

BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD

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About this newsletter

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

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

Future strategy

Best practice makes perfect

In order to map out the future course to be taken by the Better Training for Safer Food initiative, a Strategy Paper was drafted in mid-2009 to highlight challenges facing BTSF and the best ways of overcoming them. Short and medium-long term strategies were drawn up and the document is now being transformed into a Staff Working document in order to increase its visibility and importance.

Against this background, steps have been taken to launch certain of the actions described in the document. A key element has been the launch of a study on best training practices.

The objective of the study is to identify and define best practices for sanitary and phytosanitary training. It should propose new practices which could be implemented within BTSF, in particular in areas where BTSF requires strengthening.

The study will identify modern training methods employed in education centres and universities. Theoretical and practical aspects of the methods will be defined by interviewing tutors and consulting with academic centres.

Strengths and weaknesses of practices used by relevant countries and international organisations for similar training and those used within BTSF since its launch will be analysed. Finally, recommendations will be provided for best practices to be used for future BTSF activities.

The analysis will take into account the fact that BTSF covers different technical areas, audiences and global regions.

Best practices may differ in relation to those elements. It is also necessary to define benchmarks of good practice against which BTSF can be evaluated.

The study is expected to analyse the main factors in setting up training and the criteria for success, so as to identify how to improve their application within BTSF training. The principal issues to be addressed are those arising from the intermediate evaluation of the first two years of BTSF training.

The study methodology comprises inception, data collection, analysis and judgement. The two main tasks carried out in the inception phase were exploratory research and interviews, and methodology development.

The objective of the exploratory research and interviews was to get an in-depth understanding of the scope of the assignment and of the issues at stake. Consultation of documents and sources provided an initial overview. Brainstorming sessions addressed criteria for assessing the success of training, contents of the survey questionnaire, targets of the survey, experts to be interviewed, development of a prototype questionnaire and differences between technical areas within the SPS field. Exploratory interviews were aimed at identifying potential best practices, experts and relevant documentation, and discussing criteria for best practices.

The methodology was developed by taking into account the objectives and scope of the study and concerns collection and analysis of information.

A survey questionnaire has been developed with a view to compiling a dedicated questionnaire. The questionnaire will be used for interviews with internationally recognised tutors and representatives of academic centres and international organisations. Case studies will validate factors behind best practices and assess the possibility of transferring them to BTSF.

All information collected will be stored in a database structured according to segmentation criteria, such as geographical and technical areas, type of training and performance criteria. This will facilitate analysis of each criterion identified as characterising a good practice.





Once the study is finalised, implementation of the recommended practices should lead to more effective training and higher levels of knowledge dissemination and impact. Conclusions are expected by mid-2010.

Training programmes

Keeping the inedible out of the food chain

Animal by-products (ABP) are materials of animal origin not intended for human consumption. Over 16 million tonnes of ABP are produced in the EU each year, most of which comes from healthy animals.

These materials are used as they are or transformed into products for use in animal feed, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, laboratory reagents or fertilisers. Otherwise, they are disposed of as waste, such as by incineration or co-incineration following pre-treatment. An increasing amount of ABP are imported from or exported to third countries for similar purposes.

Evidence has shown that using certain ABP in feed can spread disease or contaminants. ABP can also pose a threat to health via the environment, if not properly disposed of.

Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 lays down measures to protect the safety of the food and feed chain and prevent ABP from presenting a risk to animal or public health. It establishes rules for collection, transport, storage, handling, processing, use, commercialisation, import, export and transit of ABP.

Under the Regulation, only materials derived from animals declared fit for human consumption following veterinary inspection may be used in feed. The Regulation determines uses for materials excluded from the food chain and establishes rules regarding identification and traceability and disposal.

Revised Regulation

In 2008, the Commission adopted a proposal for a revised ABP Regulation in order to clarify health rules applicable to ABP and make them more risk-proportionate. The Commission is also preparing measures to specify application of the new Regulation to the different sectors handling ABP.

The new rules apply from 2010. It is thus important to spread knowledge of the main changes and to provide a forum for exchange between practitioners on techniques for handling ABP.

Against this background, training on ABP has been re-introduced for 2010-11, having featured during the first three years of BTSF. Eight training sessions are scheduled with four to take place in 2010 and a further four in 2011. The 2010 workshops are scheduled for Brussels in May, two in Vilnius in October and Lisbon in December.

Each workshop caters for around 65 people, mainly public officials responsible for implementing ABP health rules in EU Member States, candidate, EFTA, ENP and selected third countries. Private sector representatives may also be invited. The contractor for the activity is the European Training Platform for Safer Food.

An overview will be provided of the main changes introduced by the revised ABP Regulation and detailed explanation of EU ABP standards will also be given, in particular as regards identification and traceability and import and export of ABP.

The training will identify and describe good ABP practices for the feed, technical and disposal sectors explaining how national authorities and other stakeholders can improve compliance with EU requirements when importing or exporting ABP. Workshops should also provide a basis for experience exchange between public and private sector practitioners.

Upcoming events

3-7 May: Animal health controls (bees), Prague

4-6 May: Animal health controls (fish diseases), Weymouth UK

4-7 May: Animal welfare at slaughter, Skara, Sweden

11-14 May: Animal health controls (bees), Prague

17-19 May: Food contract materials (competent authority staff responsible for setting control plans), Ljubljana

17-21 May: Controls on feed law, Warsaw

17-21 May: Food hygiene and controls of milk and dairy products, Brescia, Italy

17-21 May: Food hygiene and controls of meat and meat products, York, UK

17-21 May: Food hygiene and controls of fishery products and live-bivalve molluscs, Huelva, Spain

19-21 May: Food contract materials (inspectors of food and food contact material premises), Ljubljana

24-28 May: Better Training for Safer Food in Africa - regional food hygiene workshop for West Africa, Mali

25-28 May: The EU Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES), Mauritania

26-28 May: Prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, Oldenburg/Wilhelmshaven, Germany

27-28 May: GMO analysis, Croatia

31 May-2 June: Animal by-products, Brussels

For further information on all issues related to BTSF please visit:

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

