



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

## AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES



17.04.09

### EU chief veterinary officers negotiate in Prague – 15/04/2009

An informal meeting of the heads of the veterinary administrations of the EU Member States has taken place in Prague on 14 – 16 April.

They have addressed issues such as the conditions for export of milk, dairy products and red meat from EU to the Russian Federation and a proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the health rules concerning animal by-products not intended for human consumption. The debate in the European Parliament is expected to take place in the second half of April. Veterinary control is of extreme importance for ensuring safe food of animal origin and for enabling trade, both on the EU market and with third countries.

The aim of animal welfare is to provide natural and, under the circumstances, optimum living conditions for animals in given settings. At the same time and in particular during the current economic crisis, animal welfare must be in keeping with the economic perspective which tries to reconcile acceptable criteria and rules of the market. The level of legislation must be also taken into account and it is important to set out, if possible, objective rules and provide for sanctions to ensure their enforceability.

The Czech Presidency has also opened up the issue of animals used for scientific purposes. This dossier will be handed over to the next Presidency. Nevertheless the Czech Presidency has negotiated a number of articles and the proposal drafted by Czech experts was well received by the Member States and the European Parliament alike. A more detailed press release is available: [click here](#)



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## European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

Quantitative estimation of the impact of setting a new target for the reduction of *Salmonella* in breeding hens of *Gallus gallus* - 14/04/2009

Following a request from the European Commission, the Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards was asked to deliver a scientific opinion on a quantitative estimation of the impact of setting a new target for the reduction of *Salmonella* in breeding hens of *Gallus gallus*. The Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards concluded that *Salmonella* Enteritidis and *Salmonella* Typhimurium have the greatest potential for vertical and pseudo-vertical transmission, from breeding hens to their progeny in the broiler meat and egg layer chains. EU control measures for these two serovars in breeding hens are expected to contribute to the control of *Salmonella* infections in production stock, and to reduce human health risks from poultry.

Harmonised monitoring and reporting of *Salmonella* occurrence in different poultry populations is still largely incomplete in the EU. Consequently, there is currently insufficient data to quantify the impact of controlling *Salmonella* prevalence in breeders on the prevalence in production stock. Available risk assessment models are restricted to two EU Member States, and refer to earlier situations, in which different control measures were implemented. There are indications that for those serovars, for which vertical transmission is possible, controlling *Salmonella* prevalence to very low levels is necessary to achieve a low prevalence in production stock.

The Scientific Panel on Biological Hazards recommends that EU-wide targets for serovars other than *Salmonella* Enteritidis and *Salmonella* Typhimurium in flocks of breeding hens should be tailored to the particular situation in each Member State. At the same time, it is recommended that a further evaluation and quantification of the relationship between breeding and production flocks be carried out when more harmonized data from control programmes in each sector are available. Such considerations should include the further development of quantitative risk assessment models, taking data for specific serovars into account. For more info [click here](#)



## Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

### EFSA completes 30 risk assessments on undesirable substances in animal feed – 15/04/2009

EFSA's Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain (CONTAM) has just completed the final opinion in a series of 30 risks assessments undertaken over the last 5 years looking at undesirable substances in animal feed. For instance natural plant products, persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals were amongst those covered over the last 5 years. These opinions were delivered following requests of the European Commission to review the possible risks for animal and human health due to the presence of these substances in animal feed.

The elimination of undesirable substances in feed is not always possible, but it is important to reduce their presence in order to avoid endangering animal health, human health or the environment. The maximum levels of undesirable substances in animal feed are listed in Annex I of the EU Directive 2002/32/EC and are being updated based on EFSA's individual assessments. Feed containing amounts of undesirable substances above the maximum levels may be unsafe and must be withdrawn from the food chain.

Although the CONTAM Panel identified no risks to animal health resulting from food intakes at the maximum authorized levels providing good animal feeding practices, adverse effects on animal health could not be excluded for some substances, such as deoxynivalenol in pigs, mercury in cats, gossypol in sheep and theobromine in dogs and horses. The risks of adverse human health effects due to the presence of undesirable substances in products of animal origin such as fresh meat, eggs and milk were generally found to be low. However, in some cases EFSA recommended reducing their presence, in particular for persistent organic pollutants such as camphechlor.

The need for further research was identified for several substances, and in particular regarding the extent to which the presence of these substances in feed may lead to the contamination of foods of animal origin. EFSA's work on undesirable substances has supported the European Commission in several ways. For more info [click here](#)

### GMOs



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### Germany joins ranks of anti-GMO countries – 15/04/2009

Germany joined France, Austria, Greece, Hungary and Luxembourg opposing to GM crop cultivation by ordering a ban on Monsanto's MON 810 maize, despite European rulings that the biotech grain is safe following a press conference by German Agriculture and Consumer Protection Minister Aigner. The Minister said that the decision to ban was based on scientific factors and was not a political one. In fact, it was an individual case and not a fundamental decision against GMO crops. The Minister also revealed that her ministry would prepare a report into Germany's strategy on GMO crops.

Furthermore, the European Commission has tried without success to get the bans in other countries lifted and the Commission said that it would examine the German decision.

[Source: EurActiv.com](http://EurActiv.com)

### **Research**

### Soil contamination test improved with worms – 14/04/2009

A Dutch researcher has discovered that exposing soil and sediment invertebrates like worms and springtails to toxic chemicals can give a more accurate test of soil contamination. Dr Miriam Leon Paumen also found that prolonged exposure can have a significant impact on the lifecycle of these invertebrates. The findings of this research give weight to the theory that gradual effects cannot be assumed in risk assessments for soil and sediment contamination. For more info [click here](#)

### **Upcoming Events:**

The Agriculture and Fisheries Council will be held in Luxembourg from 23 April to 24 April.