SH Forum meeting

Clarity of EFSA's communications
SH Comms Lab

Anthony Smith, 30 May 2017

efsa
European Food Safety Authority

CLARITY OF COMMUNICATIONS

EFSA Strategy 2020 - Prioritise public and stakeholder engagement in the process of scientific assessment (SO1)

- **Ensure clarity and accessibility/usability in the communication of findings**
  - Visibility and use to be increased
  - Messages better tailored/contextualised for risk managers and general audience
  - RA outputs further improved in expression of uncertainty and disclosure of hypotheses

CLARITY OF COMMUNICATIONS

- Editorial change
- Working practices
- Outputs/channels

EDITORIAL CHANGE

Xylella in Apulia: review finds no evidence of multiple types

There is no proof that multiple types of *Xylella fastidiosa* are present in Apulia, southern Italy, according to recently available scientific evidence examined by EFSA.

The opinion from EFSA's Panel on Plant Health is the last of three outputs addressing a number of questions from the European Commission on *X. fastidiosa* in Apulia. In this one the Panel addresses the question of whether different types of *X. fastidiosa* exist in Apulia, where a disease outbreak is affecting olive trees and other plants.

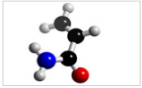
A single study raised the possibility that multiple genetic types of *X. fastidiosa* are present in the area. However, EFSA's plant health specialists say there is currently no evidence to support this hypothesis.

To reach its conclusion, the Panel reviewed the latest scientific literature and analysed DNA sequencing data retrieved from samples collected in Apulia. All the papers concluded that DNA samples collected from olive trees and other plants belong to the same sequence type, called "ST53".

For the sequence data analysis, the Panel used a dedicated database established in 2005 that contains the DNA sequences of nearly 300 *X. fastidiosa* samples. The Panel highlights that further studies with larger sample sizes are needed to provide more comprehensive answers on this issue. These should include an analysis of complete *X. fastidiosa* genome sequencing.

Key Topics

Acrylamide in food



Acrylamide in food

Acrylamide is a substance that may be formed in foods, typically starchy products including **crisps, French fries, bread and crispbreads**, during cooking processes including frying, baking and roasting at temperatures of 120 °C or higher. Acrylamide is a known carcinogen in experimental animals hence efforts should be made to minimize exposure from all sources including diet.

EFSA's Panel on contaminants in the food chain (CONTAM) is responsible for the Authority's work on this issue. In 2005 the Panel considered a report of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA). In a statement at the time, the Panel endorsed the conclusions of JECFA that acrylamide poses a human health concern and that efforts should be made to reduce exposure. EFSA continues to monitor ongoing developments in scientific research and plays an active role in building understanding of acrylamide in foods. EFSA is co-operating with national food safety authorities in the Member States in order to set up a Europe-wide database on acrylamide occurrence levels in a range of foods.

A substantial body of international research has been carried out to build greater understanding of acrylamide, how it is formed in foods, what the risks are for consumers and how to reduce occurrence levels. The European Commission has funded research projects to this end and the former Scientific Committee on Food issued an opinion on acrylamide in 2002 shortly after the first study on acrylamide in foods was published.

Since the discovery of acrylamide in foods in 2002, industry has sought to identify ways to reduce its formation in foods. As acrylamide is formed in food by common cooking practices, it is likely that people have been exposed to acrylamide in their diet for some considerable time. Choosing a balanced and varied diet, and avoiding overcooking of foods, will contribute to reducing acrylamide intake levels.

Overview and chronology

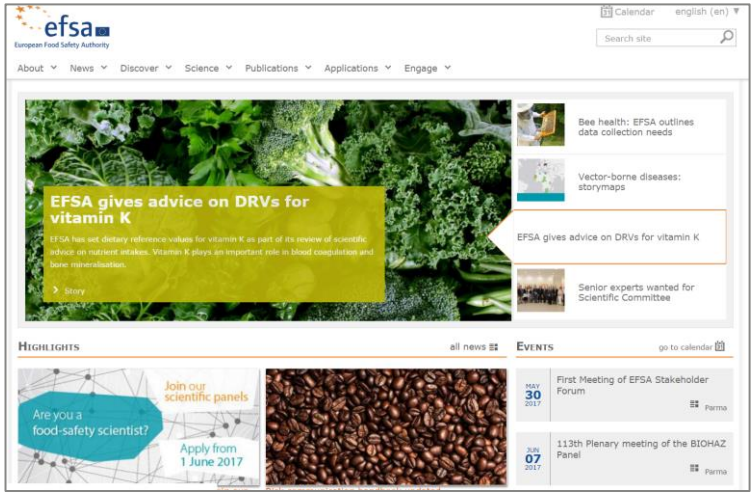
In 2002, Swedish researchers found for the first time that acrylamide can be formed unintentionally in potatoes and cereal-based products as a result of common cooking methods such as baking, frying and roasting at high temperatures (higher than 120°C). Until then acrylamide was only known as a highly reactive industrial chemical, present for instance at low levels in tobacco smoke. At that time the neurotoxicity of acrylamide in humans was known from instances of high occupational and accidental exposure when acrylamide is used in industrial processes in the production of plastics and materials. Studies in animals had shown that acrylamide induces cancer and also affects reproductive performance.

- In February 2005, the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) carried out a safety evaluation of acrylamide in food concluding that the issue poses a human health concern. This conclusion was consistent with an opinion published by the Scientific Committee on Food (SCF) in 2002. Since uncertainties remained, JECFA concluded that the safety of acrylamide should be re-evaluated in the light of further research and that efforts should be made to reduce acrylamide levels in food. In April 2005 the EFSA Panel on contaminants in the food chain (CONTAM) stated its agreement with the principal conclusions and recommendations of the JECFA evaluation.
- Exposure data which are required to evaluate the link between acrylamide and cancer are very limited. In 2002, the European Commission began collecting occurrence data on the levels of acrylamide in foods. EFSA has taken over this task in 2006, in co-operation with Member States.
- A wide range of actors including national food safety authorities in the EU Member States, academia and food manufacturers have sought to better understand acrylamide and to reduce levels in foods. Many countries continue to contribute to the growing body of research and data. Workshops on this issue have been organised by EFSA in 2003 and the European Commission jointly with the European food and drink industry association (CIAA) in 2006. Efforts have been made by food manufacturers to modify recipes and processes to reduce acrylamide occurrence in foods such as French fries, snacks and crisps. The CIAA has

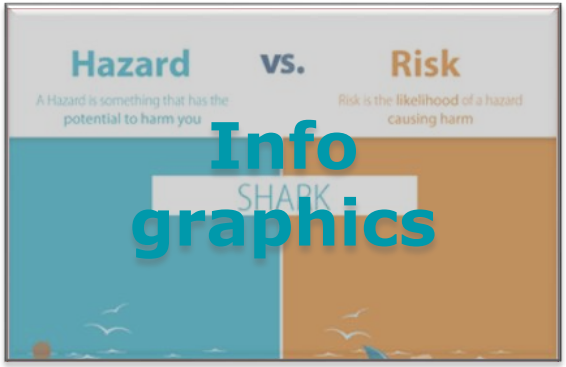
IMPROVED WORKING PRACTICES

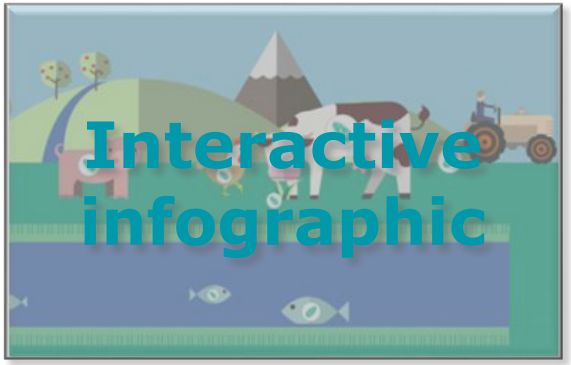
- Streamlined content approvals process
- Lead content editor
- Training
- Future plan
  EFSA House syle

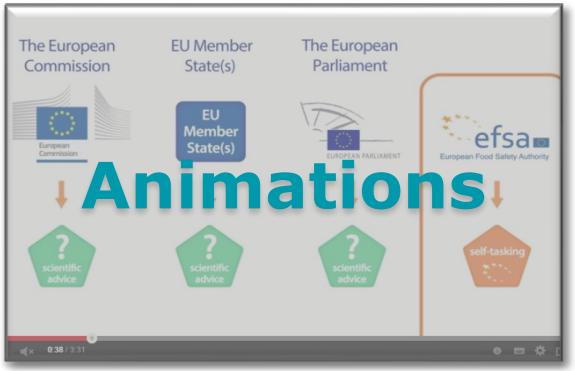
OUTPUTS & CHANNELS – REDESIGNED WEBSITE



OUTPUTS & CHANNELS – VISUAL COMMUNICATION







OUTPUTS & CHANNELS – SOCIAL MEDIA

Main account launched in 2012

- Followers: +18k

Thematic accounts launched 2016

- @Plants_EFSA
- @ Methods_EFSA

Channel opened in 2012

- +200 videos
- +500k views

LinkedIn account launched in 2012

- +23k followers

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS - BENEFITS OF THE NEW COMMS LAB

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR INTERACTION

- Registered SH **feedback on** and **test usability** and **usefulness** of selected communications products:
  - Test and seek feedback before release
  - Help EFSA's communication products to meet SH needs
  - Increase use and dissemination of EFSA's communication
- **Interaction** with EFSA communications staff

EXCLUDED FROM FRAMEWORK FOR INTERACTION

Content and **key messages** of EFSA's communications are

outside the scope of the Comms Lab

NEXT STEPS


Digital platform
Invitations
Feedback
Test cases
Evaluation

ANY QUESTIONS?

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