

SIGMA Country Cards – An interactive tool for Animal Health data ownership in Europe

Main author: Cristina Rapagnà (Other)

Co-authors: Sotiria-Eleni Antoniou, Claire Donohue, Julia Finger, Nicoletta Manghi, Drago Marojevic, Gianluca Rossi, Gabriele Zancanaro

INTRODUCTION

The SIGMA project was envisaged to (i) face the new challenges originating from the increasingly demanding scientific questions in the EC mandates on infectious/transmissible animal diseases (e.g. African Swine Fever, Avian Influenza); (ii) facilitate data submission and reduce the workload of data providers, (iii) shorten the response time of EFSA. To achieve these goals, EFSA identified, as a primary need, the improvement of the data submission process, including data harmonisation and standardisation. Once the data needs were clearly identified and formalised in two data model components (i.e. the Livestock Population data model and the Animal Testing data model) EFSA identified, in each European country, the owners of the relevant data. The result was the SIGMA Country Cards: the first European comprehensive, public, and interactive compendium on livestock population and animal testing data ownership.

METHODOLOGY

EFSA selected the EU Survey tool to reach all Member States and EU candidate and potential candidate countries to gather information on data ownership. The SIGMA data model was transposed into conceptual data needs, clear questions were formulated and included in the online questionnaire. Each country was requested to provide information on (i) the strategy and hierarchical structure to collect the national data (central level or other solutions); (ii) all relevant information on the authority or institution appointed for the collection and the management of the national data on livestock and laboratory data. The countries were requested to provide their national data model if present. EFSA also requested that they indicate a contact person for each relevant public body and for this reason the results of the questionnaires are not public. The relevant information on national livestock and laboratory data management were collated and published in Technical Reports and presented in an interactive, public infographic developed in ArcGIS.

RESULTS

With the support of the EFSA Focal Points, the rate of response has been high since the beginning and after two years the SIGMA Country Cards cover 21 out of 27 Member States (78 %) and all (7 out of 7) pre-accession countries. Any user can consult any of the Country Cards and retrieve information on the relevant national bodies involved in the collection and management of data on livestock population and animal testing. The text includes links to the relevant websites. This is the first comprehensive European Compendium on livestock and animal testing data ownership and management and represents one of the milestones of the SIGMA project.

DISCUSSION

The German Federal Institute for risk assessment (BfR) periodically publishes a Food Safety Almanac reporting information on the national authorities or institutions involved in food and feed safety. The SIGMA project took inspiration from this initiative and, building on it, offers an insight on the specific role of each institution in the collection and management of the data related to livestock and animal testing. It is important to highlight that in many European countries the responsibilities of the involved national bodies may vary considerably based on the animal species and animal diseases. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture may directly collect all data on all livestock species or distribute the task to different agencies across the national territory, playing only a coordination role. In the context of a data collection process, the SIGMA Country Cards represent a corner stone, giving an answer to a basic question: who should EFSA ask for data? Asking for the right data from the right body is the first step for an automated data submission process, bringing higher quality data and reducing the workload for data providers.