

BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD

ISSN N°: 1830-6993 • June 2009 • Catalogue N°: ND-AG-09-003-EN-N

NEWS // JUNE 2009

About this newsletter

This newsletter contains information on training activities organised within the Better Training for Safer Food initiative of the European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Consumers. It also gives details of all other issues related to the initiative.

Further information on Better Training for Safer Food can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/food/training_strategy/index_en.htm

Training programmes

Cutting public-health risks from animals and food

Zoonoses are diseases or infections transmissible from animals to humans, usually through contaminated food or direct contact with infected animals. They cause diseases that lead to large public health costs in the EU every year.

The European Commission has adopted legislation to ensure that zoonoses are monitored effectively and food-borne outbreaks of such diseases are properly investigated. Additional legislation is aimed at ensuring that appropriate measures are taken to detect and control zoonotic agents during food production, processing and distribution.



Community targets are being established for reductions in the prevalence of zoonoses and zoonotic agents. The establishment of national control programmes is a key factor in reaching these targets.

The EC has also established two types of microbiological criteria for food on the basis of scientific advice, international standards and risk assessments. Food safety criteria apply to products following the manufacturing process and during their shelf-life. If products do not adhere to these criteria, they are withdrawn from the market. Process hygiene criteria apply during production. In cases of non-compliance, improvements in hygiene are requested.

Training in this area has been organised within Better Training for Safer Food since 2007 and makes a concrete contribution to reducing the risk zoonoses pose to public health. The 2009-10 programme is primarily aimed at harmonising Member State approaches to monitoring and control of zoonoses.

The European Training Platform for Safer Food will organise five courses on implementation of microbiological criteria and investigation of food-borne outbreaks and five courses on control and eradication of Salmonella in poultry and pigs. The first workshop in the programme focuses on Microbiological criteria and takes place in Berlin in June 2009. The other workshops are to run during 2009 and 2010 in Berlin and Lyon.

Promoting food testing techniques in South-East Asia

Six ASEAN reference laboratories (ARL) have been established in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) region as part of the EC-ASEAN Economic Co-operation Programme on Standards, Quality and Conformity Assessment. They aim to disseminate approved analytical methods to National Reference Laboratories of ASEAN countries through training and technical assistance.

Analysts have been trained during a first round of training courses on detection of pesticide residues, aflatoxins, veterinary drug residues, genetically modified organisms (GMO), heavy metals and microbiological pathogens. Training needs are, however, far from being covered.



Food testing training for laboratory staff of ASEAN countries has already taken place under Better Training for Safer Food in 2007. Further training will strengthen ARLs position as centres of excellence and help ASEAN countries to improve their testing services and to disseminate approved techniques.



A preparatory meeting was organised in November 2008 in Bangkok by the European Training Platform for Safer Food to set out the details of the programme. Following the conclusions of this meeting, six workshops are to take place in June and July 2009; one in each ARL. One workshop will focus on each of GMOs, heavy metals, pesticides, mycotoxins, microbiology and veterinary drugs.

Support for rapid alert systems worldwide

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) is a network of European Economic Area Member States, the European Commission and the European Food Safety Authority. It is used for information exchange when health risks are identified and allows members to see whether a problem affects them and take action.

Training on the RASFF helps countries to improve controls and explores the possibility of setting up similar systems in other parts of the world. An example of such a system is the ARASF which has been established in the ASEAN region.

The EU Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) is an animal and public health risk management tool. It allows for electronic exchange of trade certificates and import documents for animals and products of animal origin between national authorities, as well as Common Veterinary Entry Documents provided by Border Inspection Posts.

TRACES allows third country actors to produce health certificates for exports to the EU and to give notification of exported consignments. Exporters can also get information on entry decisions.

Training on the RASFF has been launched for the third consecutive year in 2009. TRACES was introduced to the programme in 2008. Over the last two years training in these areas has taken place in the ASEAN region, Latin America, China and EU candidate and European Neighbourhood Policy countries.

The 2009-10 RASFF workshops are to take place in South Africa, Vietnam, Italy and Saudi Arabia with participants at each workshop coming from countries of the same region. A TRACES training session has taken place in Mauritius in March and further one is scheduled for Morocco in June. Further sessions may be organised and the programme should also include training missions to countries across the globe. These events are organised by the consortium of the European Application of Technology and Services, the Spanish Association for Standardisation and Certification and Ainia.

Better Training for Safer Food in Africa: update

A full update of activities taking place within the Better Training for Safer Food in Africa programme (BTSF Africa) will be given in the July edition of the newsletter, which will be dedicated specifically to BTSF Africa.

Upcoming events

- 8-11 June: Plant health import controls, Budapest, Hungary
- 8-12 June: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Principles, Budapest, Hungary
- 8-12 June: Hygiene and controls on milk and dairy products, Brescia, Italy
- 8-12 June: Trade control and expert system, Rabat, Morocco
- 8-12 June: Training for laboratory staff of ASEAN countries in food testing for mycotoxins, Singapore
- 15-19 June: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Principles, Porto, Portugal
- 15-19 June: Training for laboratory staff of ASEAN countries in food testing related to microbiology, Dong Nai, Vietnam
- 15-19 June: Training for laboratory staff of ASEAN countries in food testing for genetically modified organisms, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
- 22-26 June: Hygiene and controls on meat and meat products, Toulouse, France
- 22-26 June: Microbiological criteria, Berlin, Germany
- 22-26 June: Training for laboratory staff of ASEAN countries in food testing for veterinary drug residues, Pathun Thani, Thailand
- 29 June-2 July: Plant health import controls, Budapest, Hungary
- 29 June-3 July: Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Principles, Porto, Portugal

For further information on all of the 2009 training programmes please visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/training_strategy/training/index_en.htm

