Update on EFSA's Communications Activities

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Director of Communications

Stakeholder Consultative Platform

Brussels, 17-18 November 2011

Agenda

- Recent & upcoming communications activities
- Focus on:
  - Zoonoses thematic approach
  - Applications Helpdesk
- Joint EFSA/Advisory Forum WG on Communications – Risk communications guidelines

Pesticides

Annual report on pesticide residues

(published early November)

The report covers 2009, the first year of fully harmonised legislation on Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) across the European Union. It shows that 97.4% of samples analysed were below legal MRLS.

Communication activities:

- Press release
- Interviews with mainstream and specialised media
- Topic update
- Plants Newsletter

Public health risk of seeds and sprouted seeds

Risks posed by STEC and other pathogenic bacteria in seeds and sprouted seeds

EFSA (BIOHAZ Panel) has assessed the public health risk caused by STEC and other pathogenic bacteria that may contaminate seeds and sprouted seeds intended for direct human consumption.

Publication wk 14 November

Communication activities:

- Press release
- Update of topic on the STEC outbreaks
- Food newsletter
- Possible interviews with specialised media

Food additives

Public Consultation on draft Guidance on Food Additive submissions

New guidance will replace the 2001 SCF guidance on submission of new food additives and new uses of existing food additives. The guidance uses the latest thinking on risk assessment and adopts a three-tiered approach to data requirements .

Draft guidance endorsed at ANS September Plenary.

Public consultation to be launched mid November 2011.

Communication activities:

- Web news story
- Updated topic on food additives
- Food newsletter

Sweeteners: Aspartame

Re-evaluation of aspartame (E 951) – publication of data

Following a call for data (deadline: September 2011) EFSA received a substantial amount of data, studies and other information for this re-evaluation.

To promote transparency in the risk assessment process (and subject to any confidentiality restrictions,) all data will be published including the 112 original studies going back to the 1970s.

EFSA to launch public consultation on draft opinion; final opinion in 2012.

Communication activities:

- Web news story and publication of data (end Nov/early December 2011)
- Updated topics on Aspartame, Food additives; new topic on Sweeteners
- Food Newsletter

Bisphenol A

Response to Anses reports on BPA

In early November 2011, CEF Panel members and EFSA staff held a meeting with Anses to discuss the findings of the Anses reports and to assess any possible implications for EFSA's previous scientific advice on Bisphenol A (September 2010).

CEF Panel to review the scientific approach, the methodology followed and the data used in the Anses reports, and assess any possible implications for EFSA's previous advice. Results to be published in a Statement of the CEF Panel.

Publication expected end November/early December

Communication activities:

- Web news story
- Topic update (Bisphenol A)

Food Enzymes

Evaluation of enzymes

100s of applications are expected in this area over 2011-2013, all of which will be evaluated by the CEF Panel (with GM-related aspects done by GMO Panel).

EFSA aims to raise awareness about scientific requirements and encourage stakeholders to submit applications.

Communication activities:

- Web news story (Jan/Feb 2012)
- New topic on enzymes – including link with GMM
- Food Newsletter

Total diet studies

Joint EFSA/WHO/FAO guidance on Total Diet Studies

The organisations are jointly publishing a guidance for a harmonised Total Diet Study approach to determine population dietary exposure to chemicals in food (contaminants, nutrients…).

Guidance proposes general principles for harmonising TDS methods internationally, which would allow for pan-European data on dietary exposure to chemicals in food.

Publication of guidance expected in early December.

Communication activities:

- Joint press release with WHO and FAO
- Update of topic on data collection

90-day feeding trials

Guidelines for 90-day feeding trials with whole food and feed

Development of principles and guidance by EFSA's Scientific Committee for the establishment of a protocol for 90-day feeding studies in rodents with whole food and feed relevant to GM and novel food applications.

Publication in early December 2011.

Communication activities:

- Web news story
- EFSANews & Food newsletter

Reassessment of GM maize 1507

Reassessment of safety of GM maize 1507 (self-task)

GMO Panel has reassessed environmental safety of maize 1507 in light of new advances in methodology and scientific literature.

Publication mid-November

Communication activities:

- Web news story
- Topic update

GM animals

Guidance on the risk assessment of GM animals including animal health and welfare aspects

Public consultation on draft guidance launched over summer 2011.

Final guidance to be published in January 2012.

Guidance on ERA (Fish / Insects / Birds & Mammals) to follow in Spring 2012

Communication activities:

- Web news story
- Topic update

GMO: new techniques

Risk assessment of plants developed through new plant breeding techniques – Cisgenesis

First of several safety assessments carried out by EFSA on new biotechnological techniques for plant breeding. The EFSA assessments will feed into EC work to determine whether new techniques should be defined – and therefore regulated in the same way – as GMOs or GMMs.

Possible adoption in December plenary

Communication activities:

- Web updates
- Topic update

Assessment of Amflora PMEM report

Assessment of the post-market environmental monitoring (PMEM) report for the Amflora potato

First EFSA assessment of PMEM report on Amflora potato (for 2010 cultivation season)

Follows recent EFSA assessment of yearly PMEM report for maize MON810

Possible adoption of scientific opinion in January plenary.

Communication activities:

- Web news story
- Topic update

Health claims

Adoption of additional guidance for applicants on claims related to:

- antioxidants, oxidative damage and cardiovascular health
- bone, joints and oral health
- appetite ratings, weight management and blood glucose concentrations

Publication expected by December

Communication activities:

- Web news story

Plant health

Guidance for assessment of environmental risk from plant pests

Self-task to develop guidance on assessing the environmental risk from plant pests (invertebrates, diseases, plants).

Publication expected in December 2011

Communication activities:

- Homepage highlight
- Plants Newsletter

Plant health

Scientific Opinion on the risk to conifer species from the pine wood nematode (PWN)

The pine wood nematode is a threat to conifers worldwide and a major problem in Portugal. EFSA has been requested to deliver an opinion on the likelihood of PWN spreading to the whole EU territory.

Publication expected in January

Communication activities:

- Web news story
- Plants Newsletter

Norovirus

Norovirus in oysters

Based on the request of the Irish Food Safety Authority, EFSA will provide a scientific opinion on the methods, limits and control options for norovirus in oysters in the EU.

Publication expected January 2012.

Communication activities

- Web news story
- Update of food-borne viruses topic
- Food newsletter

Animal-based measures for welfare of dairy cows and pigs

Scientific opinions on use of animal-based measures to assess the welfare of dairy cows and pigs

First two opinions of a series looking at welfare indicators for all farm animals. They deal with the use of animal-based measures to assess welfare as opposed to resource-based or management measures.

Likely adoption of first two opinions in January 2012; opinions for remaining species due by end of 2012

Communication activities:

- Web news story
- Topic update

PET recycling

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Safety evaluation of PET recycling processes

EFSA has received some 90 applications for PET recycling processes.

First opinions using new criteria for safety evaluations (CEF Panel, July 2011) may be adopted in November 2011.

Expected publication of first opinions: December/January 2012

Communication activities:

- Web news story on publication of first opinions (general)
- Topic update (Food contact materials – 'recycled plastics')

Threshold of toxicological concern

Threshold of toxicological concern (TTC) approach

The opinion explores options for the use of the TTC approach for chemicals which are not regulated substances. TTC can be useful as screening tool for substances of known chemical structure for which specific toxicological data may be lacking and exposure is known to be low. Use of TTC by EFSA's Scientific Committee and Panels could assist risk managers in setting priorities and allow for more rapid scientific advice regarding possible health risks.

Adoption of final opinion expected in February 2012.

Communication activities:

- Web news story
- Food newsletter

Botanicals

Update of compendium on botanicals

EFSA will update the compendium on botanicals reported to contain toxic, addictive, psychotropic or other substances of concern.

Publication expected in February 2012.

Communication activities:

- Web news story (tbc)
- Update of topic on botanicals
- Plants newsletter

Isoflavones

Report of ESCO working group on isoflavones

Report on the use and health effects of isoflavones in food supplements for women during and after menopausal period. Review of scientific literature.

Publication of report expected in Spring 2012.

Communication activities:

- Web news story
- ESCO working group web page update
- Food newsletter

Risk assessment terminology

EFSA's Scientific Committee will prepare an overview which will serve as a basis for further discussion on the harmonisation of terms used in risk assessment.

An Article 36 call looked at EFSA opinions adopted between 2007 and 2009 to compare how safety/risks have been expressed.

Adoption expected in Spring 2012.

Communication activities:

- Web news story (tbc)
- EFSANews

Consultation on policy on Independence & Scientific decision-making processes

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EFSA closes public consultation of its independence policy with constructive stakeholder debate

Brussels , 12 October 2011

Video Webcast of the meeting

More than 150 delegates gathered in Brussels on 12 October to discuss the European Food Safety Authority's (EFSA) draft policy on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes. A broad spectrum of participants attended the event where everyone shared the same objective: how to ensure EFSA provides the highest calibre of scientific advice while remaining independent.

In his address, John Dalli, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy recognised the efforts that EFSA has made over the years to ensure that the Authority is independent: "*I can underline that over the years the independence provisions have been strengthened considerably and have contributed significantly to the fact that EFSA's reputation is one of a truly independent body offering solid scientific advice.*" Commissioner Dalli then continued: "*EFSA's rigorous scientific output has been the very backbone of many of our legislative initiatives. It has also been the basis of our risk management decisions, some of which have dealt with very serious threats to the food chain – the recent E. coli crisis being a very good example.* "

See also

- Executive Director homepage
- Independence
- News story: EFSA to hold consultative workshop with stakeholders on Independence and Scientific Decision-Making Processes

EFSA 10-year Anniversary

- 2012 – 10-year anniversary of General Food Law and establishment of EFSA
- Opportunity to integrate/reference in EFSA activities throughout the year (as well as EFSA's move to its new Seat)
- Milestones include:
  - 28 January launch (press release); dedicated web area
  - Joint events with Member States
  - Schuman Day/Festa dell'Europa (May)
  - Events with institutional partners (eg EP event)
  - 2-day scientific conference in New Seat (Nov)
  - etc…

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Zoonoses thematic approach: update & next steps

Zoonoses thematic approach

- Communicate the benefits, results, impact of EFSA's work over time

- Move focus from individual outputs to "key issues“

  ⇨ Integrating all outputs in a given area but focusing on those which provide "news" value

- More effective use of website to better explain overall work and structure thematic approach (e.g. new topics and sub-topics)

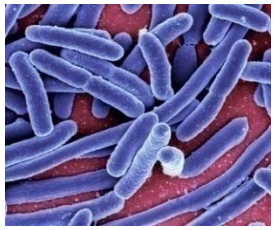
- New tools (eg fact sheets, videos, leaflets with MS…)

Zoonoses: Yesterday

Rabies

What is it?

E. coli



Why important?

Campylobacter

Leptospirose

Vector-borne

Deadly?

Dangerous?

What: EFSA Role?

Listeriose

BSE

MS Role?

Rabies

Salmonella

Not Important?

Close contact

Food-borne

Q Fever

Anti-microbial resistance?

Harmless?

Bruccellose

Clostridium

How transmitted?

Cysticercus

ECDC Role?

Rabies

How: EFSA helps

Trichinella

Zoonoses: Today

ZOONOTIC DISEASES

Overview topic page with access to all related topics regarding zoonoses

Food-borne zoonotic diseases

- ***Camplyobacter***
- ***Salmonella***
- ***Listeria*** (as part of zoonoses monitoring)
- **Food-borne viruses** (as part of zoonoses monitoring)
- **Parasites in food**
- **Monitoring and analysis of food-borne diseases**
- **BSE** (sub-topic of TSEs)

Non-food borne zoonotic diseases

- **Vector-borne zoonotic diseases**
- **Avian influenza**
- **Q-fever**
- **MRSA** (subtopic of antimicrobial resistance)

Focal areas and upcoming main outputs 2011-2013

Key focal areas:

2011-2012	2013 ->
Salmonella	Listeria
Antimicrobial resistance	Campylobacter

General thematic material

- **Zoonoses topics** package on website – published in October 2011
- **Zoonoses fact sheets** (distribution, events, website) - available
- **Joint zoonoses event** at European Parliament (EFSA, DG SANCO, ECDC) – 10 October 2011
- **Understanding science videos** on zoonotic diseases – January 2012
- **EFSA's 10 year anniversary**

Integrate/leverage key scientific outputs

EU Summary Report on zoonoses and food-borne outbreaks 2010

The EFSA-ECDC annual EU Summary Report on zoonoses, zoonotic micro-organisms and food-borne outbreaks will be published in spring 2012.

Communication activities:

- Press release
- Update of web topics in zoonoses package
- All newsletters

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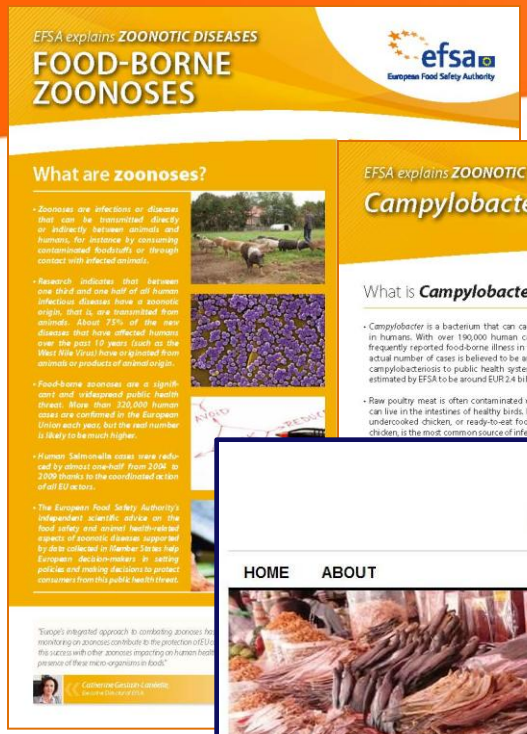
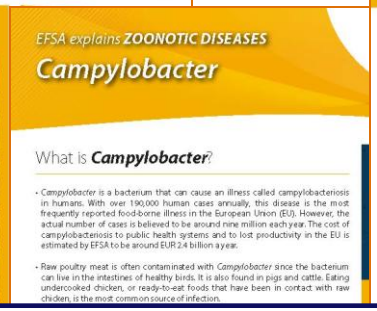
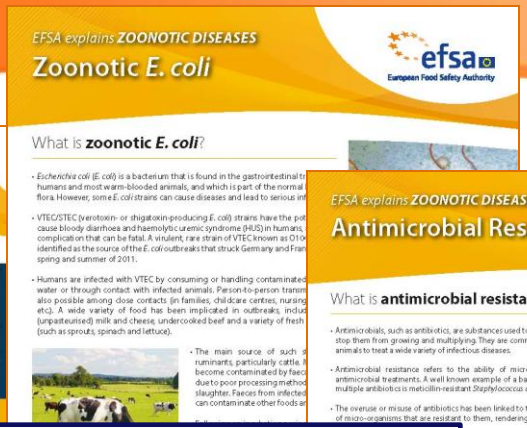
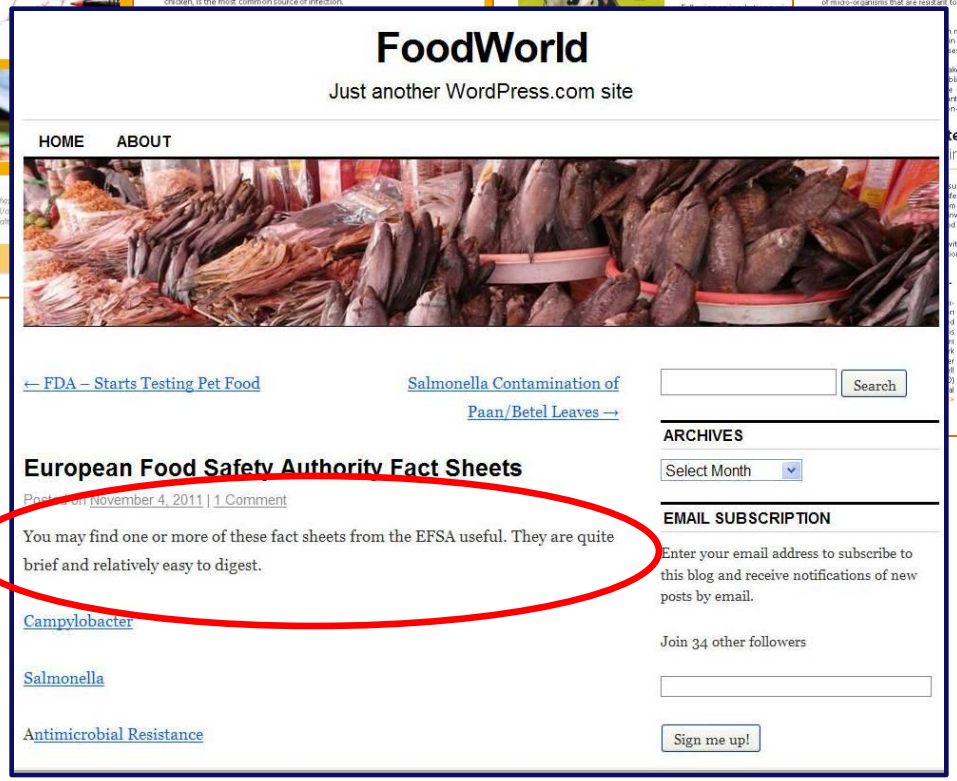

EFSA explains ZOONOTIC DISEASES
FOOD-BORNE ZOONOSES
What are zoonoses?


EFSA explains ZOONOTIC DISEASES
Campylobacter
What is Campylobacter?


EFSA explains ZOONOTIC DISEASES
Zoonotic E. coli
What is zoonotic E. coli?


EFSA explains ZOONOTIC DISEASES
Antimicrobial Resistance
What is antimicrobial resistance?


EFSA explains ZOONOTIC DISEASES
Salmonella
What is Salmonella?
How EFSA supports the EU's fight against Salmonella


FoodWorld
Just another WordPress.com site
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← FDA – Starts Testing Pet Food
Salmonella Contamination of Paan/Betel Leaves →
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Posted on November 4, 2011 | 1 Comment
You may find one or more of these fact sheets from the EFSA useful. They are quite brief and relatively easy to digest.
Campylobacter
Salmonella
Antimicrobial Resistance
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Decontamination
Feed additives
Food contact materials
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Food processing
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Home > Applications helpdesk > GMO

Print

- Animal by-products
- Decontamination
- Feed additives
- Food contact materials
- Food ingredients
- Food processing
- GMO
  - Guidance documents
- Nutrition
- Pesticides
- Ask a question

GMO applications

EFSA provides scientific advice on the safety evaluation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and their use as food or feed and/or for cultivation. This includes GM plants, GM microorganisms and GM animals.

See also

- Genetically Modified Organisms homepage
- Genetically modified animals homepage

Frequently Asked Questions

1. I have submitted a GMO application for safety evaluation by EFSA. How can I check the status of my application?
2. I am not sure if my GMO requires authorisation. Who should I contact?
3. Is there an official list of all authorised GMOs?
4. I am a new applicant. How do I prepare an application?
5. Are the requirements for applicants the same for all GMO evaluations?
6. What happens to my application when EFSA has received it?
7. How does EFSA assess an application?
8. How long does EFSA's evaluation take?
9. Do I need to pay?
10. Does EFSA authorise GMOs?
11. Short cuts for applicants

1. I have submitted a GMO dossier for evaluation by EFSA. How can I check the status of my application?

All applications received and accepted by EFSA are given an application number and assigned an EFSA Question number (e.g. EFSA-Q-2009-12345) in the Register of Questions (ROQ) once the mandate is received from the European Commission. In the ROQ, applicants can monitor the status and progress of EFSA's scientific work related to their applications. To find an application in the ROQ, click on the 'Question' option in the top menu of the ROQ, then in the 'Question type' field select 'Application' and select the relevant 'Food sector area' (there are four options for GMO applications). You can then search using key words or a Question number if you know it. After locating your application, the 'Status' column indicates the present stage of the evaluation. When a question is 'Finished', an opinion has been adopted by EFSA's Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) and is scheduled for publication within a few days. Once the opinion is published, it is available via the 'View' link. Further information: ROQ User Guide

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Home > Applications helpdesk > GMO > Guidance documents

Print

- Animal by-products
- Decontamination
- Feed additives
- Food contact materials
- Food ingredients
- Food processing
- GMO
- ▶ Guidance documents
- Nutrition
- Pesticides
- Ask a question

GMO applications – guidance documents

EFSA has prepared several guidance documents for the risk assessment of GMOs and derived food and feed. These documents detail the type of scientific data that applicants must include in GMO applications and outline the approach followed by the GMO Panel in the evaluation of the risk assessment. EFSA regularly updates its guidance documents and therefore applicants are reminded to ensure that they use the latest version of these documents.
There are **six main guidance documents** that should be used by applicants when compiling technical dossiers in support of GMO applications to be submitted to EFSA:

- Risk assessment of food and feed from GM plants (2011)
- Environmental risk assessment of GM plants (2010)
- Guidance on the submission of applications for authorisation of GM food and feed and GM plants for food and feed (2011)
- Risk assessment of GM microorganisms and their products intended for food and feed use (2011)
- Risk assessment of GM plants used for non-food or non-feed purposes (2009)
- Renewal of authorisations of existing GMO products (2006)

The first two documents, compiling all relevant information from earlier EFSA documents on different aspects of GMO risk assessment, provide a comprehensive overview of the principles and data requirements for food and/or feed and environmental risk assessment, respectively.
The third document – submission guidance – provides instructions to applicants on how to prepare and present data in an application to be submitted to EFSA.
Please note, the above current guidance documents **replace** the following previous guidance documents:

- Working document GM plants and plant protection products interplay (2008)
- Guidance document on stacked transformation events (2007)
- Guidance on risk assessment of GM plants and derived food and feed (2006)
- Risk assessment of GM microorganisms and their derived products intended for food and feed use (2006)

In addition, EFSA has published several other documents which support the current guidance documents and/or provide additional information.

- Guidance on the selection of comparators (2011)
- Opinion on statistical considerations including field trials (2010)
- Opinion on the assessment of allergenicity of GM plants and microorganisms (2010)
- Opinion on potential impacts on non-target organisms (2010)
- Report on animal feeding trials (2008)
- Guidance on Post-market environmental monitoring (PMEM) of GM plants (2011)

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Home > Applications helpdesk > GMO

Print

- Animal by-products
- Decontamination
- Feed additives
- Food contact materials
- Food ingredients
- Food processing
- GMO
  - Guidance documents
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EFSA Question number (e.g. EFSA-Q
mandate is received from the Europe
status and progress of EFSA's scient
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Ask a question about applications

I have carefully checked both the administrative guidance and the technical guidance documents and I still have a question related to my application – what should I do?

Ask a question

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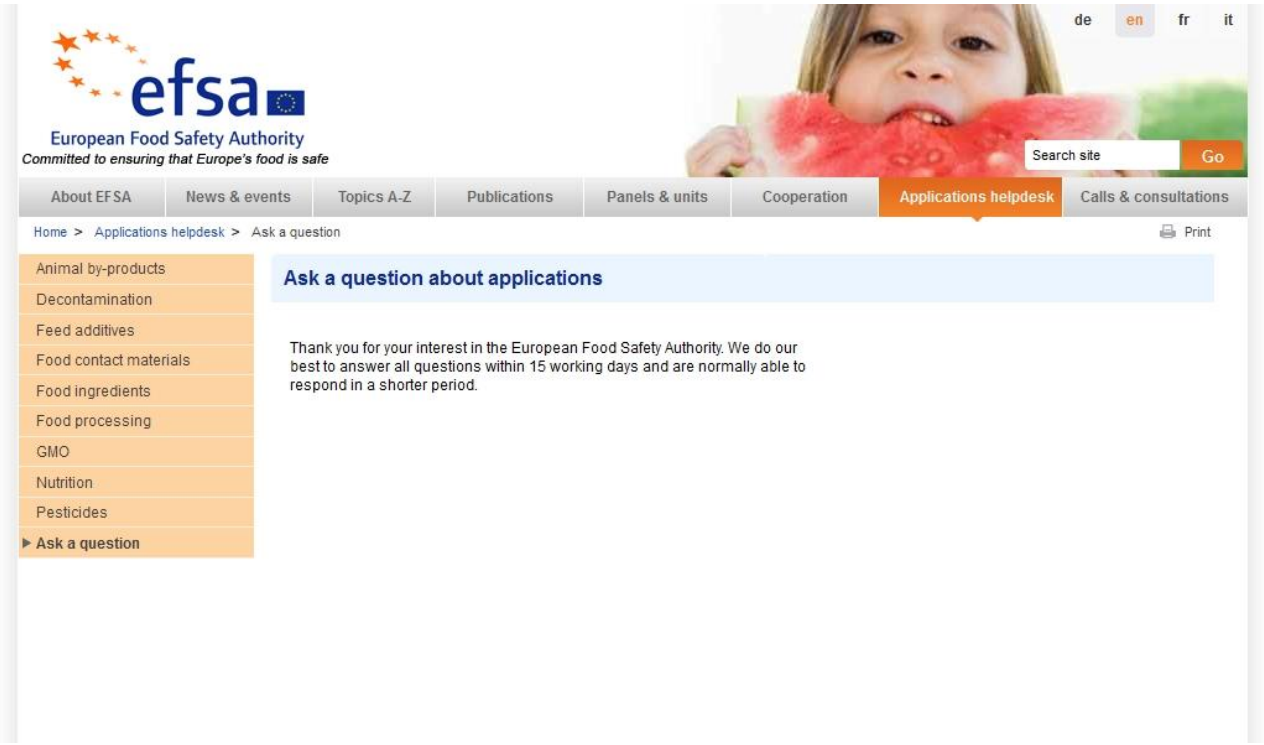

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Risk Communications Guidelines: A joint initiative between EFSA & Advisory Forum Communications WG (AFCWG)

Why do we think the guidelines will be valuable?

- Facilitate consistency in risk communications approaches across Europe
- Partly for simple shared learning and development
- But also to underpin how we operate with a stronger understanding of how we communicate on risk, how we explain different types of risk, different levels of risk, different groups affected by risk etc
- And what channels and tools are appropriate for different audiences and types of risks

Principles

- Openness
- Transparency
- Independence
- Responsiveness / timeliness

Principles in practice

- Publishing all key documents
- Understandable and usable communications
- Timely communications
- Dialogue between risk assessors and risk managers
- Dialogue with stakeholders, understanding audiences
- Acknowledging and communicating uncertainty

Factors impacting on levels and types of communications

- Aim is to cover all main issues from basic public health risk, through risk perception issues, through who is affected etc etc

- Approach offers a menu of factors to consider – some always applicable, some occasionally - when reaching decisions on communications

Levels of risk from a communications perspective

- None / negligible
- Low
- Medium
- High
- Unknown

Uncertainty can be associated with each level

Other factors to consider

- Who is affected
- The nature of the hazard/substance
- Levels of exposure to the hazard/risk
- How people / plants / animals are affected
- Ability to control the risk
- Other factors related to risk perception

Levels of communication

- Low level impact / interest
- Medium level impact / interest
- High level impact / interest

Optimal use of communication tools & channels

- Media relations
- Printed & digital publications
- Meetings & workshops
- Partner/stakeholder networks
- Public consultations
- Websites
- Social networking
- Blogging
- Microblogging

Examples of case studies

- Animal Cloning (EFSA)
- Zoonoses (EFSA)
- Salt Campaign (UK)
- Food colours: Southampton Study (UK)
- Q-Fever (NL)
- Fortodol (SWE)
- Dioxin crisis (IRE)
- (EHEC to be added in 2012)

Further reading

- Academic literature
- Practical Guides
- AFCWG to complete with MS-level initiatives

Next steps

- Incorporate Advisory Forum feedback
- Finalise content by written procedure with AFCWG
- Further consultation with EFSA's Advisory Group on Risk Communications
- Final document to be published early 2012
- Creation of a AFCWG TF for annual review & identification of case studies
- Creation of a feedback mechanism for practitioners to provide input in guideline initiative
- Stakeholder outreach
- Speaking platforms where appropriate

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?