 29 applications. Based on the opinions of the EFSA NDA Panel, the Commission should adopt the list of food ingredients or substances that will be permanently exempted from labelling by 25 November 2007.

Novel Foods

An opinion on the safety of Allblackia seed oil as a novel food ingredient was adopted on 26 October.

Population Reference Intakes

The NDA WG on Population Reference Intakes continued its work on recommendations for macronutrients for the European population, having had two WG meetings in the reporting period.

11. PLH Panel

The Panel on Plant Health held its plenary meetings on 19-20 September, 17-18 October and 28-29 November 2007.

The Panel continued its preparation of the draft opinions requested by the Commission for scientific advice on 30 pest risk assessments (PRAs) on pests considered harmful for the four French Overseas Departments (FOD: Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique and Reunion) in the context of Directive 2000/29/EC. The Panel has so far prepared 20 draft opinions on various pests of banana and citrus crops. A joint Working Group on FOD PRAs met on 17 October and the conclusions provided valuable input into the Panel's proposal for a self-task on the evaluation of PRA dossiers made by third parties for phytosanitary regulatory purposes.

With regard to cooperation with the Member States through Article 36, a call for proposals on an "Inventory of data sources for phytosanitary pest risk assessment in the European Community" was announced with the deadline for submission of proposals on 23 November 2007.

An open scientific debate on the state-of-the-art, current issues and future challenges in PRA in plant health will take place on 6-7 December 2007 (Parma, Italy) at the 10th EFSA Scientific Colloquium "Pest risk assessment - science in support of phytosanitary decision making in the European Community".

12. PPR Panel

The PPR Panel held two plenary meetings on 11-12 September and 24-25 October, and one opinion on revising MRLs of dieldrin for courgette was adopted in September (requested by the Commission).

Ten WGs took place, including two in toxicology to prepare the draft opinion on the clastogenic properties and classification and labelling of TBSA, a metabolite of tritosulfuron (EFSA-Q-2007-128), requested by the European Commission, and the draft opinion on the genotoxic and carcinogenic potential of buprofezin in the context of the human risk assessment (EFSA-Q-2007-130A), requested by EFSA's PRAPeR unit. Both are scheduled to be adopted in December.

The WGs on Toxicology and Residues discussed the draft opinion on cumulative risk assessment in human health (EFSA-Q-2006-160) scheduled for adoption in spring 2008. A new self-task question on the risk assessment for cumulative exposure of triazoles (as an example to accompany that core opinion) was launched and the preliminary work on the exposure component will be outsourced via a 6-month procurement contract (scheduled to be signed at the end of November).

A call under Article 36 was evaluated to carry out preparatory work for the development of a Guidance Document on exposure of operators, workers, bystanders, and residents to pesticides; this 9-month contract should be signed in early December.

Two WG meetings and two teleconferences on the revision of the Guidance Document on risk assessment for birds and mammals took place to prepare the draft for public consultation on the EFSA website. A meeting with Member States is scheduled for early December for an exchange of views on the finalization of this Guidance Document, scheduled for adoption in spring 2008.

Another meeting with Member States was held in Brussels on 7 September to explain and discuss the adopted opinion on IESTI (international estimate of short term intake).

The Fate WGs held three meetings to discuss the opinion on the default Q10 value used to describe the effect of temperature on transformation rates of pesticides in soil, scheduled to be adopted in December. Three other WGs agreed the mandate and the work-plan of the new self-tasked revision of the Guidance Document on persistence in soil; a first public consultation is scheduled for January 2008.

SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE DEPARTMENT (SCA)

13. Scientific Cooperation Unit

Recruitment for the Scientific Cooperation Unit has progressed: the Head of Unit and Secretary took up their positions in September/November and two new scientific staff members will join in early 2008. The unit will then be operational and will be fully staffed by summer 2008.

The unit continued its work in facilitating cooperation between EFSA and Member States by:

- (i) Development of an experts database: a concept paper has been finalised and discussed internally. Member States have nominated experts for the respective ESCO WG, which will have its first meeting in December to prepare the pilot phase of the project.
- (ii) Updating and validating the database on organisations approved to support EFSA under Article 36 of its Founding Regulation: the update and validation of the database has started, including transfer to a new IT platform.
- (iii) Ensuring sound financial management of the Focal Point agreements with Member States.
- (iv) Organising scientific events, such as the Scientific Forum in Brussels on 20-21 November, two seminars under the pre-accession programme, and a scientific colloquium on pest risk assessment.

14. Assessment Methodology Unit (AMU)

The AMU managed the Q10 experimental dataset and repeated the statistical analysis underlying the Q10-FATE opinion to be adopted by the PPR panel in December. The AMU took part in the related WG meetings and edited the draft opinion in all sections relevant to quantitative analysis and its interpretation, as well as the relevant appendices.

On behalf of the PPR panel, the AMU collated information relating to acute toxicology data in birds and mammals from Draft Assessment Reports for pesticides. This information will be used in the PPR Guidance document for birds and mammals.

The AMU has joined the WG to evaluate the UK publication on the effects of certain food additives on child behaviour. The available information was reviewed (the Lancet paper and the Food

Standards Agency report), and a report was provided on the 26th September to support the AFC Panel in its assessment. This report summarized and evaluated the methodology and recommended additional information to be requested for thorough assessment of the study. This report has been distributed to the WG and was discussed during the first meeting on November 15.

Statistical support was provided to the AFC Panel's WG on smoke flavourings. The work comprised a review of the statistical methodology used by an applicant. A report was presented to the WG and a presentation was given to the applicant during a separate meeting.

Several WG meetings were held with the AHAW "Tuberculosis in deer" WG and an innovative methodology to combine data from systematic literature review with expert opinion (Bayesian meta-analysis) was developed and implemented.

The AMU participated in the Article 36 project on QMRA of Salmonella in pigs (BIOHAZ Panel) and will serve as the technical link between the consortium and EFSA. It also supported the Zoonoses unit in the WG meetings on Turkeys and Pig Slaughter with statistical analysis and planning. Additional review and complementary analyses were provided to the final report on Salmonella in broilers released by the Zoonoses unit.

The AMU Multiple Framework Contract was finalized; it is now operational and can be used for outsourcing statistical tasks. Technical support was also provided to the Zoonoses unit in the drafting of the first call under this Framework contract on baseline study analyses.

Training on Data Collection and Analysis tools and methodologies in food risk assessment was provided for the Turkish and Croatian delegations during the Data Collection Workshop on October 2-3. In addition, the AMU coordinated the programme for two other seminars for pre-accession countries on "EFSA Panels and their Tasks", as well as the programme of the Scientific Forum on 20-21 November.

In collaboration with IT, the AMU provided support in installing specialist statistical software packages on a server and client computers. It also provided scientific support to the Risk Assessment Units and the Scientific Committee on issues related to the evaluation of the genetic toxicology of feed additives and contributed to the draft Guidance Document on the strategy for genotoxicity testing of botanical preparations.

Finally, methodological and statistical support was provided in the form of short term consultations to many units, including the Zoonoses team (baselines studies, trend analysis), the PLH unit (planning of upcoming modelling activities), the SC unit (review of a draft guidance on transparency), the SCA department (contribution to the EFSA Data Collection Strategy document) and the Risk Assessment department (contribution to the document on future animal health policy in EFSA).

15. Datex Unit

The Datex Unit contributed to the successful completion of the ethyl carbamate opinion approved by the CONTAM Panel on 20 September and presented the opinion to the EU Environmental and Industrial Contaminants Expert Group meeting on 29 October. The exposure assessment compiled by the Unit showed high levels of ethyl carbamate in some stone-fruit brandies and in tequila.

On 24 October, the EFSA food consumption network, the Expert Group on Food Consumption Data, met to discuss progress with the EU concise food consumption database. Agreement was reached to publish summary tables for each Member State on the EFSA website. The contract was signed for an Article 36 project to provide assistance to some Member States in finalising the collection of data for the concise food consumption database, and a preliminary schedule for remaining activities was agreed.

The nitrate in vegetables data collection was finalised with more than 40,000 analytical results submitted by Member States. The resultant exposure assessment was submitted to the CONTAM WG preparing the opinion for the Panel. Remarkably high nitrate concentrations were found in rucola [rocket] and some herbs. Since herbs are only a minor component of any diet this will not cause a problem, however, the traditional Roman habit of consuming high amounts of rucola seems to be revitalised in several European countries. Based on the collected information and toxicological data, the CONTAM Panel is completing a risk and benefit assessment for the opinion.

During the reporting period, the Datex Unit issued two further calls for Article 36 activities. One call will assist in chemical occurrence data submissions to EFSA insofar as it will develop and test a generic food description system. The system will build on existing initiatives and will be language-independent to improve communication between EFSA and Member States and ease the burden on Member States in compiling data. The other call will improve knowledge of furan formation in foods during handling and preparation. Furan seems to be formed during heating of foods but the exact mechanisms are unclear.

16. Pesticide Risk Assessment Peer Review (PRAPeR) Unit

The third stage of the pesticide peer review process continued with the distribution of draft assessment reports for seven substances to the respective applicant(s) and Member States. The public versions of the reports were produced and made available on the EFSA website, initiating a 40-day public consultation period. Several other substances are in the process of either having the public report finalised or are awaiting confirmation by the Commission of the preliminary prioritisation.

Consultation of Member State experts in the PRAPeR meetings continued in July with five meetings (physical/chemical properties and analytical methods; toxicology; residues; environmental fate and behaviour; and ecotoxicology) to discuss issues related to three active substances. The outcome of the consultation and the summary of the risk assessment for these substances will be finalized in the 4th quarter of 2007. Meanwhile, peer review was completed for six new active substances as well as the first four existing active substances of the third stage, part A, by submitting the EFSA conclusions to the Commission and the respective applicant(s) and by making them publicly available on the EFSA website (PRAPeR section).

Additionally, the safety of proposed MRLs for new crops included in Annex I of Regulation (EC) 396/2005 was assessed on request of the Commission on 28 June. The report was finalised on 30 July and covers about 3400 proposed MRLs for 93 active substances. A second Commission request concerning ten active substances (four chemical compounds and six microorganisms) which are proposed as candidates to be exempted from the necessity of setting MRLs, is under examination. Furthermore, the development of a database on toxicological reference values, as requested in Article 41 of Regulation 396/2005, continued.

17. Zoonoses Unit

The draft Community Summary Report on Zoonoses, Antimicrobial Resistance and Foodborne Outbreaks was compiled in September in collaboration with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). In October, Member States and other stakeholders were consulted about the draft report, the comments received were addressed, and the report was finalised by the end of November. For the first time, statistical analyses of the trends in the occurrence of zoonotic agents, both at the national and Community level, were included in the report.

The Zoonoses Task Force held two meetings: on 11-12 September and 8 November. At the November meeting, a report on harmonising the reporting of foodborne outbreaks in the Community was adopted. These harmonised reporting rules were prepared together with ECDC, and they will substantially improve the quality and the subsequent analyses of the data collected. A supporting report on the results of a survey on the reporting of the outbreaks in Member States was also adopted and published in October.

A report on technical specifications for an EU-wide baseline survey on MRSA (methicillin-resistant *S. aureus*) was adopted in November by the Task Force. The baseline survey on this emerging zoonotic agent is likely to be carried out in 2008.

The award decision on an Article 36 grant for a project preparing proposals for harmonised monitoring and reporting schemes for zoonotic parasites was finalised in November and the project is expected to begin in December.

The revision of the zoonoses web reporting application was started in September and it will focus on tables of foodborne outbreaks, antimicrobial resistance and reporting of sampling stages and frames. An electronic transfer of datasets will be made available for next year's reporting.

In October, the final report on the analyses of the Salmonella baseline survey in broiler flocks in the EU was adopted. This report focuses on risk factors related to Salmonella infection and on the results for antimicrobial resistance and serovar distribution.

Two new WGs were set up to assist the unit in the analyses of two new Salmonella baseline surveys in turkeys and slaughter pigs; in total, three WG meetings were organised to prepare the analysis plans. A call for tenders was launched to outsource part of the statistical and serovar analyses.

Two country visits to enhance the reporting on zoonoses at the national level were made to Spain and Austria, where EFSA staff met representatives of all the reporting institutions. Several important issues related to coordination of the reporting at the Community level were raised during the visits.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND ADVISORY FORUM UNIT (SC/AF)

18. Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee held its plenary meetings on 17-18 September and 19-20 November 2007 and adopted the following two opinions:

(a) Introduction of a Qualified Presumption of Safety (QPS) approach for a simplified safety assessment of selected microorganisms referred to EFSA, taking account of existing history of use and data available. Prior to the adoption, the content of the draft opinion was shared with DG

SANCO who confirmed the compatibility of this EFSA internal tool for generic risk assessment with the existing legislation. An explanatory note and/or a Q&A document will accompany the publication of the opinion to highlight that, in the case of existing sectoral legislation, QPS status does not substitute the obligation for the pre-market authorisation process. As a follow-up, an inter-panel group of experts will be created and coordinated by the BIOHAZ Panel Secretariat to develop and maintain the list of microorganisms granted QPS.

(b) The Guidance Document on the safety assessment of botanicals and botanical preparations intended for use as food supplements was adopted for public consultation on the EFSA website; the consultation will take place over December and January, and comments will be reviewed for inclusion in the document. An EFSA Scientific Cooperation (ESCO) WG, whose mandate was agreed between the Scientific Committee and the Advisory Forum, is currently being established and the group will be tasked with testing the proposed safety assessment approach with real cases and with further developing the information contained in the compendia attached to the Guidance Document. The anticipated timeframe for this activity is one year.

The draft opinion on animal cloning was intensively discussed at the November Plenary meeting and a revised version for public consultation will be endorsed at a plenary meeting on December 19.

The Scientific Committee agreed on the composition of a new WG on nanotechnology to prepare a draft initial scientific opinion on the risks arising from nanoscience and nanotechnologies, including general guidance on data needed for the risk assessment of such technologies and applications. It is expected that the Scientific Committee will endorse the draft opinion for public consultation by 30 June 2008.

The first ESCO WG on emerging risks was held on 19 September. The WG is composed of experts from the Scientific Committee, experts nominated by Member States, and external experts. The WG will identify methodologies to ensure efficient identification and assessment of possible emerging risks.

In addition, WG meetings were held in the area of transparency in risk assessment – scientific aspects and human health risk-benefit assessment – and on the use of the benchmark dose approach in risk assessment.

19. Advisory Forum

The 23rd meeting of the Forum took place on 20 September 2007 in Lisbon (Portugal) and the mandate of the scientific cooperation project on botanicals was agreed.

The progress of ongoing scientific cooperation projects was discussed. Revised TOR for the Forum WG on communications are under preparation for adoption at the next meeting in December 2007. The suggestions and comments from the Member States on EFSA's draft Management Plan for 2008 were discussed and taken into account during its revision. The Forum agreed, in principle, on adoption of minutes by a written procedure. The decision on the operation of the Forum will be revised accordingly and submitted for endorsement by the Forum in December and adoption by the Management Board in January 2008. The dates and venues of the five Forum meetings in 2008 were agreed.

Table 1 Number of plenary and working group meetings, as well as the number of opinions, reports and statements adopted in the period Sep/Oct/Nov 2007

	Plenary Meetings	Working Group Meetings	Number of opinions / reports
AFC	1	10	16
AHAW	2	30	5
BIOHAZ	2	16	5
CONTAM	1	11	4
FEEDAP	3	14	15
GMO	3	13	5
NDA	1	8	8
PLH	3	13	1
PPR	2	16	1
SC	2	10	1
PRAPeR	2	5	8
TF Zoonoses	2	5	4
Total	24	151	73

EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND MANAGEMENT BOARD UNIT

20. Relationship with the European Institutions

EFSA representatives were active in liaising with a series of contacts within the EU institutions. At the level of the European Parliament, they participated in EP Committee meetings and Plenary sittings, notably to monitor developments on pesticides and on the 2008 EU Budget.

Besides the now regular bilateral meetings between DG SANCO Director General, Robert Madelin, and CGL, contact was made with high-level senior officials from both the EU Commission (including the Cabinets of Commissioners Kyprianou and Dimas) and the EU Council (including Permanent Representatives), mainly to collaborate in the organization of EFSA's 5th Anniversary events in Brussels.

EFSA has further developed communication tools to improve the exchange of information between EFSA and the Institutions. For that purpose, EFSA has considered developing information notes for the different EU actors, e.g. the EP ENVI Committee, the Chief Veterinary Officers, or the Chief Plant Health Officers.

European Parliament

An information sheet on EFSA's activities was sent to the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) in mid-November 2007.

On October 9, CGL presented the draft EFSA work programme for 2008 to the European Parliament's ENVI Committee and on October 18, she chaired a roundtable discussion within a Parliamentary symposium on obesity.

On November 20, EFSA's liaison MEP in the ENVI Committee hosted a presentation and question time with CGL in the European Parliament.

An exhibition stand at the European Parliament on November 19-22 provided information on the activities and role of EFSA.

EFSA was directly approached by MEPs looking for further information on a number of specific topics, including EFSA's activities in food colours, GMOs, aspartame, staffing and independence issues. The EFSA ER Unit together with the relevant scientific panel coordinators contributed to the responses to these questions.

European Commission

Two bilateral meetings between Robert Madelin and CGL took place on 14 September 2007 and 26 October 2007. EFSA also assisted the Commission in its delegation to the Codex Task Force on Biotechnology, which took place on September 24-28.

Meeting with Commissioner for the Environment

As part of the series of regular meetings with EU Commissioners whose portfolios cover EFSA-related activities, CGL met Commissioner Dimas on November 21 in Brussels. Discussions included pesticides, GMOs and the killing of seals.

Meeting with Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development

Also on November 21, CGL briefly met with Commissioner Fisher Boel and discussions focused mainly on GMO issues.

Council of the European Union

Meeting with the Portuguese Minister for Agriculture

CGL met the Portuguese Minister of Agriculture Jaime Silva on 19 September in Lisbon. Discussion included food safety dossiers that will be addressed at Council during the Portuguese Presidency and the Food Safety Summit on 22 November in Brussels. Minister Silva confirmed his

participation in the events organized by EFSA on 1 October in Parma to mark EFSA's fifth anniversary.

Invitation to participate at the CVO meeting

EFSA was invited by the Portuguese Presidency to take part in the informal meeting of Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) in Lisbon on 8-10 October. EFSA was represented by the Head of the Department of Risk Assessment, Riitta Maijala, and by the Head of the Unit of Animal Health and Animal Welfare (AHAW), Jordi Serratos. They gave presentations on EFSA's activities in the area of animal health, animal welfare, and zoonoses, with particular emphasis on EFSA's contribution to the Animal Health Strategy that was recently adopted by the European Commission. The CVOs also discussed the contribution of Dr Agrela Pinheiro to the European Food Safety Summit (22 November).

Meeting of EFSA Management Board in Lisbon and CPH

At the kind invitation of the Portuguese Presidency, EFSA's Management Board will hold its December meeting in Lisbon. In addition, an invitation to participate at the meeting of the Chief Officers for Plant Health (CPHs) in Lisbon on 3-4 December was received and accepted.

Relations with the Slovenian and French Presidencies

EFSA representatives met Slovenian representatives in October. Discussions took place with the Slovenian Minister for Health, Mrs Mazej Kukovic, in the context of the Slovenian Presidency of the EU that will run from January to July 2008 and also in relation to Mrs Kukovic's participation in the European Food Safety Summit (22 November). A meeting between the Slovenian Presidency and CGL will take place in Ljubljana in January.

CGL met the French Minister for Agriculture, Michel Barnier, on 25 October in Paris where she outlined EFSA's core activities for 2008. Initial discussions were held in relation to the French Presidency that will start in September 2008.

Institutional Activities

Plant Protection Products and sustainable use of pesticides

EFSA monitored developments in: (i) a Regulation on the placing of plant protection products on the market; and (ii) a Directive setting a framework for sustainable use of pesticides.

At the European Parliament, both pieces of legislation were discussed by MEPs at a first reading and substantial changes were adopted. The main issues were as follows:

- introduction of a "stop-the-clock" mechanism to allow time for further consultation or to request additional data to complete the peer review of national risk assessments for pesticides;
- the definition of "substance of concern" was extended to cover any substance that has, or potentially has, carcinogenic, mutagenic, endocrine disrupting, neurotoxic, immunotoxic, reprotoxic or genotoxic capabilities;

- the zone-based approach proposed by the Commission was not retained, giving Member States the responsibility of carrying out national controls in the authorisation procedures, based on the principles of Integrated Pest Management;
- EFSA however should have a coordinating role in the authorisation procedure, in first receiving directly from the producer any application for the approval of an active substance or for amending conditions thereof;
- the approval period is risk-proportionate and the approval can be renewed once or repeatedly for a period not exceeding 10 years;
- priority should be given to substitution when a comparison assessment shows that safer alternatives are available;
- animal testing should be avoided as much as possible and should be undertaken only as a last resort.

The package is being currently discussed at the Council with a view to reaching a political agreement under the Portuguese Presidency, i.e. by the end of the year. The dossier will then be submitted for a second reading to the European Parliament.

Budget

The European Parliament and the Council are currently examining the EU 2008 Budget on the basis of the Commission's proposal for a preliminary draft budget (PDB). During this exercise, EFSA budgetary lines were discussed and, although the Council initially proposed to cut half of the Commission's proposed increase, the European Parliament in its October plenary sitting, and further to a positive vote by the Budget Committee, adopted the EU Draft General Budget for 2008 while restoring the Commission's PDB and welcoming the progress made by the newest agencies in expanding their activities in an effective and efficient manner. However, it requested greater clarity in the future regarding work-plans and medium-term staffing needs.

The second EP plenary reading, where the vote for final adoption will take place, is scheduled for 12 December.

21. Relations with Stakeholders

EFSA's Stakeholder Consultative Platform met on the 18-19 of October in Brussels. CGL addressed members of the Platform and updated them on progress since the last meeting in April and outlined the core areas of activity for the Authority for 2008. In addition, she highlighted the main challenges that EFSA is facing and how they are being addressed. In the context of this intervention and since the Chair of the Platform was invited to join the roundtable discussions at the Food Safety Summit (22 November), a brief exchange of views on the contribution of the Chair to the Summit took place.

The Platform also discussed additives, flavourings and contact materials, as well as nutrition and related-areas that were presented by EFSA's scientific coordinators. An update on the activities of EFSA's Scientific Committee with regards to transparency in risk assessment, cloning and nanotechnology was given by EFSA's scientific coordinator; some Member State organisations also provided presentations on these areas. An update on EFSA's recent and future

communication activities was presented; all presentations are available on EFSA's website at: http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1178633966647.htm.

The next meeting of the Stakeholder Platform will take place in April 2008; meanwhile, meetings dedicated to specific topics, such as cloning and transparency in risk assessment, will be organised.

Copa-Cogeca and BEUC

CGL addressed the Copa-Cogeca Praesidium on 23rd November in Brussels to present EFSA's work programme for 2008 with particular emphasis on future challenges.

CGL was invited as keynote speaker to address BEUC and its Members at their General Assembly on 30 November in Brussels. Shortly before that, EFSA representatives participated in the BEUC Food Officers meeting to present EFSA's work in the area of additives, flavourings, food contact materials, nutrition and related areas. Furthermore, EFSA presented its activities with stakeholders and its activities at the international level, i.e. Codex.

22. International Relations

Following the confidentiality agreement signed in Brussels on July 2, EFSA and FDA held a technical meeting on November 12 in Parma. The agenda focused on scientific subjects common to both agencies, such as the Qualified Presumption of Safety (QPS) approach and general discussion on approaches to risk assessment, nanoscience and nanotechnologies, risk assessment of animal cloning and aspartame. There was also a discussion about future bilateral meetings and future issues for cooperation.

On November 21 in Brussels, EFSA and the Food Safety Commission of Japan met to discuss the signing of confidentiality arrangements to facilitate the sharing of non-public information. Similar instruments are currently under discussion with Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) and the New Zealand Food Safety Authority.

23. Pre-Accession Programme for Turkey and Croatia

From September to end November, six training seminars were held, involving 122 Turkish and 118 Croatian experts, as follows:

- (i) Advisory Forum Seminar: Opatija, Croatia, 6-7 September
- (ii) Crises Handling Seminar: Istanbul, 17-18 September
- (iii) Seminar on EFSA and GMO Risk Assessment: Istanbul, 27-28 September
- (iv) Workshop on Data Collection and Analysis: Parma, 2-3 October
- (v) EFSA Panels and their Tasks Part I: AFC, PLH, PPR, CONTAM Panel and Scientific Committee: Parma, 16-17 October
- (vi) EFSA Panels and their Tasks, Part II: FEEDAP, BIOHAZ, AHAW, NDA Panels: Parma, 14-15 November

General conclusions:

Overall, this series of seminars, which included contributions from a wide range of EFSA staff, was very well received. Participants were enthusiastic about EFSA's activities and were keen to explore opportunities to participate in its work. At all seminars, the participants were asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire to provide feedback to EFSA. This will enable us to make improvements to future events and increase the added value for participants. Interpretation between English and Turkish/Croatian was provided for all seminars in 2007.

A final report of the 2006/2007 Programme and comprehensive reports of the individual seminars, including the replies to the evaluation questionnaires, can be found at:

http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/PartnersNetworks/efsa_locale-1178620753812_EUEnlargement.htm.

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORATE

24. Communications activities: on- and offline

Since the last MB meeting, the Communications Directorate has carried out a number of activities aiming at raising EFSA's visibility in Europe and, more specifically, in Italy.

Joint events with Member States

In keeping with one of EFSA's priorities to enhance cooperation with Member States, three events were jointly organised in September with the national authorities in Romania, Spain and Portugal.

- *"Working together towards safer food in Europe"* took place on 10th September in Bucharest in cooperation with the Romanian National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority, prior to the MB meeting. About 180 stakeholders attended the event.

The event opened with a press conference which was attended by 33 Romanian journalists from press agencies, print and broadcast press. The press conference was followed by a series of one-to-one interviews. All TV stations present broadcast the interviews in their evening news programmes. In addition, considerable coverage was generated by the national media which helped us to increase EFSA visibility in Romania.

- *"Five years since the founding of the Spanish food safety and nutrition agency and of EFSA"* was organised on 13 September in Santander by the Spanish Food Safety Agency (AESAN) at the International University Menéndez Pelayo. The event concluded with a speech by CGL and the President of AESAN.

A press conference followed the conference. It was attended by journalists from the main Spanish newswires and specialised publications who had an opportunity to interview CGL and the President of AESAN. CGL also gave an interview to a Spanish public channel TV for a programme on agriculture that was broadcast 2 days later.

- *"Joining forces for safer food in Europe: the EU food safety system"* took place on 19 September prior to the Advisory Forum meeting in Lisbon in cooperation with the Portuguese Food Safety Authority (ASAE) and on invitation of the Portuguese Presidency. Among the 80 participants were representatives from the Ministry of Economy and Innovation; ASAE; other governmental institutions; trade, industrial and consumer associations; agricultural federations; universities; and institutes.

The event was introduced by a joint Press Conference opened by the Portuguese Minister of Economy and Innovation with the participation of Manuel Pinho, and attended by 16 media representatives from Portuguese and foreign media. The event was covered by press agencies, two of the most important national dailies, regional newspapers, as well as weekly publications, online and audiovisual media.

Apart from press activities organised around such events, participants in the three events received tailored information about EFSA and its work, e.g. brochures in the national language of the audience specifically produced for these occasions. The events were also announced on the respective websites.

EFSA 5 Year Anniversary – Parma week

Recent highlights included activities organised to celebrate “*EFSA’s 5 Year Anniversary*” in Parma. For a whole week, 1-7 October, a wide range of activities took place at different venues in Parma. Overall, the week’s programme increased EFSA’s visibility and provided a unique opportunity to make EFSA better known in Parma, as well as to present our work to decision makers, stakeholders and the general public in the Parma region. Among the activities organised were:

- *EFSA exhibition and information stand on Piazza Garibaldi*: in the centre of Parma, open to the public throughout the week, where EFSA presented its past and future activities, and offered visitors: information material, a poster exhibition, interactive games for children and adults, lectures, conferences and video shows. In total, 1850 people visited the stand. EFSA organised lectures for more than 500 pupils from local schools who visited the stand. EFSA held four small conferences on the following topics: Food safety and consumers; Animal welfare and consumer protection; EFSA in Parma: what has changed; and Food law and EFSA. Among the speakers were representatives from different local stakeholders, e.g. representatives from consumer associations, lawyers, local business, farmers, etc. Discussions were facilitated by specialist Italian journalists. In addition, EFSA organised, in cooperation with the Province, a presentation of a collection of short stories “Looking at Parma” which was well attended.
- *Inaugural Ceremony in Palazzo Ducale*: attended by 150 high-level representatives from European, national and local Italian institutions. Speakers included: the Chair of EFSA’s Management Board, CGL, the Ministers of Agriculture for Italy and Portugal (respectively, Paolo De Castro and Jaime Silva), Undersecretary of State to the Italian Health Ministry (Gian Paolo Patta), former EU Commissioner David Byrne, Deputy DG for Health and Consumer Protection (Paola Testori), MEP (Vittorio Prodi), and Italian authorities for Parma (Pietro Vignali, mayor), Parma province (Vincenzo Bernazzoli, President of the Parma Province) and Parma region (Tiberio Rabboni, Council for Agriculture of the Emilia Romagna region). The ceremony was preceded by a Press Conference attended by representatives from 17 local and national media.
- *Porte Aperte - DUS*: EFSA opened the doors of DUS to the public. Our scientists and staff presented their work in 11 meetings. 150 people, among them many students, attended the Porte Aperte.
- *Porte Aperte - Palazzo Ducale*: during the weekend, EFSA opened the doors of its official seat, Palazzo Ducale, and organised guided tours of Galleria Nobile. In total, 610 people visited Palazzo Ducale and the event was very successful.
- *Scientific Symposium on Food Safety, Nutrition and Nanotechnology*: organised in cooperation with the University of Parma. The objective was to foster dialogue with the

Italian scientific community and to increase awareness of EFSA's scientific activities and its role in Europe. A total of 260 participants, mainly from Italian and European academia, attended the event.

- *Joint concerts of jazz/folk music:* EFSA and local musicians performed in different venues in Parma during the week. In addition, a concert by the Parma choir "Quod Libet", with the participation of EFSA musicians, took place in Palazzo Ducale.

Coverage in local media was excellent; each day of the week the main Parma dailies published articles on the activities. Moreover, a live interview with RAI 3 and CGL took place in the Palazzo Ducale that was broadcast in the programme "Ambiente Italia". All local media attended our pre-Parma week press briefing; the coverage was positive and all key messages were conveyed. The web section dedicated to the Parma week was updated on a daily basis, providing latest information and pictures of the events.

EFSA 5 Year Anniversary – Brussels week (19–22 November 2007)

- *Inauguration of the EFSA exhibition in the European Parliament:* Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the European Parliament and Robert Madelin delivered keynote speeches together with Patrick Wall, CGL and Vittorio Prodi (MEP). The cocktail buffet was sponsored by Europass providing local specialities from the Region of Emilia Romagna.
- *EFSA exhibition in the European Parliament:* A poster exhibition in EFSA's four working languages explained EFSA's remit and activities. EFSA scientists and External Relations and Communications staff engaged in discussions with MEPs and stakeholders and encouraged visitors to play the EFSA quiz wheel and to answer one of the various questions on the Authority. EFSA publications and anniversary give-aways, like the EFSA mug and apron, were in high demand.
- *EFSA information stands in the Berlaymont and Charlemagne:* Staff from Science, External Relations and Communications informed officials from EU institutions and stakeholders about EFSA's role. EFSA scientific and corporate publications available at the stands were highly requested.
- *EFSA Scientific Forum:* More than 500 participants attended the Scientific Forum on 20 and 21 November. The various plenary sessions focused on key challenges in risk assessment and the 10 parallel sessions covered the main areas of EFSA's work.
- *European Food Safety Summit:* jointly organised by EFSA, the Portuguese Presidency and the European Commission, brought together high-level decision makers from Member States, EU Institutions, International Organisations and non-EU partner countries. Speakers at the Summit included Commissioner Markos Kyprianou, and Jaime Silva, Zofija Mazej Kukovič and Michel Barnier, three Ministers of the current and forthcoming EU Presidencies.
- *Networking Buffet Dinner:* in the Piazza of the Berlaymont, was attended by several hundred participants of both the Forum and Summit. Patrick Wall, Chair of the EFSA Management Board delivered the opening speech. The buffet dinner in a relaxed atmosphere was a unique networking opportunity bringing together scientists, representatives of EU institutions, national authorities and a wide range of stakeholders in the food safety area.
- *Scientific Forum Press Briefing and other media relations activities:* 23 journalists attended the press briefing prior to the Forum and 38 journalists from across the EU attended the Forum itself, which is the highest ever attendance of journalists at an EFSA event. In

addition, several interviews, mainly with CGL but also MB members and some invited Forum speakers, were arranged with 11 publications. A press point was organised following the Summit and more than 25 pieces of coverage had been gathered by 27 November.

EFSA's visual presence in Brussels: EFSA announced its 5 Year Anniversary and related events through three big banners on the façade of the Berlaymont and Charlemagne buildings, providing a high level of visibility for EFSA at the centre of EU institutions.

Webcast: The entire Scientific Forum and European Food Safety Summit were webcast live on the EFSA site. The events attracted a high number of viewers from 38 countries with a total of 2,368 unique viewing sessions registered during the three days. The highest traffic was on 21 November, the day of the parallel sessions, when 1,387 unique viewing sessions were registered.

Other EFSA meetings and events

- *Management Board meeting - Bucharest, 11 September:* A news alert highlighting Managements Board's focus on transparency, specifically its policy on Declarations of Interests, and the creation of a new Panel to enhance the efficiency of the existing AFC Panel, was distributed to journalists on the day of the meeting. The presentations and the outcomes of the discussions were posted on the EFSA website immediately after the meeting.
- *Advisory Forum meeting – Lisbon, 20 September:* a news story on the outcome of the discussions was posted on the EFSA website immediately after the meeting.
- *17th meeting of the AFWGC – Parma, 24 October 2007:* A news alert informing the local media about the meeting was distributed to journalists on the day. The information was also posted on EFSA's website.
- *EFSA-FDA meeting – Parma, 12 November:* Information on the first technical meeting between both organisations was posted on the EFSA website and a news alert was sent to the local media.

The Communications directorate continued to provide logistical and administrative support for the organisation of other EFSA events, in particular those of the Science Directorate. In this context, the main projects supported by Communications were:

- EFSA 9th Scientific Colloquium - Nutrient Profiling for foods bearing Nutrition and Health Claims - Parma, 11-12/10/2007
- EFSA conference with stakeholders – Risk assessment of feed additives in the EU: present and future – Toulouse, 24-25/10/2007
- EFSA 10th Scientific Colloquium - Pest risk assessment - Science in support of phytosanitary decision making in the European Community – Parma, 6-7/12/2007

25. Press releases / statements Corporate / Science

- (i) EFSA to consider new UK study on behavioural changes associated with certain food colours (6 September)
- (ii) EFSA Board focuses on policy on transparency (11 September)

(iii) EFSA to further evaluate study on food colours and behaviour. Panel to prioritise safety assessment of six study colours (28 September)

(iv) EFSA Executive Director meets representatives of the Genetic Rights Foundation and Coalizione Italia-Europa "Liberi da OGM" (30 October)

Publication of the EFSA scientific statement on the Southampton University study on possible adverse effects of certain food colours on hyperactive children, and the Authority's decision to conduct further research on the matter, generated considerable coverage across Europe with about 190 articles published in 23 countries. Following publication of the study in the *Lancet*, coverage was most extensive in the UK (56 articles) including all the major national papers: *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, *The Guardian* and *The Times*.

Coverage was also strong in Germany (40 articles), with regional titles publishing a large number of articles on the subject. Overall, information was handled in a factual manner, with few opinionated articles on the subject. Favourable coverage emerged in *Food Navigator.com*, *Food Production Daily*, *The Grocer*, *Nutra Ingredients* and *AP-FoodTechnology*, when Julian Hunt, Director of Communication of the Food and Drink Federation, welcomed the Authority's involvement, claiming that the issue of food colours must be addressed at a European level.

Discussions in the European press on acceptance of GMOs in Europe were reported with mention of EFSA's risk assessment work in this field. In particular, criticism expressed by Italian NGOs was reported, as well as EFSA's meeting with the NGOs at the demonstration in Parma.

26. Web developments

The new website was launched on 4 September. The site has been completely redesigned and rebuilt to optimize usability for EFSA's key online audiences. The re-launch is a first step in EFSA's new online communication strategy which aims to increase awareness and use of the website significantly over the next two years.

Several web news stories were published including one on the BSE-related public health risks of certain animal proteins in animal feed, the evaluation of nutrient sources in food supplements and food, an update on animal welfare aspects of killing and skinning seals, and new procedures for handling Declarations of Interest. A new key topic on Acrylamide in food was added in November.

Event announcements, including animated banners and photos, were published on a range of activities including Parma week and Brussels week. As well as the live broadcast of the events in Brussels in November, links to the video-on-demand were uploaded shortly afterwards along with the full set of presentations from the speakers.

Other new additions to the site in November included a link on the homepage to EFSA's new 5 year anniversary video "5 years with EFSA" and four new landing pages for units of the Scientific Co-operation and Assistance department under "Scientific Panels and Units".

27. Publications

Since the last Board meeting in September, the following publications, in addition to those previously mentioned, were produced:

- a. Summary of Scientific Colloquium no. 7 (cumulative risk-assessment of pesticides to human health): October 2007.

- b. EFSA 5 Year anniversary brochure "Taking stock - Looking forward" in four languages (English, French, German, and Italian): September 2007.
- c. Zoonoses summary brochure 2005 in French, Italian and German: November 2007.

ADMINISTRATION DIRECTORATE

28. Recruitment status

Number of recruitment procedures for Temporary Agents and officials (until 30th Nov. 2007)

			RECRUITMENT (+)			END OF CONTRACT (-)			
	Staff foreseen 2007 (establishment plan)	Total TA & Officials end Dec 06	Number of New Contracts	New comers	Change in contract, Cat. or Grade (*)	Resignations	Change in contract, Cat. or Grade (**)	"Net" Result	Total TA & Officials end Nov 07
AD	166	87	69	48	21	5	10	54	141
AST	134	86	63	19	43	5	21	36	122
Total	300	173	132	67	64	10	31	90	263

Number of recruitment procedures for all staff (until 30th Nov. 2007)

		RECRUITMENT (+)			END OF CONTRACT (-)				
	Total staff number end Dec 06	Number of New Contracts	New comers	Change in contract, Cat. or Grade (*)	Resignations	Contract Expiry	Change in contract, Cat. or Grade (**)	"Net" Result	Total staff number end Nov 07
AT+Officials	173	132	67	64	10	0	31	90	263
AUX	24	0	0	0	0	2	14	-16	8
CA	24	9	9	0	0	2	19	-12	12
END	7	5	5	0	0	3	0	2	9
Total	228	146	81	64	10	7	64	64	292

(*) = EFSA's staff recruited to TA posts (including AUX, CA, END) at EFSA

(**) = EFSA's staff leaving their TA post in order to be recruited to a new TA post at EFSA (AUX, CA, END not included)