

EMERGING RISKS EXCHANGE NETWORK (EREN)

Minutes of the 31st meeting



23-24 May 2024

09:00-18:00/ 08:30-15:00 (EEST)

Minutes agreed on 20 June 2024

Location: Larnaca, CY and Online (MS Teams platform)

Attendees:

- Network Members Participants:

Country	Name ¹
Austria	Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES)
Belgium	University of Liege
Belgium	Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain Control Policy
Bulgaria	Risk Assessment Center on Food Chain (RACFCH), Ministry of Agriculture
Croatia	Croatian Agency for Agriculture and Food (HAPIH)
Cyprus	State General Laboratory
Czech Republic	Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic
Denmark	National Food Institute
Estonia	Ministry of Rural Affairs
Estonia	National Centre for Laboratory Research and Risk Assessment (LABRIS)
Finland	Finnish Food Authority
France	French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES)
Germany	Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL)
Germany	Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR)
Greece	Hellenic Food Authority
Greece	Ministry of Rural Development and Food
Hungary	University of Veterinary Medicine
Ireland	Food Safety Authority of Ireland
Italy	Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Lombardia e dell'Emilia Romagna
Lithuania	National Food and Veterinary Risk Assessment Institute
Luxembourg	Luxembourg Veterinary and Food Administration (ALVA)
Netherlands	Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA)
Norway	Norwegian Food Safety Authority
Poland	National Veterinary Research Institute (NVRI)

¹ Indicate first full name and them surname (John Smith) throughout the document



Portugal	Autoridade de Segurança Alimentar e Económica (ASAE)
Romania	National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority (ANSVSA)
Slovak Republic	Food Safety Authority - Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Spain	Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition (AESAN)
Spain	Departamento de Patología Animal, Facultad de Veterinaria, Universidad de Zaragoza
Sweden	Swedish Food Agency

- Observers:
Thomas Luthi (FSVO, CH); Ryan Newkirk (WHO); Zana Dukadzinac (CFIA, CA); Heather Holland (CFIA, CA); Vittorio Fattori (FAO); Jeff Lejeune (FAO); Richard Norman (MPI, NZ).
- European Commission/Other EU Agencies representatives:
Sandrine Amsler (DG SANTE); Tamas Bakonyi (ECDC); Nadia Cerioli (EEA); Eleni Gkana (DG SANTE); Agnes Kovari (ECHA); Marian Scott (EU SCHEER).
- EFSA:
Bernard Bottex (Chair), Aurore Czerwiec, Milen Georgiev (Chair in the afternoon on 23 May), Angelo Maggiore, Raquel Garcia Mattas, Georgia Gkrintzali, Aikaterini Vlachou, Clémentine Eynard, Alexandros Georganas, Winy Messens, Jean-Lou Christian Michel Dorne, Hans Steinkellner, Marina Mukhamadieva
- Presenters:
 - EREN: Zsuzsa Farkas (HU); Madlen Vasileva (BG); Claudia Reckzeh (DE), Philipp Hebel (DE); Vittorio Fattori (FAO); Ryan Newkirk (WHO); Cormac Mcelhinney (IE); Claude Saegerman (BE); Jenny Aasa (SE); Danai Papanastasiou online (GR); Ákos Józwiak (HU), online (HU); Cormac Mcelhinney (IE); Colm Kirby-Ó Colmáin (IE), online ; Maria do Céu Gonçalves Da Costa (PT)
 - EFSA: Milen Georgiev (KNOW); Bernard Bottex (KNOW); Aurore Czerwiec (KNOW); Raquel Garcia Matas, online (KNOW); Clémentine Eynard (KNOW); Winy Messens, online (BIOHAW); Angelo Maggiore, online (KNOW) Marina Mukhamadieva (EFSA/D-fine); Jean-Lou Dorne online (EFSA/MESE)
 - Invited speakers: Zoi-Dorothea Pana (CY); Gérald Umhang, online (FR); Marco Lalle, online (IT); Viktoria Cabanova, online (SK); Gianluca Nurra, online (StaDG-ER).



1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed the participants. Bernard Bottex opened the 31st EREN meeting, welcoming participants to Cyprus and noting the attendance of both in-person and online colleagues. He acknowledged the importance of scientific cooperation and information exchange between EU Member States, EU agencies and international organizations like WHO and FAO but also with other countries. The Chair introduced the new members/observers to the network, including representatives from Poland, European Commission, ECHA, EEA, WHO, New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries, and new alternates from Bulgaria, Finland, Lithuania, Poland.

Apologies from Malta and Latvia.

The local host in Cyprus representatives of the State General Laboratory of Cyprus of the Ministry of Health has also welcomed the participants in 31 EREN, highlighting priority of food safety for consumer protection and maintenance of close cooperation with EFSA, hosting the event to support the promotion of scientific cooperation.

The Chair referred to wider food safety issues and mention was made of a new EFSA campaign about plant health and the risks of bringing plants into the EU that could introduce pests.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted agreeing for possible dynamic change in the order of presentations during the day. At the end of day 1 point 4.10 was transferred and presented on day 2 involving earlier start at 8.30h on 24 May.

3. Follow up from previous meeting

The EFSA appreciated the network's role in the success of the March 2024 Emerging Risk Newsletter. Updates and storage locations for briefing notes from the last meeting were confirmed. Key terms were defined, with potential refinements to be considered through a future survey. An info-session for new members was held before the 31st EREN and may be repeated for more participants. Topics covered included adverse health effects from tara flour leading to a ban in the US and Canada, lead in US-imported applesauce, global spice safety and economic factors, HPAI cases in cattle, cats, and humans, and new research on Chronic Wasting Disease transmission.

4. Member State's signals and updates

4.1. Food safety and antifungal resistance

A presentation outlined that antifungal resistance poses a critical threat to human health and food security, with resistance mechanisms shared between medical and agricultural spheres, emphasizing the need for a One Health approach. Discussions highlighted the complex, multidisciplinary challenges of antifungal resistance, including its impact on food safety, the exacerbating roles of climate change and agricultural practices, and the tensions between developing new fungicides and EU green policies. Consensus among participants pointed to antifungal resistance as an



emerging risk that requires broader considerations, improved management, research, and coordinated action across EU Member States, advocating for data sharing and global collaboration to address this escalating concern.

4.2. *Baylisascaris procyonis* larvae

Baylisascaris procyonis, a zoonotic roundworm parasite with the potential to cause larva migrans and consequent neurological, ocular, or visceral damage in humans, was in the focus of a presentation discussing its life cycle, prevalence in European raccoon populations, and the ecological and health risks associated. Given the growing raccoon populations in Europe, concerns have been raised about increased human exposure and under-detected infections. The [EuroRaccoon group](#) recently created could make a partial contribution to pathogen transmission research without however replacing the need for rigorous surveillance were highlighted. The conclusion underscored the parasite as an emerging risk, albeit with currently limited impact on human health, and called for improved surveillance, awareness, and international collaboration to mitigate potential future risks.

4.3. Mono-n-hexyl phthalate (MnHexP)

The topic was focused on the increased exposure to mono and hexyl phthalate (MnHexP) metabolites, derivatives of phthalates known for their use in plastics and associated with various health risks, including reproductive toxicity and metabolic disorders. Notably, a rise in MnHexP levels has been detected in children's urine in Germany, signifying a potential rise in environmental exposure. The exact sources of MnHexP are yet to be identified, prompting calls for further investigation into exposure through food packaging, cosmetics, toys, and other pathways. Possible clarifications may come from the EU-wide research and innovation partnership programme 'the Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals (PARC)', which is undertaking a reassessment of human biomonitoring samples and toxicity testing. However, an active proposal is to document current findings in a briefing note, underlining the need for continued research and data gathering to clarify and mitigate possible risks.

4.4. High levels of PFAS and PFOS in freshwater fish

The issue of heightened PFAS and PFOS levels in freshwater fish is raising health concerns due to the environmental persistence and toxicity of these chemicals, with a U.S. study showing higher concentrations in freshwater fish than in ocean fish. The discussion highlighted that farm-raised fish have lower PFAS levels possibly due to the use of groundwater, while wild fish, especially from lakes and urban waterways, show higher contamination, affecting species like bass and catfish disproportionately. European studies are underway to assess the risk, reflecting the need for a comprehensive understanding of exposure levels. Consequently, participants directed for more data collection on PFAS levels in European freshwater fish, with assessment bodies like EFSA's CONTAM panel and PARC set to use these findings to refine risk assessments and ensure consumer safety by addressing new sources of PFAS contamination.

4.5. Toxoplasma in salad – results of multi-country EU project

An EU-funded OHEJP project TOXOSOURCES detected *Toxoplasma gondii* in approximately 4.1% of ready-to-eat salad samples across 10 European countries, indicating potential health risks, notably to pregnant women and the



immunocompromised. Although, the study's qualitative approach did not distinguish between live and dead parasites it alerts for attention. There's a pressing need for more information including research to pinpoint contamination sources and for improved detection methods, as well as sharing findings and data from the project survey with food safety experts to consider broader context of food safety and public health in refining risk assessments and public health strategies.

4.6. Q-fever possible increase in the exposure

An analysis from Bulgarian Risk Assessment Centre on study findings about Q fever was presented, indicating a concerning rise in outbreaks among humans and animals in Bulgaria, which now has the highest notification rate of Q fever in the EU. The study revealed that the disease is likely underestimated due to sampling issues and identified a high percentage of positive occupational cases and six new risk areas, emphasizing the role of small ruminants, especially goats, in disease transmission. The study's recommendations call for a One Health approach to enhance sampling and collaboration between veterinary and human health sectors. The network concluded that further information is needed and the necessity to share findings with other Member States was discussed to ascertain if the increase in Q fever is a broader trend, potentially classifying it as an emerging risk if confirmed to be widespread.

4.7. Chagas disease

The presentation revisited the topic of Chagas disease, updating its status from a previous 2020 discussion. New data from the BVL has led to a divided opinion on whether Chagas should now be considered an emerging risk, as climate change could enable the disease-carrying triatomine bugs to inhabit parts of Europe. Recent studies have brought attention to the disease's oral transmission, particularly via contaminated food, which may pose a greater risk than previously recognized, including severe cases with high fever and mortality. As a result, there's a call for Chagas to be included in the WHO's estimation of foodborne disease burden. The network acknowledged Chagas as an emerging risk, emphasizing the need for continued research on its foodborne transmission and the monitoring of vector establishment in Europe.

4.8. PFAS contamination from sea spray

The topic presentation and discussion at the EREN meeting centred on a novel concern regarding PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) contamination through sea spray aerosols, highlighting research that indicates a potential enrichment of PFAS in sea spray up to 100,000 times greater than in seawater. Participants recognized the implications for environmental contamination and food chain exposure, particularly for coastal eco- and agrisystems, and communities. They acknowledged the need for further research to understand exposure routes, transformation mechanisms, and the impact of climate change on this new transport pathway. The consensus was to classify the issue as needing more information, advocating for the use of more sensitive and accredited analytical methods and considering the inclusion of this topic in future discussions on oceans and climate change effects.

4.9. Increased and new exposure to invasive mosquitoes

Previously, Asian tiger mosquito *Aedes albopictus* was found in Slovakia just once, in 2012. A sole record was reported from the eastern part of the country. At that time,



the species was not able to establish locally. After 10 years, repeated occurrence was reported from the capital city of Slovakia, Bratislava. It seems that one of the most invasive species in the world found suitable conditions and possibly can create local populations. Moreover, other invasive mosquitoes, *Aedes japonicus japonicus* and *Aedes koreicus* are spread in the country too. The provided information presents a situational update and confirms the impact of environmental change drivers, suggesting expansion in the habitats of disease vectors. The situation could also be influenced to some extent by global trade patterns

4.10. Results of 8th Survey Analysis and Discussion

Final emerging risk status:

- Acrylamide contamination in plant-based protein ingredients: a growing concern

A study published in 2023 found significant differences in acrylamide contamination among different types of plant-based protein ingredients (PBPIs) produced through various processing methods.

- Risks to human health associated with the proliferation of *Ostreopsis* in France (South-West coast)

During the summer 2021, *Ostreopsis* blooms were responsible for human outbreaks in France (South-West coast) involving at least 674 people who developed flu-like symptoms. Other outbreaks also occurred in summer 2022 in the same area.

- Food safety and antifungal resistance

In 2022 WHO launched for the first time the global report/effort to estimate the emerging threat of fungal pathogens and antifungal resistance. There is increasing evidence that both the niche and the resistance rates of fungal pathogens have changed in the environment including the food industry. Additionally, there is data indicating that multi-resistant *Candida* strains are disseminated in the food chain in certain parts of the world.

- Chagas disease: An Underestimated Foodborne Disease?

A recent study published in 2024 highlights the global burden of foodborne Chagas disease. Its incidence is rising in Europe and North America.

Final further information needed status:

- Alongshan virus in ticks

A study published in 2023 shows that Alongshan virus is widely distributed among ticks in Germany and suggests that animals are likely to have frequent exposure to it, based on serological investigations.

- New mycotoxin producing fungi species

A study published in January 2021 identified 33 new strains of mycotoxin-producing fungi within the genus *Fusarium*. Some of these fungi cause severe symptoms of *Fusarium* Head Blight, which is a disease of cereal crops.

- Quaternary ammonium compound

A literature review published in 2023 evaluates the existing information on the ecological and human health effects of quaternary ammonium compounds and identifies several areas of potential concern, including acute and chronic toxicity to aquatic organisms, and adverse health outcomes such as dermal



and respiratory effects, developmental and reproductive toxicity, and antimicrobial resistance.

- Health effects of emulsifiers

Several studies published between 2021 and 2023 underlined the potential link between emulsifiers and intestinal inflammation, colorectal, breast and prostate cancers. In addition, a recent cohort study published in 2024 has unveiled a potential link between the consumption of certain emulsifiers (E407, E407a, E471) and an increased risk of cancer.

- Arcobacter risk to the food industry and human health

In 2022, a study found that 22.3% of food samples tested contained Arcobacter, with *A. butzleri* being the most prevalent species. This species is commonly linked to human illnesses. In August 2023, a study was published on antibiotic resistance of *A. butzleri* strains from food and clinical samples. All the tested strains were resistant to tetracycline and cefotaxime.

4.11. Psychoactive truffles sold as microdosing food supplements

This presentation described psychedelic truffles being sold as food supplements from ecommerce sites to customers in European countries via postal networks. The market conditions around this observation were described, revealing a rise in offered online microdosing kits marketed as food supplements, potentially driving for an emerging risk and complicating toxicological evaluations. It was concluded that additional information is required to fully characterize this issue.

5. EFSA and EREN activities

5.1. Food safety and colistin resistance

The discussion underscored the importance of One Health approach and multidisciplinary collaboration to address the global health crisis of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), particularly colistin resistance and its impact on food safety. With AMR threatening significant mortality and economic impacts, and the overuse of antimicrobials in livestock being a major contributor, the need for integrated surveillance and better data is clear. Studies show a concerning link between antibiotic use in animals and human pathogen resistance. Significant efforts in Europe have been made to reduce colistin use, but global vigilance and strict adherence to regulations are required to prevent the spread and re-emergence of resistant strains. It was highlighted that the thematic relevance of the EFSA network on microbial risk assessment is significant, and the information from this discussion should be shared with this more specific network.

5.2. Food safety implications from the use of environmental inhibitors in agrifood systems

The presentation of the FAO report², focused on the dual challenge of enhancing sustainability in agri-food systems through environmental inhibitors while managing food safety risks. These inhibitors, crucial for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and nitrogen loss in agricultural practices, face regulatory challenges, including the absence of internationally harmonized residue limits and inconsistent definitions across regions. The dialogue underscored the importance of proactive, science-based risk assessments for these compounds, integrating food safety from the outset, and international collaboration to establish consistent standards that protect consumers



and facilitate trade without compromising environmental goals. Moving forward, the harmonization of regulations and closing knowledge gaps are pivotal for the safe, beneficial use of environmental inhibitors in response to global food security and climate change.

5.3. INFOSAN & Food Fraud: Emergencies and Beyond

The topic info outlined INFOSAN as a voluntary network aiming to prevent the international spread of contaminated food and foodborne diseases. The network facilitates the rapid exchange of information during food safety incidents and fosters collaboration among member states. INFOSAN declares that it has been effective in managing food fraud incidents and could potentially help with emerging risks related to the food system.

5.4. Vibrio RA status

The BIOHAZ panel has initiated a self-task mandate, which EREN supported with evidence from previous discussions, to assess the public health risks associated with the consumption of seafood contaminated with pathogenic *Vibrio spp.* in the EU. These bacteria, including *V. parahaemolyticus*, *V. vulnificus* and non-O1, non-O139 *V. cholerae* are naturally found in marine environments and are known to cause infections through the exposure to sea water or consumption of raw or undercooked seafood. With the rise in sea surface temperatures due to climate change, there is a growing concern for increased transmission and infection rates. Moreover, given the lack of food safety criteria for *Vibrio spp.* in seafood, the evidence of *Vibrio* outbreaks in the EU and the underreporting of non-cholera *Vibrio* infections, the BIOHAZ Panel proposed this mandate. The completion of this scientific opinion is anticipated by the end of June 2024.

5.5. Oceans, Emerging chemicals, Eurocigua Food supplements

EFSA's foresight project on the safety of food and feed from the oceans is addressing future ocean usage and its potential impacts on food/feed safety and risk assessment. An in-person workshop in Lisbon March 2024 aimed to explore future scenarios for sea transport, trade, aquaculture, and seabed mining, focusing on implications for food/feed safety, risk-benefit analysis, and sustainability assessments. The findings will be reviewed in future EREN meetings and considered within EFSA's strategic planning.

EFSA's SCREENER project evaluates emerging chemical risks in the food chain, specifically assessing 212 REACH chemicals and additional halogenated organic chemicals found in food samples using advanced mass spectrometry methods. Fifteen chemicals were prioritized for in-depth analysis, with the results of the hazard and exposure assessments presented. An upcoming workshop in September 2024 aims to discuss collaborative efforts for a permanent emerging chemical risk identification system and contribute to the development of an early warning system for such risks.

The Eurocigua II project, led by the Portuguese ASAE and the Catholic University of Portugal, is conducting a survey to assess awareness of ciguatera poisoning among EU stakeholders. Preliminary results indicate a significant knowledge gap, with nearly half of the participants unaware of ciguatera. EFSA is calling for broader dissemination of the survey to enhance reporting and understanding of ciguatera poisoning, with an extended deadline for submission set for June 30th, 2024.



The Project on food supplements was organised via Tailor-Made Activities of EFSA focal points and initiated at the end of April 2024. The participating countries include France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Ireland, Belgium, Denmark and observers from Sweden and Latvia.

5.6. Update on HOLiFOOD

The status of the Horizon Europe project HOLiFOOD (<https://holifoodproject.eu>) was presented at the meeting, focusing mainly on the following activities:

- Activities related to AI and system approach for early identification and real-time monitoring of drivers of (re)emerging food safety risks; the activities on Identification of emerging risks from a corpus of text using AI; and development of a Dashboard.
- Activities on Holistic Risk Assessment and applying various assessment methodologies in 3 use-cases (maize, lentils and chicken).
- Activities related to Education and training materials
- Communication activities and liaison with HOLiFOOD's sister project FoodSafeR

Also, a call for expression of interest was announced for participating to a Living Lab on artificial intelligence (AI)-powered tools for emerging risk identification, organised on 17th June 2024.

5.7. Update on EFSA presence at FoodSafeR

The FoodSafeR project, which is a large EU-funded initiative involving roughly 20 organizations working to create an open digital hub for sharing information on emerging food safety risks. A Living Lab was conducted to develop this hub, which will feature confidential workspaces for data exchange and integrate partners across Europe and internationally. EFSA is also testing the platform to disseminate news, increase visibility, and encourage collaboration on food safety matters. The platform offers functionalities such as posts, file attachments, workspaces for focused discussions, and an RSS feed for global food safety news. Concerns about sharing sensitive data and user access are being addressed by controlled admission and a phased opening, starting with professional networks in food safety. The overarching goal is to ensure that the platform remains a trusted and valuable tool for discussion of emerging food safety issues.

6. Methodology

6.1. Innovative new tools in relation to prevention of disease and contamination examples of EHD drivers, BSM tools and Bee Tox Wax

The presentation at EREN emphasized the importance of biosecurity in livestock management, highlighting the challenges in compliance and the development of tools to enhance practices. A study on EHD drivers outlined the significance of farm characteristics, human activities, and interfaces with wildlife, as the latter involves wider uncertainty. Tools showcased included the Biosecurity Measure Tool (BSM) for real-time farm assessment and the BeeTox Wax tool for evaluating beeswax toxicity risk. A pilot study with students tested the BSM tool, and its effectiveness was demonstrated in a project on Influenza D. Training and collaboration were underlined as key to successful biosecurity implementation, along with a solid scientific



foundation and privacy in data collection. The BeeTox Wax tool has been validated through a comprehensive survey of Belgian beeswax, identifying methods to detect residues among a range of contaminants and is available for broader use, supporting informed decision-making.

6.2. AMPHIDEB project

At the EREN meeting, EFSA's AMPHIDEB project was presented, which targets the monitoring and assessment of fungal diseases and multiple environmental stressors affecting amphibians and reptiles, key sentinel species in ecosystems. The project's holistic approach encompasses scientific opinions on pesticide impacts, disease spread, and integrated risk assessments spanning individual to ecosystem levels. The discussion underscored significant data gaps, particularly concerning terrestrial life stages and the need for optimized non-target species risk assessments. The Project advocated for expanded environmental monitoring across Europe, methodological integration into EFSA's risk assessment framework, and enhanced collaboration with biodiversity experts in a wider ecological context beyond food safety, potentially involving environmental agencies.

6.3. Chemical hazards analyses in vegetarian replacement products

Due to observed change in the consumption pattern of reduced consumption of meat, the Swedish Food Agency has collected information about contaminant occurrence in vegetarian meat substitutes. The work has focused on metals, natural plant toxins, process contaminants, mycotoxins and plant protection products. The data availability of chemical hazards in these types of products is limited. From the available data it is concluded that vegetarian meat substitutes contribute to the exposure of all studied chemical hazards. More studies are required to perform full risk assessments.

6.4. Questionnaire for PARC Project EWS

The presentation provided a brief overview of the Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals (PARC) project, its overall goals, and specific objectives. Within PARC, one work package focuses on the development of an Early Warning System (EWS) for chemical risks. Within the seven-year PARC timeframe, it is envisioned that a holistic AI-driven system will be developed. The system will use various data sources, including exposure and effect data as well as other risk indicators together with computational modelling to identify potential emerging risk chemicals. To ensure PARC's EWS aligns with stakeholder needs, a survey has been developed to gather their input. A brief overview of the survey content was presented. Currently the survey is at the validation stage.

7. StaDG-ER issues to share with EREN

7.1. COCERAL mycotoxins report

COCERAL, the European association of trade incereals, oilseeds, rice, pulses, olive oil, oils and fats, animal feed and agrosupply, conducted its first biannual survey on mycotoxin management among its members in 2007, which was repeated in subsequent years. Although some questions were adapted or added over time, the survey's main objective remained the same – to provide an overview of mycotoxin management practices among COCERAL members. The latest COCERAL Mycotoxin



management report, expected to be published on 1st July 2024, details how COCERAL members deal with mycotoxin through testing and prevention measures, and providing technical guidance to farmers. The report reveals increasing mycotoxin concerns, particularly aflatoxins in corn due to climate change-induced heat waves. A technical advisor at COCERAL highlighted the importance of biosecurity in the European agricultural commodity trade and emphasized the need for better predictive models to understand climate change's impact on mycotoxin prevalence and for more reliable quick tests for certain mycotoxins. He called for industry collaboration, scientific support, and potentially simplified EFSA data collection standards to tackle more rapidly the challenges posed by climate change to food safety and security.

7.2. Issues of concern StaDG-ER

The topics ranged from the potential risks of fungi like *Amanita muscaria* to the transmission of salmonella through eggs and the adulteration of insect-based products. The group also anticipate discussions on the effects of cyclic imines in shellfish, the impact of micro and nanoplastics in agricultural soils, and updates on Q fever in Belgium, rat hepatitis virus and semicarbazide in whey protein products. The discussion emphasized the need for further research and accurate data to assess and manage these risks effectively. Notably, the detection of rat hepatitis virus in farm pigs highlighted the importance of understanding transmission routes to protect public health, underscoring the broader theme of the meeting: the critical need for enhanced monitoring and collaboration to ensure food safety amidst new and evolving challenges.

8. Newsletter new topics

The members are invited to suggest topics to be included in the newsletter. A question in the feedback survey after the meeting will prompt for it too.

9. Any Other Business

- Possible Qs on perceptions related to Food Supplement

Views shared about the consumption habits and perceptions related to food supplements, highlighting user reasons for consumption, health status goals, but also misunderstandings. The discussion explored the need for a comprehensive European approach to accurately assess dietary supplement intake and its effects on health outcomes. The conclusion emphasized the importance of harmonizing data collection across countries, improving understanding of food supplement consumption patterns, and promoting knowledge among consumers for better health and safety evaluations. Promising steps are initiated with EFSA tailor made activities with focal points about food supplements.

- Evaluation of EREN

We acknowledge and thank EREN members and observers for the good participation rate for the evaluation survey. The evaluation of EFSA networks has been completed, and the draft results, reflecting several positive outcomes, have been shared with the advisory forum.

- EREN TOR

Updates to our network's terms of reference are anticipated, with suggestions set to be distributed to network members ahead of the next meeting.



- Possible of IPA countries (observers)
The network has endorsed the future onboarding of IPA countries, supporting their integration into our collaborative efforts.

10. ERAP workshop

Both on-site and online attendees participated in a dedicated session focused on presentation and guided training of the new innovative tool (Emerging Risk Analysis Platform, ERAP) designed to centralise and facilitate submission and analysis of new signals.

11. Closure of the meeting

The following 32 EREN is in Parma (and online) on 29-30 October 2024.

The 31st EREN meeting was adjourned.