

Parma, 4 November 2016

## Management Board Weekly Media Round-Up

**26 October -4 November 2016**

### **Titanium Dioxide**

- Right ahead of Halloween celebrations, French media warned about the presence of nanoparticles in popular sweets due to the use of food colours, in particular titanium dioxide (E-171). The news was triggered by a study released by NGO Agir pur l'environnement that claimed that children, due to their high consumption of sweets, are more exposed than adults and are therefore more likely to develop chronic diseases. The NGO also called for a moratorium on nanoparticles to prevent possible risks. EFSA was mentioned in relation to its recent opinion on titanium dioxide, which confirmed its safety, but also identified data gaps to be filled in.

### **Processed Contaminants**

- The on-going debate in Italy over the safety of palm oil continues to trigger media attention. Consumers association Codacons issued a press release calling on EFSA, the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS) and the Ministry of Health to intervene to stop the advertising campaign pro-palm oil in Italian media. The association also announced to consider to take legal action against the vice Minister for Agriculture, Andrea Olivero, who had openly sided in favour of palm oil.

### **GMOs**

- The New York Times carried a long piece analysing the effect of genetic modification on crop yields. While the fears about GMOs have not materialized, the newspaper argued, neither have the hopes. The daily claimed that, over the past 30 years, pro-GMO countries have gained 'no discernible advantage in yields [...] when measured against Western Europe, a region with comparably modernized agricultural producers like France and Germany'.

### **Animal Welfare**

- French leading newspaper Le Monde carried another piece on animal welfare, after an NGO filmed the slaughtering practices of pregnant cows in a slaughter house in Limoges, France. The shocking images showed fetuses in advanced status being extracted from the uterus of their mothers during slaughtering. The article argued that while the practice is currently legal, it remains highly controversial.

There are no figures on how many pregnant animals are slaughtered every year within the EU. However the article said that according to EFSA 'studies in Germany, Italy, Belgium and Luxembourg have shown that 10% to 15% of cows are slaughtered when

they are full often during the last period of gestation'. The article added that EFSA is due to deliver soon an opinion on slaughtering of pregnant animals where questions like 'does the fetus suffers when her mother shot?' will be addressed for the first time.

### **Pesticides**

- Spanish Radio Onda Cero aired a short interview on with José Tarazona on pesticides residues in food. The presenter provided a thorough introduction on the topic, following the news angle chosen last week by Spanish newswire EFE, which focused on third countries imports.

- In an article by Le Monde on the on-going EU reform of organic farming EFSA's latest residues report was factually mentioned in relation to the data on organic food.

- US weekly Newsweek carried an article on unexpected consequences that come with spraying neonicotinoid insecticides. According to a new study, the use of neonics can cause 'huge outbreaks' of plant pests such as spider mites or slugs. That is because applying neonics can reduce the activity of genes that strengthen cell walls in plants and defend against pests — which might explain why mite populations explode in areas of pesticide application.

### **AMR**

- An article by specialised outlet Global Meat News showed that, according to Eurostat's latest figures, Italy and Spain have increased the use of antibiotics in farming since 2013. This data came at odds with the current push by the European Commission and globally to tackle AMR. The article reported a comment by Erik Larsen, chairman of the Danish Pig Research Centre, saying that these new figures coming out of southern European countries are 'ridiculous', especially if they are compared to the ones referring to northern countries, such as Denmark. EFSA was not mentioned in the article.

#### **Document history**

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Prepared by	
Reviewed by	F. AVANZINI
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