Risk perception and communication: The EFSA experience

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Parma Summer School 2018
15 May 2018
Intro to EFSA
HEADQUARTERS in the heart of Parma
WHAT EFSA DOES

- Provides independent scientific advice and support for EU risk managers and policy makers on food and feed safety
- Provides independent, timely risk communication
- Promotes scientific cooperation
KEEPING FOOD SAFE IN THE EU
WHAT EFSA DOES NOT DO

- Develop food safety policies and legislation
- Adopt regulations, authorise marketing of new products
- Enforce food safety legislation
EFSA AT A GLANCE

ESTABLISHED
2002

> 450 staff

> 1,500 experts

1,000 meetings/year

20% tele-meetings

5,000 outputs / 500 a year
FUNDING

€75-80m
THE CONTEXT OF EFSA’S WORK IS CHANGING...

- Public expectations and benefits/opportunities of greater transparency and engagement
- Emergence of new risks and hazards
- Evolving scientific knowledge, creating a need for innovative and collaborative approaches
- The impact of globalisation
- Availability of expertise for EFSA’s multidisciplinary needs
How EFSA works
FROM A MANDATE TO AN OPINION

EFSA’s scientists evaluate, assess, advise

Adoption and communication
SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE

Scientific Committee
- Ensures consistency
- Issues guidance
- Assesses emerging risks

Scientific Panels
- Draft and adopt scientific outputs on general health issues and regulated products

Staff
- Support panel work e.g. data collection
- Produce scientific and technical advice
- Communication
THE SCIENTIFIC PANELS

- Plant health
- Nutrition
- Food Packaging
- Food additives
- Plant protection
- GMO
- Animal feed
- Animal health & welfare
- Biological hazards
- Chemical contaminants
URGENT REQUESTS FOR SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

- Melamine in infant milk
- Dioxins in pork meat
- Chlormequat in table grapes
- Volcanic ash
- "Schmallenberg" virus
- Swine fever
- Avian influenza

2007
- Melamine in food and feed

2008
- Nicotine in wild mushrooms
- 4-methly-benzophenone in breakfast cereals

2009
- STEC in vegetables

2010
- Hepatitis A
- Salmonella Mikawasima
- Phenylbutazone in horsemeat
- Xylella fastidiosa

2011
- Lumpy skin disease

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016
Who we work with
OUR PARTNERS

Individual experts
National food safety organisations
International organisations
Research institutes & academia
WITHIN EUROPE...

- National food safety agencies from 28 EU Member States
- 400 research institutes
- EU Agencies
OUTSIDE EUROPE...

- Partners
- Established cooperation
- IPA/ENP countries
OUR STAKEHOLDERS

- Consumer organisations
- Distributors & HORECA
- Practitioners’ associations
- Farmers & primary producers
- NGOs & advocacy groups
- Business & Food Industry
- Academia
Risk communication
EFSA’S MANDATE IS TO ...

Reg (EC) No 178/2002

Art. 3 Other definitions
Risk communication means the interactive exchange of information...throughout the risk analysis process...including the explanation of risk assessment findings and the basis of risk management decisions;

Art. 23 Tasks of the Authority
To ensure that the public and interested parties receive rapid, reliable, objective and comprehensible information in the fields within its mission;

Art. 40 Communications from the Authority
- Communicate on its own initiative
- Disseminate information material for the general public
- Promote coherence in the risk communication process
- Ensure appropriate cooperation with regard to public information campaigns
RISK COMMUNICATION IS

- Bridging the gap between science and the consumer
- Promoting and disseminating consistent messages
- Understanding consumer perception of food and food safety risks
Provide consistent, accurate and timely communication

Facilitate dialogue and exchange of knowledge

Strengthen EFSA’s reputation
Building trust in the EU food safety system

Enhancing reputation & credibility of EFSA and our experts

Bringing science closer to stakeholders and citizens
WHO DOES EFSA COMMUNICATE WITH?

- Policy Makers
- Stakeholders
- Risk Managers
- Risk Assessors
- Scientific Community
- Concerned Individuals
- Media
- Partners
A toolbox approach
HOW?

MULTIMEDIA
- Videos
- Interactive tools
- Infographics
- Data visualisation

EFSA JOURNAL
- All EFSA scientific outputs

SOCIAL MEDIA
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- YouTube

EFSA WEBSITE
- News, Topics, Alerts, Newsletter
- Lay Summaries, Factsheets, Events

SCIENTIFIC OUTREACH
- Science networks
- Infosessions
- Scientific Conferences
- Webinars
Social Media

Main account launched in 2012
- Followers: +18k

Thematic accounts launched 2016
- @Plants_EFSA
- @Methods_EFSA

Channel opened in 2012
- +300 videos
- +630k views

LinkedIn account launched in 2012
- +23k followers
Malachite green in food

Scientific Summary

Malachite green (MG) has been used globally in aquaculture but is not registered for use in food-producing animals in the European Union. The European Commission requested EFSA to evaluate whether a reference point for action (RPA) of 2 µg/kg for the size of MG and its major metabolite (Malachite Green Acetyl Ester or MGAE) is adequate to protect public health. Available occurrence data were not suitable for a reliable exposure assessment. The hypothetical intake exposure was calculated assuming the RPA as occurrence value for all type of fish. The products and EU member states where the exposure assessment was performed have affected exposure values that would range from 0.1 to 19 µg/kg body weight per day. For high-end exposure fish, the exceedance rate was 66%.
When food is cooking up a storm - Proven recipes for risk communication

- Introduction and objectives
- Principles guiding good risk communication
- Openness; Transparency; Independence; Responsiveness/Timeliness
- Factors impacting on level and type of communications
- Tools and channels
- Learning from experience
PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATING DURING AN INCIDENT

Recent examples
COMMUNICATION HIGHLIGHTS

April
- Data collection on Fipronil
- Start of BPA hazard assessment

May
- Guidance on RA of nanosubstances
- New MRLs for glyphosate/opinion on animal health and glyphosate feed

June
- Human and animal health risks from dioxins in food and feed
- Guidance on endocrine disruptors

July
- Annual report on veterinary drug residues

Oct
- Hazard analysis approaches for small retail establishments and food donations

Nov
- Guidance on risk assessment of chemical mixtures

June
- Annual report on veterinary drug residues
MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS (Q1 2018)

**Bruxelles veut tirer les leçons de l'affaire du glyphosate**

**Resistenza antibiotici 'minaccia salute pubblica' Ue**

**EU expected to vote on pesticide ban after major scientific review**

**Il est temps d’arrêter le grand manège des pesticides !**

**EU Commission wants new Powers to vet product safety**

**Pesticides Give Bees a Hard Time**

**Dans les Balkans, le vaccin salvateur**

**Patatine, biscotti & Co: nuovi obblighi per chi li produce, cibi meno a rischio**

**Microplastics are found in more than 90 PERCENT of popular brands of bottled water**

**Neue Acrylamid-Richtlinien EU verbietet starkes Frittieren von Pommes**

**Los insecticidas neonicotinoides son un riesgo para las abejas, según la EFSA**
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