

Parma, 25 November 2016

Management Board Weekly Media Round-Up

21-25 November 2016

Pesticides

- Brussels based Politico and a number of other media across the EU reported on a vote by the Plenary of the European Parliament on a resolution against the re-approval of the herbicide bentazone. The pesticide is commonly used in agriculture. Its renewal is supported by industry. Farmers lobby Copa Cogeca sent a letter to MEPs urging them to support the re-approval. Pekka Pesonen, author of the letter, stated: 'We need to build trust in the high standards of EFSA's system and EFSA's role as a risk assessor'. Media reports however stressed that EFSA's statement on the herbicide highlighted critical concerns. EFSA's opinion on bentazone was factually mentioned also in a European Parliament's press release and in various articles in Spanish media. Notably, Green MEP Michèle Rivasi in a press release endorsed EFSA's findings on bentazone.
- On a separate issue, several media reported that, on Wednesday 23rd Nov, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled in favour of disclosing confidential safety studies of pesticides. The ECJ stated that herbicides could be viewed as 'emissions', and that therefore safety studies could be released as long as there is empirical evidence on their exposure to humans. The judged cases regarded access to documents on glyphosate and imidacloprid and were put forward by different NGOS (Greenpeace, PAN Europe and Stichting de Bijenstichting). German newspaper Die Zeit quoted Franziska Achterberg at Greenpeace's EU Unit as saying 'on the basis of the verdict, national and EU authorities should automatically publish such studies'.

Corporate

- Chinese leading outlet Southern Weekly published an interview with EFSA's Executive Director conducted in Beijing, at the margins of EFSA's official visit to China. The interview touched upon the relationship between China and the EU in the field of food safety and the signature of the memorandum of cooperation between EFSA and the Chinese

Contaminants

- Palm oil was the object of two interviews held by EFSA's scientist with Swiss broadcaster RSI Rete Due and Italian television RAI3. In both cases EFSA's scientist spoke about EFSA's opinion on processed contaminants, focusing the discussion on nutritional aspects.

Avian flu

- Newswire Reuters reported on the first case of H5N8 bird flu detected in a poultry farm north of Copenhagen, Denmark. The information was circulated by the country's Environment and Food Ministry. As a consequence, media also reported that neighbouring Sweden had decided to raise the alert level to two on a scale of three, which meant poultry must be kept indoors. Updates on the status of the outbreak within the European territory were published on a daily basis.
- German daily Der Tagesspiegel in an interesting article explained the complications of detecting the virus spreading through the migratory routes. The article also quoted the WHO as saying that, while it was expected that a further spread of the outbreak is probable, 'it is not known at present which species of birds carry the virus within them'. EFSA was not mentioned in the articles.

AMR

- Pan European outlet Euractiv carried an interview on AMR with EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis Andriukaitis. In the interview the 'EU health chief' addressed some criticism concerning NGOs for not properly raising awareness among citizens on the abuse of antibiotics. Andriukaitis also mentioned some of the key pillars of the EU post-2016 Action Plan on AMR.

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