

Office of the Executive Director and the Management Board

HIGHLIGHTS

Risk Assessment

The **ANS Panel** adopted one opinion on methionates covering three application dossiers. The **AHAW Panel** adopted two opinions and held various working group meetings. The **BIOHAZ Panel** adopted the opinion on the maintenance of the list of Qualified Presumption of Safety microorganisms intentionally added to food or feed. The **CEF Panel** published four opinions and peer reviewed and published twelve opinions on flavourings adopted by the AFC Panel. The **CONTAM Panel** adopted two opinions and issued together with DATEX a joint statement concerning Dioxins in Irish pork. The **FEEDAP Panel** adopted four scientific opinions and one self task on the creation of additional categories and functional groups for classifying feed additives. The **GMO Panel** adopted two application opinions and participated in various meetings with Member States. The **NDA Panel** adopted ten Article 14 health claims referring to children's health and development and three Article 13 (5) claims, in addition one Novel food opinion was adopted. The **PLH Panel** adopted the opinion on Citrus Black Spot and adopted its first guidance document. The Panel also initiated work on a new self task on development of a harmonised framework for assessment of risks of organisms posing a threat to the Community plant health. The **PPR Panel** adopted two opinions and the terms of references for two new mandates.

Scientific Cooperation and Assistance

The **Scientific Cooperation Unit** has prepared new agreements to be signed by the National Focal Points for 2009. EFSA's expert database is now fully operational and five hundred experts have been included. The twelfth Scientific Colloquia was organised on controlling *Campylobacter* and saw the attendance of 90 scientists and stakeholders from all over the world. **AMU** participated in various meetings with different panels and contributed to the published Zoonoses report. A self mandate has been started. The **DATEX Unit** created an internal Working Group with Praper and Zoonoses and also continued the work aimed at making available to EFSA Panels and staff food consumption data with a greater degree of detail and quality. The **PRAPeR Unit** published five reasoned opinions and finalised nine EFSA conclusions. The **EMRISK Unit** provided scientific and administrative support to the ESCO Working Group on Emerging Risks and completed a strategy paper for the medium term planning of the Emerging Risks Unit. The **ZOONOSES Unit** organized two Working Group meetings and participated in the Scientific Colloquium on *Campylobacter* in Rome. A report on the Analyses of the baseline survey on *Salmonella* in slaughter pigs in the EU was published.

Scientific Committee & Advisory Forum

The Scientific Committee held its 33rd Plenary Meeting and various Working Group meetings. A draft opinion on transparency on EFSA's risk assessment was discussed and endorsed for public consultation.

Communications

The Communications Directorate carried out a wide range of activities including the organization of the 12th Scientific Colloquium and the finalization of various scientific and corporate publications like special issue of *Trends in Food Science and Technology* special issue covering EFSA's fifth anniversary, further editions of *moving together* and EFSA's thematic family of electronic newsletter.

Administration

RISK ASSESSMENT

Panel on food additives and nutrient sources added to food (ANS)

The ANS Panel held two Working Group meetings in December, of which one was organised in Brussels and one was held in Parma. Furthermore, one meeting was held with the Commission (teleconference on guidelines and data requirements).

The opinion on methionates, covering three application dossiers, was adopted via written procedure on 17 December 2008.

The contract on 'preparation of pre-evaluation documents from several application dossiers for nutrient sources originating from orotic acid' with the Technical University of Denmark was signed on the 3 December 2008. The contract 'Commenting on the SCF 2001 guidance on submission for food additive evaluations and its possible evolution in view of their practical use and of the evolution of science, technology and risk assessment paradigms and practices' was signed with Dr Barlow, Member of the Scientific Committee, on the 3 December 2008.

The opinion on taurine and D-glucurono-lactone was sent to the Panel members for adoption by written procedure on the 18 December 2008 with a deadline of 15 January 2009. The Panel is also expected to finalise the opinion on a second study on Aspartame in January.

Panel on animal health and welfare (AHAW)

The AHAW Panel held its 38th plenary meeting on December 11-12. Two opinions were adopted, one on the risk of classical swine fever virus being present in fresh meat from slaughter pigs vaccinated around disease outbreaks and another on control and eradication of classical swine fever in wild boar. Additionally, a scientific report was accepted by the Panel in order to draft five scientific opinions on the welfare of Dairy cows (leg and locomotion problems, udder and reproductive problems, metabolic disorders and behavioural problems).

Working Group meetings have been held on the following mandates: fish welfare, stunning and killing of fish species, welfare of dairy cows, classical swine fever and brucellosis in pigs,

Under Article 36 a project was granted for two emerging animal diseases CCHF and EHD, intended to support EFSA's general mandate and preparedness for issuing scientific opinions through a risk assessment approach within the area of animal health.

EFSA received the completed scientific report concerning an Article 36 grant on risk assessment methodologies for stunning and killing methods for food producing.

Representatives of the AHAW Unit gave presentations in a meeting in DG SANCO on Aquatic Animal Health on December 8 and participated in the First Steering Group on Categorisation of Animal Diseases in line with the Animal Health Strategy the 9th December.

One scientific paper has been accepted in the "Italian Journal of Animal Science (IJAS)" on "EFSA scientific advice on Animal Welfare".

Panel on biological hazards (BIOHAZ)

The 44th Plenary the BIOHAZ Panel was held on 10-11 December.

Working Group meetings were held as follows: Cooling of Eggs on 3 December; MRSA on 3 December and 8 January, Bacteriophages on 9 December, *Salmonella* in poultry on 17 December. The joint BIOHAZ-GMO Working Group on the use of Antibiotic Resistance Marker genes used as marker genes in GM plants met on 18-19 December.

At the Plenary of 10-11 December, the BIOHAZ Panel adopted the opinion on the maintenance of the list of Qualified Presumption of Safety (QPS) microorganisms intentionally added to food or feed.

The contract on "Fate of *Salmonella* spp. on broiler carcasses before and after cutting and/or deboning" was signed on 17 December and the project commenced.

A Working Group on genetic TSE resistance in goats was formed following an urgent request from the European Commission. The first meeting will be held on 16 January.

Panel on food contact materials, enzymes, flavourings and processing aids (CEF)

Three working group meetings were held, on Flavouring Guidelines, on Smoke Flavourings and on Flavourings evaluation.

Four opinions were published: Two on Flavouring substances with structural alerts for genotoxicity and two opinions on Food Contact Materials.

Twelve opinions on Flavourings adopted by the AFC Panel have been peer reviewed and published.

The evaluation of Flavouring substances in the Community Register (substances currently on the market) should be finalised in 2009. The evaluation of applications for substances to be used for Food Contact Materials is ongoing, with a steady number of petitions.

Guidelines for the evaluation of Enzymes and of Flavourings are being prepared in the respective working groups; they should be discussed in the next Panel meetings in order to be submitted for public consultation and to be adopted by Summer 2009.

The evaluation of a processing aid is planned for the January Plenary.

Panel on contaminants in the food chain (CONTAM)

Within the reference period the CONTAM Panel met once in plenary (29th CONTAM plenary meeting - 2-4 December 2008). Five working group and audio conference meetings were held during this period related to requests on undesirable substances in animal feed – section natural plant products (3 meetings), undesirable substances in animal feed – section nitrite (1 meeting), and heavy metals (arsenic) in food (1 meeting). In addition, a first planning audio conference meeting was held related to the work of the new established Working Group on lead in food.

The opinions on Yessotoxin group toxins and Gossypol as undesirable substance in animal feed were adopted at the 29th CONTAM plenary meeting.

In addition, EFSA has received a request for urgent scientific advice on the risks for public health due to the possible presence of dioxins in pork and pork products from Ireland and the presence of possibly contaminated processed pork products from Ireland in composite foods by the European Commission. Due to the urgency of this request EFSA issued a statement following Art. 13b of the "Decision concerning the establishment and operations of the scientific committee and panels". The statement was jointly prepared by the EFSA DATEX and CONTAM units taking into account scientific advice from experts of the CONTAM and ANS Panel. The EFSA statement on dioxins in pork from Ireland was issued on 10 December 2008 two days after the request was received. The European Commission discussed and agreed on guidelines for measures to be taken on the same day.

In the above mentioned period the CONTAM Panel has received two requests for scientific advice: one related to risks for public health due to the presence of dioxins in pork from Ireland and one related to the influence of processing, particularly heat treatments on the levels of marine biotoxins in processed shellfish products compared to raw products. The deadline for this request is March 2009.

Panel on additives and products or substances used in animal feed (FEEDAP)

In the reference period the FEEDAP Panel held one plenary meeting, four working group meetings on micro-organisms and on Ractopamine and one meeting with industry (FEFANA).

The Panel adopted four scientific opinions and one opinion on the proposal to create additional categories and functional groups for classifying feed additives (self-task).

There are currently two calls for proposals under progress, one on trace elements and the other on the environmental impact of zinc and copper used in animal nutrition. A kick-off meeting with the beneficiary of the grant agreement on the trace elements will be organised in January.

Working group meetings on coccidiostats, aminoacids and ractopamine are planned during January.

Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)

The GMO Panel held one plenary session (3-4th December). Three working group meetings were held: one with the food/feed Working Group, one with the environmental risk assessment Working Group, one with the joint GMO-BIOHAZ Working Group for the antibiotic resistance marker genes mandate. For self tasks, one meeting for the non-target organisms Working Group was held and in conjunction with this meeting Working Group members also met the one on Environmental Risk Assessment of EuropaBio for knowledge sharing.

GMO Panel experts met appointed Austrian experts concerning the Austrian safeguard clause on MON810 and T25 maize. GMO panel members met experts from two Member States in the spirit of the article 30 procedure, one meeting took place with the Belgian Biosafety Council concerning general issues of nutrition, toxicology and allergenicity and one meeting with experts from the French food safety authority (AFSSA) concerning the need for the 90-day feeding study in rodents. GMO panel experts met with EC/JRC to discuss and explore the joint use of JRC bioinformatics tools. Technical assistance was provided to DG SANCO: one during SCFCAH meeting with MS regarding the panels view on the Austrian study concerning GM maize NK 603 x MON 810 and one during a SCFCAH working group meeting with Member States regarding the updated EFSA guidance for GM food and feed presently under EC-Member State discussion and revision to be adopted as EC regulation.

Two GMO application opinions were adopted: one FEEDAP-GMO co-opinion on the feed additives Natugrain TS; one opinion on a new GM plant application for maize MON89034. An article 29 scientific opinion was adopted on the safeguard clause invoked by Austria on Maize MON810 and T25.

A request for a scientific opinion on supplementary information about the enzyme preparation of trade name ECONASE XT L and ECONASE XT P was received from the EC. An application for authorisation of genetically modified H7-1 Roundup Ready® Sugar beet for food and feed uses and cultivation submitted under Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 was received.

Panel on dietetic products, nutrition and allergies (NDA)

The NDA Panel held six Working Group meetings and one Plenary meeting and adopted ten Article 14 health claims referring to children's health and development and three Article 13 (5) claim (claims based on newly developed scientific evidence and/or for which protection of proprietary data is requested). The Panel also adopted one Novel food opinion on Lycopene cold water dispersible(CWD) products from Blakeslea trispora as food ingredient.

With respect to an overview of health claim applications, to date EFSA has received 236 children and risk reduction claims. 70% of applications received have not been validated yet as EFSA is seeking more information from the applicants or clarification from Member States. By now the EFSA NDA Panel has adopted 38 opinions covering 45 applications; thirteen applications have been withdrawn; fifteen applications are in progress For Art. 13(5) claims (based on new science and/or proprietary data) EFSA has received eleven applications, three applications have been withdrawn, five opinions have been adopted, and three applications are in progress.

In December 2008 the European Commission sent a revised list of botanical claims and some additional non botanical claims. In total EFSA is asked to evaluate 4185 Article 13 health claims (main entry) by taking into account the conditions of use and references provided for around 10.000 similar health relationships The NDA unit has pre-

screened all health claims according to six defined criteria and will send back to the Commission in January 2009 those claims for which further clarification or information is needed (around 50% of the claims). EFSA will publish in January 2009 the access database consisting of the main claim entries and similar health relationships of all Article 13 health claims received. Information on each claim including status, question number and deadline is provided. EFSA is targeting to meet the deadline of 31 July 2009 for those claims which were included in the July 2008 list and passed the pre-screening (around 1000 claims) and a deadline of 30 November 2009 for additional 470 claims.

Panel on Plant health (PLH)

The Panel held one plenary meeting (17-18 December 2008) and four working groups meetings. In particular the working group evaluating the pest risk analysis made by South Africa on Citrus Black Spot finalised the opinion on this harmful organism while the working group on arthropods commenced its evaluation of the pest risk analysis made by the UK on the Oak Processionary Moth.

The Panel coordinator attended the meeting of the Chief Officers of Plant Health Services held by the French Presidency. The meeting was devoted to the discussion of the EU system of pest risk analysis, to which EFSA contributed in series of preparatory meetings.

The Panel adopted the opinion on Citrus Black Spot on time following approval by the Commission the request for an additional two months to assess fully the data and to produce a sound document.

The panel also adopted its first guidance document for the evaluation of pest risk assessment documents prepared by third parties for phytosanitary purposes. This document will streamline the panel's approach to the evaluation of documents submitted by third parties while at the same time enhancing the transparency of this process.

A Service Level Agreement was signed with the Joint Research Centre (Ispra, IT) to produce a model framework for the assessment of EU climatic suitability for the establishment of organisms harmful to plants and plant products (project acronym CLIMEPEST). The project will serve the purpose of developing modelling tools to be used in PLH opinions.

The Panel has initiated the work on a new self-task devoted to development of a harmonised framework for assessment of risks of organisms posing a threat to the Community plant health. The first meeting of the dedicated working group will take place on 15-16 January.

Panel on plant protection products and their residues (PPR)

The PPR Panel held one plenary meeting on 9-10 December 2008, and adopted two opinions: the opinion on neuro-toxicological effects of deltamethrin and the opinion on pore water concentrations as metrics for the assessment of ecotoxicological effects in soil.

The Panel further adopted the terms of references for two new mandates (self tasks) to revise the Guidance Documents "Aquatic Ecotoxicology" and the GD "Terrestrial Ecotoxicology".

Seven Working Group Meetings took place between 01 December 2008 and 09 January 2009: Working Group Fate GD Persistence in Soil, Working Group Toxicology, Joint Working Group Toxicology & Residues, Working Group Fate GD greenhouses, Working Group Revision of the Persistence in Soil GD Ecotox (Bugs) and two Working Group Residues (Triazole Mandate and Probabilistic Mandate). Further, a teleconference took place to discuss the workshop on persistence in soil to be held in 2009.

Three public consultations (on Guidance Documents "Aquatic Ecotoxicology", "Terrestrial Ecotoxicology" and a draft project plan on the development of a new Guidance Document on emissions from protected crop systems) have been closed on 15 December 2008 and are currently being analysed.

Representatives of the PPR Unit participated in a Standing committee meeting in Brussels and gave presentations on the activities of the Panel at the Fresenius Ecotox Conference in Cologne.

SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

Scientific Cooperation (SCO)

Following the endorsement by the Advisory Forum to strengthen the Focal Point network, new agreements have been drafted between National Focal Points in all 27 Member States and EFSA ready for signature. These agreements will form the basis to continue the work on cooperation between EFSA and Member States. The SCO unit has presented work on cooperation activities between EFSA and Member States at Focal Point kick-off meetings in Belgium, Greece, and Luxembourg. A further meeting has been scheduled for Lithuania in January 2009. Many countries have developed special websites to highlight Focal Point activities.

EFSA's expert database is now fully operational. Five hundred experts have been included to date and the database is currently used by EFSA to search for scientists with a specific expertise. Discussions with Member States to further enlarge and strengthen the use of this database will take place at the next Focal Point meeting in February 2009.

In December 2008, a meeting took place with CABI, a specialised bibliographic database, to discuss the development of an EFSA online scientific journal, which meets the requirements of bibliographic databases for indexation.

In December 2008, approximately 90 scientists and stakeholders from 30 countries, including the USA and New Zealand, attended the scientific colloquium on 'Assessing health benefits of controlling *Campylobacter* in the food chain' in Rome. It was the twelfth in the series of EFSA's Scientific Colloquia.

The SCO unit has organised a scientific event on "Folic acid: an update on scientific developments" which is due to take place in Uppsala on 21-22 January. Approximately 55 scientists from EU and non-EU countries are expected to attend and will discuss recent scientific developments in this area.

The "Interim Review of the Strategy for Cooperation and Networking between EU Member States and EFSA" and a "Review of the work carried out under Article 36 and proposed contract and grant activities for 2009" have been finalised and are available on EFSA's website.

Assessment Methodology Unit (AMU)

AMU took part in various meetings with different panels and units (CONTAM, BIOHAZ, DATEX, Zoonoses, PLH).

The unit contributed to the published Zoonoses report on the risk factor analysis in slaughter pigs.

In total two grants were initiated. A first on colony collapse disorder syndrome in bees and a second one a review of plant pest predictive models using climatological and plant phenology data. Both grants are for a one year period.

A self mandate on the use of systematic literature review in food and feed safety risk assessment has been started and the unit is ready to launch a multiple framework contract to provide toxicological support to EFSA.

Data Collection and Exposure Unit (DATEX)

The Working Group on Left-censored data began its activities aimed at evaluating the performance of a range of statistical approaches to deal with datasets on chemical contaminants in food, in which a variable proportion of data are below the limit of detection. During the first meeting, that was held in Parma on 4-5 December 2008, the working group outlined a comprehensive research program for such evaluation, using both real and simulated data. The program will be implemented in the coming months. The project is intended to provide EFSA with common guidelines for the treatment of left-censored data in chemical contaminant data submissions.

In December DATEX created an internal Working Group with PRAPER and ZOONOSSES to develop a standard protocol for data transmission of chemical occurrence. The protocol will comprise standard terminology including a standard food classification system.

The European Commission requested urgent assistance in assessing the risk connected to the consumption of pork meat contaminated with dioxins. The DATEX Unit participated in the preparation of the "Statement of EFSA on the

risks for public health due to the presence of dioxins in pork from Ireland". In particular, DATEX assessed dioxin exposure according to different scenarios using data from the EFSA European Concise Food Consumption Database.

The DATEX Unit continued the work aimed at making available to EFSA Panels and staff, food consumption data with a greater degree of detail and quality. In an excellent EU-wide collaborative spirit 18 Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom) signed a collaboration agreement in 2008 with EFSA for the provision and processing of existing food consumption data. These countries will provide very detailed consumption data to EFSA from the latest national dietary surveys on adult populations.

Moreover, the kick-off meeting of the article 36 project "Individual food consumption data and exposure assessment studies for children" was held in mid December in Parma. This project is aimed at carrying out an independent exposure assessment study in children for food colours, selenium, chromium and lead for children in different Member States. The first results are expected by June 2009.

Pesticide Risk Assessment Peer Review (PRAPeR)

The PRAPeR Unit held the inaugural meeting of the Pesticides Steering Committee and had one bilateral teleconference with the European Commission. In addition, PRAPeR was represented at one Working group (Legislation) meeting and one Standing Committee (Residues) meeting.

Five reasoned opinions regarding the modification of existing MRLs and the setting of import tolerances were published.

Nine EFSA conclusions regarding the pesticide risk assessment of active substances included in stages 3 & 4 of the review programme were finalised and delivered to the Commission. The EFSA conclusion updating the pesticide risk assessment for the first active substance resubmitted under Commission Regulation (EC) No. 33/2008 was finalised and delivered to the Commission.

In the framework of Article 12(1) EFSA will be responsible to provide reasoned opinions regarding the existing MRLs for all active substances where a decision on inclusion or non-inclusion in Annex I is taken after 2 September 2008. For this work programme which covers about 200 active substances over two years, a self-mandate was launched.

EFSA self-tasked to review an EFSA opinion regarding the MRLs of concern for the active substance because lower toxicological reference values were established.

In the framework of the peer review, one new resubmission application was submitted to EFSA under the accelerated procedure for Member State consultation in accordance with Commission Regulation (EC) No 33/2008. The Commission requested EFSA to conduct a peer review for a third resubmission application. Approximately 50 such resubmission applications are expected to be submitted to EFSA during 2008 – 2010.

Emerging Risks Unit (EMRISK)

The unit provided scientific and administrative support to the ESCO Working Group on Emerging Risks. The final report was revised and is expected to be presented to the EFSA Executive Director in mid-January.

During the dioxin emergency, which affected pork from Ireland, the Emerging Risks Unit supported the activities of EFSA and consequently coordinated a report on "lessons learned".

A strategy paper for the medium term planning of the Emerging Risks unit, describing its mission, mandate and activities, was completed. The EFSA "Crisis Management Plan" was revised on the basis of additional internal and external comments.

Two calls for tender (Development of a SAS Macro to import, analyse and visualize data from the DG-SANCO Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed Safety (RASFF) as a tool for early warning under the Multiple Framework Contract

for Assistance to the Assessment Methodology Unit for statistical analysis and ad hoc consultation upon request; and Delivery of a database on bioactive constituents of food plant) were signed.

The unit is preparing to establish together with DG SANCO a network of experts working on emerging risks. Relevant working groups with specific objectives and time frame will support this work. The network shall follow-up the activities of the ESCO working group.

Animal Diseases Transmissible to Humans Unit (ZOOZONES)

The Zoonoses unit organised two Working Group meetings in December 2008, one on monitoring and reporting on VT E. coli in animals and food and one on statistical methods to be applied for analyses of trends in zoonotic agents. The unit also participated in the organisation of the Scientific Colloquium on Campylobacter that was held in Rome on 4-5 December. A country visit to Denmark was made to enhance the zoonoses reporting.

In December, the unit published a Report on the Analysis of the baseline survey on Salmonella in slaughter pigs in the EU, Part B. The report revealed a number of risk factors related to occurrence of Salmonella in slaughter pigs, most importantly the impact of the slaughterhouses. In addition a report was delivered to BIOHAZ panel on the occurrence of Salmonella in poultry flocks.

Together, seven contracts related to assistance in analysing the zoonoses data were signed in December. One of these was about analysing the Salmonella serovars data, one on the analyses of historical data on antimicrobial resistance and the other five concerned statistical and epidemiological analyses of the results from the EU wide baseline surveys. In addition, one grant agreement was signed related to development of harmonised monitoring and reporting schemes for rabies and Q fever in the Community.

The unit will publish in mid January the Community Summary Report on Zoonoses in 2007 by organising a press briefing with the Commission and ECDC.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE & ADVISORY FORUM

Scientific Committee (SC)

The Scientific Committee had its 33rd Plenary meeting on 1-2- December in Parma. The Committee discussed the progress on the consideration of cross-cutting issues in the various Scientific Panels, SC Working Groups and the Scientific Cooperation and Assistance Directorate. EFSA updated the SC about outcome of meetings of the Management Board, the Advisory Forum.

The draft opinion on “Transparency in the scientific aspects of risk assessment carried out by EFSA: general principles” was discussed and endorsed for public consultation. The consultation has been launched on the 16th December 2008 and will end on the 15th February 2009. The SC intends to adopt the final opinion at its plenary meeting in April 2009.

The EFSA Scientific Panels will be consulted until mid-March 2009 on the draft opinion on Benchmark Dose. Adoption is expected by the end of the mandate of the current Scientific Committee.

EFSA has received about 200 comments in the framework of the public consultation of its draft opinion on risks arising from nanoscience and nanotechnologies on food and feed safety which ended on 1st December. The SC working group will now finalise the opinion, taking into account the comments received, and submit it to the Scientific Committee for adoption at its plenary in February.

Scientific Committee Working Group meetings were held in the area of welfare of experimental animals, risk-benefit assessment, benchmark dose and ESCO botanicals.

An article 36 contract was signed with the Central Science Laboratory in York for the development of a framework for the risk assessment of chemical mixtures. The purpose is to build a toxicological database on relevant chemical mixtures to food safety. The project will last one year, starting from beginning 2009.

A new mandate on “Exploring options for providing preliminary advice about possible human health risks bases on the concept of threshold of toxicological concern (TTC)” was adopted and a Scientific Committee working group will be soon established. Sue Barlow was appointed Chair of the new working group.

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORATE

On 4-5 December, EFSA's 12th Scientific Colloquium entitled 'Assessing Health Benefits of controlling *Campylobacter* in the food chain' was held in Rome. Some 90 scientists and stakeholders from 30 countries, including the USA and New Zealand, attended the meeting. This included representatives from the European Commission, ECDC (the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control), EMEA (the European Medicines Agency) and Member States. The Press Office also attended the final session of the colloquium and prepared a text on the conclusions which was then published on EFSA's website.

Science/Corporate Press material/ Press releases / Web news stories:

The Press Office issued a number of press releases and web news stories on the following topics:

Press Releases:

- EFSA recommends lower MRLs for several active substances used in pesticides (27/11/2008)
- EFSA responds to Commission's urgent request on dioxins in Irish pork (10/12/2008)

Web News Stories:

- EFSA to provide scientific assistance on dioxins in Irish pig meat (8/12/2008)
- EFSA's Management Board adopts Strategic Plan 2009-2013 (19/12/2008)
- EFSA initiates pan-European research project on bee decline (19/12/2008)
- EFSA evaluates Salmonella contamination of pigs at slaughter (22/12/2008)

EFSA's response to the European Commission's request for urgent scientific advice following the discovery of dioxin contamination in some Irish pork generated extensive international media coverage. EFSA's statement was picked up by many major international news agencies and broadcasters, including CNN and BBC. Leading national dailies across Europe and a wide range of regional and specialist media also reported the statement. EFSA's statement was, of course, particularly well covered in Ireland but there was also considerable coverage in the UK, Italy, Germany and Spain. The main messages of EFSA's press release generally came through strongly in coverage, with most reports stating that EFSA examined several different scenarios, along with consumption patterns, before concluding that the risks to consumers were very limited in most cases.

There was a 62% increase in the number of EFSA related articles in 2008 compared to 2007 (11,652 and 7,194 articles respectively). Coverage in November-December 2008 was 134% higher than in November-December 2007.

Web developments

The most significant online communications improvements during the period have been in the areas of website content, content management, usability, and online reach.

Content initiatives included updated information on EFSA's work on Article 13 health claims and a revamped EU enlargement page. A new Key Topic section was published on EFSA's work on flavourings and the section on nanotechnology was updated with the close of the public consultation. A number of important scientific outputs were highlighted via the homepage including the consultation on scientific aspects of transparency in risk assessment, the research grant on bee decline and the report on salmonella in pigs. Several new publications were integrated online including the special 5 year anniversary edition of Trends in Food Science and Technology and the latest editions of EFSA's range of newsletters. Key forthcoming meetings were announced online including the inaugural meetings to

be held following the re-establishment of the Scientific Committee and Panels, and the 4th meeting of National Focal Points.

Content management was enhanced through projects related to metadata (dual Panel tagging of Scientific Opinions now possible), and dynamic features (latest Events now displayed on homepage automatically). In addition, all the queries displaying latest Scientific Opinions, News and Events on the Scientific Panel homepages were amended for better usability. Efforts were also made in the area of domain name management (steps towards full phase-out of www.efsa.eu.int).

The webcast of the December Management Board meeting in Parma had the highest number of views since EFSA started webcasting MB meetings. The live webcast registered 1308 views, representing a 235% increase compared to the 2007-2008 average. The steep increase was achieved through a promotion campaign directed to subscribers of the EFSA Highlights e-newsletter.

Publications

Since the last MB meeting, various scientific and corporate publications have been produced. These include:

Scientific:

- The second editions of EFSA's thematic family of electronic newsletters, EFSA in focus, were published in all four official EFSA languages (EN, FR, DE, IT) and were distributed widely among the many EFSA networks and all experts in the DoI database.
- The special issue of the scientific journal *Trends in Food Science and Technology* covering the Scientific Forum organised in Brussels in the context of EFSA's 5 Year Anniversary was delivered and will be distributed at the January Management Board meeting.

Corporate:

- EFSA news 18 and the third edition of Moving Together were printed and then distributed in all four official EFSA languages in December.
- The 2009 workplan is in production and a digital copy will be printed and made available for the January Management Board meeting.

ADMINISTRATION

Legal and Policy Affairs Unit

EFSA lodged the defense in the case T-457/07 European Dynamics against EFSA, case started in 2007.

Cooperation with EU Institutions

European Commission

The General Director of SANCO and the Executive Director agreed over the turn of the year the "Roadmap – priorities for selected EFSA activities" and the corresponding "Common procedure concerning the update of the Roadmap". The documents are a further step forward in fostering the efficient cooperation between SANCO and EFSA.

On 15 December 2008 Mr Carlo Corazza, Director of the Representation of the European Commission in Milan and Mr Matteo Fornara, press officer, visited EFSA in order to receive detailed information about the working process of EFSA and to discuss the means of cooperation between the Representation and EFSA.

Council of the European Union – Czech Presidency of the EU

In the context of the Czech Presidency of the EU EFSA's Executive Director met on 5th December in Prague representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture to discuss the priorities of the Presidency in areas of competence. Jiri Ruprich, member of EFSA's Management Board, joined EFSA's delegation during the visit

European Parliament

Budget 2009

The European Parliament voted on the 2009 draft Budget at second reading on Thursday 18th of December. The final EU budget was adopted. Considering that the Council, represented by the French Presidency at the EP plenary, officially approved the adoption of the final EU budget by the EP, the budgetary procedure for adopting the Budget 2009 is henceforth closed.

For EFSA, the Budget for 2009 includes a 4,546 Mio€ reserve on Title 1 and 2 and preliminary contact with the MEP have been undertaken in January in order to prepare the discussion of the process of the lift of the reserve.

Plant Protection Products

A triologue between the three main institutions (EP, Council and Commission) took place on 17 December 2008 so as to reach an agreement for the second reading of the EP concerning the future Regulation on the placing of plant protection products on the market. A compromise was found for finalising the new EU pesticides legislation.

As far as the amendment on EFSA conclusions in the peer review process is concerned (Art. 12), the compromise finally refers to a global 150 day-period to allow additional experts' consultation if needed..

On 13 January, the full Parliament voted on the above mentioned second-reading deal while endorsing it. The text must still be formally endorsed by the Council that will act by a qualified majority to approve the EP amendments. The final Regulation should then be published. This should be the case early spring 2009. The Regulation would then apply 18 months after the date of entry into force (which is the date of publication in the Official Journal).

Relations with Stakeholders

The new Chair of the Platform attended the Management Board meeting in Parma on the 18th December where he was introduced to the Board Members. In a dedicated session with the secretariat of the stakeholder platform first objectives of the chairmanship mandate were discussed.

International Relations

On 12 January, EFSA received the visit of a delegation from the Chinese Ministry of Health in the framework of a "Study tour on Food Safety in Germany and Italy" organised by GTZ (an international cooperation enterprise owned by the German Federal Government). EFSA Executive Director of and the Deputy Director General of the Chinese Ministry of Health, Mr. Zhang Min Yuan, welcomed this opportunity to meet and exchange views on possible future cooperation.

Pre-Accession Programme

The European Commission adopted the 19.12.2008 the IPA 2009 Programme for agencies including the 1.000.000 € Programme for EFSA for the 3 Candidate countries and the 5 Potential Candidate countries.

The Commission (DG SANCO, DG RELEX and DG Enlargement) agreed the 9th January 2009 with EFSA on a seminar/workshop with the 16 European Neighbourhood countries in summer 2009 in Brussels on food safety funded by the TAIEX office in DG Enlargement.

Human Resources*HR – Numbers of recruitment procedures for all staff (until 16th January 2009)*

	RECRUITMENT (+)					END OF CONTRACT (-)			"Net" Result	Total staff number 16/01/2009
	Total staff number end Dec 07	Total staff number 31/12/2008	Number of New Contracts	New comers	Change in contract, Cat. or Grade (*)	Departures (**)	Change in contract, Cat. or Grade (***)	Contract Expiry		
AT+Officials	273	318	4	2	2	2		1	-1	317
AUX[†]	4	0	0	0	0				0	0
CA	24	64	3	0	0				3	67
END	9	13	1	1	0			1	0	13
Total	310	395	4	3	1	2		2	2	397

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

(**) = Resignations, termination of contract after probationary period, termination of contract.

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

[†] Auxiliary Contract types ended at 31/12/2007