



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

## AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES



**03.04.09**

### [EFSA evaluates risk of MRSA in food and animals – 27/03/2009](#)

EFSA has published an opinion on the public health significance of MRSA in animals and foods. EFSA's Panel on Biological Hazards (BIOHAZ) found that while food may be contaminated by MRSA, there is currently no evidence that eating or handling contaminated food may lead to an increased risk of humans becoming healthy carriers or infected with this bacterium. The Panel also concluded that where MRSA prevalence in food-producing animals is high, people in contact with live animals, especially farmers, veterinarians and their families, are at greater risk than the general population.

According to the Panel, a specific type of MRSA, called CC398 which can be found in slaughterhouses and on raw meat has a low risk of infection for slaughterhouse workers and persons handling meat. Add to this, according to Professor Dan Collins (Chair of the BIOHAZ Panel) said that to date there is no such evidence that humans can get infected with CC398 when eating contaminated food. CC398 is mostly detected in pigs, veal calves and broiler chickens.

Regarding control options, the Panel said that animal movement and contact between animals are each likely to be an important factor for the transmission of CC398. The Panel said that the most effective control measures are likely to be at farm level.

The Panel also said that systematic monitoring of MRSA should be carried out to evaluate trends in the development of MRSA in food-producing animals in all Member States. Further work should be performed on harmonising methods for sampling, detecting and quantifying MRSA in humans and animals, and for detecting MRSA as a contaminant in food, and in the environment. The Panel also recommended that guidelines for screening of patients admitted to hospitals should be expanded to include professional categories exposed to intensively reared livestock.

### [Fisheries control: committee rewrites rules on recreational fishing – 31/03/2009](#)



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The EP Fisheries Committee rewrote the rules on recreational fishing in its consultative report. Usually, EP Committees consultative reports enable the European Commission to propose or amend legislation. Hereunder, the report is enabling the Commission to close fisheries or reduce quotas and to ensure compliance with CFP before a co-decision procedure is taken.

In some cases, recreational fishing may have a significant impact on fish stocks. MEPs adopted amendments rewriting the recreational fishing article to say that such fishing from a vessel in Community marine waters on a stock subject to a multiannual recovery plan "may be evaluated" by Member States. But fishing with rod and reel from shore shall not be included. The Committee added that within 2 years of the date of entry into force of the regulation, the member states may estimate the impact of recreational fishing and which stocks have a significant impact. Then, for those with a significant impact a monitoring system will be developed to accurately estimate the total recreational catches from each stock.

MEPs added that the marketing of catches from recreational fishing shall be prohibited except for philanthropic purposes. Furthermore, fish released in recreational fisheries shall not be considered as discards for the purpose of this regulation. According to the proposal, a number of powers should be conferred to the Commission. In addition, the committee deleted articles referring to the closure of fisheries by the Commission, the possibility of reducing a Member State's quotas on the Commission's initiative and to the refusal of quota exchanges. Instead, the committee added rules on the transfer of unused quotas.

In relation to sanctions, the Commission proposes a range of sanctions when there is an infringement of the CFP. MEPs add that vessels committing serious infringements should not be eligible for public aid and penalty points should be assigned to vessels and captains. Once again these penalty points could lead to exclusion from receiving EU subsidies or national public aid. Where there are no further offences, points would expire after 3 years. The committee adds that infringing seriously CFP rules leads to exclusion from benefitting from the EFF, Fisheries Partnership Agreements or other public aid. These sanctions will be accompanied by other sanctions or measures.

Furthermore, MEPs want data or records to be kept for a minimum of ten years in an electronic format.

### **Laboratory research: limiting animal testing without hampering scientific progress – 31/03/2009**

The EP Agriculture Committee commented that the use of animals in scientific experiments needs to be limited for ethical reasons. It is known that around 12 million animals are used for scientific research in the EU every year. Thus, this number should be reduced to a minimum and any planned tests subjected to compulsory ethical assessment to take account of the public's concerns are the goals being backed by the Agriculture Committee.



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MEPs suggested measures to promote alternatives to animal testing such as using fewer primates without compromising the fight against serious diseases, feasibility studies before animal captures are halted, the classification of the severity of tests, more effort to devise alternative methods and finally more transparency without increasing red tape.

### **Antitrust: Commission confirms unannounced inspections in the North Sea shrimps sector – 31/03/2009**

The European Commission confirmed that it carried out surprise inspections on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March at the premises of companies active in the North Sea shrimps and related products industry in several Member States. The Commission has suspected that the companies concerned may have violated EC Treaty antitrust rules that prohibit cartels (Article 81). It does not mean that the companies are guilty of anti-competitive behaviour nor does it prejudge the outcome of the investigation itself. However, the Commission respects the rights of defence, in particular the right of companies to be heard in the Commission's proceedings against them.

### **Challenges on European Agriculture and Rural areas resulting from Climate Pressures**

#### **Commission publishes paper on the challenges for European agriculture and rural areas that result from climate pressures – 01/04/2009**

The European Commission presented today a White Paper laying out a European framework for action to improve Europe's resilience to climate change, emphasising the need to integrate adaptation into all key European policies and enhance co-operation at all levels of governance.

Farming in the EU will be affected by climate change as decreasing average annual and seasonal rainfall will be a serious problem in several regions and as there will be more sudden heatwaves, droughts, storms and floods across the EU. Even if some climate changes may be positive for some northern European regions, most will be negative, affecting regions already suffering from environmental or other changes. Farming will be most affected in the southern and south-eastern regions.

For more info [click here](#)

### **European Commission's report on the coexistence of genetically modified crops with conventional and organic farming – 02/04/2009**



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Coexistence refers to the choice of consumers and farmers between conventional, organic and GM crop production, in compliance with the legal obligations for labelling defined in Community legislation. The possibility of adventitious presence of GM crops in non-GM crops cannot be excluded. Therefore, suitable measures are needed during cultivation, harvest, transport, and storage and processing to ensure coexistence.

The Commission issued a second report on coexistence. Member States have made significant progress in developing coexistence legislation during the last years. 15 Member States have adopted legislation on coexistence, 11 more than in 2006 when the first coexistence report was published. Another 3 Member States have notified draft legislation to the Commission. This development of the legislative framework has gone hand in hand with a moderate expansion of the cultivation of GM crops. At the present time there is no indication of the need to deviate from the subsidiarity-based approach on coexistence. The Commission will continue to develop recommendations for crop-specific technical segregation measures together with Member States and stakeholders. In 2011, the Commission will report on the progress made, including an update on the development and implementation of national coexistence measures. For more info [click here](#)