European Food Safety Authority

Communications: highlights of recent and upcoming activities

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Stakeholder Consultative Platform
Parma, 22 June 2010

What is Bisphenol A (BPA)?



?



- Chemical used combined with others to manufacture plastics (polycarbonate, PC) and resins
- PC is used to make plastic food containers (e.g., baby bottles, plates and mugs, storage boxes)
- Epoxy resins are used to make protective coatings and linings for food and beverage cans and vats.
- BPA can leach in small amounts from food contact materials into food and drinks

Issues with Bisphenol A (BPA)

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- Whether these low doses of BPA cause adverse health effects in humans is a highly debated issue.

- BPA: **weak estrogen-like activity** (1,000 times less potent than natural estrogens such as estradiol)

- **Low dose studies**: some neurodevelopmental and behavioural data have suggested a heightened sensitivity during stages of development in rodents.

- Some risk assessors (US, France, Denmark) have identified “warning signs” in various studies but have also noted important methodological weaknesses

How the media sees BPA



Parents warned of 'cancer risk' in plastic baby bottles (Irish Independent)

How the media sees BPA

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Mail Online

Chemical in baby bottles 'raises risk of heart disease'

The New York Times

Heightened Concern Over BPA

AFP

Bisphénol A: des sénateurs RDSE demandent l'interdiction pour l'alimentaire

KURIER

Schadstoffe im Schnuller

BR-online

Verpackungen unter Vererdacht

Le Monde

Bisphénol A: des experts reconnaissent l'existence de signaux d'alerte

canada.com Network

Health Canada makes it official: BPA is health hazard

Chicago Tribune

Chicago protects infants by banning BPA

BPA

The CEF Panel is dealing with three requests from the EC on BPA:

i) Assessing a new study (Stump) on possible neuro-developmental effects of BPA

ii) Reviewing scientific arguments supporting Danish government decision to ban BPA from food-contact materials for children aged 0-3

iii) Reviewing hundreds of studies in its review and analysis of most recent scientific literature (2007-2010)

BPA

National experts meeting (26 March 2010) to discuss draft opinion and literature review; draft opinion also shared with international partners (WHO, FDA, Canada)

Final opinion to be adopted 8 July 2010

Communications activities – mid July:

- press release
- updated web topic and FAQ
- media interviews

CEF - Flavourings

- EFSA has evaluated some 2,800 flavourings currently in use, most do not raise safety concerns
- Further data have been requested for some 360 substances whose safety could not be fully assessed – these will then be re-evaluated
- Commission aiming to establish a positive list by end 2010
- Guidelines for the assessment of new flavourings have recently been published following public/stakeholder consultation

Communications activities (June/July) to explain process and key findings:

  - press release
  - Q&A

CONTAM – Marine biotoxins

- Assessment of emerging marine biotoxins (i.e. toxins not currently covered by EU legislation)
- 3 opinions published, 1 further statement due in July
- EFSA has also been asked to review the typical portion size used to assess existing marine biotoxins

Communications activities:

  - new topic section on the website
  - newsletter coverage

GMOs: Environmental RA

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Live webcast

EFSA Technical meeting with Member States competent authority experts and experts from the EFSA GMO Panel and its working groups

Meeting following the EFSA public consultations on updated Guidance Document on ERA of GM plants and NTO scientific opinion



If you have any difficulties please switch to Windows Media Player or select technical support.

Agenda

1. Welcome
   Tour de table of participants
   Adoption of the agenda
   General Introduction by the EFSA GMO Panel: D. Bartsch
2. Overview by the EFSA GMO Panel: J. Sweet
   Introduction by Member States
   Discussion
3. Overview by the EFSA GMO Panel: J. Sweet
   Introduction by Member States
   Discussion
4. Overview by the EFSA WG member: D. Bartsch
   Introduction by Member States
   Discussion
5. Overview by the EFSA GMO Panel: S. Arpaia
   Introduction by Member States
   Discussion
6. Overview by the EFSA GMO Panel: J. Kiss

View presentation slides

Meeting documents

Technical Support

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GMOs: Environmental RA

Environmental Risk Assessment Guidance (ERA)

- Final guidance to be published in November 2010

Communications activities

- Press release
- Press briefing in Brussels
- Newsletter: EFSA in focus Plants

GMOs

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GM animals:

- EFSA is currently developing a guidance for environmental and human health risk assessment of GM animals (Commission mandate).
- Two Panels involved GMO and AHAW
- The draft guidance expected to be published for public consultation in 2011

Communications activities:

  - new topic on EFSA's website explaining EFSA's work on this topic
  - publication of external report on information currently available on GM animals and criteria for their environmental risk assessment

GMOs

Final opinion on the assessment of allergenicity of GM foods (self-task), following public consultation

Communications activities (July):

- web story to announce publication of the final opinion

Pesticides

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EFSA's Annual Report on pesticide residues

- The report will include analysis of the results of monitoring carried out by Member States

Communications activities:

- press release to announce report to the media at the end of June
- possible interviews

BIOHAZ

- **Scientific opinion on the use of recycled hot water for decontamination of carcasses**
  - **Webstory – September**
- **Review of BSE risk in meat and bone meal derived from mammals**
  - **Webstory – September**
- **Irradiation of food**
  - joint opinion of the BIOHAZ and CEF Panel on the efficiency and safety of irradiation techniques for the decontamination of food
  - press release with publication (Autumn 2010)

Zoonoses

Upcoming scientific work:

- **Baseline Survey on Campylobacter in broilers**
  Part B (July 2010)

- **Baseline Survey Salmonella in breeding pigs**
  Part B - Analysis of the factors (September 2010)

  ⇨ Communication activities under consideration

  ⇨ Update/integrated web topic on Zoonoses

AHAW – Broilers

Genetic selection of chickens (broilers) /health and welfare aspects

The European Commission requested 2 opinions:

– one on the welfare implications linked to the genetic selection of commercial broilers

– the second on the welfare of broilers raised and kept for breeding.

Communications activities:

- web news story announcing public consultation on 30 March 2010
- publication final opinions scheduled for July 2010 (communications plans tbd)

Other AHAW

- **Harvesting feathers from live geese for down production**
  - **Stakeholder meeting 28 May 2010**
    - home page highlight announcing consultation (July)
    - Opinion adoption expected November 2010 (communications tbd)
- **Opinion on increased mortality events in Crassotrea gigas (pacific oysters) - possible publication September 2010**
  - web new story
  - Newsletter: EFSA In focus animals
- **H1N1 2009 influenza virus in animals:**

  BIOHAZ Statement on food safety aspects adopted in May 2010/published

  AHAW Scientific opinon on:
  - H1N1 pandemic and its potential implications for animal health (Sept 2010)
  - monitoring for emergence of possible new pandemic strains (Dec 2010)

NDA – Health Claims

- **In May 2010 EFSA received further 452 claims for evaluation -** webpage updated

- **3rd series of Article 13 opinions:**
  - Adoption in July 2010 (500-600 health claims)
  - Publication scheduled for end of September 2010 accompanied by web news story

NDA – Health Claims

- **Technical meeting with stakeholders** on recent developments related to health claims – Parma, 1 June 2010:

  – Meeting announced on 9 April 2010
  – Briefing document for participants published on 10 May 2010
  – More than 400 attendees
  – Web news story reporting on the event + media interviews on site
  – Meeting report to be published in the Autumn



NDA - Dietary Reference Values



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Dietary reference values and dietary guidelines

A balanced diet is one that provides adequate amounts of energy and nutrients for health and well-being. Dietary Reference Values (DRVs) are the complete set of nutrient recommendations and reference values, such as population reference intakes, the average requirement, adequate intake level and the lower threshold intake. DRVs can be used for instance as a basis for reference values in food labelling and for establishing food-based dietary guidelines (FBDG). FBDG translate nutritional recommendations into messages about foods and diet, and can guide consumers on what to eat and help them make healthy dietary choices.

See Also

NDA - Dietetic products, nutrition and allergies

EU framework

The scientific advice on nutrient intakes is the basis for Community action in the field of nutrition. For example such advice has been used by policy makers for decisions on food labelling. At EU level, the 1992 opinion of the Scientific Committee on Food (SCF) on the nutrient and energy intakes for the European Community provided reference intakes for energy and certain nutrients. There is now a need for this advice to be reviewed and updated to ensure that the Community action in the area of nutrition is underpinned by the latest available knowledge.

Scientific advice in this field is also available from other sources. Scientific advisory bodies in Member States have provided advice on nutrient intakes. International organisations such as the World Health Organisation have published recommended intakes for certain nutrients and dietary components. Taken together these reports suggest a growing degree of consensus, but there are variations on some issues.

EFSA' s role and activities

EFSA provides the most up-to-date and comprehensive scientific advice to support EU policy makers in their decision making process in the field of nutrition. EFSA's advice on nutrient intakes provides an important evidence base to underpin nutritional policies, the setting of diet-related public health targets and the development of consumer information and educational programmes on healthy diets.

In theory	In practice
EFSA identifies and reviews scientific studies, including reports of national and international authorities, for possible health effects of a specific nutrient.	Health effects of dietary fibre are identified by reviewing scientific studies.
EFSA evaluates evidence for relationships between the intake of a nutrient and defined health outcomes.	The evidence for the relationship between dietary fibre intake and bowel function or diet-related diseases is evaluated.
Where nutrient-health relationships are established, EFSA provides scientific advice which may be used by policy makers.	A daily intake of 25 g of dietary fibre is set as a Dietary Reference Value because it is adequate for normal bowel function in adults, while consumption above 25 g dietary fibre per day may reduce risk of coronary heart disease and type 2 diabetes and may improve weight maintenance.

How is this advice utilised?

Policy makers, such as Member States authorities, may use such scientific advice (also taking into account food and nutrient intakes and health status of their population) when making nutrient intake recommendations (e.g. setting a recommended daily intake of dietary fibre of 25 g for adults) or when establishing food based dietary guidelines (e.g. recommending regular consumption of fruits, vegetables and wholegrain cereals).

NDA - Dietary Reference Values

Dietary Reference Values on protein and energy - public consultation planned in Summer/Autumn 2010

Communications activities:

- Press Release
- Interviews
- Topic update (http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/ndatopics/topic/drv.htm)

Scientific Committee

Animal Cloning

- A further request from EC received on 11 May for an update on the latest scientific developments with regard to the food safety and animal health and welfare-related aspects of animal cloning for food production purposes
- A further public call for data launched on 9 June
- EFSA statement due to be published in October, following endorsement by the Scientific Committee

Draft Guidance on Risk Assessment of nanotech applications

- draft opinion due to be published for public consultation in the second half of 2010

EMRISK – Emerging Risks

Annual report

- Addressing EFSA's strategic plan, crisis preparation and medium and long-term emerging risk identification and anticipation
- Publication of the report planned for July

Communications activities:

- Web story
- All newsletters
- Homepage highlight

Eurobarometer: Objectives

- **Assess, evaluate and monitor over time:**
  - Consumer concerns regarding food and food-related risks
  - Level of public confidence in food safety and ability of public authorities to protect consumer interests
  - Sources of information on food/food safety and trust/credibility of sources.

- **2nd Eurobarometer on food-related risks**
  - Compare/contrast vs 2005/06 results



Overall content

- **Questions on:**

  - Risk perception

    (Associations with food from general to specific; ranking of concerns from food safety to diet and health issues)



  - Sources of information and trust

    (all potential key sources)

  - Views on public authorities

    (e.g. laws, action, involvement etc.)



Timeline

- Field work: **11- 27 JUNE**
- Expected publication date with press launch: **OCTOBER**
- Materials:
  - Full & summary reports
  - Country fact sheets



New website design

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Before

After



Improved navigation

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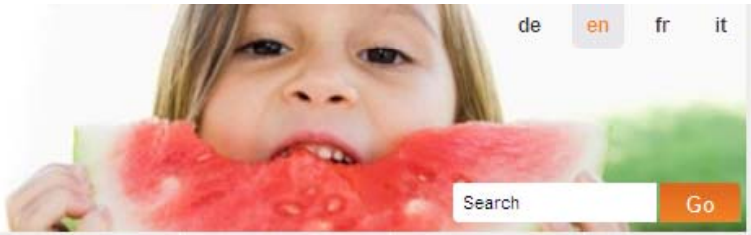

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EFSA provides scientific advice on the spread of common ragweed

News Story
10 June 2010

EFSA has published a scientific opinion on the possible effects on public health, animal health and the environment of the further spread of weeds from the *Ambrosia* species (including *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*, or common ragweed)[1] in the European Union. As requested by the European Commission, the opinion pays particular attention to the role of animal feed, especially birdseed, in helping to spread the weeds.

The main conclusions of the opinion are as follows[2]:

- In humans, the major adverse health effects caused by *Ambrosia* plants are allergic symptoms – such as a runny nose, conjunctivitis and asthma – brought about by inhaling their pollen. Skin allergies and food allergies are of relatively minor concern. *Ambrosia* plants may also make people sensitive to other allergens.
- There is some evidence that animals, particularly horses, can be allergic to *Ambrosia* pollen.
- There is no direct evidence that *Ambrosia* can lead to the extinction of other plant species. However, there are some indications that *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* could become highly invasive in certain habitats, therefore further ecological studies are needed in this area.

See Also

- Topic: Plant health
- CONTAM homepage
- NDA homepage
- PLH homepage

Improved navigation

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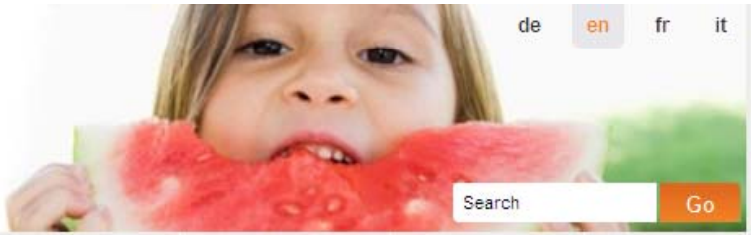

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Communications strategy



EFSA's draft Communications Strategy 2010 – 2013

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ONLINE

All interested parties are invited to submit comments by **5 July 2010**.

