Publications from International Organizations on Public Health

Edited by
Anna Maria Rossi

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

EFSA Scientific Committee. Scientific motivations and criteria to consider updating. EFSA scientific assessments. EFSA Journal 2017;15(3):4737 doi:10.2903/j.efs.2017.4737 EFSA is committed to assess and communicate the risks occurring in the food and feed chain from farm to fork and to provide other forms of scientific advice. This work, carried out by EFSA since its inception, has resulted in the adoption of thousands of scientific assessments. EFSA is obliged to re-assess past assessments in specific regulatory contexts such as those on food and feed additives, active substances in plant protection products and genetically modified food and feed. In other sectors, the reconsideration for updating past EFSA scientific assessments is taken on an ad hoc basis mainly depending on specific requests by risk managers or on EFSA self-tasking. If safety is potentially at stake in any area within EFSA’s remit, the readiness to update past scientific assessments is important to keep EFSA at the forefront of science and to promote an effective risk assessment. Although this task might be very complex and resource demanding, it is fundamental to EFSA’s mission. The present EFSA Scientific Committee opinion deals with scientific motivations and criteria to contribute to the timely updating of EFSA scientific assessments. It is recognized that the decision for updating should be agreed following careful consideration of all the relevant elements by the EFSA management, in collaboration with risk managers and stakeholders. The present opinion addresses the scientific approaches through which it would be possible for EFSA to increase the speed and effectiveness of the acquisition of new data, as well as, to improve the consequent evaluations to assess the relevance and reliability of new data in the context of contributing to the better definition of whether to update past scientific assessments.

Dorne JL, Richardson J, Kass G, et al. Editorial. OpenFoodTox: EFSA’s open source toxicological database on chemical hazards in food and feed. EFSA Journal 2017;15(1) doi: 10.2903/j.efs.2017.e15011 EFSA’s Chemical Hazards Database OpenFoodTox provides open source data for substance characterization, links to the relevant EFSA output, background regulations and summaries of critical toxicological endpoints. An online MicroStrategy tool enables the downloading of summary data sheets for each individual substance in PDF or Excel format. OpenFoodTox is a valuable tool and source of information for scientific advisory bodies and stakeholders with an interest in chemical risk assessment. This editorial provides a snapshot description of OpenFoodTox as an open source toxicological database for chemical risk assessment. Since 2002, EFSA has assessed over 4,400 substances and contaminants in over 1,650 outputs on single substances and groups of substances (e.g. flavourings). From all these risk assessments performed at EFSA, it has been recognized that a structured database summarizing the toxicological endpoints and reference values on a substance specific basis would be instrumental in disseminating these results to a wider community, and would be of great support for the work of EFSA experts and staff in providing scientific advice. Consequently, over the last 5 years, summary data related to human health, animal health and ecological hazard assessment have been systematically collected and structured into OpenFoodTox. The database has been designed and developed using a data model taking into account the OECD harmonised templates to collect and structure the data in a harmonised manner.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Strategic work of FAO to help eliminate hunger and malnutrition. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2017; 28 p. Job number: I6431 FAO supports governments in the development of coherent and evidence-based policy and programmes with stronger focus on food security and nutrition, including greater commitment and allocation of human and financial resources for implementation and stronger and more inclusive coordination across sectors and stakeholders.

FAO Statistical yearbook 2016. World Food and Agriculture. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2017; 234 p. US $ 40.00 This yearbook presents selected key indicators related to agriculture and food security that the international community, governments, the private sector and civil society can use to assess current trends and prioritize actions. It has two main sections, one thematic and one country-specific. It presents a variety of dimensions of agriculture and food security in four focus areas: the setting; hunger dimensions; food supply; and environment. The book is part of the FAO Statistical Yearbook suite of products; it includes data from FAOSTAT and other FAO databases and international organizations.
Economic analysis of animal diseases. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2016; 94 p. (FAO Animal Production and Health Guidelines Series; 18) US $ 40.00 ISBN 978 92 5109 166 1 Job number: 15512 Animal health and economics are closely linked. Any decision taken to prevent, control and eliminate an animal disease is based not only on the technical knowledge available about a particular disease but also on the effectiveness and socio-economic aspects associated with interventions and mitigation measures implemented by governments, producers and all the actors along the livestock value chains. Economic rationale drives decisions in assessing particular investments which are likely to result in a benefit for society or for a specific stakeholder, including livestock farmers and communities. These guidelines prepared by FAO will contribute to a better understanding of the importance of economic analysis when assessing the impact of a particular animal disease in production, trade, market access, food security and livelihoods of rural communities, or when designing or implementing an animal health strategy at national, regional or global level. This framework will provide a good communication tool between animal health technicians, veterinarians and economists in developing countries and will encourage a well informed collaboration between veterinarians, animal health experts, economists and social scientists for livestock and socio-economic development. Economic analysis should be an essential part of animal disease policies and disease management strategies.

Development of integrated multipurpose animal recording systems. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2016; 189 p. (FAO Animal Production and Health Guidelines; 19) ISBN 978 92 510 9256 9 Job number: 15702 Animal identification and recording serves multiple purposes in a country’s livestock sector. It is a prerequisite to establish and operate any genetic improvement programme. It also contributes to animal traceability and disease control, as well as to deterring stock theft. Traceability of animals and their products helps to ensure the safety and quality of animal products, and contributes to enhance market access and to generate larger incomes for producers and other players in the value chain. Animal recording systems are therefore not just an information system but a powerful tool for livestock development and for contributing to global demands for food security and poverty alleviation. To make animal recording systems effective, they must be supported by appropriate public and private policies, and a legal and institutional framework. These multiple uses of animal identification and recording highlight the need to adopt multipurpose systems that integrates animal identification and registration, animal traceability, animal health information and performance recording. The FAO guidelines for development of integrated multipurpose animal recording systems have been prepared with the objective of helping countries to design and implement such systems and to maximize the chances that they will be sustained. These guidelines put performance recording in a more general context, and hence to complement rather than replace the previous FAO guidelines. They focus primarily upon the process rather than the methods and the technology (e.g. details of the equipment and measurements), since the latter is sufficiently covered by other guidelines. Where necessary, the guidelines are formulated to suit low or medium input production environments.

Get on the Fast-Track – The life-cycle approach to HIV. Geneva: UNAIDS 2016; 140 p. The scope of HIV prevention and treatment options has never been wider than it is today. The world now has the scientific knowledge and experience to reach people with HIV options tailored to their lives in the communities in which they live. This life-cycle approach to HIV ensures that the best solutions are found for people throughout their lifetime. In this report, UNAIDS is announcing that 18.2 million people now have access to HIV treatment. The Fast-Track response is working. Increasing treatment coverage is reducing AIDS-related deaths among adults and children. But the life-cycle approach has to include more than just treatment. Tuberculosis (TB) remains among the commonest causes of illness and death among people living with HIV of all ages, causing about one third of AIDS-related deaths in 2015. These deaths could and should have been prevented. The impact of better treatment coverage means that a growing number of people will be living with HIV into old age, while there has also been an increase in new HIV infections among older people. The consequences of long-term antiretroviral therapy, combined with the diseases of ageing, will be new territory for many HIV programmes.

Ending the AIDS epidemic for adolescents, with adolescents. Geneva: UNAIDS 2016; 32 p. A practical guide to meaningfully engage adolescents in the AIDS response. Adolescents (10-19) are the only age group in which AIDS-related deaths are not decreasing. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a specific goal to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Within this goal it includes a specific target that aims at ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. For this reason, specific yet flexible strategies are needed for different age groups, populations and geographic locations. Ending the epidemic among adolescents requires amplifying investments where they can make the most difference and fostering innovation not only among governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector, but also among adolescents and youth themselves. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to programme designers, implementers, policy and decision-makers on how to meaningfully engage adolescents in the AIDS response and broader health programming, and to demonstrate why adolescents and youth are
critical in efforts to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030. It also highlights what steps should be taken to implement programmes and policies that improve adolescent health outcomes (including for HIV) at the national, regional and global levels.

**United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**

**Fostering and communicating sustainable lifestyles: Principles and emerging practices.** Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme. Sustainable Lifestyles, Cities and Industry Branch (UN Environment). 2016, 122 p. The goal of this report is to further the understanding of sustainable lifestyles and accelerate their widespread adoption. The report does so by identifying elements to consider when developing sustainable lifestyle and related initiatives, and by providing guidance for effective communication, framing and engagement strategies. This report addresses this question by seeking to understand what makes such initiatives effective as models of ways of living and how best to communicate them. It analyses case studies from around the world of initiatives and campaigns intended to bring the participants closer to a sustainable lifestyle through practice, communication and, in most cases, both. The report begins by presenting principles by which the case studies assembled can be interpreted and evaluated and offers insights on how to apply key learnings.

**Global Gender and Environment Outlook.** Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) 2016. 235 p. Job no: DEW/2012/NA ISBN 978 92 807 3581 9 In this report the authors and the UN Environment Secretariat look at the links between gender and the environment and their importance for gender-sensitive policy-making and actions. The Global Gender and Environment Outlook (GGEO) was developed and written by a global team of almost 50 experts, with inputs from major groups and international organizations as well as guidance from dozens of reviewers. Gender inequality is one of the most pervasive threats to sustainable development. It has negative impacts on access to, use of and control over a wide range of resources, and on the ability to meet human rights obligations with respect to enjoyment – by women and men – of a clean, safe, healthy and sustainable environment. The GGEO provides an overview of current knowledge and gives a first set of answers to the following key policy-relevant questions: What social forces are producing the changes seen in the environment, and are they gender-dependent? What are the large-scale consequences of ongoing environmental changes for social systems and human security, and are these consequences gender-differentiated? What do future projections and outlooks look like, are they gender-differentiated, and will there be different outcomes for women and men? What actions could be taken for a more sustainable future that would position women and men as equal agents in taking such actions, and which socio-economic factors could shape different outcomes and responses for women and men? The report analyses a wide variety of areas, including water, sanitation, energy, food security, forests, oceans, consumption and production. For example, women and children are most often responsible for household chores.

**World Health Organization (WHO)**

**WHO Recommendations on antenatal care for a positive pregnancy experience.** Geneva: World Health Organization. 2017. 168 p. Sw.fr. 40.00/US $ 48.00 Order number: 11500929 ISBN 978 92 415 4991 2 Within the continuum of reproductive health care, antenatal care provides a platform for important health-care functions, including health promotion, screening and diagnosis, and disease prevention. It has been established that, by implementing timely and appropriate evidence-based practices, antenatal care can save lives. Endorsed, by the United Nations Secretary-General, this is a comprehensive WHO guideline on routine antenatal care for pregnant women and adolescent girls. It aims to complement existing WHO guidelines on the management of specific pregnancy-related complications. The guidance aims to capture the complex nature of the antenatal care issues surrounding health-care practices and delivery, and to prioritize person-centred health and well-being – not only the prevention of death and morbidity – in accordance with a human rights-based approach.

**Statistical aspects of microbiological criteria related to foods: a risk manager’s guide.** Geneva: World Health Organization. 2016. 120 p. (Microbiological Risk Assessment Series; 24) ISBN 978 92 415 6531 8 Microbiological criteria have been used in food production and the food regulatory context for many years. While the food-specific aspects of microbiological criteria are well understood, the mathematical and statistical aspects are often less well appreciated, which hinders the consistent and appropriate application of microbiological criteria in the food industry. This document has been developed to begin redressing this situation. A particular aim of this document is to illustrate the important mathematical and statistical aspects of microbiological criteria, but with minimal statistical jargon, equations and mathematical details. It is hoped that the resulting document and support materials make this subject more accessible to a broad audience.

**Personal protective equipment for use in a filovirus disease outbreak. Rapid advice guideline.** Geneva: World Health Organization. 2016. 67 p. Sw.fr. 25.00/US $ 30.00 Order number: 11500931 ISBN 978 92 415 4972 1 Filoviruses (Ebola and Marburg) are highly contagious pathogens, which cause severe and often fatal illness in humans. Health workers are at increased risk of infection with these viruses because of their close and prolonged contact with severely ill pa-
Patients with a high viral load. The risk of transmission of Ebola virus can be reduced if appropriate measures are taken, including the use of personal protective equipment. The West African Ebola outbreak taught public health planners important lessons about how best to protect those providing clinical care. These lessons – of what works, what does not, what is most practical and effective – have been collated, assessed by experts in clinical care and infection control and form the basis for these recommendations. This is an important step forward in evidence-based protection and safety for health care delivery during outbreaks.