



Better Training for Safer Food

Annual Report 2007



The Health and Consumers Directorate-General of the European Commission manages the Better Training for Safer Food initiative. This report describes the activity of Better Training for Safer Food in 2007.

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This report was prepared in the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers by the Unit E2 Training Sector.

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Comments and suggestions by colleagues in the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers are gratefully acknowledged.

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http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm

and information on the Better Training for Safer Food initiative at:

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

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD ...	7
2.1. FUTURE TRAINING STRATEGY	8
3. TRAINING IN 2007	13
3.1 OVERVIEW	13
3.2 EU-BASED ACTIVITIES	17
3.2.1 HAZARD ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL CONTROL POINT	17
3.2.2 VETERINARY CHECKS AT BORDER INSPECTION POSTS	19
3.2.3 EU REGULATIONS FOR ANIMAL BY-PRODUCTS	22
3.2.4 WELFARE STANDARDS CONCERNING THE STUNNING AND KILLING OF ANIMALS IN SLAUGHTERHOUSE AND DISEASE CONTROL SITUATIONS	24
3.2.5 MONITORING AND CONTROLS OF ZONOSSES AND APPLYING MICROBIOLOGICAL CRITERIA IN FOODSTUFFS	25
3.2.6 CONTROLS ON FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS	26
3.2.7 EVALUATION AND REGISTRATION OF PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS	28
3.3 ACTIVITIES IN THIRD COUNTRIES	30
3.3.1 EU FOOD STANDARDS	31
3.3.2 ASSISTANCE AND SUSTAINED TRAINING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTROL STRATEGIES FOR HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA	32
3.3.3 TRAINING FOR LABORATORY STAFF OF ASEAN COUNTRIES IN THE APPLICATION OF FOOD TESTING ..	34
3.3.4 TRAINING ON THE EU RAPID ALERT SYSTEM FOR FOOD AND FEED AND THE POSSIBLE INTRODUCTION OF A SIMILAR SYSTEM IN OTHER REGIONS OF THE WORLD	36
3.4 BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES	38
4. TRAINING IN 2008	43
4.1 OVERVIEW	43
4.2 EU-BASED PROGRAMMES 2008	47
4.2.1 HAZARD ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL CONTROL POINT	47
4.2.2 VETERINARY AND FOOD SAFETY CONTROL CHECKS IN AIRPORT BORDER INSPECTION POSTS	47
4.2.3 VETERINARY AND FOOD SAFETY CONTROL CHECKS IN SEAPORT AND ROAD AND RAIL BORDER INSPECTION POSTS	48
4.2.4 ANIMAL BY PRODUCTS	48
4.2.5 ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS DURING TRANSPORT, AT SLAUGHTER AND IN KILLING FOR DISEASE CONTROL PURPOSES	48
4.2.6 MONITORING AND CONTROLS OF ZONOSSES AND APPLYING MICROBIOLOGICAL CRITERIA IN FOODSTUFFS	49
4.2.7 EVALUATION AND REGISTRATION OF PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS	49
4.2.8 FOOD HYGIENE AND CONTROLS	50
4.2.9 PREVENTION, CONTROL AND ERADICATION OF TRANSMISSIBLE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHIES ..	50
4.2.10 TRAINING ON PLANT HEALTH CONTROLS	51

4.3	THIRD COUNTRY TRAINING PROGRAMMES 2008	52
4.3.1	ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION ON HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA CONTROL . .	52
4.3.2	DEVELOPMENT OF ANIMAL DISEASE CONTROL STRATEGIES IN PARTICULAR FOR HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA.	52
4.3.3	TRAINING ACTIVITIES ON EU FOOD STANDARDS	53
4.3.4	TRAINING FOR LABORATORY STAFF OF ASEAN COUNTRIES IN THE APPLICATION OF FOOD TESTING. .	53
4.3.5	TRAINING ON THE EU RAPID ALERT SYSTEM FOR FOOD AND FEED AND THE POSSIBLE INTRODUCTION OF A SIMILAR SYSTEM IN OTHER REGIONS OF THE WORLD	54
5.	BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD IN AFRICA.	55
6.	INTERMEDIATE ASSESSMENT OF BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD	57
7.	CONCLUSIONS.	59
ANNEX 1	FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	61
ANNEX 2	TRAINING SECTOR MEMBERS.	63
ANNEX 3	BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS. .	65
ANNEX 4	INDEX OF ABBREVIATIONS.	73
ANNEX 5	PHOTO GALLERY FROM 2007 TRAINING ACTIVITIES.	75

1. INTRODUCTION



The European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Consumers' Better Training for Safer Food initiative has just completed its second year of activity. It provides training for Member State control staff and third country participants dealing with food, veterinary and plant health issues.

The initiative expanded considerably in 2007, both in terms of the number of people it has trained and the scope of the training programmes on offer. Following the success of last year's training programme, I am pleased to present the Better Training for Safer Food annual report for 2007.

Effective food safety controls are vital to ensure the highest standards of consumer protection. In addition, the free movement of food and animals within and into the EU relies on all Member States and third countries exporting to the EU implementing harmonised safety rules.

It is vital that control personnel responsible for ensuring the safety of food and feed and the health and welfare of animals and plants in the EU and its trading partners remain up to date with the relevant EU standards. Appropriate training is a key factor in this.

Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 on official controls for the verification of compliance with feed and food law, and animal health and welfare rules empowers the Commission to set up EU-level training in these areas.

By organising training in the EU, the initiative helps to tighten and harmonise safety controls, thereby making a concrete contribution to European integration. Places on EU-based training courses are allocated to third country participants, and programmes are organised specifically for third and particularly developing countries so as to familiarise them with EU requirements. This is vital for helping such countries to access the EU market for their products.

This report describes the activities in 2007, including the work carried out internally by the Commission prior to implementation of the training, as well as the training programmes themselves. It also looks ahead to the training to be carried out in 2008.

I would like to thank everyone involved in Better Training for Safer Food for their contribution to the success of the initiative in 2007. I hope that this report will provide useful information on the initiative's current and future actions to interested stakeholders in the EU and throughout the world.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Robert Madelin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert Madelin

Director-General for Health and Consumers

2. BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD

The Better Training for Safer Food initiative is run by the European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Consumers. It trains official safety control staff in Member States and third countries – in particular developing countries – on food, veterinary and plant health issues.

The need for such training originates, in part, from the development of the Internal Market, which relies on harmonisation of rules across the EU. An EU-level body of legislation on food, feed, animal health, animal welfare, and plant health has been gradually built up, to the extent that national law governing these areas is now almost entirely based on EU law.

This legislation also aims to protect consumers. This is an important concern for citizens due to factors such as food crises and the global nature of food trade. Respecting harmonised safety rules along the food chain is vital for effective controls.

These factors underscore the need to ensure increased compliance with Community law. This entails high levels of competence among control officials, who need broad knowledge of hazards in the food and feed chain and the ability to identify non-compliance.

Third countries exporting to the EU must guarantee respect for Community rules. Imports of live animals and food and feed of animal origin require certification from the exporting third countries. For food and feed of plant origin, the Community relies on guarantees from importers, who must obtain assurance at the place of production that EU requirements are met. The European Commission believes that training staff to verify compliance with Community law is key to satisfying these needs.

April 2004 saw the adoption of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 on official controls performed to ensure verification of compliance with food and feed law, animal health and animal welfare rules. This came into force in January 2006. Article 51 of the Regulation empowers the Commission to develop training for Member State competent authority staff verifying compliance with food and feed law, as well as animal health and welfare and plant health rules. Such training should also be open to third country participants, and in particular to developing countries.



This resulted in the launch of the Better Training for Safer Food initiative. It trains national level control staff and third country participants. Training organised in the EU is open to a certain number of participants from third countries and sessions are also organised specifically for third countries.

The training should keep national-level control staff up to date with EU rules and guarantee uniform, efficient controls. This will help ensure respect for Community regulations safeguarding animal and plant health and will contribute to providing safer food for consumers and safer feed for animals.

A uniform approach to the operation of Community and national control systems also encourages cross-border trade and creates a level playing field for food businesses. Programmes developed for third countries help to increase trade in safe food between the EU and the rest of the world.

The Commission also recognises the benefits of training business operators. It could increase the efficiency of skilled workers and allow food businesses to adapt their procedures for checking compliance. This would reduce the risk of having to withdraw products from the market in the event of a problem. Better compliance at the point of production might also reduce the need for official controls and the related costs.

Although the legal basis only provides for training to be organised and funded from the Community budget for staff from official competent authorities, private-sector participants, in particular representatives of producers and industry associations, are also invited to certain training activities but at their own expense.

2.1.FUTURE TRAINING STRATEGY

The Better Training for Safer Food programme is currently managed by the Commission with the assistance of external contractors identified through public procurement procedures. A specific Sector with responsibility for implementing the programme has been created within Directorate E of the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers.

Work was undertaken in 2007 to pave the way for the establishment of a more efficient structure for the long term management of training activities. This follows the adoption of Communication COM (2006) 519 on Better Training for Safer Food.

This Communication underlines the importance of creating a Community dimension for training in the relevant areas and sets out the main goals of the initiative. It also gives an overview of the best options for organising efficient, cost-effective training in the future.

Four main options were considered in this initial analysis: continued direct management by issuing contracts (status quo), a specialised Commission service, a regulatory agency and an executive agency.

The Commission concluded that an executive agency would be the most appropriate solution for managing training. This would allow the Commission to keep control of core tasks and a political decision-making role in terms of aspects such as planning, fixing objectives and monitoring results, while the Agency would concentrate on tasks requiring administrative and financial expertise.

With a view to confirming the conclusions of this analysis and exploring the possibility of an eventual extension of the mandate of the Public Health Executive Agency (PHEA) to include certain tasks related to Better Training for Safer Food activities, the Commission requested a cost-benefit analysis.

This analysis, completed in September 2007, supported the above idea, indicating the positive aspects of outsourcing those administrative and financial tasks that could be managed more economically and efficiently by PHEA without undermining the Commission's political prerogatives and guiding role.

In accordance with this conclusion the Commission will prepare proposals concerning outsourcing to PHEA. These are expected to be submitted during 2008.



3. TRAINING IN 2007

3.1 OVERVIEW

The work towards the implementation of the 2007 training programmes began in 2006 under the aegis of the Health and Consumer Directorate-General (DG) Unit E2 Training Sector.

Training needs were discussed with other DGs, particularly through the Inter-service Steering Group¹. This met in February 2006 to reflect on general and technical training aspects and monitoring of activities and results. It aimed to set training priorities and facilitate coordination with other Commission services organising training.

Discussions with national authorities took place during the expert group meeting held in February 2006. This was attended by representatives of Member States and associated countries. The representatives at the meeting were mainly National Contact Points (NCP), identified by the Commission to channel information related to the initiative between the Commission and national authorities. The Commission maintained coordination with the NCPs throughout 2006 and their input helped to establish training priorities.

Outcomes of the training taking place during 2006 and the areas for improvement highlighted by these outcomes were also taken into account in deciding on the training programmes to run during 2007.

The training sector also drew on resources such as notifications received by the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) and the findings of Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) inspections, in order to finalise the 2007 offer.

- Twelve areas were chosen for the 2007 training programmes. Eight of these were to take place in the EU and four in third countries. All seven 2006 programmes continued, including the EU-based programmes on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point principles, EU standards for animal by-products, animal welfare standards in slaughterhouse and disease control situations and veterinary checks at air- and seaport border inspection posts.
- Both third country programmes from 2006 on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza control and EU food standards continued.
- Three new EU-based programmes were established. They covered monitoring and controls of zoonoses and applying microbiological criteria in foodstuffs, controls on food contact materials and evaluation and registration of plant protection products.
- Two new third country programmes focused on training for laboratory staff of Association of South-East Asian Nations countries in the application of food testing and training on the RASFF and the possible introduction of similar systems in other regions of the world.

Following the definition of the 2007 training programmes, it was necessary to designate contractors to take charge of them.

1. In addition to DG Health and Consumers, this group was composed of representatives from the Secretariat General, the Legal Service and from DGs Agriculture and Rural Development, Budget, Development, Enlargement, Enterprise and Industry, External Relations, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Internal Market and Services, Research, Taxation and Customs Union and Trade, as well as the EuropAid Cooperation Office and the European Anti-Fraud Office.

The European Commission requires that all contractors responsible for the running of its training programmes be highly competent in all areas related to the organisation, management and implementation of training. To this end, it sets high standards which are borne out through thorough and testing evaluation procedures to which potential contractors are subject.

At the end of these evaluation procedures, contractors with the requisite level of expertise were identified to manage the programmes. The Commission could thus be confident that the nature of the evaluation process would ensure that the implementation of training in 2007 would be of the highest possible standard.

For each EU workshop a certain number of fully funded places were allocated to each Member State. Participants proposed for these places by a Member State would come from its official competent authorities. As quotas were set for participants from developing country competent authorities attending certain EU-based activities, such participants would likewise receive financial support, when approved by the Commission.

In the case of third country activities, financial support would be provided to staff of competent authorities of developing countries. In both cases, attendance of private sector participants and those from developed third countries would be at their own expense.

For each training activity, the contractor was responsible for drawing up lists of participants from the competent authorities of the invited countries and sending them to the Commission for final approval.

In order to draw up the participant lists, the contractors are charged with sending invitations to participate to the relevant bodies. For EU Member States and associated countries, invitations are channelled through NCPs to the relevant authorities. For third countries, the contractor sends invitations either directly to the competent authorities of invited countries or via EC delegations, third country delegations in Brussels or the secretariats of regional organisations such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) or African Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP). Each contractor also sets up a dedicated website in order to better publicise the training opportunities on offer.

The wide geographical spread of training participants afforded considerable opportunities for information exchange. This allowed participants to gain an insight into the experiences of people from other countries. It also helped to establish new relationships which could prove productive in the future.

With regard to the selection of tutors for each workshop, all contractors were required to put in place a stringent selection process. This aimed to ensure that designated experts would have the requisite experience to speak authoritatively on their given topic. The proposed list of tutors for any event was to be submitted to the Commission for approval.

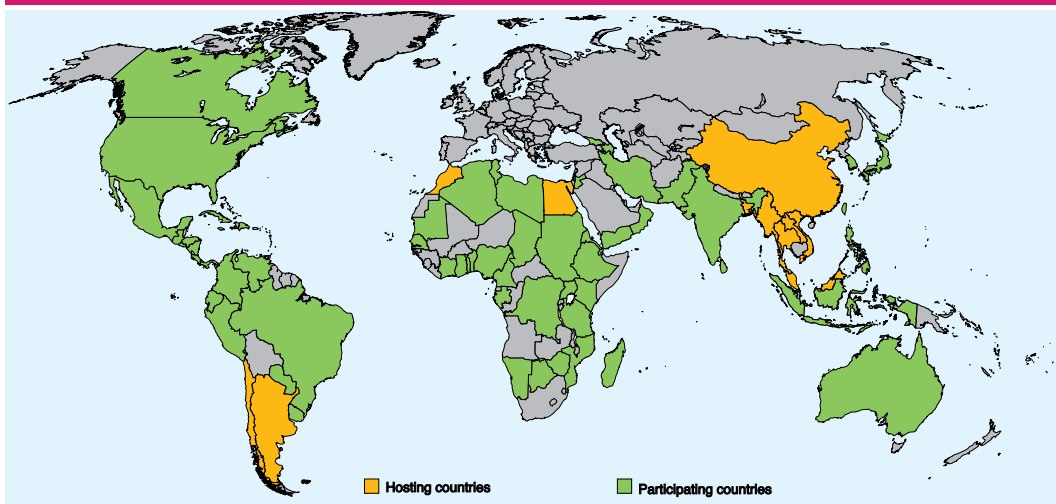
The Commission makes every effort to ensure that the workshops benefit from an international selection of tutors. This is done with the aim of providing participants with a variety of perspectives from across the EU and throughout the world. Commission representatives attend workshops to ensure their smooth functioning and provide participants with the benefit of their knowledge.

The international nature of the initiative is further emphasised by the fact that the Commission maintains a wide geographical spread of training locations. In 2007, EU activities took place in 15 countries and third country training activities in 18.

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES HOSTING AND PARTICIPATING IN TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN 2007



NON-EUROPEAN COUNTRIES HOSTING AND PARTICIPATING IN TRAINING ACTIVITIES WORLDWIDE IN 2007



The format and content of workshops and sustained training and assistance missions are designed by the contractors with the Commission giving final approval. Special emphasis is placed on practical exercises backed up with theoretical presentations. Workshops also feature discussion, exchange of views and feedback.

Another feature of the workshops is participant evaluation. For this, contractors are expected to put in place a procedure to assess participants' satisfaction. At the end of each activity, participants are requested to provide feedback concerning the quality and usefulness of the training. The results will be analysed by the contractor and provided to the Commission together with recommendations for improvements.

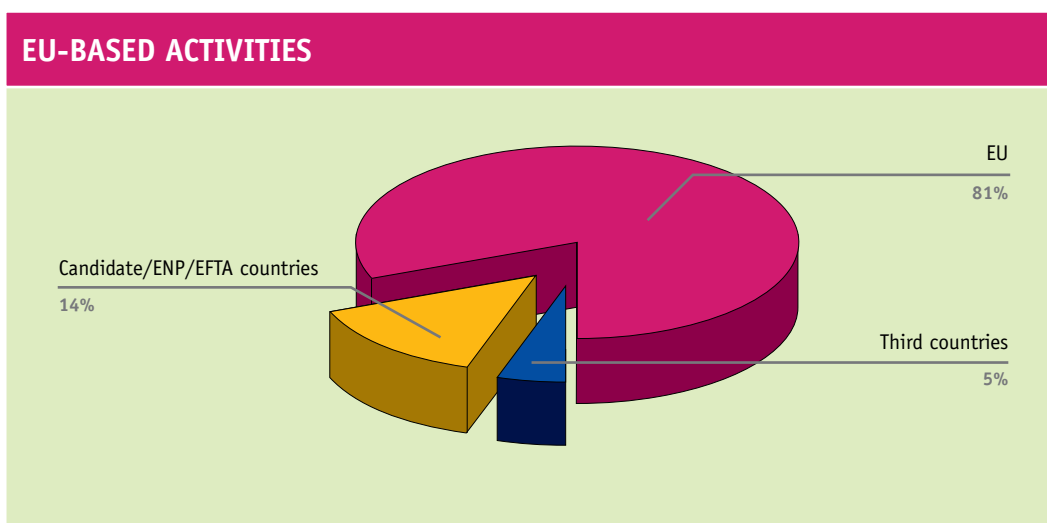
TRAINING ACTIVITIES 2007				
Training programmes	No. of events	Training days	Overall participants	
EU-based programmes				
Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point principles	19	95	346	
Airport Border Inspection Posts	3	9	106	
Seaport Border Inspection Posts	3	9	116	
Animal by-products	4	8	265	
Animal welfare	1	5	74	
Zoonoses	5	20	187	
Plant protection products	2	8	43	
Food contact materials	6	20	192	
Total (EU-based programmes)	43	174	1329	
Third country programmes				
EU food standards	7	19	572	
Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza control (workshops)	3	9	55	
Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza control (sustained training)	9	378	553	
Food testing	6	30	106	
Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed	5	13	237	
Total (third country programmes)	30	449	1523	
Total (all programmes)	73	617	2852	

3.2 EU-BASED ACTIVITIES

A total of eight EU-based programmes have been run within the initiative in 2007. As these activities are mainly aimed at EU Member State competent authority staff and that roughly 80% of places on workshops in Europe are allocated to EU countries, the number of EU participants is in line with projections made at the outset.

The Commission also allots a significant number of places on the EU-based courses to European Free Trade Association (EFTA), candidate and European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries, thus explaining the high levels of participation amongst the EU's immediate neighbours.

The participation of people from outside of Europe also contributes to lending a strong global dimension to the EU-based activities. Indeed, non-European countries were represented in the majority of EU-based programmes taking place in 2007.



3.2.1 HAZARD ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL CONTROL POINT

Training on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) continued for a second year in 2007 and was run by Campden and Chorleywood Food Research Association Group who had implemented it in 2006. The training was divided into two courses. Course one was for participants with basic HACCP awareness and course two was for those with more advanced HACCP knowledge.

Eight five-day workshops took place within course one. Three of these were held in Stratford-upon-Avon (UK) of which two were in April and one in October, three took place in Porto in May, June and September and one each was held in Paris and Budapest in July and November respectively.

Course two comprised eleven five-day workshops. Four of these took place in Porto in May, June, September and October, four in Budapest two of which were in July and one each in October and November. Two workshops ran in Stratford-upon-Avon in September and October and one was held in Paris in November.

A total of 16 tutors from four EU Member States were used and 346 participants attended of which 139 attended course one and 207 attended course two. All EU Member States, candidate and European Free Trade Association countries sent participants. Other countries represented were Brazil, Chile, D.R. Congo, Jamaica, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Serbia and Tunisia.

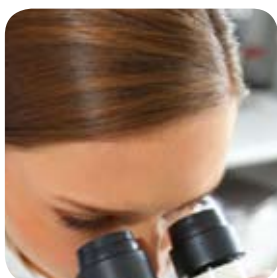
Evaluation of the training took place through distribution of a questionnaire enabling participants to give their opinion on tutors, organisation, subject emphasis and comprehension. The results were encouraging, with 88% of course one participants considering that the quality of the workshops was excellent and the training had met its objectives. For course two, 83% viewed the workshops as having attained their objectives and the training as having been of the highest standard.

Suggestions for improvements included allotting more time for factory visits, providing more balance between the food and feed sectors and spending more time on auditing principles and less on revision of basic HACCP principles in the advanced course.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Food and feed businesses in the EU are required by EU law to comply with hygiene requirements including implementation and maintenance of permanent procedures based on HACCP².

HACCP is recognised as the most effective tool for improving safety in food and feed businesses. It consists of seven principles to be followed in sequence. These are: hazard analysis; identification of Critical Control Points (CCP) at which control can be applied and a hazard prevented, eliminated or reduced; establishment of critical limits beyond which hazards are no longer under control; monitoring of CCPs; establishment of corrective actions; documentation and verification of effectiveness. HACCP aims to identify hazards and prevent them from contaminating feed and food. It enables effective control of production so as to verify compliance with safety requirements.



Course one involved development, implementation and maintenance of HACCP-based procedures and also aimed to introduce auditing principles. Course two aimed to provide delegates with an understanding of auditing of HACCP systems.

Both course one and course two workshops covered the topics outlined below. In course one, they were dealt with as an introduction as opposed to a refresher course for course two. The auditing principles session was more in-depth in course two.



The session on background to HACCP covered HACCP requirements in the EU and the role of the World Health Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the Codex Alimentarius Commission. It also looked at the relationship between HACCP and systems such as the International Food Standard, the benefits, limitations and barriers to HACCP introduction and HACCP certification schemes and guidance sources.

Training on Prerequisite Programmes (PRP) to be developed, implemented and documented before setting up an HACCP plan included the role of PRPs as a foundation of and support to HACCP systems, effective evaluation of PRPs and examples of typical PRPs.

2. See Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs, Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin and Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003

Presentations on preparatory stages of HACCP explained the need for management commitment to developing, implementing and maintaining HACCP systems and requisite personnel. They also outlined consultancy roles, linear, modular and generic approaches, documentation software packages, appropriate training and steering groups.

The seven HACCP principles were presented with case studies to demonstrate their application.

Course one auditing training included checklist exercises, reviews of HACCP plans, the principle stages in auditing and the role of checklists and aide-memoires. In course two, this session also covered questioning techniques used in audits, the role of third party auditors and competent authorities, objective and subjective evidence and reviews of sample documentation.

For all workshops, a factory visit was undertaken. For the course one visits, participants identified hazards, suggested control measures and provided feedback on the best ways to implement HACCP in the factory. Course two participants performed HACCP audits in the business visited and presented their findings.

3.2.2 VETERINARY CHECKS AT BORDER INSPECTION POSTS

Border controls are fundamental to safeguarding public and animal health. It is vital that control staff implement effective, harmonised veterinary checks.

EU legislation imposes health and supervisory requirements on live animal imports and products of animal origin entering the EU³. These aim to ensure that imported animals and products meet the standards required for production in, and trade between, Member States.

Training on best practices for veterinary control procedures aims to improve knowledge of relevant requirements amongst border control personnel. This will help to ensure a consistently high standard of such controls throughout the EU.

Following positive results in 2006, it was decided to continue for 2007 the programmes on best practices for veterinary checks in airport and seaport border inspection posts (BIP).

AIRPORT BIPS

The contract for the programme on airport BIPs was awarded to the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health, Family and Youth which had run this programme in 2006. Three three-day workshops took place at Vienna airport in April, June and September.

Overall, 17 tutors were used from four EU Member States, one European Free Trade Association (EFTA) country and one third country as well as from DG Health and Consumers and the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO). A total of 106 participants attended the training, all of whom came from EU, candidate, EFTA and European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries.

Evaluation was carried out in two ways. Each participant filled in an evaluation questionnaire and final discussions took place in small groups. With regard to the evaluation questionnaires, 89% of respondents considered the workshop as very good or excellent. For 88% the workshop lived up to their expectations and was relevant to their job.

3. Import requirements are, in particular, included in Directives 97/78/EC and 91/496/EEC

Suggestions for improvement included more focus on cooperation with other branches of competent authorities, more opportunities for exchange of experience during and after workshops and spending more time on the areas of procedures and certificates.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

The first and second workshops were of a more basic level than the third. The first workshop was aimed almost entirely at EU border veterinarians whilst in the second more spaces were reserved for participants from candidate, EFTA and ENP countries.

Presentations for the first two workshops covered the EU Hygiene Package, particularly procedures for ensuring that imports comply with rules laid down in the Package, potential problems and rules for composite products. Other presentations dealt with relevant customs legislation and procedures, risk assessment and use of the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), transit and storage rules and surveillance procedures for customs warehouses. A further presentation covered FVO inspections, including cooperation with inspectors and frequent findings.

Practical sessions took place within the BIP during these workshops. Some of these used original certificates and consignments and relevant legislation to facilitate simulated case studies.

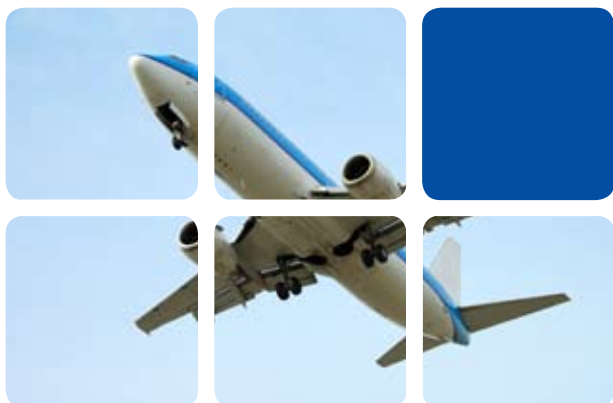
The session on procedures used legal texts in relation to original certificates of problematic consignments and another session involved checking that original certificates conformed to legal requirements. Other sessions involved transit checks on consignments for transit via the EU, clearance of live animals covering checks and blocking of consignments and clearance of products using thawing, cutting, temperature control and pH testing as well as examination and sampling. Further sessions dealt with hygiene, including disinfection, specialised clothing and restrictions and passenger checks involving customs procedures.

For the second workshop, given the presence of more participants from non-EU countries, two extra practical sessions were held. One was on third country relations and dealt with the approach to veterinary border controls in the EU and the background to relevant EU legislation. The other covered practical procedures at border controls.

As it aimed to provide more advanced training, the third workshop's content differed from that of the others. The ichthyology presentation looked at controls on fish and fishery products including examination and sampling. The sampling and residue control presentation focused on issues concerning testing for contaminants. Other presentations looked at common problems in BIPs as identified by FVO inspections and how FVO inspections are conducted including preparation for receiving them and follow-up procedures.

Further sessions dealt with procedures for examining and quarantine of live imports, checks on horses, International Air Transport Association regulations for air transport of animals and EU customs legislation.

Practical sessions in the BIP dealt with cargo handling in airports and on planes including temperature control, monitoring of the environment, access to animals during flights and euthanasia. These sessions also covered examination of fishery products, tasks related to fraud and composite products including container tracking, detection of forged certificates, use of the RASFF, x-ray



equipment, DNA analysis, consignment selection and rules for certain third countries.

Other practical sessions were held at Vienna zoo and focused on immobilisation rules for large animals and use of containers for different animals as well as catching, housing and examination of live reptiles. Practical work at the zoo also covered transport and first aid for ornamental fish and birds as well as regular infractions.

SEAPORT BIPS

This programme involved the implementation of three, three-day workshops. One was held in May and two were in September. All three took place in Italy at the seaport BIP of Pisa/Livorno. The workshops were implemented by the consortium led by Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise "G. Caporale".

Fifteen tutors from five Member States managed the training. The European Commission was represented by eight officials of whom five were from DG Health and Consumers, two from the FVO and one from DG Taxation and Customs Union.

In all, 116 participants from 33 countries attended. Of the countries represented, 25 were EU Member States with Austria and Luxembourg not present. Other participating countries were Albania, Croatia, FYROM, Iceland, Montenegro, Norway, Turkey and Ukraine.

The quality of the training was evaluated by distribution of questionnaires at the end of the workshops. Almost all participants (99%) gave a very satisfactory evaluation of the activity in general and 98% and 99% respectively declared that the event corresponded to their expectations and that the objectives had been achieved. Satisfaction levels with educational methodologies, tutors and educational materials were over 95% throughout.

Indications for improvements were to keep the goal of harmonisation of procedures in mind at all times and to focus on communication between the Commission and Member States, between customs and BIPs and among BIPs.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

The course was mainly practical and based on brainstorming sessions, case studies and discussions. Lectures were limited to refreshment of basic principles. Exercises were carried out in small groups animated by tutors and plenary presentations of the results and discussions followed. This gave participants the chance to compare responses to critical situations and find common solutions.

The training aimed to give participants an understanding of relevant legislation and ideas for common strategies for harmonised implementation of control procedures for products of animal origin. It also had the objective of providing an understanding of the importance of information collection, distribution and exchange and an awareness of appropriate procedures for evaluation of the accuracy of information and management of documents.

Presentations covered the EU Hygiene Package including norm interpretation, procedure harmonisation and the legal basis of controls, custom procedures for veterinary checks and communication of safety risks through the RASFF. Other presentations dealt with transit and transshipment rules, FVO inspections and how to prepare for them, disposal of kitchen waste and prevention of fraud.

Participants were divided into smaller groups for practical sessions. These dealt with procedures for consignments in transit, free zones and customs warehouses, documentary and physical checks, as well as consignment selection of products of animal origin and live animals, and documentary case studies.

The programme also included visits to the BIP. This enabled participants to see Livorno harbour, inspection centres, the kitchen waste disposal plant, the store for products not conforming to EU requirements and the administrative office. They also performed practical exercises during the visits.

3.2.3 EU REGULATIONS FOR ANIMAL BY-PRODUCTS

Four, two-day workshops have been organised within the Animal By-Products (ABP) programme. The workshops were held in Limassol in May, Madrid in June, Bonn in July and Vilnius in September. The contractor was the Agri-Livestock Consultants Consortium.

The six workshop tutors were experienced practitioners in the field each from a different EU Member State. Host country speakers also presented papers at each workshop.

A total of 265 participants attended training including representatives from all EU Member States. Other countries present were Croatia, Iceland, FYROM, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Turkey, Argentina, Australia, Belarus, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Canada, India, Kenya, Moldova, Morocco, Pakistan, Russia, Thailand and USA.

At each workshop, participants were provided with an evaluation questionnaire to measure the quality of the tutors and the relevance of the issues covered. The overall satisfaction rate with the training was 85%.

Feedback from delegates has laid the ground for future training. Recommendations included focusing workshops on specific topics and providing more training on the EU Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) database for monitoring the movement of animals and products of animal origin.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Over 16 million tonnes of material of animal origin not intended for human consumption are produced in the EU each year. Some of this material is transformed into products used in animal feed, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, laboratory reagents and other products. Some is disposed of as waste by incineration, or co-incineration. Using certain ABPs in feed can spread disease or contaminants. ABPs can also pose a health threat via the environment, if not properly disposed of.



The Commission has adopted measures in order to ensure that only materials from animals fit for human consumption may be used in feed⁴. It also sets out clear rules on what may be done with materials excluded from the food chain.

Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) findings show that some EU countries face a challenge to comply with these requirements. The workshops thus aimed to give a detailed explanation of EU ABP standards, particularly concerning recent developments and expected changes. The training also described their impact on food and feed producers, manufacturers of technical equipment and the disposal sector and explained how competent authorities and other stakeholders can improve compliance. The training was appropriate for both public and private sector needs.

The presentations covered five main topics. The first was update of legislation and expected changes and gave a detailed overview of current regulations.

The second topic was identification and channelling of ABP material. This included identification and marking, separation of products from animals fit for human consumption from products from those from animals not fit for human consumption and labelling for disposal or to avoid animal and human consumption. Other subjects were channelling for ensuring that products arrive uncontaminated for their designated use, and use of commercial documents, TRACES and Common Veterinary Entry Documents for imports.

Tracking and tracing of ABP using paper trail and information technology was another main topic. It looked at current information and communication technology implementations especially online real-time data capture and adaptation to the ABP sector of techniques developed in Animal Identification and Registration and Movement Control.

An additional topic was interlink of ABP Regulation with food and animal disease control legislation for hides, horses, former foodstuffs, blood products, meat bone meal fertiliser, milk and catering waste.

The final topic covered interlink between the ABP Regulation and sector legislation including for organic fertiliser, biodiesel, medical devices, cosmetics and medicinal products and processed animal proteins as well as end of chain regulations.

At each workshop, a presentation was given by a representative of the hosting country covering local experience and solutions to questions posed during the training.

Plant visits were an integral part of the agenda. Participants visited slaughterhouses, rendering, processing, biogas and composting plants. They provided practical insight into operational aspects and provided a platform for discussion and exchange of experience.

4. Regulation (EC) 1774/2002

3.2.4 WELFARE STANDARDS CONCERNING THE STUNNING AND KILLING OF ANIMALS IN SLAUGHTERHOUSE AND DISEASE CONTROL SITUATIONS

The consortium led by Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise "G. Caporale" was contracted to organise animal welfare training. One workshop was held in Zagreb, Croatia, on 15-19 October.

Eighteen tutors from nine EU Member States and candidate countries and two third countries managed lectures, group activities and visits. Four Commission officials also attended.

A total of 74 participants from 48 countries took part in the training. All EU Member States, candidate countries and European Free Trade Association countries were represented. Other countries present were Albania, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Lebanon, Morocco, Namibia, Paraguay, Peru, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay, USA and Zimbabwe.

The quality of training was evaluated by the distribution of questionnaires at the end of the workshop. In all, 99% of participants considered that the objectives had been achieved, 97% evaluated the training activity as very good or excellent and 96% declared that the event met their expectations.

It was suggested that future training should have less presentations, enhance discussion during site visits and reduce participant numbers in order to allow for more practical sessions.

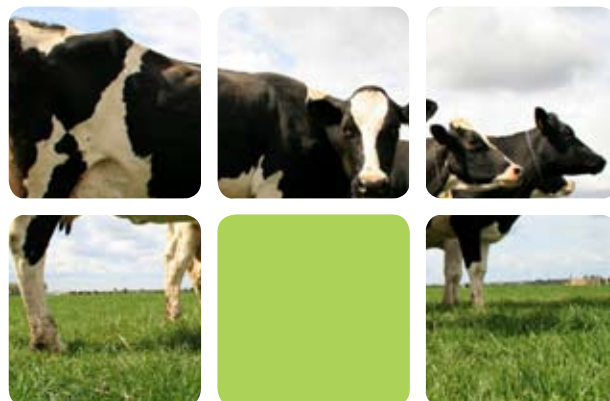
TECHNICAL INFORMATION

EU legislation on slaughtering aims to minimise animal suffering by allowing use of only approved stunning and killing methods based on scientific knowledge and practical experience⁵. Establishments in third countries must ensure that animals are killed under equivalent conditions in order to export to the EU.

Food and Veterinary Office reports have highlighted deficiencies in the application of approved stunning and killing methods in the EU and third countries. Disease outbreaks such as Foot and Mouth and Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza have highlighted limitations of certain killing techniques used for disease control.

Implementation of humane slaughter methods is of great interest to European consumers. Maintaining high standards of animal welfare also has positive outcomes on food quality. In this context, it was decided to continue training on animal welfare standards at slaughter and killing for disease control in 2007.

The course aimed to enable participants to understand the scientific principles behind international welfare standards and the main stunning and killing techniques used. It also aimed to raise their awareness of relevant EU



5. Directive 93/119/EC

legislation and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) standards and monitoring procedures for implementation of welfare requirements.

Presentations were given on the scientific basis for proper handling, stunning and killing of cattle, pigs, poultry and small ruminants with regard to anatomy and physiology. Others dealt with OIE guidelines, revision of EU legislation on protection of animals at slaughter and killing and integration of animal welfare into EU food safety legislation.

Additional presentations focused on the non legislative approach to animal welfare, the development of welfare indicators and best practices, auditing of stunning and killing techniques, the DIALREL Project on religious slaughter and handling and restraining. A panel discussion was also held on animal welfare as an added value to trade with the EU.

Field activities included visits to a bovine, poultry and swine slaughterhouse and a poultry or dairy farm. Case studies were provided which set out problems to which participants tried to find common solutions. Each group wrote a report on their case study and the facility visited.

3.2.5 MONITORING AND CONTROLS OF ZOOSES AND APPLYING MICROBIOLOGICAL CRITERIA IN FOODSTUFFS

Five, four-day workshops were held in this programme. Two of these were in Italy in June, one was in Poland in October and two were in Denmark in October and November. The contractor responsible for implementation was the consortium led by Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise "G. Caporale".

Fourteen tutors from three EU Member States managed lectures and group activities. The European Commission was represented by six officials.

In all, 187 participants from 38 countries attended. All EU Member States and candidate countries as well as Iceland, Norway, Ukraine, Argentina, Brazil, Morocco, Thailand and Tunisia were represented.

The quality of the training was evaluated by questionnaires filled in by participants at the end of the workshop. Almost all participants (97%) gave a satisfactory general evaluation and 90% felt that the event corresponded to their expectations. A total of 92% thought that the objectives had been met. Satisfaction with educational methodologies, tutors and materials exceeded 80%.

Suggestions included increased capitalisation on networking and problem sharing opportunities, having two tutors supervising case studies to give better technical support and enhancing practical aspects, especially with regard to salmonella risk factors.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Zoonoses are diseases transmissible between animals and humans. The Commission has taken measures to ensure that they are properly monitored, and that food-borne outbreaks receive appropriate epidemiological investigation⁶. The Commission also aims to ensure that effective measures are taken to detect and control zoonotic agents along the food chain⁷.

6. Directive 2003/99/EC

7. See Regulation (EC) No 2160/2003



Targets are being set for reducing prevalence of zoonoses and zoonotic agents and should be achieved by establishing national control programmes. Imports of live animals and hatching eggs will become subject to control programmes equivalent to those in EU Member States.

Microbiological criteria for organisms in specific foodstuffs have also been laid down and apply to products placed on the EU market and food imported from third countries⁸.

Against this background, training on monitoring and controls of zoonoses and applying microbiological criteria in foodstuffs was launched in 2007. The course aimed to familiarise participants with EU provisions and guidelines for monitoring zoonoses, zoonotic agents and antimicrobial resistance and for handling food-borne outbreaks and EU food safety strategies.

It also aimed to enable participants to better plan and implement monitoring and control programmes on zoonoses and zoonotic agents in compliance with EU provisions and to support food businesses in executing measures for reducing zoonoses.

Presentations included risk analysis, EU food safety strategies, monitoring of zoonoses and zoonotic agents and investigation of food borne illness in Man. Others covered salmonella control programmes, risk factors in animals, establishment of Food Safety Objectives and microbiological criteria as risk management tools.

Case studies focused on collection of data on zoonoses and zoonotic agents, identifying critical issues, investigating disease outbreaks, implementation of Food Safety Objectives, microbiological criteria and salmonella control programmes and risk management.

3.2.6 CONTROLS ON FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

Six courses were held on food contact materials. Of these, four were three-day courses for competent authority staff responsible for setting up control plans and inspectors of food and food contact materials premises. Two were four-day courses for laboratory personnel responsible for chemical analysis. All workshops were held at Groningen in the Netherlands. One was held in each of June, July, August and October, and two took place in September. The contractor for the activity was the European Training Platform for Safer Food.

For the workshops for competent authority staff, ten tutors were used from three EU Member States. In the case of the workshops aimed at laboratory personnel, 13 tutors from four EU Member States and one European Free Trade Association country provided training.

A total of 192 participants attended. All EU Member States except France and Sweden were represented. Other countries with participants attending were Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, FYROM, Turkey, Belarus, Ethiopia, Georgia, Morocco and Tunisia.

Questionnaires distributed following workshops asked for participants' opinions on the standard of training. A total of 93% of participants at workshops for competent authority staff had a positive view of the training. This rose to 96% for the laboratory personnel workshops.

8. Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005

Recommendations from courses for competent authority staff included provision of more information on declarations of compliance and practical application of legislation and more insight into processing and packaging technology. For training for laboratory personnel, suggestions included provision of information on obtaining testing methods from Community and National Reference Laboratories, more insight into screening methods for unknown substances and more involvement of people analysing selection of test conditions.



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Food contact materials are materials and articles intended to come into contact with food, including packaging, cutlery, dishes, processing machines and containers. Such materials should not transfer their components into foodstuffs in unacceptable quantities.

Food and Veterinary Office reports have identified a need to improve official controls of food contact materials. High levels of non-compliance with regard to migration into food have been reported for plasticisers. This demonstrates a need for training in this area in order to improve the skills of inspectors.

New EU legislation on food contact materials requires manufacturers to issue declarations of compliance and provide supporting documentation⁹. Inspectors responsible for checking this documentation require appropriate training.

Subjects addressed by both courses included EU provisions, national control plans, analysis of plasticisers, verification of compliance, and inspections of premises.

Lecture sessions for competent authority staff covered enforcement policies, EU legislation on interaction of food with packaging, food contact materials on the market, documentation, traceability requirements and good manufacturing practice. Other presentations dealt with migration modeling as a risk management tool, safety evaluation of food contact materials for authorisation, risk-based annual planning cycles and assessment plans.

Practical exercises were carried out on informing Member States about risky materials using the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed, inspecting declarations of compliance, traceability and good management practice, exposure and risk assessment and use of Expert Choice to manage complex decisions.

Plenary presentations for laboratory staff included EU legislation and national approaches in non-harmonised areas, Community and National Reference Laboratories, harmonisation of validation procedures and proficiency studies. Additional presentations looked at authorisation of food contact materials, European Committee for Standardisation analysis methods and test conditions.

Practical training covered evaluation of migration of plasticisers from lids, quality checks and proficiency studies, phthalates and heavy metals, robustness testing and use of statistical parameters for evaluating analysis methods.

9. Framework Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004

3.2.7 EVALUATION AND REGISTRATION OF PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS

A five-day workshop and three-day follow-up meeting were held in Bratislava in June and September respectively. The course was aimed exclusively at participants from the new Member States, candidate, and European Neighbourhood Policy countries.

A total of nine tutors from four different EU Member States provided the training. The first workshop was attended by 30 delegates and the follow-up meeting by 13. All Member States having joined the EU since 2004 were represented except Malta, as were candidate countries Croatia and Turkey.

Questionnaires were handed out following the workshops asking participants to give their opinions on the training. More than 63% of participants evaluated the way in which the events meet their expectations as excellent, while 34% considered them "good". A total of 24% rated the improvement in their knowledge level as a result of attending the event as "excellent" and 71% as "good".

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Following inclusion of active substances onto Annex I of Directive 91/414 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market, all Member States must ensure that commercialised plant protection products comply with the conditions of inclusion for each active substance.

Member States having joined the EU since May 2004 must ensure that active substances listed on Annex I of the Directive prior to their accession are examined to ensure they comply. Training on evaluation and registration of plant protection products was thus introduced into Better Training for Safer Food for 2007.



The course focused on administrative procedures, documentation, data protection, quality management and auditing. Assessments were made of scientific studies, cases for not submitting studies, specifications for active substances, and calculations on data points.

The workshop aimed to give participants a common understanding of the legal requirements of re-registration and the necessary administrative and technical training for conducting national re-registration activities in a manner compliant

with the legislation. It also tried to provide an opportunity to discuss re-registration problems and identify solutions.

An overview was provided of the current position regarding implementation of Directive 91/414, Member State responsibilities, challenges of re-registration, the process leading to a decision on

inclusion and the post inclusion process. These were followed by case studies in which representatives from each new Member State summarised the current status of their national system.

Participants undertook plenary and working group sessions on step one of the re-evaluation process. This involves checking that the conditions of Annex I of the Directive are met and demonstrating access to a complete Annex II dossier for inclusion of an active substance.

The plenary session on step one detailed post inclusion procedures and the mechanics of step one, including compliance with inclusion conditions and data protection. The practical exercises dealt with post-inclusion actions, planning and administration, simulated submissions demonstration of access to an Annex II dossier and the applicability of step one procedures to different national situations.

Step two of the process involves re-registration of plant protection products at national level in line with uniform principles. The plenary session on step two covered development of mutual recognition guidance documents, the Annex III dossier to be submitted for authorisation of a product, labelling requirements and the risk envelope concept. This concept means that once a risk assessment has been conducted for a use of a product, assessment of that product for any further uses posing no greater risk can simply refer to the earlier evaluation.

Practical exercises on step two focused on submission to re-register an existing product, the risk envelope approach and mutual recognition.

The follow-up meeting reflected on the conclusions from the workshop. Themes covered included data protection, work-sharing between countries, the risk envelope approach, minimising evaluation inputs, Member States' experience, mutual recognition and zonal issues in relation to authorisation.

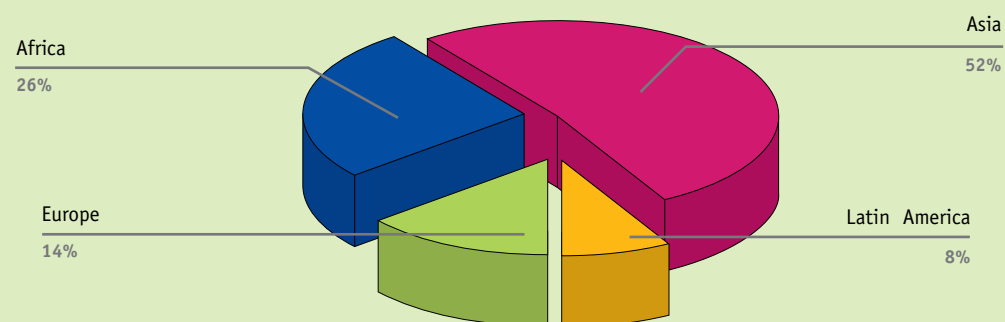
Group exercises in the follow-up meeting dealt with critical examination of re-registration, mutual recognition guidance and development of written procedures.

3.3 ACTIVITIES IN THIRD COUNTRIES

In 2007, four programmes for third countries have been run within the initiative. Participation in these programmes was intended for people from third, and particularly developing countries. However, in the light of the spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza to new EU Member States and candidate countries, part of the programme dealing with this issue was focused on this region.

The 2007 activities saw a high concentration of activities in Asia, particularly in the Association of South East Asian Nations region, which accounts for the high levels of participation from that continent. Activities were also held in Africa and Latin America and the training, likewise, benefited from significant numbers of participants from those two regions.

THIRD COUNTRY ACTIVITIES: PARTICIPANTS BY REGION



3.3.1 EU FOOD STANDARDS

The programme comprised five, three-day workshops on fishery and aquaculture products and two two-day workshops of which one was on residues and contaminants in fruit, vegetables, nuts, herbs and spices and the other on food contact materials.

The fishery and aquaculture workshops took place in Morocco in March, in Mauritius and the United Arab Emirates in May, in Chile in July and in Vietnam in September. The workshop on residues and contaminants was held in Egypt in April and the one on food contact materials was in Thailand in October/November.

The contract for the organisation of the activity was awarded to AETS, in consortium with AENOR and AINIA.

In all, 31 tutors from ten EU Member States, one European Free Trade Association country and seven third countries were used. A total of 572 participants from 73 different countries and three regional organisations were trained within the programme.

Participating countries from Africa were: Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mayotte, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Seychelles, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Latin American participants came from: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Asian participants were from: Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Oman, Palestine, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri-Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Vietnam and Yemen.

Participants were asked for their reflections on the training via forms distributed at the end of workshops. Questions on these forms covered aspects including the effectiveness of the lecturers, the level of theoretical training and the standard of training materials. The organisers received a satisfaction level of 82%.

It was felt that some aspects of the training could be improved. These included lengthening training sessions, reserving the afternoon of the last day for question and answer sessions and carrying out evaluation on a day-to-day basis to obtain more relevant feedback.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

As the world's biggest food importer, the EU requires comprehensive safety legislation to ensure that imports meet Community standards. Compliance with such standards may place constraints on exports from developing countries due to the lack of adequate control structures. In areas such as fruit and vegetables and other non-animal food sectors, private organisations and importers are often responsible for ensuring food safety.

The programme aimed to inform third country control staff about the implications of EU food safety standards. Increased knowledge of EU policy amongst third country authorities should improve controls of exports and help third countries to meet EU import requirements, thereby facilitating trade.

Workshops on fishery and aquaculture products and residues and contaminants included presentations on the structure and constituents of EU food legislation and Food and Veterinary Office inspections.

In the fishery and aquaculture workshops, other presentations covered EU legislation on official controls, fishing vessels and landing sites, auction halls and wholesale markets, processing establishments, aquaculture and live bivalve molluscs. The fishery and aquaculture workshops included on-site visits to aquaculture farms, fishing vessels, landing sites, processing and canning establishments and cold storage facilities.

Presentations for the residues and contaminants workshop covered EU legislation on Maximum Residue Levels for pesticides, contaminants such as heavy metals and mycotoxins, food processing in relation to residues and contaminants and processing establishments. Participants visited a residue analysis laboratory for parallel sessions on residues of mycotoxins, pesticides and metals as well as food hygiene.

All visits were followed by debriefing sessions during which interpretation and application of EU legislative requirements was explained.

The food contact materials workshop presentations focused on national legislation and Council of Europe resolutions on food contact materials, risk assessment and declarations of compliance. They also looked at compliance with food contact material requirements in Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines and China. Other presentations covered enforcement of the legislation in Europe, packaging compliance in the Association of South East Asian Nations region, testing and quality assurance and requirements for official laboratories.

Practical exercises involved case studies on the understanding and application of EU food contact materials legislation. These dealt with plastic, paper, ceramics and coatings.

3.3.2 ASSISTANCE AND SUSTAINED TRAINING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTROL STRATEGIES FOR HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA

This programme involved the seconding of experts to provide sustained training and assistance to Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Egypt and Morocco for six weeks each. Three, three-day laboratory workshops were held of which one was for delegates from Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, another for delegates from Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, and the other for Egyptian, Moroccan and Nigerian participants. The workshops took place in May in Oldenburg, Germany. The contractor was the European Training Platform for Safer Food.

Eleven tutors from three different EU Member States were used during the workshops and nine experts undertook the sustained training and assistance missions. In all, 55 delegates from the nine designated countries attended the laboratory workshops. In the nine countries visited, 553 people attended the sustained training.

More than 43% of workshop participants considered the way in which the event met their expectations as excellent and a further 48% considered it to have been good. Recommendations for improving the sustained training and assistance included assessing the situation at the outset to find the most relevant areas for assistance, increased focus on basic bio-security and increasing contact with programmes run by other international organisations.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Outbreaks of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in poultry began to increase sharply in 2004, mainly in South-East Asia. In 2005 the disease spread to Africa, Turkey and Russia and also reached the EU. Human cases have been increasing since 2004.



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Health Organization WHO, World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and EU experts have concluded that a long-term coordinated effort will be necessary to control the situation.

The FAO and OIE in collaboration with the WHO have developed a Global Strategy for the Progressive Control of HPAI. The short term objective is to prevent further spread of HPAI in countries infected by the H5N1 strain. The main task of the sustained training and assistance was establishing and helping to implement contingency plans and identifying practical surveillance and disease control measures at national, regional and local levels.

Details of the activities for each of the countries visited during 2007 are as follows:

Bangladesh: The expert met government staff, visited farms and discussed vaccination and bio-security of backyard poultry. Training dealt with diagnosis, practical control, surveillance, vaccination, culling and carcass disposal.

Cambodia: The expert learned about the Cambodian HPAI eradication task forces and discussed fencing of chickens and bio-security. Surveillance of marketplaces was also initiated. The training covered EU legislation, the 2003 avian influenza outbreak in the Netherlands, sampling, markets, carcass composting, epidemiology and information management.

Laos: The mission focused on bio-security in markets and slaughterhouses. The expert assessed the situation in different regions, visiting farms, slaughterhouses and a vaccination institute. Training topics were bio-security in markets and slaughterhouses, vaccination, blood sampling and swabs.

Myanmar: The first visit was spent assessing the poultry sector's disease control organisation and training the veterinary service. During the second visit the expert organised sessions on sampling, a simulated outbreak on a farm and lectures on epidemiology. Other areas covered were surveillance, differential diagnosis, protective equipment, culling and vaccination.

Training for Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey included emergency preparedness planning, culling, bio-security, traceability, epidemiology, vaccination and trade. Additionally, in Bulgaria, the expert focused on pathology and adapting EU Regulations to the Bulgarian situation and in Romania he looked at eradication, early warning systems and surveillance of backyard flocks.

Egypt: The expert discussed supervision strategies and issues including communication and compensation with the relevant authorities. Lectures on HPAI prevention and control were also organised. Training focused on surveillance, emergency preparedness, bio-security, protective equipment, animal movement management, and market inspection.

Morocco: Relevant authorities and the expert defined subjects needing attention, including communication, risk management and culling. Trainees performed exercises on suspicions of outbreaks and responses to confirmations of outbreaks.

The laboratory workshops provided training in virological and serological diagnosis methods covering biology, molecular biology, diagnostics, outbreaks and virus spread.

A practical session on molecular biology included manual and automatic nucleic acid isolation, Polymerase Chain Reaction testing and real-time technique. The session on pathology covered autopsies and bio-safety of autopsy. The serology part looked at influenza antibodies, handling of specimens and sample management. The virology session dealt with virus isolation, handling large numbers of specimens and haemagglutination inhibition.

3.3.3 TRAINING FOR LABORATORY STAFF OF ASEAN COUNTRIES IN THE APPLICATION OF FOOD TESTING

This programme comprised six five-day workshops for analysts from Association of South East Asian Nations Reference Laboratories (ARL) and other laboratories. The workshops took place in the ARLs at Singapore in June and July, Dong Nai, Vietnam in July, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia in July, Pathun Thani, Thailand in August and Nonthaburi, Thailand in September. The contractor was the European Training Platform for Safer Food.

Twelve tutors from four EU Member States were used for the entire programme. A total of 106 participants attended from all Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam).

On the evaluation forms distributed at the end of each workshop, 33% of participants said that the training had been excellent in meeting their expectations and 54% said that it had been good; giving a satisfaction rating of 87%.

Proposals for improvements included using more local tutors, encouraging further cooperation between EU Community and National Reference Laboratories (NRL) and ARLs and obtaining a better overview of ASEAN NRLs' competences to better define subjects.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Six ARLs have been established within the EC-ASEAN Economic Cooperation Programme on Standards, Quality and Conformity assessment. They disseminate valid analysis methods to ASEAN National Reference Laboratories through training and technical assistance.

Providing training to ARLs should enhance their capacity to disseminate competence and help ASEAN countries to improve official testing services.

Each workshop focused on a different topic. These were detection of veterinary drug residues, mycotoxins, pesticides residues, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and heavy metals as well as microbiology.

The veterinary drug residues workshop covered microbiological plate tests for screening antibiotics in animal tissue and instrumental analysis for specific drug residues in animal tissue. Work sessions covered sulphonamide residues in muscle, milk and honey, detection of minoglycosides and tetracycline residues analysis. Training on test methods looked at analysis methods for residues of sulfonamides and tetracyclines.

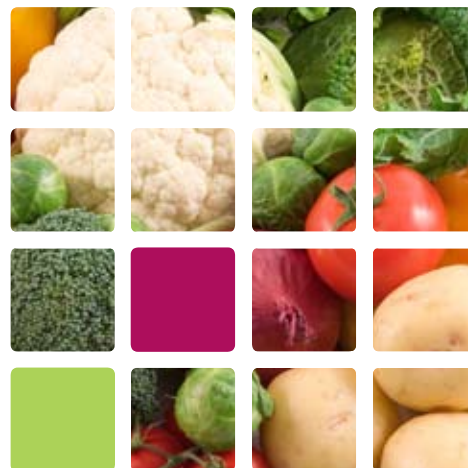
Mycotoxins workshop presentations covered mycotoxin contamination and control, concentration data, risk analysis and method validation. Practical sessions included extraction steps for mycotoxin analysis, cleanup procedures for immunoaffinity columns and qualitative and quantitative determination of mycotoxins in food.

The pesticide residues workshop presentations were on sample preparation for multi-residue analysis, the QuEChERS method of rapid extraction and analysis of pesticide residues in food, matrix effects, EU proficiency tests and toxicological risk assessment. Interactive sessions focused on use of web-based information sources in residue analysis and quality assurance provisions. Laboratory training dealt with the QuEChERS method for fruit and vegetables, oils and tea and use of analyte-protectants for improving gas-chromatographic pesticide analysis.

Presentations for the microbiology training focused on listeria monocytogenes, calibration checks, proficiency testing, food borne pathogens, HACCP, quality assurance and salmonella detection. Practical sessions concentrated on rapid detection, enumeration and identification of listeria monocytogenes and also included testing for listeria monocytogenes and confirmation and identification tests.

Lectures in the GMO workshop focused on DNA extraction and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing, validation of PCR methods, good laboratory practice, measurement uncertainty and decisions on compliance. During laboratory sessions, participants prepared samples and extracted DNA from them. They learnt how to determine the purity of extracted DNA, run PCR using thermocyclers and interpret results.

Training on heavy metals principally focused on cadmium, lead and mercury. Theoretical presentations dealt with accreditation requirements, method validation, analytical methods, proficiency testing and measurement uncertainty. Practical training covered method validation, calibration curves, linearity range, drift control, accreditation and quality assurance.



3.3.4 TRAINING ON THE EU RAPID ALERT SYSTEM FOR FOOD AND FEED AND THE POSSIBLE INTRODUCTION OF A SIMILAR SYSTEM IN OTHER REGIONS OF THE WORLD

This activity comprised three three-day workshops on the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) in Thailand in June, Argentina in September and China in November. Two two-day workshops on TRACES took place in November in Vietnam. AETS in consortium with AENOR and AINIA organised the training.

Eleven tutors from seven EU member States and two third countries were employed over the five workshops. A total of 237 participants from 29 countries in Latin America and Asia and a regional organisation (Association of South East Asian Nations) were trained.

Latin American countries represented were Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Participating Asian countries were Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Participants' evaluation of the workshops gave a satisfaction rating of 85%. Suggested improvements were to allow more time for practical training such as studying notifications and to avoid overlaps between presentations.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION



The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) is a network involving EU and European Economic Area countries, the Commission and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). It is primarily a tool for information exchange between members when health risks have been identified and measures taken. It allows members to see if they are affected by a problem and take appropriate action.

In many developing countries, national control systems lack resources and many cases notified through the RASFF concern products imported from or exported to third countries. A system similar to the RASFF could enhance controls on products for the domestic market and correct problems with exports quickly.

This programme was launched in 2007 to provide third countries with information on the RASFF and discuss the desirability of and requirements for setting up similar systems elsewhere in the world.

Each of the RASFF workshops gave an overview of the system and discussed the possibility of introducing a similar system within one country and as a regional network of countries. The overview covered the history, principles and infrastructure of the RASFF, collection and treatment of information and the notification process.

Parallel sessions detailed the functioning of the RASFF in different EU Member States, collection and verification of information and data, notification of alerts, reaction, decision making and

surveillance. Practical exercises related to rapid alert systems covered operational steps from getting started, through the creation, submission and evaluation of notifications, to searching for, and reacting to notifications. Further case studies looked at creating and reacting to notifications.

The programme also dealt with the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES), a risk management tool for animal and public health. TRACES creates a single database for monitoring movement of animals and products of animal origin within the EU and from third countries, as well as providing reference data on trade in such goods.

The TRACES training gave a general presentation of the interface and dealt with points related to the functioning of the system. These included customs codes, certification of imports, reference data management and decisions to be made on animals and products in relation to relevant EU legislation.

3.4 BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES



Better Training for Safer Food webpages

Extensive communication activity in support of the initiative has been undertaken in 2007 and will continue in years to come. A communication plan was drawn up at the beginning of 2007 based on the calendar of activities and the horizontal communication initiatives defined for the year.

Webpages dedicated to the initiative contain information on the background to Better Training for Safer Food as well as past, current and future train-

ing programmes. Organisational details are also available including the list of National Contact Points who facilitate communication between the Commission and national authorities. The pages are regularly updated with news of training events and have been restructured to render them more user friendly.

A leaflet on Better Training for Safer Food has been produced as well as a presentation using flash technology. These products detail aspects of the development, benefits and organisation of the initiative in a visually attractive manner.

A video news release (VNR) has been produced in English, French, German, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese. It contains information on the motivations behind the initiative and the future plans. It also has footage of three workshops from 2007 on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points, airport Border Inspection Posts and EU food standards complete with reflections from participants and tutors. The VNR provides a useful outlet through which to raise the initiative's profile using audiovisual media.

Better Training for Safer Food was represented at the World Seafood Congress in Dublin in September 2007. An exhibition stand was hired and materials were distributed to delegates.

News updates on Better Training for Safer Food have been published regularly on the DG Health and Consumer e-news facility and contributions have been made to other publications released by the DG. Input has also been provided for the publication of articles in the specialist press.

Training events were publicised in collaboration with contractors and Commission representations in hosting countries. The contractors also produced programme-specific webpages. Press releases were published linked to press conferences held prior to workshops.

Better Training for Safer Food has also aroused the interest of the independent media, particularly in countries hosting training.

The following quote appeared in the independent media in Cyprus concerning the training on animal by-products held there in May.

"The workshop is intended as a training course as well as a forum for discussion into the ways in which European States must deal with animal by-products, as underlined by EU regulation 1774/2002."

Cyprus Weekly, Cyprus, 3 May 2007

Concerning the programme on zoonoses, this piece was published in the Italian press in June:

"The training provided in this series of workshops offers national competent authority staff responsible for official controls useful tools and knowledge for better verifying compliance of foodstuffs with established criteria."

La Città, Teramo, Italy, 5 June 2007

This quote appeared in the Chilean press in July following the workshop on EU standards for fishery and aquaculture products held in Puerto Varas.

"The EU doesn't take any chances when it comes to food safety, as Chile well knows... This workshop is part of an EU safety training project for different areas of food production both for the Community and countries who want to export their products."

Revista del Campo, Chile, 23 July 2007

Information on the initiative in general has also appeared in different sectors of the press, including specialist and EU affairs publications. Some examples are provided here.

"Member States traditionally train their own control staff dealing with food hygiene, animal health and welfare. Now the Commission is also able to set up EU-level training in these areas. "Better training for safer food", a DG SANCO training initiative for official safety control staff has just completed its first year of activity."

Federation of Veterinarians of Europe Newsletter, March 2007

"Better Training for Safer Food is a training programme started in 2006 to ensure national authorities were up-to-date with all aspects of EU food safety law, with a view to harmonizing practices throughout the bloc as trade between member states increases. As well as Member State control personnel, the initiative also aims to provide training in these areas for third, and particularly developing country participants."

Nutra Ingredients, France 28 May 2007

"The Commission has ... ambitious plans for 2007. The training budget has increased from €3.5 million to some €7 million. It intends to continue the 2006 training programme by holding 62 different training events covering 12 topics for some 2,900 participants."



Article on ABP training, Cyprus, May 2007

Finally, on the occasion of the publication of the Better Training for Safer Food annual report for 2006, this piece was published.

The first annual report on Better Training for Safer Food, which was published today, gives a detailed outline of the training activities carried out in 2006 are. It also provides some information on the feedback that the Commission received from attendees. Finally, the report describes the planned programme for 2007 and looks at how future training programmes should be carried out in order to achieve the best results.

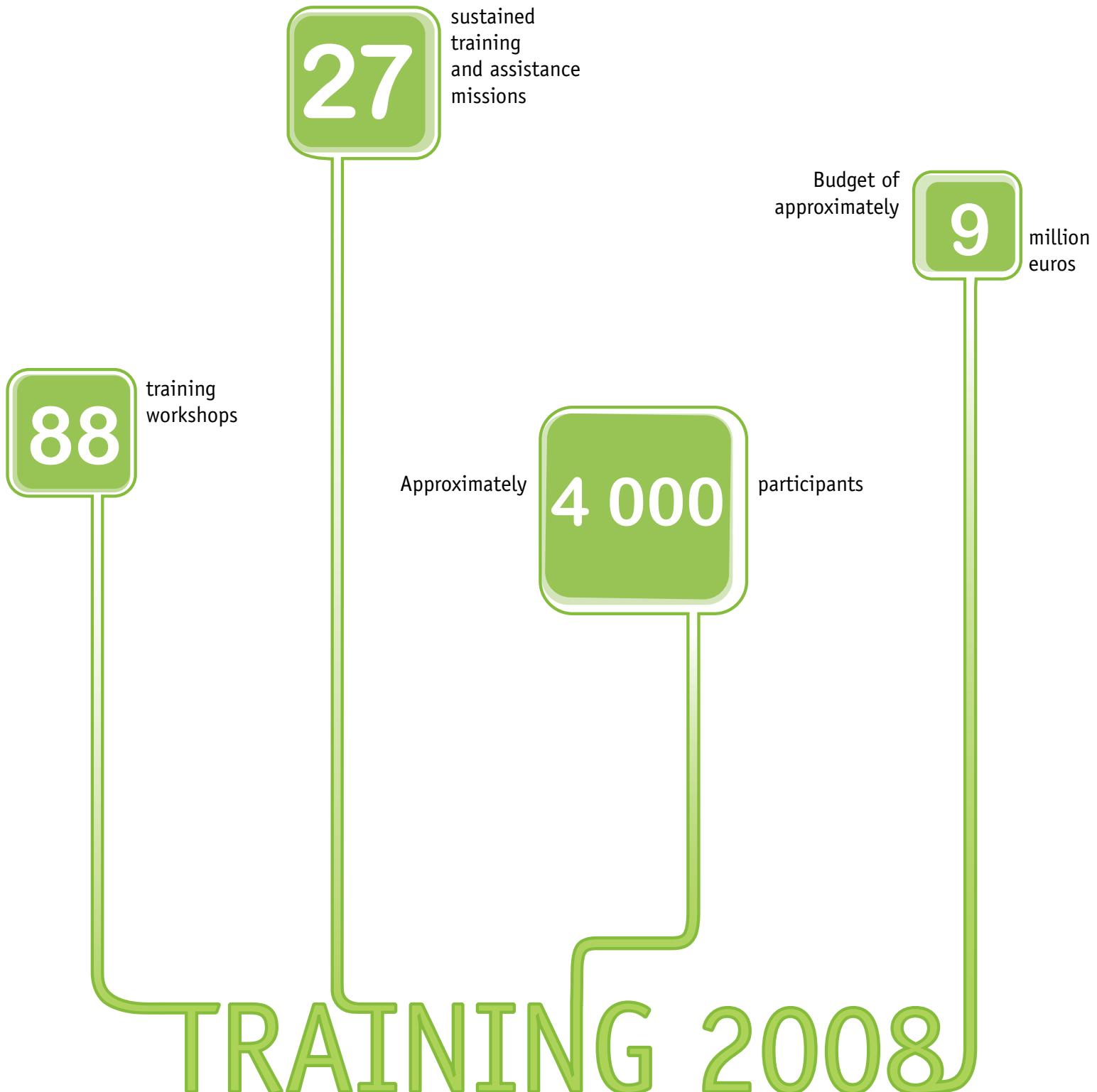
Financial Mirror, Cyprus, 25 May 2007



Report on food standards workshop, Abu Dhabi, May 2007

Communication activities will expand in 2008 to correspond with the broadening scope of the training. The webpages will be regularly updated, articles will be published in various Commission publications and newsletters will be produced. Coordination will also be ensured with contractors so as to gain maximum publicity for training events.

A DVD is to be produced via a web TV format with various sections dealing with subject areas covered by the training. This will enable a wider audience to access the training through open and distance learning. Training documents will serve as the basis for much of the content and will be adapted accordingly.



4. TRAINING IN 2008

4.1 OVERVIEW

Following on from the success of the 2007 training, it is now time to turn to the 2008 activities. The year 2007 marked a considerable step forward for the initiative both in terms of the expansion in its activity and participation levels and further progress in these areas will be made in 2008.

New programmes are set to be launched and the majority of the 2007 programmes are to continue. This contributes to further broadening the scope of the activities and the number of places open to participants from the EU and across the globe.

At the same time, the Commission will build on the lessons learned from 2007 so as to further raise the standards of the training on offer as well as that of the logistical work carried out in support of the training.

All of this should ensure that Better Training for Safer Food continues towards its ambition of training an annual average of 6.000 participants in the long term and enhances its position as a global point of reference for training in the food, veterinary and plant health areas.

Preparation for the 2008 activities was undertaken throughout 2007. The DG Health and Consumers Training Sector met with National Contact Points (NCP) in February and July. During these meetings, NCPs provided feedback to give the Training Sector a clear idea of strengths, weaknesses and possible areas for improvement.

Previous outcomes and training needs were discussed within the Inter-service Steering Group in March and December 2007. Consultation within the DG took place, with colleagues providing technical support in their area of competence. The Training Sector again used Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) notifications and Food and Veterinary office (FVO) findings in order to ascertain areas where needs existed.

This collaboration, along with the experience gained in 2006 and 2007, was instrumental in defining the 2008 training offer.

- EU-based programmes for 2008 include some which continue along the same lines as in 2007. These are Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), Animal by-product (ABP) standards, veterinary checks at airport Border Inspection Posts (BIP), monitoring and controls of zoonoses and microbiological criteria in foodstuffs, and plant protection products. Two programmes are being extended. The programme on veterinary checks at seaport BIPs is also to include road and rail border inspection posts. The animal welfare programme is to focus on welfare during transport in addition to at slaughter and killing for disease control.

- New EU programmes for 2008 cover food hygiene and controls, prevention, control and eradication of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies and plant health controls.
- All 2007 third country programmes continue in 2008. The programmes on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) control and training for laboratory staff of Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries in the application of food testing function along the same lines as in 2007. The programmes on EU food standards and the RASFF see the introduction of training and assistance missions to what, in 2007, were exclusively workshop-based programmes.
- No new areas are to be covered by third country programmes but an additional programme is to be launched to assessing the global situation on HPAI control.

Furthermore, 2008 sees the launch of the Better Training for Safer Food in Africa programme about which more details can found in section 5.

Training in 2008 is again to be organised, managed and implemented by external contractors in the EU and third countries. As was the case for the 2007 programme, the Commission employed a thorough evaluation process with the aim of designating highly efficient and competent contractors to run the 2008 training activities.

Following evaluation, suitable contractors were identified to manage the programmes in 2008. Again, the Commission has every confidence that this will ensure optimum standards of training implementation in 2008.

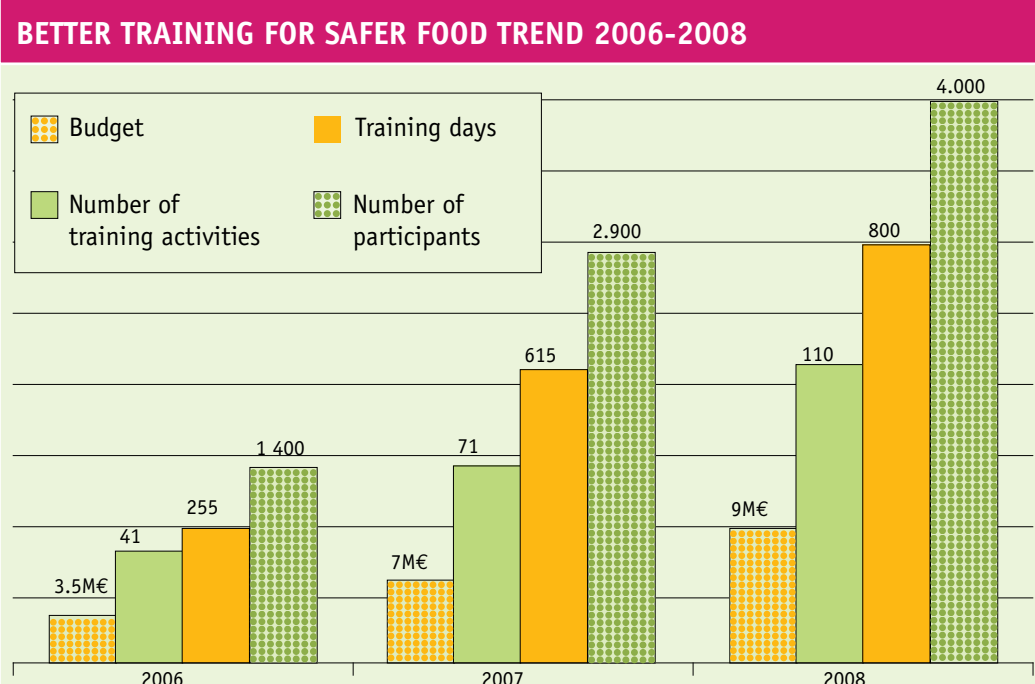
These contractors are once again required to put in place the same stringent selection processes for tutors and experts providing sustained training and assistance as in previous years. This is to ensure that training is of the highest possible standard. A minimum of 3-6 international tutors with extensive experience should generally be available. Commission representatives will also attend many of the workshops to lend their input and expertise.

Participant selection functions in much the same way as during the first two years of activity, with lists of participants being drawn up by the contractor and sent to the Commission for approval. It is again expected that, for most EU-based programmes, around 80% of participants should be from Member States and candidate countries with the others coming from European Free Trade Association, European Neighbourhood Policy, Mediterranean Basin and selected third countries. For third country programmes, participants should come exclusively from third countries.

As in previous years, participants receiving financial support from the Community budget should come from their national competent authority. For third country training, financial support from the Community budget is provided to staff of competent authorities of developing countries. Participation of competent authority staff from developed third countries is likely to be at their own expense. Private sector participants attend at their own expense for all training courses.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES 2008
EU Training programmes
Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
Airport Border Inspection Posts
Seaport/Road/Rail Border Inspection Posts
Animal by-products
Animal welfare
Zoonoses
Plant protection products
Food hygiene and controls NEW
Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies NEW
Plant health controls NEW
Third country programmes
EU food standards
Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza control
Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza assessment NEW
Food testing
Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed

The graphic below demonstrates the increase in the extent of, and resources devoted to the activities since the initiative's inception in 2006. It is expected that Better Training for Safer Food will continue to expand gradually over the coming years before eventually reaching a steady rate of activity in the long term.



2006

2007

2008

EU based programmes: HACCP

- Animal By Products
- Animal Welfare
- Bips Airport
- Bips Seaport

Third Country programmes:

- EU food import standards
- Avian Influenza

EU based programmes:

- HACCP
- Animal By Products
- Animal Welfare
- Bips Airport
- Bips Seaport
- Zoonoses
- Food Contact Materials
- Plant Protection Products

Third Country programmes:

- EU food import standards
- Avian Influenza
- RASFF
- Food Testing ASEAN Countries

EU based programmes:

- HACCP: implementation and auditing
- Animal By Products
- Animal Welfare: focus on welfare during transport
- Bips Airport
- Bips Seaport/roads/rail
- Zoonoses and microbiological criteria in foodstuffs
- Food Hygiene and Control: fish, meat and dairy products
- Plant Protection Products: evaluation and registration
- Plant Health Control: import control
- TSE: prevention, control and eradication

Third Country programmes:

- EU food import standards: fishery, fruit & vegetables, FCM, labelling, traceability, residues, contaminants, BSE
- Avian Influenza
- RASFF and EU IT systems such as TRACES
- Food Testing ASEAN Countries
- Better Training For Africa (first year)

4.2 EU-BASED PROGRAMMES 2008

4.2.1 HAZARD ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL CONTROL POINT

Training on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles continues for a third year in 2008 and is again divided into two courses, both of which are to place particular emphasis on the subjects of HACCP in small and medium enterprises and HACCP flexibility.

Course one deals with implementation and maintenance of procedures based on HACCP principles. It covers the background to HACCP, incorporation of HACCP principles into a HACCP plan, implementing and maintaining an HACCP plan, benefits of HACCP and approaching HACCP audits.

Course two looks at the ability to conduct audits verifying implementation of HACCP systems and compliance with hygiene requirements. Content includes the background, principles, application and benefits of HACCP, prerequisite programmes, the relationship between Quality Assurance programmes and HACCP and the principles of auditing.

Both courses include practical activities and exercises within food and feed establishments implementing HACCP procedures.

The programme comprises 19 five-day training courses. Of these, eight are for course one and eleven are for course two. The attendance at each course is to be approximately 20-25 people, with overall participation of around 400.

4.2.2 VETERINARY AND FOOD SAFETY CONTROL CHECKS IN AIRPORT BORDER INSPECTION POSTS

Training on veterinary checks at airport border inspection posts (BIP) is to be launched in mid-2008 and the programme is likely to run until mid-2009. The training is expected to be carried out in the same way as the programme for 2007. It is planned to hold three three-day workshops for around 40 participants each and 120 over the entire programme.

The workshops should cover a range of issues. These include EU legislation, procedures for imports of products and live animals, information exchange, intelligence gathering, risk assessment, cooperation with customs, problems concerning veterinary checks and rules on personal imports.



4.2.3 VETERINARY AND FOOD SAFETY CONTROL CHECKS IN SEAPORT AND ROAD AND RAIL BORDER INSPECTION POSTS

This programme is expanding for 2008 to include checks at road and rail BIPs in addition to seaport BIPs. Four three-day training courses are planned, with two taking place in a seaport BIP and two covering both road and rail BIPs. Each workshop caters for around 40 people with the attendance for the entire programme coming to about 160.

The BIPs in which the training is to take place will have handled high quantities of goods and live animals over a number of years. They will also have regular experience of dealing with products from third countries.

The workshops cover aspects of import controls on live animals and products intended for human consumption or otherwise. There is particular focus on areas of EU legislation where interpretation can be difficult, as well as procedures for controls on imports of products and live animals. Training also deals with information exchange, intelligence gathering, risk assessment and cooperation with customs.

The seaport part of the programme looks at destruction of kitchen waste and other waste animal and plant products. The road/rail side deals with checks on products of animal origin and re-imported consignments and exit checks on transit consignments.

4.2.4 ANIMAL BY PRODUCTS

Training on EU standards for animal by-products continues in a similar format to the initial two years of the initiative. Three two-day workshops are to be organised with approximately 70 people attending each course and around 210 taking part in the whole programme.

The training provides an update of EU animal by-products (ABP) standards and specific issues of the animal by-products regulation. The workshops describe good ABP practices in the milk and rendering industries and the use of ABPs in medical devices, in-vitro diagnostics and laboratory reagents as well as in the renewable energy sector. The training is also to look at issues arising from former foodstuffs and risk evaluation of ABPs.

Although the workshops are mainly aimed at competent authority officials, given that ABPs are of great relevance to a particular industrial sector, the workshops aim to deliver training appropriate for the public and private sectors. Around 20% of participants may come from sectoral associations.

4.2.5 ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS DURING TRANSPORT, AT SLAUGHTER AND IN KILLING FOR DISEASE CONTROL PURPOSES

Animal welfare training in 2008 is set to expand to take in welfare of animals during transport in addition to welfare at slaughter and killing for disease control. One three-day workshop for around 70 participants is expected to be organised on stunning and killing of animals at slaughterhouses and in disease control situations. A four-day workshop for approximately 110 participants is scheduled to take place on welfare during transport. This programme is expected to begin from the middle of 2008 and should be concluded in the first half of 2009.

The workshops should aim to develop participants' ability to solve problems encountered by inspectors in a variety of geographical contexts. Topics may include EU legislation and the international framework, the scientific basis for proper transport, handling, stunning and killing of animals, as well as transport conditions and practical aspects of handling of animals.

Further areas likely to be covered are design of lairage facilities and vehicles, stunning and killing techniques, monitoring and enforcement of welfare requirements and experience gained from disease epidemics and transport of animals.

For each workshop, it is planned to spend two days on theoretical training. The workshop on welfare at slaughter is expected to devote one day to practical auditing exercises in slaughterhouses. The transport workshop should provide for two days' practical training which may be spent in transport companies, on vehicles or at control posts applying internationally recognised animal welfare standards.

4.2.6 MONITORING AND CONTROLS OF ZOOSES AND APPLYING MICROBIOLOGICAL CRITERIA IN FOODSTUFFS

The zoonoses programme modifies its focus slightly for 2008 to deal primarily with implementation of microbiological criteria in foodstuffs and investigation of food borne outbreaks. The training will again consist of five four-day courses for approximately 40 people each and 200 for the whole programme.

Training on microbiological criteria covers use of microbiological criteria as risk management tools and harmonisation of monitoring of foodstuffs. It also looks at implementation of microbiological criteria by food businesses and verification by competent authorities.

Training on investigation of food-borne outbreaks focuses on investigation tools such as cohort analysis, case control studies, software applications and strain typing as well as quantitative assessment of risks derived from different foodstuffs. It also deals with classification of outbreaks according to epidemiological and sample evidence, place of exposure and contributing factors as well as reporting of outbreaks.

4.2.7 EVALUATION AND REGISTRATION OF PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS

In 2008, training related to plant protection products is expected to consist of one three-day workshop and one two-day workshop. Around 35 people should attend the first workshop and 40 people the second one. The training is aimed at participants from EU Member States having joined since 2004, candidate and European Neighbourhood Policy countries. It is to begin from mid-2008 and continue into 2009.

The first workshop should cover evaluation and registration of plant protection products and follow up on the 2007 activities. These were aimed at ensuring that new Member States are operating a consistent approach to checking that active substances comply with conditions for inclusion on Annex I of Directive 91/414 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market and re-registration of plant protection products.

This workshop is expected to look at administrative procedures involved in compliance checking, scientific principles and procedures to be adopted in compliance checking and work on practical examples.

The second workshop aims to allow Member States to share experience so as to improve harmonisation of control of use and marketing of plant protection products. This should shed light on problematic aspects of control activities which can form the basis for discussion.

Subjects to be covered in the second workshop are likely to include the EU legislative framework on use and marketing of plant protection products, national control systems and activities and infringements.

4.2.8 FOOD HYGIENE AND CONTROLS

The EU has developed measures aimed at ensuring high standards of hygiene during food production and effective control of the entire food chain. These rules introduce aspects such as requirements that animals be clean at slaughter, provision of food chain information, risk based meat inspection, simplified slaughter and de-boning requirements and requirements for biotoxin detection in fishery products and raw milk production.

Training on food hygiene and controls has thus been introduced into Better Training for Safer Food. The aim is to increase levels of food safety expertise throughout production, processing and distribution. The programme is divided into three modules covering meat and meat products, milk and dairy products and fishery products and live bivalve molluscs.

Five five-day courses are to take place on each subject. Each workshop caters for 20-25 people equating to 100-125 for each module and 300-375 for the whole programme.

All three modules cover legislative requirements for registration, approval, inspection, general hygiene and HACCP and topics specific to the respective sectors. Likewise, all modules deal with controls on primary production, microbiological criteria and sampling. All workshops include visits to production plants.

The meat products module also includes requirements for ante- and post-mortem inspection, welfare issues, emergency slaughter and trichinella examination. The dairy products module covers criteria for raw milk and traditional products. The fishery products module looks at biotoxin and freshness controls and management of production areas for bivalve molluscs.

4.2.9 PREVENTION, CONTROL AND ERADICATION OF TRANSMISSIBLE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHIES

The Commission has introduced measures to protect human and animal health from BSE and other transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE). The measures lay down eradication rules and cover bovine, ovine and caprine animals, removal of specified risk material and animal feed prohibitions. They also include rules for domestic and intra-community trade, import and export.

Training on prevention, control and eradication of TSEs thus takes place for the first time within Better Training for Safer Food in 2008.

The programme comprises five three-day workshops, each of which includes a day's practical training on feed sampling and testing for BSE. Attendance should be approximately 30 people per workshop and 150 for the whole programme.

The training focuses on implementation and control of risk reducing measures to combat and eradicate BSE and includes details of past experience and difficulties encountered at field level. The aim is to help to harmonise approaches to TSEs to allow for comparison of the situation in Member States. It should also better enable competent authorities to verify compliance with TSE requirements.

Main topics are EU provisions on risk material removal, feed ban, monitoring and commercialisation as well as practical application of these provisions. The EU reporting system on surveillance and monitoring programmes is covered as is use of risk assessment, epidemiology and economics to support decision making.

4.2.10 TRAINING ON PLANT HEALTH CONTROLS

Food and Veterinary Office missions have revealed a lack of implementation of potato control directives in a number of Member States. Such missions also revealed discrepancies between Member States in the approach and ability of inspectors with regard to internal controls under the EU plant passport regime. Discrepancies have also been noted in efficiency in handling pest outbreaks and controls on imported plants.

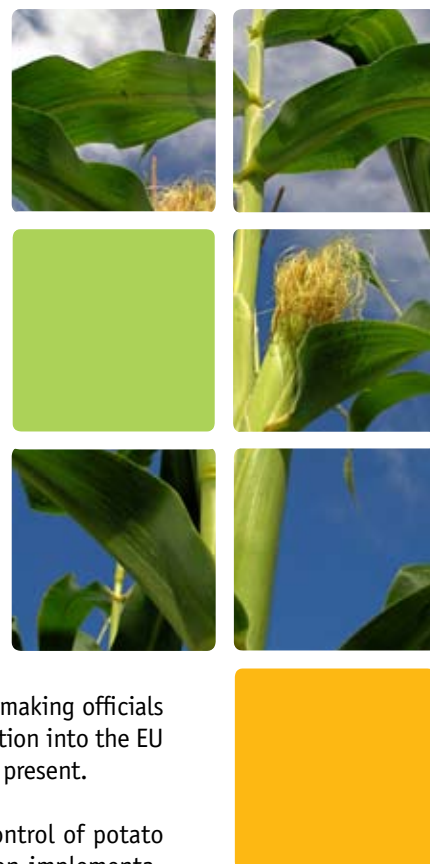
With this in mind, training on Plant Health Controls begins in 2008. It is divided into three modules. Two modules train plant health control staff in the EU plant quarantine regime for potatoes and the EU internal plant quarantine regime. The other trains plant health import control staff in the EU plant quarantine regime for imports.

The modules on the quarantine regimes for potatoes and imports consist of three three-day workshops. The module on the internal quarantine regime consists of three four-day workshops. Approximately 25 people should attend each workshop producing a global attendance of 75 for each module and 225 for the programme as a whole.

The activity should contribute to common understanding and harmonised implementation of the legislation. The training is aimed at planning and policy making officials and field inspectors implementing legislation. It should help to prevent introduction into the EU of harmful organisms and to prevent the spread of, and eradicate those already present.

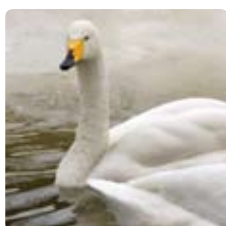
The quarantine regime for potatoes module covers EU provisions related to control of potato quarantine pests, particularly ring rot and brown rot and practical guidance on implementation of these provisions. The EU internal quarantine regime module deals with measures on internal control under the EU plant passport regime. The module on the quarantine regime for imports covers application of provisions for aspects of import control particularly planning, inter-organisational co-operation, inspection and sampling, measures required when harmful organisms are intercepted and notification procedures.

All workshops feature field trips. For training on the quarantine regime for potatoes participants will visit a storage place and watercourse, for the internal plant quarantine regime module they will visit a plant health office and for training on the quarantine regime for imports they will visit a border inspection post.



4.3 THIRD COUNTRY TRAINING PROGRAMMES 2008

4.3.1 ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION ON HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA CONTROL



Training in the area of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) control has been a part of the Better Training for Safer Food initiative since its launch in 2006. Following two years of work in this area, it is now considered appropriate to reflect on the work done in the field both within Better Training for Safer Food and other international initiatives.

To this end, a programme is being launched for 2008 to facilitate a review of the work done and the current situation of HPAI control and to identify the principal training needs which exist in relation to the fight against the spread of HPAI. This will in turn enable the European Commission, in collaboration with other prominent international donors, to plot the best future course for activities in this area.

The programme includes a one-day technical seminar for 80-100 people in Brussels attended by representatives of the European Commission and competent authorities of countries having benefited from Commission HPAI training. Delegates also come from organisations active in HPAI control including the World Organisation for Animal Health, the World Health Organization and the Animal and Human Influenza Facility of the World Bank.

The seminar aims to report on activities in the fight against HPAI by the EU and other donors, exchange experience, define best practices and identify the countries most in need of HPAI training and their specific needs.

Sustained training missions of about one week each are also scheduled to be carried out in countries having received Better Training for Safer Food HPAI missions in 2006 and 2007.

One expert is to be seconded to each of Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Morocco, Egypt, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Myanmar. There, they are to meet local authorities and experts to assess the impact of the 2006 and 2007 sustained training.

4.3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF ANIMAL DISEASE CONTROL STRATEGIES IN PARTICULAR FOR HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA

On the basis of the outcomes and conclusions of the activity mentioned above, training on the development of animal disease control strategies, in particular for HPAI will be launched during 2008. The activities in this programme will continue into the first half of 2009. The training is expected to include laboratory workshops and secondment of experts to provide sustained training and technical assistance to competent authorities.

Two three-day laboratory workshops are planned in order to provide training in virological and serological diagnosis methods and other techniques of an appropriate level of sophistication to enable participants to apply them in their home countries. The workshops should also cover the role of laboratory diagnostics in HPAI control, laboratory capacity and equipment and the Differentiation of Infected from Vaccinated Animals (DIVA) strategy.

The workshops are expected to cater for around 20 participants each, from selected new EU Member States and candidate countries, ASEAN Member States and other Asian countries, Mediterranean basin countries and African countries. In addition to the two laboratory workshops a further regional coordination workshop may be held during the year.

Sustained training and technical assistance is scheduled to be undertaken in collaboration with competent authorities and relevant international organisations. Seconded experts should deliver training on areas including surveillance and monitoring, bio-security, zoning and compartmentalisation strategies, stamping out and vaccination, as well as development of communication, legislation and laboratory capacity. The experts may also assist in the implementation of control plans and provide advice on related issues.

Experts are expected to be seconded for three weeks to each of eight selected countries in the regions mentioned above.

4.3.3 TRAINING ACTIVITIES ON EU FOOD STANDARDS

This programme continues the last two years' training on EU food standards. As with the HPAI training, the activities outlined here are to run until mid-2009. As compared with the 2007 training on this subject, the format is to change from a workshop-based one, to one comprising workshops and sustained training missions.

Ten three-day workshops are to be implemented for around 80 participants each, of which a quarter may come from the private sector. The training is to meet the needs of competent authority staff but will also be relevant to industry representatives.

The workshops are to take place in the ASEAN region and elsewhere in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. They aim to explain EU food standards and particularly recent legislative developments. Among other areas, the workshops focus on fishery products, fruit and vegetables, residues and contaminants, plant protection products, labelling and traceability, BSE and provisions on meat and residue monitoring plans.

Experts will be seconded to African, Asian, Latin American and Pacific countries for sustained training and assistance missions totalling around 150 days. These missions will provide support to competent authorities of recipient countries in the fields outlined above.

4.3.4 TRAINING FOR LABORATORY STAFF OF ASEAN COUNTRIES IN THE APPLICATION OF FOOD TESTING

Application of food testing training for ASEAN countries is scheduled to continue from mid-2008 and continue through the first half of 2009. Workshops are planned to take place in the six ASEAN Reference Laboratories (ARL) established under the EC-ASEAN Economic Cooperation Programme on Standards, Quality and Conformity assessment.

The training is to comprise six five-day workshops for around 20 participants each. These participants should be analysts from ASEAN National Reference Laboratories and other laboratories designated by national authorities.

In addition, a two-day preparatory workshop is scheduled to take place prior to the beginning of the programme. This aims to identify the specific content of workshops to be implemented during the training activity.

It should be attended by around 30 people including representatives of the six ARLs and the food control authorities of each ASEAN country, as well as the chair or co-chair of the prepared foodstuff products working group of the ASEAN consultative committee on standards and quality.

4.3.5 TRAINING ON THE EU RAPID ALERT SYSTEM FOR FOOD AND FEED AND THE POSSIBLE INTRODUCTION OF A SIMILAR SYSTEM IN OTHER REGIONS OF THE WORLD

As in 2007, three three-day workshops are to be held on the EU Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) and the possible introduction of a similar system in other regions of the world. The number of participants at each workshop will be around 60, with a total of roughly 180 for the entire course.



One workshop will take place in each of EU candidate and European Neighbourhood Policy countries, Asia and Africa. The workshops aim to provide an overview and explanation of the RASFF and to detail requirements for setting up similar systems in third countries. This includes required levels of food and feed controls, organisational structure of competent authorities, legal basis and communication needs.

The training also outlines requirements for setting up regional networks of countries exchanging rapid alerts on food and feed. These include scope for information exchange, legal, transparency and confidentiality requirements and follow-up of notifications.

A total of five two-day training sessions will be held on the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES). These sessions take place in ASEAN member countries and North Africa and are expected to be attended by around 15-20 participants each. They should provide an introduction to TRACES and allow participants to undertake computer-based exercises related to the functioning of the system.

An additional aspect of the training is the introduction of sustained training and assistance missions. The missions will mainly cover RASFF, TRACES and other EU-related IT systems. Experts will be seconded to ASEAN member states for around 100 days overall.

5. BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD IN AFRICA

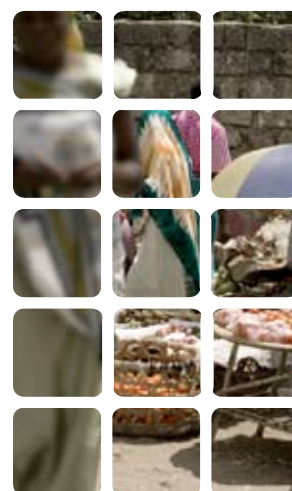
The third country programmes outlined in the previous section are not the only activities taking place outside of the EU in 2008. This year also sees the launch of the Better Training for Safer Food in Africa programme.

The Commission adopted an Annual Action Programme 2007 on 16 November 2007, launching the implementation of the Food Security Thematic Programme. This was elaborated in accordance with the Food Security Thematic Strategy Paper and Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2007-2010. Strategic Priority 3 of the Multi-annual Programme relates to ways of exploiting the potential of continental and regional approaches to improve food security.

In addition, the Lisbon Summit of 8-9 December 2007 adopted a Joint EU – Africa Strategy together with its first Action Plan 2008-2010. This Strategy requires the implementation of programmes and mechanisms to develop capacity in the areas of norms, standards and quality control at regional and pan-African level with reference to international sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards. One of its key actions concerns the need to provide training to strengthen the SPS capacity of African countries in the period leading up to the 2010 EU-Africa Summit.

It is in this context that DG Health and Consumers is to launch Better Training for Safer Food in Africa. The programme is dedicated entirely to Africa and has been allocated a budget of €10 million to be spread over 3 years (2008-2010). Its purpose is to support food security by strengthening national, regional and pan-African SPS capacity in areas such as control, surveillance, legislation, management and inspection.

The programme focuses in particular on international standards and good agricultural and manufacturing practices in relation to food safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health. Public sector beneficiaries will include trade and technical ministries. Beneficiaries from the private sector will be the farmers, livestock producers, processors, distributors and retailers who play a role in the agro-food sector in Africa. The knowledge, expertise, capacity and skills gained will enable African countries to produce and distribute agricultural and food products which comply with international SPS standards. This should reduce the likelihood of food-borne diseases and related health and socio-economic burdens.



Enhanced SPS capacity will contribute towards sustained availability of, and access to safe foodstuffs, thereby helping to advance the competitiveness of African agriculture. This will have a positive knock-on effect on the promotion of south-south trade, reduction of non-tariff barriers, access to international markets and overall poverty alleviation and food security. Capacity building through training is a powerful instrument for improving the functioning of public institutions and the private sector. It can improve hygiene procedures, farming practice, inspection and verification. This will improve food safety for domestic consumers and increase international trade. Importers and consumers of African food in the EU and globally will also benefit from such training.

Central, regional and local level competent authorities responsible for food safety and SPS controls will be involved in the programme. Other important stakeholders will be national agencies, academic and technical institutions, reference laboratories and producer, exporter and certification organisations. Training beneficiaries will be identified in cooperation with competent authorities and through consultation of all relevant stakeholders. The programme will pay special attention to small scale producers as the greatest needs for improving controls and hygiene standards have been identified at this level.

The programme is to be managed by DG Health and Consumers as a component of Better Training for Safer Food. The DG will conclude contracts for implementation of activities through public procurement procedures.

The development of Better Training for Safer Food for Africa activities will require close coordination with various parties. These include EC Delegations in Africa and Commission undertakings such as DG Trade's SPS trade related assistance and DG Development's SPS programmes, financed under the European Development Fund.

Coordination with activities of other international players will be ensured, particularly the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations' Standards and Trade Development Facility, the World Organisation for Animal Health, the World Bank, the World Health Organization, the World Trade Organization's SPS Committee and the African Union.

The programme's performance is to be assessed partly through factors such as participation levels and the number of countries benefiting from training. Evaluation forms will also be distributed following each programme. The feedback received will be taken into account for subsequent programmes. The activities will be subject to external impact monitoring by an independent consultant recruited directly by the European Commission according to EC rules and procedures.

Commission officials are to be present at certain events to monitor the work done and it is expected that webpages will be created at which participants and stakeholders in the programme will be able to express their opinion on its functioning.

6. INTERMEDIATE ASSESSMENT OF BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD

The beginning of Better Training for Safer Food's 2008 activities marks two years since the launch of concrete training activities within the initiative. During these first two years, approximately 4.000 participants have directly benefited from the training on offer. This figure is likely to have doubled by the time the programmes starting in 2008 have been concluded.

In the light of the last two years' training, the Commission now feels that the time is right to launch an intermediate assessment of the work undertaken thus far within the framework of the initiative and the main results of this work.

The assessment has three main objectives. The first of these is to assess the impact of the training activities, especially in terms of improvements they have brought about in relation to the everyday work of participants. This will enable the Commission to ascertain to what extent the training has broadened participants' knowledge and to what extent this newly acquired knowledge has been implemented in participants' daily work and disseminated amongst their colleagues.

Another objective is to learn more about the way in which training activities are implemented, coordinated and managed, as well as the main strengths and weaknesses of the activities. The final aim is to obtain recommendations for improving the design of future training.

The evaluation will be mainly carried out through distribution of questionnaires to participants at least four months after their attendance at training. A sample of the completed questionnaires will then be taken for the purposes of evaluation.

This sample should be representative of the whole participant population. The selection process of the sample to be used will thus take into account a range of factors including geographical areas where training has been carried out, the different training activities implemented and the evolution of the programmes during the initiative's first two years.

Besides participants, the assessment will also involve other groups involved in the initiative such as tutors, national contact points and project coordinators. A similarly representative sample of these groups will also be taken so as to provide assessments of the activities and indications for improvement.

The final results of this assessment are expected to be available in early 2009.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The work done within Better Training for Safer Food in 2007 represents a vitally important step in the development and expansion of the Community training strategy for food and feed law, animal health and welfare rules, and plant health rules. The extent of the initiative's activities has expanded considerably as compared with 2006. Participant numbers have more than doubled, in line with the expectations at the outset, and the number of training programmes on offer has almost doubled.

The challenge which lays ahead for 2008 is to make a success of the planned further expansion in terms of the extent of the activities while at the same time, consolidating the progress already made in the two years since the launch of the initiative. Whilst the experience of 2007 has been positive, there is always room for improvement. The lessons learned in 2007 will lay the foundations for improved performance in 2008 and the years that follow.

None of this success would have been possible without the invaluable contributions made by parties from both within and outside of the European Commission. The DG Health and Consumers Training Sector members would like to express their appreciation to all who have contributed to the success of Better Training for Safer Food. The training sector hopes to continue these productive working relationships, and to develop new ones in the years to come. A special mention should go to Isabelle Rollier, coordinator for much of the third country activity and the DG Health and Consumers financial cell, in particular Ludwig Vandenberghe and Marc Vallons.

Thanks go to all other colleagues within DG Health and Consumers and the Food and Veterinary Office as well as the members of the inter-service steering group from other Commission DGs and services who have lent their time and expertise to ensuring the smooth functioning of the training during 2007. The Training Sector is also grateful to the National Contact Points from across Europe whose coordination has been essential to the selection of participants and whose feedback has helped to determine the range of programmes to run in 2008.

Finally, the training sector would also like to thank the staff of the EC Delegations in the countries in which training activities have been held, for their assistance and support. Special thanks also go to Patrick Deboyser, the Health and Consumer DG representative in the Delegation in Thailand, for the coordination and help he has provided for the organisation of training in the ASEAN region.

ANNEX 1. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following are requests for information concerning Better Training for Safer Food which are often received by the DG Health and Consumers Training Sector. This section aims to provide clear and concise answers to these questions for all parties interested in the initiative.

How can I register to take part in the activities?

Staff of national authorities of EU Member States, candidate and associated countries interested in finding out more about participating in the activities should refer to their appropriate National Contact Point. Interested parties from third countries should refer directly to the appropriate contractor for the activity in which they wish to take part.

How do I get touch with my National Contact Point and/or the relevant contractors?

Contact details of the National Contact Points are available at

http://ec.europa.eu/food/training_strategy/participants/ms_contact_points_en.htm.

Links to the websites of the training contractors for 2008 can be found at

http://ec.europa.eu/food/training_new/training/contractors2008_en.htm.

The contractor's websites provide contact information and details of the procedures to be followed for registration.

Who is eligible for funding to participate in the training?

For EU-based programmes, the participation of competent authority staff from Member States and selected non-EU countries is funded from the Community budget. For third country activities funding is provided for the participation of official national-level staff of developing countries. For most third country training, funding is limited to competent authority staff of those countries in the global region (e.g. ASEAN, Latin America or Africa) for which the specific workshop or training session is intended.

What about the private sector?

The benefits of providing training for the private sector are clear. For this reason, places are sometimes set aside for private sector participants, particularly on programmes of a high degree of relevance to specific industrial sectors. The attendance of such participants will however come at their own expense.

How are training activities currently organised?

At present, the development of training activities is mainly based on the periodical launch of calls for tender aimed at concluding contracts for the organisation, management and implementation of training.

How can my organisation participate in the calls for tender related to the training programmes?

To find out about the details of these calls, including procedures to follow for submitting tenders, interested parties are invited to consult the Tenders Electronic Daily supplement to the Official Journal of the EU at <http://ted.europa.eu/>. All prior information and official contract notices related to these calls for tender are published there. Relevant information is also published at the Better Training for Safer Food webpages at http://ec.europa.eu/food/training_strategy/tenderers/calls_tenders_en.htm.

Is it possible to access the material used during training if I have not been able to attend?

Currently, the best way to do this is via colleagues who have taken part in the training and have the relevant material at their disposal. However, during 2008 the DG Health and Consumers Training Sector is to produce a DVD with different sections focusing on subjects covered by the initiative. This product will be made available to all interested parties. It is also hoped to disseminate the content of the DVD via the dedicated webpages, thus allowing an even wider audience to gain access to the relevant training material.

If I would like to raise the initiative's profile within my organisation, are there any means with which I could do this?

People who have participated directly in training activities are encouraged to actively disseminate the knowledge acquired during the training as widely as possible within their own organisations. They can also request copies of information tools produced to support the initiative, including the annual report, leaflet, and DVDs, and distribute these to potentially interested parties. This material can be obtained by contacting the DG Health and Consumer Training Sector by e-mail at sanco-trainingforsaferfood@ec.europa.eu or by post at:

European Commission

*Directorate-General for Health and Consumers
Unit E2 Training Sector
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ANNEX 2. TRAINING SECTOR MEMBERS

The members of the Health and Consumers DG Training Sector are: Salvatore Magazzù (Head of Sector), Lauro Panella (economic analysis), Daniella Heyninck (administrative support), Wouter Luyckx (administrative support), and David Turner (communication).



From left to right: David Turner, Wouter Luyckx, Daniella Heyninck, Lauro Panella and Salvatore Magazzù

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ANNEX 4. INDEX OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABP:	Animal by-products	ENP:	European Neighbourhood Policy
ACP:	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States	FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organisation
AETS:	European Application of Technology and Services	FVO:	Food and Veterinary Office
AENOR:	Spanish Association for Standardisation and Certification	GMO:	Genetically Modified Organism
ARL:	ASEAN Reference Laboratory	HACCP:	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point
ASEAN:	Association of South-East Asian Nations	HPAI:	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
BIP:	Border inspection post	MERCOSUR:	Southern Common Market
BSE:	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy	NCP:	National Contact Point
CAC:	Codex Alimentarius Commission	NRL:	National Reference Laboratory
CCP:	Critical Control Point	OIE:	World Animal Health Organisation
DG:	Directorate-General	PCR:	Polymerase Chain Reaction
DG SANCO:	Directorate-General for Health and Consumers	PHEA:	Public Health Executive Agency
DIVA:	Differentiating Infected from Vaccinated Animals	PRP:	Prerequisite Programmes
EFSA:	European Food Safety Authority	RASFF:	Rapid Alert System
EFTA:	European Free Trade Association	SPS:	Sanitary and phytosanitary
		TSE:	Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy
		TRACES:	Trade Control and Expert System
		VNR:	Video News Release
		WHO:	World Health Organisation

ANNEX 5. PHOTO GALLERY FROM 2007 TRAINING ACTIVITIES



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