



## Highlights

### Advisory Forum voices continuing support for EFSA

The competent national food safety bodies in Europe that make up EFSA's Advisory Forum have united to reaffirm their ongoing endorsement of the valuable work EFSA has carried out in close cooperation with the 27 EU Member States, Iceland and Norway to improve consumer safety since 2002. The Declaration of Support, agreed on 27 September 2012 at the 45<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EFSA Advisory Forum held in Parma, celebrates the progress of EU food safety, acknowledges the crucial role EFSA has played and looks forward to meeting the challenges that lie ahead.



Advisory Forum (27 September 2012, Parma)

### Declaration by the Members of EFSA's Advisory Forum

"In the space of a decade European food safety has made resounding progress and to mark this milestone we hereby recognise the crucial contribution EFSA has made. EFSA has enhanced consumer protection, provided vital support to Member States and proved to be a crucial resource in times of food crises.

The Advisory Forum has confidence in the independence and scientific decision-making process of EFSA and has worked in cooperation with the Authority over the past ten years to strengthen EU risk assessment and all measures to ensure the objectivity of scientific advice.

Our members reaffirm their endorsement of the independent experts who contribute to EFSA's scientific work and the vital role they play in the risk assessment process.

The competent national food safety bodies in Europe that make up the Advisory Forum declare their continued commitment to the strengthening of science-based policy-making. Looking forward, we will strive to ensure that scientific risk assessment evolves and develops to meet the critical challenges that lie ahead in an ever-changing environment.

We will build upon the progress made since 2002 and continue to champion this partnership of trust to secure the safety of food and feed in Europe."

Made at the 45<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EFSA Advisory Forum, Parma, 27 September 2012

## Contents

- 1 Advisory Forum voices continuing support for EFSA
- 1 Declaration by the Members of EFSA's Advisory Forum
- 2 **Feature story:** Ten years of partnership and cooperation
- 2 Stay up to date with our Highlights newsletter and EFSA email alerts. Subscribe now
- 3 **Feature story:** How EU measures have cut *Salmonella* cases
- 4 EFSA Journal marks 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with special issue
- 4 Watch EFSA's videos: Don't miss our Understanding Science series in which EFSA staff explain the science behind our work



## Ten years of partnership and cooperation

Scientific cooperation between EFSA and EU Member States is a central pillar of EFSA's Founding Regulation and has therefore been a cornerstone of the Authority's activities since it was set up in 2002. EFSA's relationship with the Member States is critical both from a data collection and information exchange perspective – ensuring that a high calibre of evidence can be applied to risk assessment.

Partners include institutions with whom the Authority has a legal obligation to work, specifically risk managers working within the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Member States, risk assessors, stakeholder groups and individuals or groups who feel they can contribute to the Authority's work. This integrated system, with EFSA at its core, has produced high-profile work such as the EU reports on zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance and, further afield, a harmonised approach to Total Diet Studies, developed with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The Strategy for Cooperation and Networking, adopted in 2006, identified four priority areas:

- exchanging and collecting scientific data and information;
- sharing risk assessment practices;
- contributing to the harmonisation of methodologies for risk assessment;
- promoting coherence in risk communications.

The strategy was reviewed in 2008 and a further “taking stock” exercise was completed in 2010. This process has produced a sophisticated and increasingly valuable system of cooperative endeavour between EFSA and the Member States, including medium-term planning of scientific cooperation activities.

The Advisory Forum, Focal Points, and dedicated science networks are key vehicles for data and information exchange, consultation, and work-sharing between EFSA and Member States. The Advisory Forum connects EFSA with the national food safety authorities of all 27 EU Member States, Iceland and Norway, with observers from Switzerland and the Candidate countries. The Advisory Forum advises EFSA on scientific matters, its work programme and priorities, and helps the Authority to address emerging risk issues as early as possible. With EFSA in the role of “enabler”, the Forum provides

a valuable risk assessment “umbrella” for Member States, allowing them to concentrate their energies on national priorities and reducing duplication of effort.

Focal Points act as outreach bodies in the Member States, linking EFSA and the national food safety authorities, research institutes, consumers and other stakeholders, supporting national Advisory Forum members.

EFSA's science networks consist of nationally appointed EU Member State organisations with expertise in the fields covered by the network. They play an invaluable role in assisting the coordination of activities, the exchange of information (e.g. on recent risk assessment activities or on data collection), the development and implementation of joint projects (e.g. scientific events and workshops), and the exchange of expertise and best practice in the fields within EFSA's mission.

In addition to these formal ties, the Authority awards grants and issues procurement orders to organisations that have been officially nominated by Member States to help EFSA with tasks such as data collection, preparatory work for scientific outputs, and other forms of technical assistance. EFSA has consistently increased its support to data collection and other scientific cooperation with Member States, allocating in 2012 over €9 million to these activities (an increase of almost €1 million compared to the previous year). Effective pooling of excellence is also supported through EFSA's steadily growing Expert Database, which gives EFSA and Member States access to the best experts available.

EFSA has also developed close links with consumer groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and bodies representing groups such as farmers, food producers and distributors and science professionals. It has built on the requirement in its founding statute to establish “effective contacts with consumer representatives, producer representatives, processors and any other interested parties”, most notably with the establishment of its Stakeholder Consultative Platform. Since its foundation EFSA has placed great emphasis on public consultation and dialogue with stakeholders and other interested parties in order to ensure that EFSA has access to all available information, to add clarity and context to its scientific work as well as to promote transparency. ■

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## How EU measures have cut *Salmonella* cases

*Salmonella* – a bacterium causing salmonellosis in humans – was until 2005 the most common food-borne disease in European Union (EU) with almost 200,000 reported human cases that year. It is estimated that the overall economic burden of human salmonellosis for the EU could be as high as €3 billion a year.

Salmonellosis is a zoonosis – disease or infection that can be transmitted directly or indirectly between animals and humans. The bacterium is commonly found in the intestines of healthy birds and mammals. It can spread to humans through contaminated eggs and meat, most often poultry and pig meat. Usual symptoms include fever, diarrhoea and abdominal cramps.



To combat human salmonellosis it is important to reduce *Salmonella* in animals and derived products so that food is safer for consumers. In 2003, the EU set up comprehensive control measures for zoonoses, considering *Salmonella* as a priority. Enhanced *Salmonella* programmes in poultry were implemented in all EU Member States and targets were set for reducing the

bacteria in poultry flocks (laying hens, broilers and turkeys).

To support the reduction of *Salmonella* in the food chain, EFSA has advised on the risks for public health from infected animals and provided recommendations and advice on control and reduction measures, such as reduction targets in poultry and poultry meat and the use of vaccines and antimicrobials for the control of *Salmonella*. EFSA has also evaluated the impact of different control measures for *Salmonella* in pigs.

EFSA has assisted decision-makers by analysing the results of EU-wide baseline surveys on the prevalence of *Salmonella* in food and food-producing animals, including evaluating the risk factors that contribute to its prevalence in animal populations and food. In addition, the occurrence of *Salmonella* in humans, animals and food is monitored and analysed in EU Summary Reports prepared by EFSA and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control each year to provide up-to-date information on the current situation in Europe.

A concrete example of EFSA's work is the Authority's contribution to the setting of EU reduction targets for *Salmonella* in laying hens. To determine the original situation, the European Commission and EU Member States carried out an EU-wide survey on the prevalence of the bacteria in poultry flocks and EFSA analysed the results of the survey. Based on the findings EU and national decision-makers set targets to significantly reduce the prevalence of *Salmonella* in flocks of laying hens to 2% or less over time in all EU Member States (from an original situation of around 20% in some Member States).

The impact of the reduction and control programme on the actual prevalence of *Salmonella* in animals and its impact on human salmonellosis cases is analysed annually in EU Summary Reports. In light of possible revisions of the current targets, EFSA also estimated the public health benefits that could be achieved from the setting of new targets.



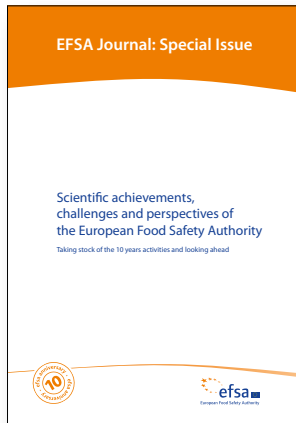
The coordinated approach by all EU actors has had significant results: human *Salmonella* cases have been reduced by almost 50% in the EU over five years (2004-2009). At the same time, the prevalence of *Salmonella* in poultry decreased significantly, especially in laying hen flocks. The reduction of the bacteria in laying hen flocks is likely to be the main reason for the decline of *Salmonella* cases in humans, since eggs are considered the most important source of human infections in EU.

EFSA and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control continue to analyse the data collected from the Member States on a yearly basis to further monitor the situation and the progress made in meeting reduction targets set for *Salmonella* in various animal populations. EFSA's continued scientific work, including assessments of new mitigation options and reduction targets where necessary, helps the European Commission and the Member States to consider possible reviews of existing targets and other control options to further combat this public health threat. ■



# EFSA Journal marks 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with special issue

The *EFSA Journal*, the European Food Safety Authority's open-access online scientific journal, is the dedicated home for all EFSA's scientific outputs. The Journal is now widely referenced in leading bibliographic databases relevant to EFSA's work, such as CAB Abstracts, Food Science and Technology Abstracts (FSTA) or SciFinder, and is by far the most visited page of EFSA's website.



To mark EFSA's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a special issue of the *EFSA Journal* has been published giving an overview of EFSA's work and summarising the main achievements of the Authority's first decade.

Between 2002 and 2012, more than 3,000 scientific outputs were published in the *EFSA Journal*, the majority of them scientific opinions adopted by EFSA's Scientific Committee or one of its Scientific Panels. The published outputs reflect the breadth of EFSA's remit, which covers the entire food chain from farm to fork with topics related to: animal health and welfare, biological hazards, pesticides and contaminants, genetically modified organisms, nutrition, plant health, and food and feed additives.

Hubert Deluyker, EFSA's Director of Science Strategy and Coordination, said: "The *EFSA Journal* has played a key role in increasing the visibility and awareness of EFSA's scientific outputs and gaining recognition for the work of our scientific experts. EFSA is proud to have a journal that provides its panel and working group experts with a showcase for their work that is visible in the scientific community and which is recognised and respected by other food safety and research institutions.

"As well as raising the profile of the work being carried out at EFSA, the *Journal* also plays a valuable role in helping us to attract scientists to sit on our panels and working groups. Without the experts from across Europe and the support of our dedicated staff EFSA would not be the organisation which it has gradually become. For this, I would like to thank the Editorial Board."

EFSA today plays a pivotal role assessing risks associated with the food chain. Ten years after the Authority's creation, its vision to be recognised as a responsive, authoritative and independent source of scientific advice and information in the area of food and feed safety has become reality. The *EFSA Journal* has played an important part in the realisation of that vision. [www.efsa.europa.eu/efsajournal](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/efsajournal)

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