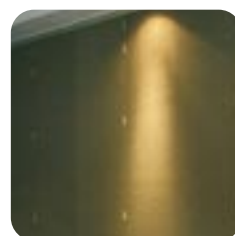
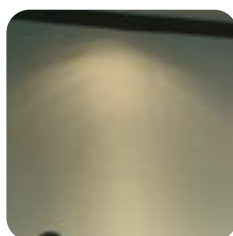




Better Training for Safer Food

Annual Report 2006



The Health and Consumer Protection 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 2006.

Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on its behalf is responsible for any use that might be made of the following information.

This report was prepared in the Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection by the Unit E2 Training Sector. The main contributors were Salvatore Magazzù and Lauro Panella.

Comments and suggestions by colleagues in the Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection 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/index_en.htm

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Better Training for Safer Food

A n n u a l R e p o r t 2 0 0 6

1. INTRODUCTION

The European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection's Better Training for Safer Food initiative has just completed its first year of activity. The initiative provides training for Member State safety control staff and third country participants dealing with food and feed law, animal health and welfare rules and plant health rules. Following the success of the training which has taken place during the past year, I am delighted to present the Better Training for Safer Food annual report for 2006.

Certain EU Member States have a tradition of organising training for their control staff. However, only with the adoption of Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 on official controls for the verification of compliance with feed and food law, and animal health and welfare rules, has the Commission been empowered to set up EU-level training in these areas.


A primary aim of Better Training for Safer Food is to keep control personnel responsible for ensuring the safety of food and feed and the health and welfare of animals and plants, up to date with the relevant EU standards. This should ensure that controls become more harmonised and effective. In this way, the initiative is making a concrete contribution to European integration.

The Commission also recognises the need to familiarise third, and particularly developing countries with EU import requirements. This is vital for helping developing countries to access the EU market for their products. Places on EU-based training courses are thus allocated to third country participants, and programmes are also organised specifically for third countries, thereby giving the initiative a strong global dimension.

This report describes the functioning of the activities in 2006, 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 2007 and the long term structure for training provision, which is explored in depth in Communication COM (2006) 519 on Better Training for Safer Food, adopted in September 2006.

I would like to thank all of those involved in Better Training for Safer Food. They have made invaluable contributions to the success of the initiative in 2006 and, in many cases, have also supplied the information which has made the compilation of this report possible.

I hope that the report will provide useful information on the background to the initiative, its current actions and its future course to all interested stakeholders, both within the EU and throughout the world.



Robert Madelin

Director General for Health and Consumer Protection

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2. BACKGROUND TO BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD

Better Training for Safer Food is a new initiative run by the **European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection**. It aims to organise a **Community training strategy** for official Member State safety controls staff responsible for verifying compliance with EU standards in the following areas:

- food law
- feed law
- animal health rules
- animal welfare rules
- plant health rules.

As well as Member State control personnel, the initiative also aims to provide training in these areas for third, and particularly developing country participants.

The need for this kind of training originates, in part, from the development of the **Internal Market**, the smooth functioning of which relies on the introduction of harmonised rules at EU level. This applies as much to the food trade as to any other sector. An EU-level body of legislation on food, feed, animal health, animal welfare, and plant health has thus been gradually built up. It is generally considered that the Internal Market aims for these areas have been met, since **national law** governing them is now almost entirely **based on EU law**.

As well as aiding completion of the Internal Market, this body of legislation aims to **protect European consumers**. However, food safety emergencies, such as the BSE crisis and sporadic cases of chemical contamination, have highlighted deficiencies in national control systems. At the heart of the problem is the lack of a **harmonised approach** to the design and development of these systems.

Both the Internal Market and consumer protection issues reveal a need to ensure **increased compliance** with Community law. This entails a **high level of competence** on the part of the controlling authorities. Officials checking for compliance need a broad knowledge of potential hazards in the feed and food chain and an understanding of market mechanisms. They must have an awareness of problems inherent to specific production, processing, conservation and distribution methods, and be able to identify non-compliance with requirements and fraudulent practices.

Third countries exporting to the EU must provide guarantees as to the **respect of Community rules**. The import regime for live animals and food and feed of animal origin is based upon certification guarantees given by exporting third countries. In other cases, and in particular for feed and food of plant origin, the Community relies upon **guarantees from importers**, who in turn must obtain assurance at the place of production that EU requirements are met. This means that anyone involved in importing live animals, feed, food or plants must be familiar with EU rules.

The European Commission believes that training those who verify implementation of Community law, rather than simply introducing new legislation, is the best way to satisfy these needs. On the one hand, training for national level control staff should keep them **up to date with new EU rules**. On the other, it should guarantee that controls are carried out in a more **uniform and objective manner** in all Member States.

April 2004 saw the adoption of **Regulation (EC) No 882/2004** which came into force in January 2006. This focuses on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, and animal health and welfare rules. The Regulation identifies training as a key tool in harmonising Community and national control systems.

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 participants of third countries, in particular developing countries.

The benefits of this kind of training provision are multiple. It should lead to more **efficient controls** to help ensure the food industry respects Community regulations safeguarding animal and plant health. This, in turn, will contribute to providing safer food and feed, thereby guaranteeing **high levels of protection** for both consumers and animals.

A uniform approach to the operation of Community and national control systems also generates economic benefits. For instance, it creates a **level playing field for food businesses** and encourages cross-border trade. Finally, programmes developed for third countries help ease **access to the EU market** for their products. This increases free and fair trade between the EU and the rest of the world.

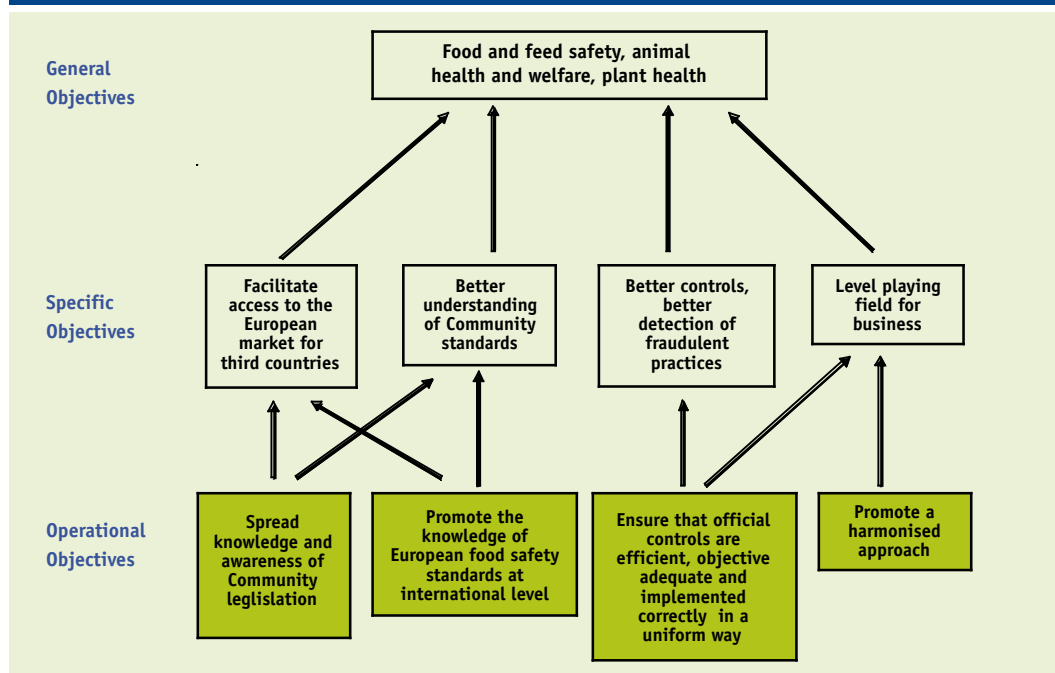
The adoption of this Regulation has paved the way for the launch of the Better Training for Safer Food initiative. Training is now being developed for **national level controls staff** as well as third, and particularly **developing country participants**. In the latter case, the aim is to familiarise them with EU import requirements and, where it exists, the possibility of EU support. Training organised for Member States in the EU is open to a certain number of participants from third countries and sessions are also organised specifically for third countries.

The Commission also recognises the benefits of training **business operators**. It could increase the efficiency of skilled workers, thereby improving implementation of EU standards. It would 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.

However, the legal basis only provides for training to be organised and funded from the Community budget for staff from official competent authorities. If private-sector participants wish to attend, they may do so **at their own expense**. In any event, Member States can encourage national agencies to develop private-sector training programmes.

The following pages give an overview of the process which was followed in order to develop the training activities which have taken place within Better Training for Safer Food during 2006. The report then goes on to look in more detail at the individual programmes which have run during the course of the year and looks ahead to those which are scheduled to take place during 2007. Finally, it gives an insight into the long-term future of the EU training strategy for food and feed law, animal health and welfare rules, and plant health rules.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES OF TRAINING ACTIVITY



TRAINING 2006

- 34 training events
- 7 sustained training missions
- 1 400 participants
- Budget of €3.5 million

3. TRAINING 2006

3.1 OVERVIEW

The work towards the implementation of the training strategy began in 2004-2005 under the aegis of the **Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection**. One of the first concrete steps towards the development of the training strategy was the drawing up of a Road Map which was included in the Commission Legislative and Work Programme for 2006. This programme also highlighted the need to develop food safety training to ensure high standards of controls.

The need for an EU training strategy was discussed with other Directorates General. An **Inter-service Steering Group**¹ was set up and met four times between November 2004 and February 2006. The group reflected on the 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 **Member States** took place within the context of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health, and a Member State expert group meeting was held in February 2006. The Member States emphasised their support for EU organised training and insisted that training priorities and programmes be **established in cooperation** with them. They also urged the Commission to help integrate their own training efforts into EU training. As an initial step, the Commission identified individual **Member State contact points** in order to facilitate communication related to the initiative.

This collaboration helped to define the principal training needs in the areas in question, and as a result, seven areas were chosen as the subjects of training programmes to run during 2006. Five of these were for programmes to take place in the EU. The other two were to be held in third countries. **EU-based training** was to cover:

- the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point system for preventing contamination in food;
- EU rules for the use and disposal of animal by-products;
- animal welfare standards in slaughterhouse and disease control situations;
- good practices for veterinary checks at airport border inspection posts;
- good practices for veterinary checks at seaport border inspection posts.

Third country training was to focus on:

- EU food import standards for:
 - 1) fishery and aquaculture products;
 - 2) fruit and vegetables;
- development of strategies for the control of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI).

A series of **calls for tender** was then launched for the conclusion of contracts related to the organisation, management, and implementation of **ad-hoc training programmes** dealing with these subjects. The launching of ad-hoc training programmes can essentially be seen as a **start-**

¹ In addition to DG Health and Consumer Protection, 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.



up phase of the initiative. One principal objective of this phase was to gather as much experience as possible and to obtain feedback from all stakeholders. This would then help the Commission to decide on the best way in which to organise training in the long term.

With regard to the permanent training structure, the publication of the **Commission Communication** on Better Training for Safer Food, exploring in more depth the viable

long-term options for training provision, was foreseen for mid to late 2006.

In response to the calls, a total of **43 tenders** were received by the Commission. Evaluation committees were then set up within the Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection to evaluate these offers. These committees were made up of a total of **41 members** of the Commission staff, from six Directorates General and services¹. Their evaluation was carried out in accordance with stringent, pre-defined criteria. At the end of the process, contracts were awarded to the **seven bodies** whose offers best responded to the criteria laid down for the management of each contract.

Following the designation of the seven contractors for the 2006 activities, various practical aspects such as the dates and locations of the different activities could then be settled upon. This would be arranged through regular correspondence as well as **face-to-face meetings** with the contractors. The contractors were also required to provide preliminary reports on the work undertaken within the framework of the contracts. These reports would be followed by **interim reports** on the actual training events during the course of the year, and then **final reports** at the end of the contract duration.

For each workshop, the participants proposed by any EU Member State would come from the **official competent authorities** of that state. The participation of the proposed Member State staff would be financed from the Commission budget. As quotas were also set aside for participants from the competent authorities of developing countries attending certain EU-based activities, such participants would likewise receive financial support, when approved by the Commission.

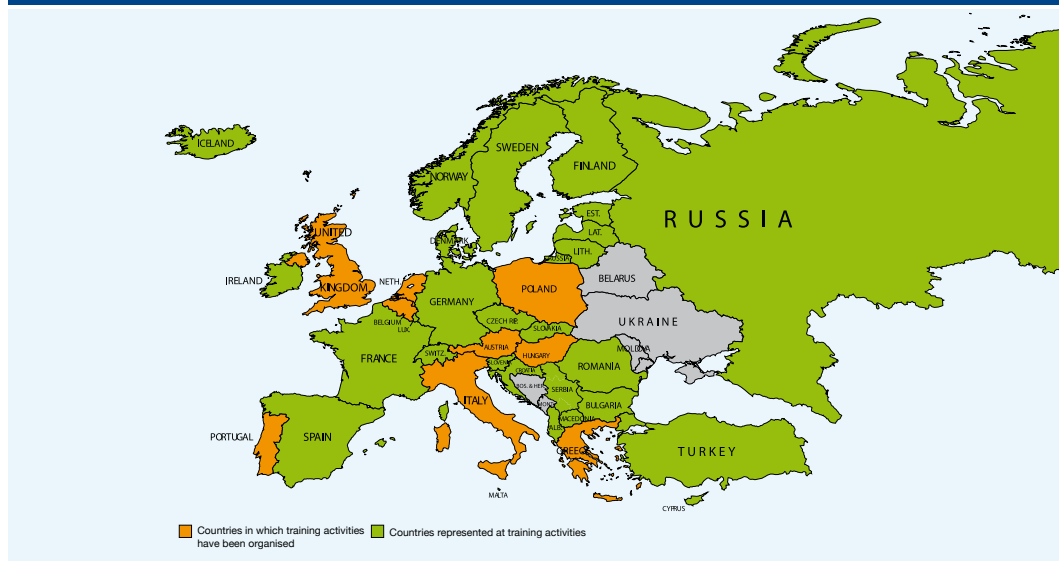
In the case of third country activities, financial support would be provided to staff of competent authorities of **developing countries**. In both cases, the attendance of private sector participants and those from developed third countries would be at their own expense.

With regard to the selection of tutors for each workshop, all contractors were required to put in place a **stringent selection process**. This process aimed to ensure that all 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. This procedure is geared towards ensuring that the standard of instruction is of the highest possible quality.

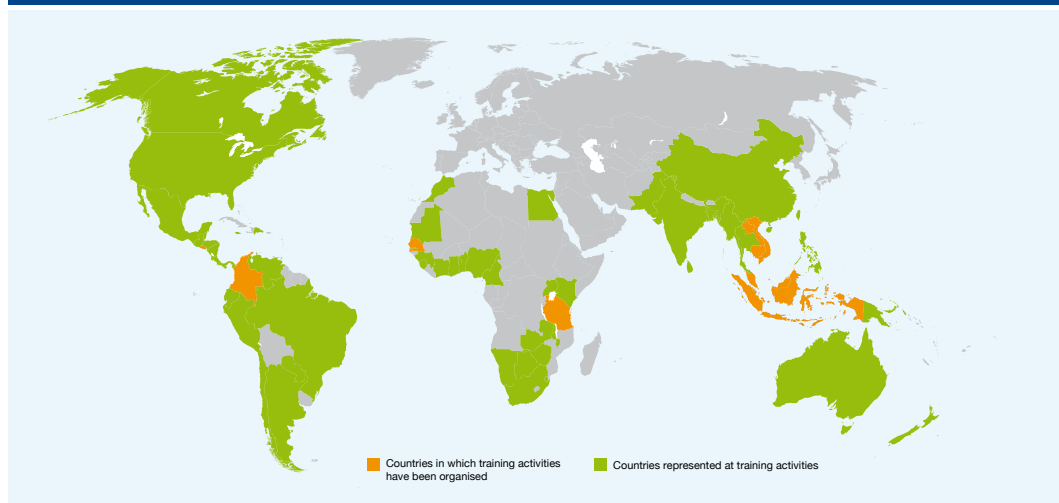
¹ In addition to DG Health and Consumer Protection, evaluation committee members were drawn from DGs Agriculture and Rural Development, Development, External Relations, and Trade, as well as the EuropAid Cooperation Office.

In addition, the Commission makes every effort to ensure that the workshops benefit from a highly international selection of tutors. This is done with the aim of providing participants with **variety of perspectives** of experts from across the EU and a range of third countries. Commission representatives are also present at every workshop, both to ensure its **smooth functioning** and in many cases, to provide participants with the benefit of their knowledge and expertise, particularly as regards EU regulations on a given subject.

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES HOSTING AND PARTICIPATING IN TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN 2006



NON-EUROPEAN COUNTRIES HOSTING AND PARTICIPATING IN TRAINING ACTIVITIES WORLDWIDE IN 2006



The international nature of the initiative is further emphasised by the selection of training locations. In this, the Commission tries to maintain a **wide geographical spread**. In 2006, the EU activities took place in nine different Member States. A total of nine countries also hosted third country training activities.

Globally, for the year 2006, activities within the initiative have encompassed:

- seven training programmes;
- approximately 1 400 participants;
- 34 workshops and seminars;
- seven sustained training and assistance missions;
- a budget of around €3.5 million.

In terms of participation from the **public and private sectors**, around **87%** of all participants were from the competent authorities of EU Member States, candidate, associated or third countries. The private sector accounted for the remaining **13%**.

At the end of each training workshop, participants were provided with **evaluation forms** to give their impressions of the standard of training. The response was very positive with an overall **approval rating of 84%**.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES 2006

Training programmes	No. of events	Days spent on training	Overall participants
HACCP	20	100	370
EU import standards for fruit and vegetables and fishery products	6	18	409
Avian influenza control (sustained training)	7	120	160 ¹
Avian influenza control (workshop)	1	3	19
Animal by-products	4	7	285
Airport border inspection posts	1	2	36
Seaport border inspection posts	1	2	33
Animal welfare standards	1	3	85
Total	41	255	1397

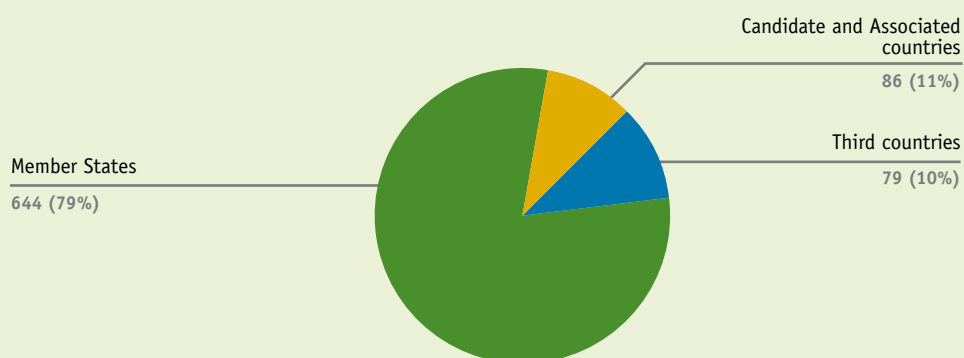
The following section looks at the various aspects linked to the seven programmes running during 2006. These will include the dates and locations, as well as the subjects covered in each of the programmes. Attention will also be given to outcomes such as trainee and tutor participation.

¹ Based on estimates from experts seconded to provide sustained training

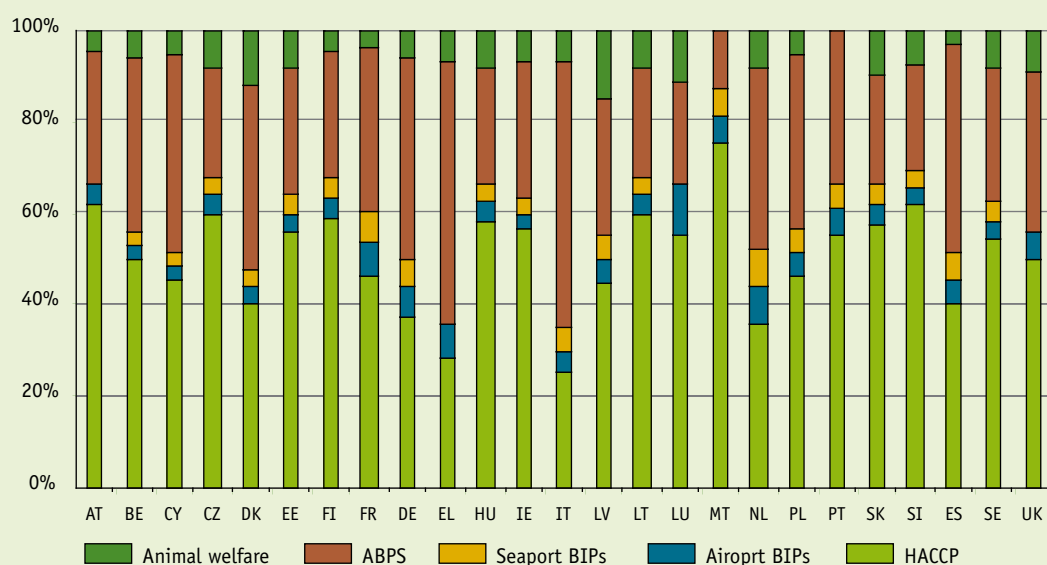
3.2 EU-BASED ACTIVITIES

The fact that the EU-based activities are primarily intended for **Member State controls personnel** does not detract from the **global aspect** of these programmes. Although EU participants made up 79% of the total¹, one participant in ten in these programmes came from outside of Europe.

EU-BASED ACTIVITIES: EU/NON-EU PARTICIPANTS



PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS PER ACTIVITY FOR EACH MS



¹ In the light of the January 2007 EU enlargement, it must be considered that when the 2006 training took place Romania and Bulgaria were not European Union Member States. In all figures cited in this report, in relation to 2006 activities, they are thus considered to be accession countries rather than EU Member States.

The wide geographical spread of participants afforded considerable opportunities for **information exchange**. This was one of the main informal benefits of the training. Bringing together participants from a range of countries allowed them to gain an insight into the experiences of their colleagues from **different geographical contexts**. At the same time it enabled the creation of **new relationships** which have the potential to lead to highly productive collaboration in the future.

In terms of participation percentages, the **highest for a single country in a single programme** was that of Malta in HACCP training at around 75%. With the exception of Malta and Portugal in the animal welfare workshop and Austria, Greece and Luxembourg at the seaport BIPs workshop, all Member States were represented at every workshop. The UK did not send formal participants to the seaport BIPs event, but given that the workshop took place in that country, that the British authorities played an integral role in its organisation and supplied tutors for the event, UK staff nonetheless benefited from the training.

3.2.1 Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP)

EU rules require food and feed businesses to follow procedures based on HACCP principles. This **identifies hazards and prevents contamination** of feed and food. It also enables checks on compliance with food safety requirements by businesses.

A total of **20 five-day workshops** have been held on HACCP principles and were attended by 370 participants. The contractor for the organisation of this programme was the **Campden and Chorleywood Food Research Association Group**. The training took place in Birmingham, Budapest and Porto, with courses running almost continuously between June and December.

Each workshop included a **practical factory visit** and an optional **final examination**. The programme was divided into **two courses**, with ten workshops for each one:

- Course one was aimed at participants with a basic awareness of HACCP. It involved the **implementation and maintenance of control procedures** based on HACCP principles. It aimed to provide delegates with a good understanding of how food and feed business operators develop, implement and maintain HACCP-based systems, and to introduce them to the principles of auditing.
- Course two was intended for participants with more advanced HACCP knowledge. It aimed to provide delegates with a strong understanding of how to **audit HACCP systems**. The focus was on the principles of auditing and participants were asked to carry out a practical audit of the factory they visited.

Each course dealt with the following five **principal topics**, albeit from a different viewpoint:

- the background to HACCP
- the role of prerequisite programmes
- planning HACCP
- the seven HACCP principles
- the principles of auditing.

The results of the final examinations in both courses were very encouraging. A total of 83% of course one participants successfully passed the examination, whereas for course two, the figure was even higher, at 88%.

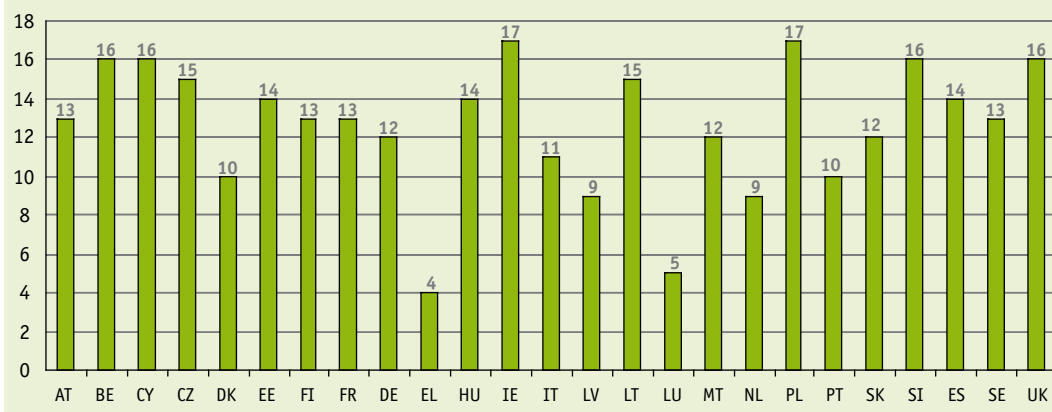


HACCP workshop participants, Birmingham, June 2006

HACCP training attracted an overwhelmingly **EU-based audience**. A total of 316 participants came from Member States, accounting for 86% of global participation. In addition, other European countries contributed a further 31 participants (8% of the total). Third countries were responsible for 6% of all participation, that is to say 23 participants.

As regards individual Member States, the highest attendance figures came from Poland and Ireland with 17 each. The lowest were from Greece and Luxembourg, with 4 and 5 participants respectively.

HACCP: PARTICIPANTS BY MEMBER STATE



Amongst **EU accession and candidate countries**, 12 participants came from Croatia, 8 from Bulgaria, 4 from Romania and one each from Macedonia and Turkey. As regards **third countries**, 6 participants were from India, 5 were from Morocco, 4 from the Maldives and 3 from Kenya. One participant each came from Botswana, Ghana, Jamaica, Tanzania and Thailand.

Each of the HACCP workshops involved between **four and five tutors**. Almost all of these tutors came from the three countries in which the events were being organised, UK, Hungary and Portugal.

The feedback received from participants at the end of the workshops was generally **very favourable**. Course one was rated as "good" by over 94% of participants. The majority of course two participants were also satisfied, with 84% considering it to have been "good".

Whilst the feedback was positive, **possible improvements** have been identified, including:

- more guidance on the flexibility of application of hygiene regulations;
- provision, in a variety of languages, of the EU guidance document on the “Implementation of procedures based on the HACCP principles”;
- more time and emphasis on auditing principles in course two.

3.2.2 Veterinary checks at airport border inspection posts



Training on veterinary controls at border inspection posts, Vienna airport, June 2006

Effective and harmonised checks by veterinary control staff at border posts are vital for the **security of public and animal health**. Promoting good practices for veterinary checks ensures consistently high standards of implementation across the EU. In this, airport Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) are a priority.

The airport BIPs programme aimed to train veterinary control staff in good practices for checks at airport BIPs. It involved the

implementation of **one, two-day workshop** for 36 participants. This took place at Vienna airport in June, and the contractor for the organisation of the event was the **Austrian Federal Ministry for Health and Women**.

The **workshop sessions** covered issues such as:

- EU rules for border post inspections;
- customs procedures;
- hygiene at BIPs;
- checks to ensure the validity of product certification and procedures for products for which no EU-wide import conditions exist;
- the TRACES computer system;
- the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed.

A range of issues which border post veterinarians could be called to confront were dealt with in **practical sessions** in the BIP itself. These included:

- examinations of live animals and products;
- checks of passengers;
- hygiene practices;
- selecting consignments;
- taking samples of products.

Participation in the Airport BIPs workshop was **entirely European**, with all except four participants coming from EU Member States. There were two participants each from Germany, France, UK, Italy, Spain, Poland and the Netherlands. One participant each came from all other Member States as well as from Bulgaria, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland.

Tutors came from Austria, Germany and Belgium, as well as the European Commission.

The majority of feedback received from participants at the workshop was positive. A total of **87%** of participants considered that the workshop was **successful** in meeting their expectations.

In addition to the evaluation form responses, various constructive comments were provided by the participants, including the following:

- lengthen the workshop in order to fit in all the relevant content;
- allow more time for discussion with the tutors;
- place more emphasis on the customs procedures and certification subject areas.

3.2.3 Veterinary checks at seaport border inspection posts



In a similar way to the workshop on airport BIPs, this programme aimed to train veterinary control staff in good practices for checks at seaport BIPs. It also involved the implementation of **one, two-day workshop**, which was attended by 33 participants. This was held in November in the UK, partly at the seaport BIPs of Felixstowe and Tilbury and partly in Hertfordshire. The workshop was implemented by the **Association of Port Health Authorities** and focused on:

- EU legislation and its practical effect on veterinary checks;
- implementation of procedures for imports;
- information exchange and intelligence gathering.

Practical visits to the BIPs at Felixstowe and Tilbury also took place, during which participants observed:

- storage facilities for ships' catering waste;
- procedures for moving consignments within the port;
- inventory systems for organising controls;
- procedures for selecting consignments;
- procedures for sampling imports.

As with the airport BIPs workshop, all participants in the seaport BIPs programme were from **Member States or accession, candidate, and associated countries**. Two participants each

attended from France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland and Spain. One participant came from each of the other Member States except Austria, Greece and Luxembourg, who were not represented. Croatia, the Faeroe Islands, Iceland, Norway, Romania and Turkey also each had one representative attending. As mentioned in section 3.2, the UK did not send participants, but as the UK authorities organised and provided tutors for the event, that country was nonetheless represented and able to benefit from the training.

A total of **six tutors** were used for the workshop and two EC representatives were also in attendance.

This workshop was also **highly regarded by participants**. On the evaluation forms distributed at the end of the event, all respondents considered the workshop to have been excellent or good.

As with other programmes, a widespread comment was that more time was required to cover all of the relevant topics. Other suggestions were:

- ensure that the topics covered benefit from at least some explanation by the European Commission experts present;
- reduce the time spent travelling to, and between, the BIPs;
- make the presentations available in note form beforehand.

3.2.4 EU regulations for animal by-products (ABPs)



Participants at the animal by-products workshop, Athens, May 2006

ABPs are materials of animal origin not intended for human consumption. They can, depending on the risks involved, be **used in products** such as animal feed, cosmetics, medicinal products or fertilisers. Otherwise they are **disposed of as waste**. The Commission has adopted measures to ensure only materials fit for human consumption go into feed. It also sets out rules for the disposal of ABPs.

Three, two-day workshops, plus a day-long **conclusive conference**

have been organised within this programme, which was attended by 285 participants overall. The workshops were held in Athens in May, Milan in June and Warsaw in July. The final conference took place in Brussels in September. The contractor for the programme was the **Agri-Livestock Consultants Consortium**.

The ABP **workshops** dealt with a range of subjects pertaining to the sector including:

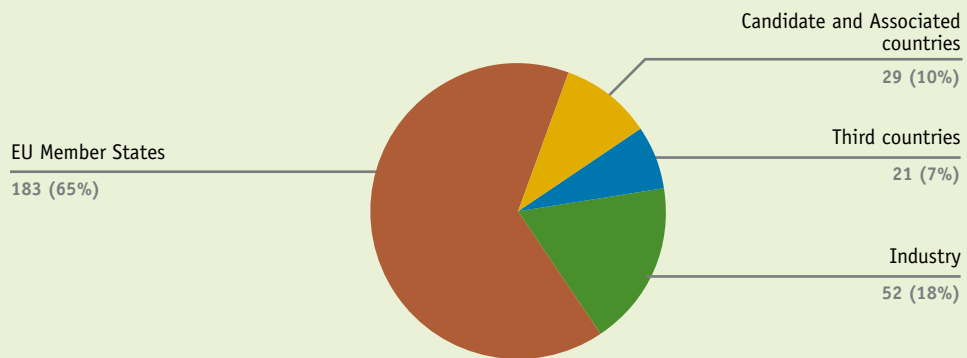
- EU regulations;
- the ABP production chain;
- industrial aspects;
- import conditions;

- fallen stock disposal schemes;
- approval and supervision of establishments dealing with ABPs;
- restrictions on the use and disposal of ABPs.

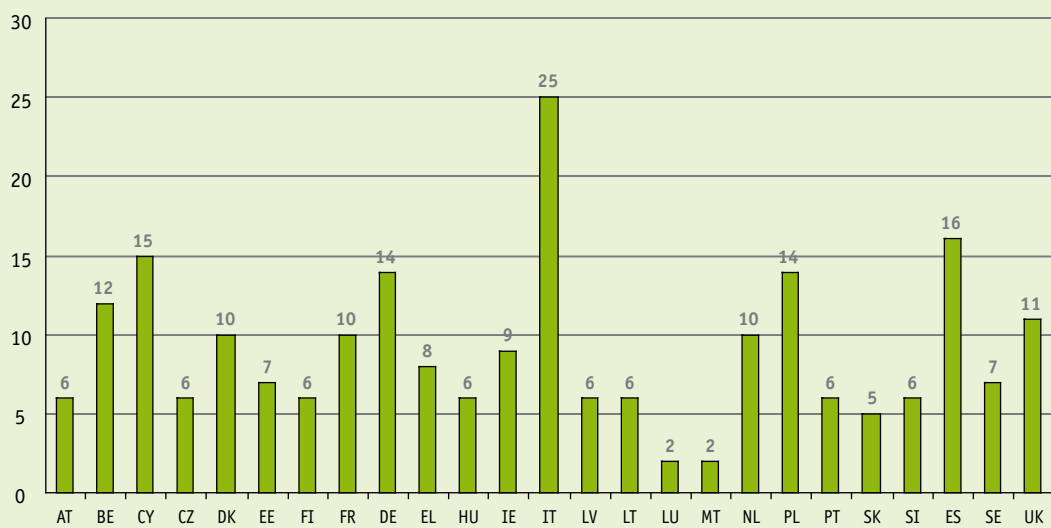
The **conclusive conference** looked at:

- the experience of implementing EU ABP regulations in a range of different sectors of activity;
- the main topics covered during the workshops;
- the main tasks and challenges which lie ahead for the ABP sector;
- areas in which training is likely to be needed in the future.

ABP EVENTS: PARTICIPANTS PER CATEGORY



ABPs: PARTICIPANTS BY MEMBER STATE



As with all EU-based activities in 2006, **the majority of participants** (65%) were staff of official authorities from **EU Member States**. Industry representatives made up 18% of participants, as ABPs are a subject of particular relevance to a very **specific industrial sector**.

Of the EU participants, the largest number came from Italy with 25, which was mainly due to the large home attendance at the Milan event. The relatively high number of participants from Poland (14) was also due to the high Polish turnout at the event in Warsaw. However, the low level of participation from Greece demonstrates that geographical proximity was not necessarily a determining factor.

ABPs: PARTICIPANTS NON-EU MEMBER STATES



Animal by-products are a subject of worldwide importance and **18 non-EU countries** were represented at the events taking place within the programme. The highest numbers were from accession, candidate and associated countries, with 6 participants each coming from Bulgaria, Turkey and Norway. Participation was by no means limited to Europe, however. Of the third countries, four participants came from Nigeria, South Africa and the USA respectively, and three came from India.

For each workshop, **seven tutors** and two additional speakers were used. The tutors came from UK, Ireland, France, Norway, and the Netherlands. The additional speakers were from Slovenia, the Netherlands, Hungary, Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic. This meant that participants benefited from a **wide range of experience** from across the EEA. The international dimension was reinforced by the thirteen speakers present at the conclusive conference, amongst which third countries were represented by India and the USA.

Participant approval ratings for the standard of training in ABP workshops were **consistently high**, ranging from 75% to 89%, demonstrating a considerable degree of satisfaction.

Constructive comments were also provided on the ABP training, such as:

- spend more time working in smaller groups, allowing for more interaction between tutors and participants;
- include practical aspects, such as visits to ABP processing or disposal sites;
- provide more information on prospective future developments in the sector.

3.2.5 Welfare standards concerning the stunning and killing of animals in slaughterhouse and disease control situations

Community legislation on slaughtering practices aims to **minimise farm animals' suffering** by using approved stunning and killing methods. Reports have highlighted deficiencies in this area in the EU and elsewhere. Disease outbreaks have also exposed the limitations of certain slaughter techniques used for bringing them under control.

This course trained official veterinary surgeons carrying out checks on slaughterhouses to ensure the correct implementation of EU animal welfare standards at slaughter. One **three-day workshop**, attended by 85 participants was organised in Bristol in September by the **Humane Slaughter Association**.

The workshop provided participants with an overview of EU legislation on animal welfare. It then went on to discuss topics such as:

- the scientific basis for proper handling, stunning and killing;
- the techniques usually applied in Europe;
- auditing methods to evaluate adherence to regulations;
- means of enforcing compliance.



The event included **visits to slaughterhouses**, where participants could observe and evaluate the design of the facilities and the procedures in place to ensure a high level of animal welfare.

This programme received a high level of interest from non-EU countries, with almost **half of all participants** coming from **outside of the EU**. Of these, 30 (35% of the total) came from third countries, and 11 (14%)

from associated, candidate and accession countries. The remaining 44 participants (51% of the total) were from the EU.

Amongst Member States, three participants each came from Denmark, Italy, Latvia, and UK. Two each came from Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden. All other Member States sent one participant, except for Malta and Portugal, who were not represented.

Representatives from **30 non-EU countries** attended the event, with Turkey sending more participants (four) than any other country, including the EU Member States. It was followed by the Philippines and Australia with three each, and China, Namibia, Norway and Romania with two. Participants also came from Albania, Argentina, Bangladesh, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Egypt, India, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Russia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The international character of the workshop was also enhanced by the experts assigned to give presentations. A total of **21** took part in the event, coming from **seven countries** both in the EU and elsewhere in Europe.

Animal welfare was another instance where encouraging feedback was received from participants. In all, **90%** of responses to the questionnaires distributed showed a positive opinion of the standard of training.

Specific comments received were also positive, emphasising the high quality organisation of the course, some suggestions for improvement were:

- provide more focus on the disease control area of the subject;
- give the presentations a more practical and less theoretical character;
- lengthen the workshop and allow more time for discussion.

3.3 ACTIVITIES IN THIRD COUNTRIES

In 2006, two programmes for **third countries** have been run within the initiative. Participation in these programmes was exclusively for people from third, and particularly developing countries. These activities brought together colleagues from within specific regions of the world. For 2006, the programmes covered south-east Asia, Central and South America and Africa.

In the same way as the EU-based programmes, it is hoped that, as well as providing valuable training, these events have generated a high degree of information exchange between participants, and contributed to fostering new professional relationships.

3.3.1 Third country workshops on EU standards for fishery and aquaculture products, and fruit and vegetables



The EU is the world's **biggest food importer** and needs wide-ranging legislation to ensure the safety of its imports. This can at times pose problems with regard to imports from third, and particularly developing countries, where checks may be less stringent. At the same time, the EU does not wish to put up **barriers to imports**. This training programme raises awareness of EU standards in the developing world and thus helps developing countries **access the EU market** for their products.

In all, **six, 3-day workshops** were organised, and split into two product categories. These were:

- fishery and aquaculture products;
- fruit and vegetables.

For each subject, one workshop each was held in Latin America, (El Salvador for fruit and vegetables in May/June and Colombia for fish in June), Africa (Senegal for fish in October and Tanzania for fruit and vegetables in November), and south-east Asia (Indonesia for fish in April and Malaysia for fruit and vegetables in September). The contract for the organisation of the activity was awarded to **European Application of Technology and Services (AETS)**, in consortium with Spanish companies, **AENOR** and **AINIA**.

A total of 409 participants attended the programme and the level of private sector participation was 23%.

The **fishery and aquaculture** programme gave an overview of EU legislation in the relevant areas. It also provided information on:

- EU technical assistance;
- Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) inspections;
- EU requirements for fishing vessels, landings and processing establishments;
- production, harvesting, packaging, storage and transport of aquaculture products.



Delegates during the workshop on EU import standards for fishery and aquaculture products, Jakarta, April 2006

These workshops hosted participants from a total of **37 countries**. The highest participation levels came from the three host countries, Indonesia, Senegal and Colombia.

Other countries represented from Asia were: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Malaysia, the Maldives, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. Other participating countries from Africa were: Benin, Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Tanzania,

Togo, and Uganda. Participating Latin American countries were: Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela.

Participants also came from the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the ASEAN secretariat and representations of EU Member States.

The **fruit and vegetable** workshops covered topics including:

- EU legislation, including phytosanitary export requirements;

- EU technical assistance;
- FVO inspections;
- requirements for the primary production, transport and distribution of fruit and vegetables;
- requirements for processing establishments and hygiene controls;
- the role of the competent authorities in third countries, with regard to inspections and certification for export.

They were attended by delegates from **33 third countries**. In the same way as for fishery and aquaculture, the highest participation levels were supplied by the host countries, Malaysia, Tanzania and El Salvador.

Other countries from Asia with representatives attending were: India, Indonesia, Laos, the Maldives, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. From Africa participants were also present from: Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Other Latin American participants came from: Belize, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Members of staff from representations of EU Member States were also present.

Between **eight and twelve tutors** were used for each workshop throughout the entire programme. On every occasion, tutors from both EU member States and the region in which the event was held, participated. The EU tutors were drawn from **seven Member States**, and those from third countries from **eight developing countries**.

The evaluation received from the participants was both positive and also constructive. Overall, the organisation of the programme was viewed as having been well carried out. Participants did, however, feel that the workshops would have benefited from:

- more time;
- an increased practical aspect, including practical exercises;
- visits to food production establishments.

3.3.2 Assistance and sustained training for Association of Southeast Asian Nations member states on avian influenza

In global terms, south-east Asia has seen the majority of both animal and human cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). The current wave of the virus originated there in 2003 and it has been estimated that this led to a **quarter of the region's bird population** dying or being culled. Moreover, it is there that the mutation of the virulent H5N1 strain into a highly pathogenic virus capable of **affecting humans** has been most in evidence.

This programme entailed the seconding of **two experts** to south-east Asia to provide sustained training in the field and practical assistance to the public authorities. In addition, a **laboratory workshop** was organised. The contractor for this activity was the **Animal Science Group of the ID Lelystad Consortium**.

- One expert spent 15 days each in **Cambodia** and **Laos** in March and April and 30 days in **Vietnam** in August.
- One expert spent 60 days in **Indonesia**, split into four visits in April, June, August and November.
- The **three-day** laboratory workshop in **diagnostic techniques** was held at Lelystad in the Netherlands in May.

As regards the sustained training and assistance missions, the objectives varied in accordance with the situation of each country, in terms of the control measures taken.

- The aim of the missions to Cambodia and Laos was to assist with the drawing up of **national HPAI contingency plans**.
- In Vietnam the principle objective of the mission was awareness raising, concerning **bio-security measures** to be taken to prevent the spread of HPAI.
- For Indonesia, a **compartmentalisation plan** was to be implemented, which would divide the country into zones. This aimed at the **eradication** of HPAI in each of these zones and the **re-stocking** of holdings with healthy poultry. In addition, a **certification system** to classify poultry holdings as HPAI-free was to be drawn up.



Sustained training session on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza control, Laos, April 2006

As the majority of the training activity in the avian influenza programme was comprised of sustained training on the ground in south-east Asia, precise details of those taking part are not available. However the participation levels in these sessions were generally encouraging.

The expert seconded to Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, noted **considerable increases** in the attendance at the activities during the course of the mission to Laos. He observed that at the beginning of his spell there, around 6 people

were present. By the end of the first week this had increased to about 20, and during the second week the participation levels were rising each day.

More precise data is available for the workshop on diagnostic techniques for avian influenza, which was held in the Netherlands in May. A total of **19 delegates** attended and Indonesia was the most represented nation at the event, with 11 participants. In addition, two participants each attended from Vietnam, Cambodia and Singapore and one each from Thailand and Laos.

In terms of feedback, the two experts provided a range of recommendations for future initiatives in this area, including:

- more involvement of the competent authorities of the countries in question;

- increased technical support to farmers;
- foster greater collaboration between the competent authorities and the poultry industry.

As regards the laboratory workshop, the feedback received emphasised that:

- the distance and cost of attending makes participation difficult;
- it might be worthwhile providing different levels of training which take into account the diverse situations in the various countries across the region.

3.4 BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

In terms of communicating the training initiative, extensive activity has been undertaken during 2006 and will continue in years to come. A **communication plan** was drawn up at the beginning of the year, based on the **calendar of activities** for 2006.

Webpages dedicated to the training initiative, have been created on the Health and Consumer Protection DG website and can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/food/training/index_en.htm. These contain information on the **background** to Better Training for Safer Food and the current and future **training programmes**. Details of various organisational aspects can also be found. This includes a list of the **Member State contact points** who facilitate communication between the Commission and the national-level authorities. In-depth information on the **Commission Communication on Better Training for Safer Food** is also provided. In addition, the pages are regularly updated with news of training events.

As well as the webpages, **newsletters** concerning the activities have been produced, both in electronic and print form. These have been aimed at a variety of audiences. Contributions have also been made to the newsletters of other European Commission Directorates General.



Better Training for Safer Food introductory webpage

Publicity for **individual events** has been undertaken in collaboration with the individual contractors for each training programme. The majority of the contractors have produced **webpages** on the programme which they are organising. For certain events, press releases

were also published. These were, in the main, linked to the organisation of press briefings prior to workshops. For example, in the case of the animal by-products workshop held in Milan, collaboration took place between the Directorate-General, the Commission representation in Milan, and the contractor. This involved the drafting, translation and mailing of a **press release** to local journalists in order to attract them to the pre-workshop press conference.

As well as the communication activities undertaken directly by the Health and Consumer Protection DG, Better Training for Safer Food has also aroused the interest of the **independent media**, particularly in the locations where training activities have taken place.

The workshop on EU import standards for fishery and aquaculture products which took place in Bogotá, Colombia in June drew the attention of the media from various countries in Latin America, including Nicaragua, Panama, and the Dominican Republic as well as Colombia itself, from where the following extract is taken:

"Around 80 experts from Latin America were present in the Colombian capital to take part in the workshop "European food legislation for fish and aquaculture products from third countries", during which various European specialists shed light on the requirements which must be respected in order for fish products to pass through the European Union's borders."

La Nación Latina, Colombia, 20 June 2006

The Senegal workshop on the same subject, held in October 2006, attracted considerable comment from the Senegalese press. Following the event, articles appeared in *le Quotidien*, *Sud*, and *le Matin*, with the latter reporting that:

"This workshop is, amongst other things, a response to European requirements in the area of safety of food products of aquatic origin."

Le Matin, Senegal, 26 October 2006

Subsequent to the adoption of the Communication on the future training strategy, which coincided with the final conference on animal by-products in Brussels, the initiative also received coverage from the *Europolitics* website, which stated:

"The establishment of an executive agency . . . should facilitate the implementation of Regulation 882/2004 concerning official controls on animal feed and food for human consumption."

Europolitics, 21 September 2006

Following the workshop in Milan on animal by-products, the specialist Italian monthly, *Eurocarni* published an article on the event, in which it said:

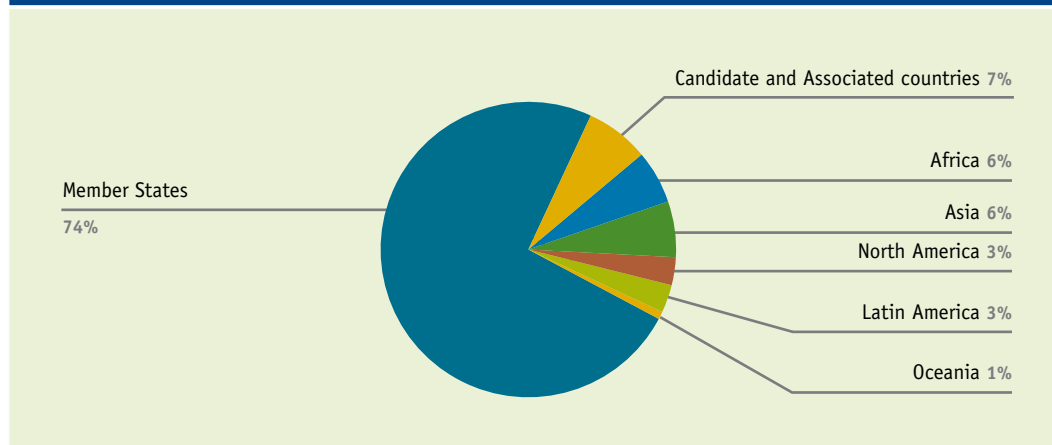
"The presentations dealt with all of the themes which are crucial to the application of legislation in the area of animal by-products."

Eurocarni, Italy, August 2006

3.4.1 Expressions of interest in Better Training for Safer Food

On the webpages dedicated to Better Training for Safer Food, there is a **registration form** which anyone interested in the training activities is invited to fill in. At the time of writing, this form had been completed by around **500 interested parties** from around the world.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN ACTIVITIES RECEIVED AT TRAINING WEBPAGES BY WORLD REGION



The registration form at the website is soon to be modified. This will enable those filling it in to give more **in-depth information** on their training interests. They will be able to be more specific regarding the areas of safety controls in which they are involved and where they feel there is a need for training provision. The information received will thus be qualitative as well as quantitative, enabling the Commission to **gauge training requirements** even more accurately. Appropriate action can then be taken at Commission level to ensure that the training offer remains as relevant as possible to the needs of the actors in the sector.

This will be just one of a number of communication activities which will help to increase the visibility of the training initiative during 2007. Others will include:

- more **frequent updating of the website** with news of events taking place within the initiative;
- the production of a **range of communication tools** such as leaflets, fact sheets and a professional power point presentation;
- **raising the profile** of Better Training for Safer Food through all available channels, both within the Commission itself, and also in the specialist press.

TRAINING 2007

- 62 training events
- 9 sustained training missions
- Approximately 2 900 participants
- Budget of approximately €7 million

4. TRAINING 2007

4.1 OVERVIEW

Training in 2007 will be run along similar lines to 2006, with **twelve programmes** taking place, **eight** of which will be in the **EU** and **four in third countries**. The training offer for 2007 has, in large part, been defined by the experience and feedback from the 2006 activities and also from consultations with Member States and the Inter-Service Steering Group during the year.

As mentioned in section 3.1, a Member State expert group meeting and a Steering Group meeting were held in February 2006. In addition, further discussion with Member States took place within the Standing Committee of the Food Chain and Animal Health in July 2006.

On this basis, it was concluded that the **seven subject areas** which had been the focus of the 2006 activities should continue in 2007. In certain cases, the format used in 2006 was considered to be the most suitable method of training provision, and should therefore **take a similar form** in 2007. This was the case for the programmes on:

- the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point system for preventing contamination in food;
- EU rules for the use and disposal of animal by-products;
- EU import standards for fishery and aquaculture products, and fruit and vegetables.

The other continuing activities are to be **broadened** in terms of aspects the number of events to be held, or their geographical scope. This applies to the programmes on:

- animal welfare standards in slaughterhouse and disease control situations;
- good practices for veterinary checks at airport border inspection posts;
- good practices for veterinary checks at seaport border inspection posts;
- the development of strategies for the control of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

In addition, training programmes are to be organised in **five new areas**. Three of these are to run in the **EU**, and cover:

- monitoring and controls of zoonoses and applying microbiological criteria in foodstuffs;
- controls on food contact materials;
- evaluation and registration of plant protection products.

The two **new training programmes** taking place in **third countries** in 2007 focus on:

- training for laboratory staff of ASEAN countries in the application of food testing;
- 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.

Calls for tender were launched in July 2006 for the conclusion of contracts for the organisation

and implementation of nine programmes. This covered both the new programmes and those expanding substantially in relation to 2006. One call was for **EU-based activities** and the other for those in **third countries**. As in 2006, a certain number of third-country participants will be able to attend sessions in the EU.

A total of **32 responses** to the calls were received by October 2006 and, as for the organisation of the 2006 activities, evaluation committees were appointed to assess the tenders. In all, **35 members of Commission staff from five Directorates General¹** sat on these evaluation committees. The evaluations would eventually lead, once again, to the designation of contractors to manage and implement the various training programmes.

Reflecting the increased activity levels within the initiative in its second year, training in 2007 is to comprise:

- twelve training programmes (of which eight are in the EU and four in third countries);
- approximately 2 900 participants;
- 62 workshops and seminars;
- nine sustained training and assistance missions;
- a budget of approximately €7 million.

TRAINING ACTIVITIES 2007

Training programmes	No. of events	Training days	Overall participants
HACCP	19	95	380
Animal by-products	4	8	280
Airport border inspection posts	3	9	120
Seaport border inspection posts	3	9	120
Animal welfare standards	1	5	100
Zoonoses	5	20	200
Food contact materials	6	20	240
Plant protection products	2	8	50
EU import standards for fruit and vegetables and fishery products	7	19	420
Avian influenza control (workshop)	3	9	60
Avian influenza control (sustained training)	9	378	540 ²
Food testing	6	30	120
RASFF	3	9	240
Totals (estimated)	70	614	2870

¹ As well as DG Health and Consumer Protection, these were DGs Research, Development, Trade, and Fisheries and Maritime Affairs.

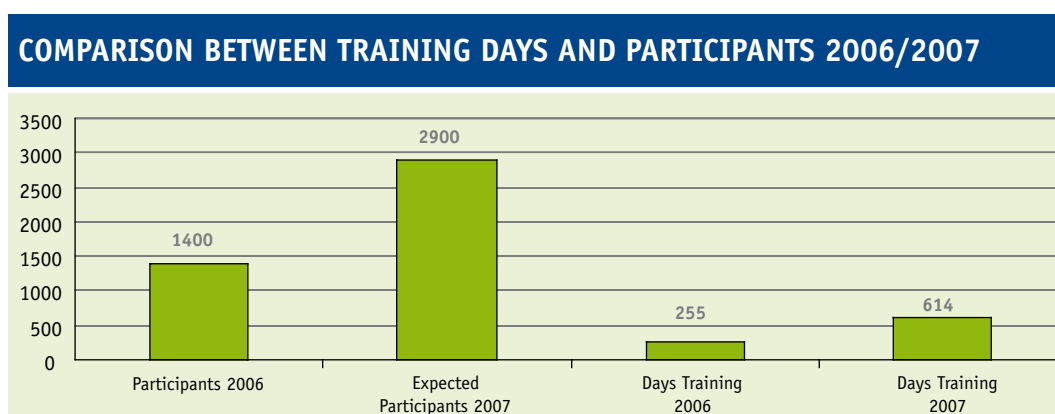
² Based on estimations of an average of ten participants per week of sustained training, over six weeks for each of nine countries.

Due to the lengthy periods of sustained training and assistance, **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza control** is projected to be the programme with the most days dedicated to it in 2007. If only workshops and seminars are taken into account, **HACCP** is the most extensive programme and comprises the highest number of training events.

The sustained training on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza control is estimated to have the highest levels of participation of any training event in 2007. It must, however, be taken into account that the participation figures cited for the sustained training sessions are estimations due to the more flexible nature of the training.

With the exception of avian influenza, HACCP and EU import standards for third country products are projected to have the most participants in 2007. Following these are animal by-products, **food contact materials and the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed**. The latter two are projected to have the highest participation levels of the programmes for which 2007 is the first year of implementation.

Comparisons between 2006 and 2007, as regards numbers of participants and number of days spent on training, give a clear view of a project in **full expansion**. The increases in numbers of participants and days dedicated to training are considerable and should continue in forthcoming years.



This section provides information on the twelve programmes taking place in 2007. It also looks ahead at the prospects for the coming year, in terms of projected numbers of events and participants.

4.2 EU-BASED TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR 2007

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP)

Training on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point principles is to continue during 2007 in much the same format as in 2006. Again, it will be divided up into two different courses. Course one focuses on the development, implementation and maintenance of HACCP systems and course two deals with the carrying out of audits in order to verify compliance with HACCP principles.

Both courses will examine the **background, principles, application and benefits of HACCP** and will also include practical exercises in establishments implementing HACCP procedures. Course one should also focus on approaches to HACCP audits, whereas course two is expected to look at the relationship between business Quality Assurance programmes and HACCP systems, as well as auditing principles.

There are slight differences from the 2006 format. Firstly, **course one** is to comprise a total of between **six and eight** workshops, whereas for **course two**, between **ten and twelve** workshops are to be held. Each event should be of approximately **five day's duration**, of which one will be a welcome day and four will be working days, and should cater for between **20 and 25 participants**. The events are to take place in four different EU Member States, of which one should be in each of the northern, southern, eastern and western regions of the EU.

EU regulations for animal by-products (ABPs)

As with HACCP, training on ABPs continues in 2006, with only slight organisational alterations. **Four, two-day events** will be held, however, these will all be workshops, instead of one being a final conference. Each workshop should host approximately **70 participants**. The geographical spread must be the same as for HACCP, with one workshop each taking place in the north, south, east and west of the EU.

Aspects of the course content may also differ, drawing on the conclusions of the September 2006 conference. The subject matter should concentrate more on specific topics, of the greatest relevance to the ABP industry in Europe. This should include EU standards on ABPs, in areas such as identification, traceability, intra-Community and external trade, and links between ABP regulations and other relevant legislation.

Welfare standards concerning the stunning and killing of animals in slaughterhouse and disease control situations

Training on animal welfare issues will continue to focus on slaughter in slaughterhouse and disease control situations. In 2007, it will take the form of **a five-day workshop for around 100 participants**. In 2007, the event must be held in a Member State which joined the EU in 2004 or an EU candidate country.

The course content will be generally **similar to 2006**. It is likely to include aspects such as EU legislation, the scientific basis for proper stunning and killing methods, transport conditions, design of facilities, the main stunning and killing techniques used in Europe, and enforcement of adherence to welfare requirements.

Veterinary checks at airport border inspection posts

As in 2006, training will be organised in best practices for veterinary checks at airport border inspection posts. Activity levels are, however, to increase dramatically, with **three, 3-day courses for 40 participants each** being planned.

The topics addressed should include EU legislation, procedures for imports of products and live animals, information exchange and intelligence gathering, risk assessment, cooperation with customs services, certification issues, and personal imports.



Photo courtesy of Luka Koper border inspection post

Veterinary checks at seaport border inspection posts

Just as for airport border inspection posts, training levels for seaport border inspection posts will increase to **three, 3-day courses for 40 participants each**.

The topics covered will be largely similar to those dealt with by the airport BIPs programme. They are, however, also likely to include the destruction of kitchen waste and waste animal products from vessels.

Monitoring and controls of zoonoses and applying microbiological criteria in foodstuffs

Zoonoses are diseases that are transmissible between animals and humans. EU legislation aims to ensure that zoonoses, zoonotic agents and related antimicrobial resistance are properly monitored and that food-borne outbreaks receive sufficient investigation. It also lays down criteria for certain micro-organisms in specific foodstuffs and rules to be complied with by food business operators with regard to the presence of such organisms.

This programme aims to harmonise Member State approaches to monitoring zoonoses, zoonotic agents, and related antimicrobial and food borne outbreaks. It should increase Member States' ability to control and reduce the levels of zoonoses and zoonotic agents. A total of **five, four-day training courses** are to be implemented for around **40 people** each.

Areas dealt with in the workshops are likely to include EU provisions for zoonoses and microbiological criteria in foodstuffs, and their practical application. The workshops should also look at EU reporting systems on zoonoses, verification of compliance by food business operators with microbiological criteria, and risk assessment.

Controls on food contact materials

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

A total of **six courses** are to be held on food contact materials. Of these, four will be three-day courses for both staff of competent authorities responsible for setting up control plans, and inspectors of food and food contact materials premises. Two will be four-day courses for laboratory personnel responsible for chemical analysis. Each course caters for around **40 participants**.

The topics addressed by both courses include EU provisions on food contact materials, national control plans, analysis of plasticizers, verification of compliance, and inspections of premises.

Evaluation and registration of plant protection products

EU Member States are required to adopt measures to prevent unauthorised active substances being used in commercialised plant protection products. The Member States which joined the EU in May 2004 and January 2007 need to ensure that active substances used in their plant protection products are examined properly to verify that they are compliant.

A **five-day workshop for around 35 participants** is to be organised. A **three-day follow-up meeting** is subsequently to be held for approximately **15 delegates**. This course is aimed exclusively at participants from the new Member States, Acceding and Candidate Countries, and European Neighbourhood Policy states.

The course content should focus on administrative procedures and documentation, data protection, quality management and auditing. Assessments will also be made of scientific studies, cases for not submitting studies, specifications for active substances, and calculations addressing data points.

4.3 THIRD COUNTRY TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR 2007



Workshop on EU import standards for fruit and vegetables, San Salvador, June 2006

Third country workshops on EU food import standards

It is planned to increase training on EU import standards for third country products from six to **seven workshops**, each providing training for between **60 and 100 participants**. Five three-day workshops deal with fisheries and aquaculture products and two-day events will be dedicated to monitoring plans for residues and contaminants in fruit, vegetables, nuts, herbs and spices, and food contact materials.

The courses will provide a **detailed overview** and explanation of EU standards in these areas particularly concerning recent developments in food law, food hygiene, controls, and phytosanitary rules. It is also intended to give the workshops a more practical character through visits to processing establishments.

Sustained training and assistance in developing strategies for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) disease control

Training in avian influenza containment strategies continues in 2007 but with a wider geographical scope. One EU expert will be seconded to provide sustained training and assistance to the following new Member States, candidate country and third countries:

- Laos
- Cambodia
- Myanmar
- Romania
- Bulgaria
- Turkey
- Egypt
- Morocco
- Nigeria.

The designated expert for each country spends six weeks there. The main task is establishing, and assisting with the implementation of **contingency plans** identifying practical measures for surveillance and disease control, at national, regional and local levels. This should be done within the framework of the **Global Strategy for the Progressive Control of HPAI** and in collaboration with relevant international organisations.



In addition, **three, three-day laboratory workshops for 20 participants** each are also to be held. One workshop will be attended by delegates from Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, another by delegates from Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, and the other by delegates from Egypt, Morocco and Nigeria.

The workshops will provide training in state of the art virological and serological methods of diagnosis.

They aim to cover the role of

laboratory diagnostics in HPAI control, the laboratory capacity and equipment, and virological and serological methods to be used in disease control, and the DIVA (Differentiating between Infected and Vaccinated Animals) strategy.

Training for laboratory staff of ASEAN countries in the application of food testing

Six ASEAN Reference Laboratories (ARLs) have been established within the framework of the EC-ASEAN Economic Cooperation Programme on Standards, Quality and Conformity assessment. There is now a need to make training in the detection of harmful residues in food available to these ARLs.

This programme entails the organisation of **six regional workshops, of five day's duration**, for a total of **120 analysts** from ARLs and other laboratories. The workshops will focus on the detection of pesticides residues, veterinary drug residues, mycotoxins, microbiology, heavy metals, and GMOs.

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

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) is a system for the notification of risks to human health from food or feed, between a network of Member State food safety authorities, the European Commission and the European Food Safety Authority.

This activity entails the organisation and implementation of **three workshops, of three days' duration**, in China, Thailand and Argentina. Each workshop should cater for about **80 participants** and will give an overview of the RASFF before discussing the possibilities for introducing a similar system both within one country and in the form of a regional network of countries.

4.4 CALLS FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

A **call for expression of interest** has been launched, the purpose of which is to enable the Commission services, after examination of the applications submitted, to draw up a file listing potential contractors who could be entrusted with contracts for the provision of external assistance in connection with the activities of the Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection.

One sub-list of the file is dedicated to the Better Training for Safer Food initiative. External contractors may be called upon to carry out tasks such as the organisation of and support for training activities, implementation of analysis, studies and evaluation, or examination of reports and documents related to training activities.

This list is used to select applicants who may subsequently be invited to submit detailed proposals to the Commission in the context of restricted invitations to tender, possibly leading to the award of contracts worth up to €137.000.

The initial notice of the call for expression of interest was published in the supplement to the

official journal S208 of 27 October 2005. The deadline for the submission of candidatures is 26 July 2008.

A variety of bodies may apply for inclusion in the list, including consortia of firms or service providers, universities and research institutes. All applicants must demonstrate professional experience of at least one year in areas pertaining to the relevant sub-list.

Application forms for submission of candidatures for inclusion in this list by legal or natural persons are available for download, free of charge, at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/ami/index_en.html. They must be submitted to the DG, first online and then by post.

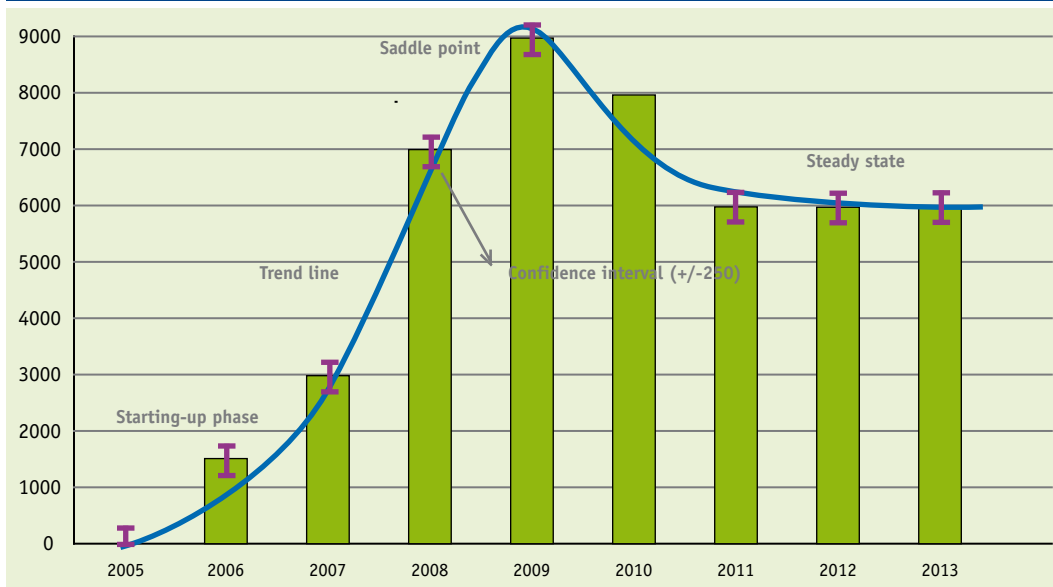
5. COMMISSION COMMUNICATION OUTLINING FUTURE TRAINING STRATEGY FUTURE TRAINING STRATEGY

The Commission adopted **Communication COM (2006) 519 on Better Training for Safer Food** on 20 September 2006. The Communication aims partly to provide an overview of the range of possible long term options that may be used for organising training on food and feed law, animal health and welfare, and plant health rules. Its ultimate objective is to present what the Commission considers to be the option best able to offer efficient training using the available resources in the most cost-effective way. The Communication can be consulted at http://ec.europa.eu/food/training/communication_final_report_en.pdf.

As stated in section 3.1, the first two years of the initiative, characterised by the organisation of ad-hoc training programmes by individual contractors, can be considered as a **start-up phase**. The long term phase will begin when the **finalised structure** is in place.

The need for an established set up is partly due to the gradual build up in participation levels, which is expected over the next few years. The projected trend in terms of participation is demonstrated in the graphic on the next page.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EU TRAINING ACTIVITIES



In the shorter term, it has been estimated that levels should rise quickly, reaching a saddle point of around **9 000 participants** in 2009. They should then drop to a steady annual average of around **6 000**. This is because, after a certain point, the people who have already received training in a given area can then spread the knowledge. This should slightly reduce the need for training provision.

Whatever training system is eventually chosen, continuous management of the strategy will be needed. This will **set out priorities** and identify areas where training is required, thereby leading to the establishment of training programmes. It will also **verify the quality** of training and **establish procedures** necessary for the smooth functioning of the system.

The Commission will require the assistance of other parties in order to accomplish these tasks. These include in first instance the Member States, but possibly also non-governmental organisations. In any event, the Commission intends to consult all relevant stakeholders on training matters.

Various factors must be taken into account when deciding on the most effective method for organising training:

- The wide area covered by the initiative means that the future set up should enable **clear training priorities** to be set out, and that a global approach and specialist expertise are essential.
- **Flexibility** is vital in order to react to emergencies, and to ensure that any scares are dealt with in the same way by all affected Member States.
- The organisation of training courses and possibilities for participation should be communicated in a **transparent** way to all stakeholders in the EU and third countries.

- **Continuity** is necessary to ensure quality. Training should thus be delivered over an extended period by a well established team that is familiar with EU policy in the relevant areas.
- The Commission must also have the **necessary control** to steer the programme, to verify the quality of the training, and to impose corrective actions if needed.

EU training should be **complementary** to that organised by **Member States** by adding a European dimension to training. With regard to this, and irrespective of the option chosen for the long term organisation of training, the Commission intends to make the best possible use of the facilities and experience available at national level.

National bodies could disseminate European policy on the relevant issues. They could assist with training activities in the Member States by “**training the trainers**” and organising regular training sessions for staff of the controlling authorities in the Member States and third countries. Cooperation with national bodies would be **flexible**, allowing the rapid assignment of tasks to a particular agency. The work programme of the bodies could be adapted in accordance with Commission priorities.

In the Communication, the Commission looks at four different options for the long-term training set-up. These are:

- the issuing of contracts;
- a specialised Commission service;
- a regulatory agency;
- an executive agency.

The **issuing of contracts** for different elements of training, such as training delivery, establishment of learning material, programme management, and logistical aspects, allows training areas to be defined in accordance with the Commission’s priorities, and contracts can run for the specific period necessary for the completion of a given project. The type of contract can also be modified to handle more urgent training needs. Spreading contracts over a number of years reduces, but does not eliminate the risk of lack of continuity. Several years’ experience may be lost at the end of a contract.

A **specialised training centre** would provide the Commission with permanent facilities and staff for organising training. Such a set up would require tutors and management staff to be permanently available. The Commission would also have to manage the training programme, develop training materials, invite trainees, and take care of logistical arrangements. This would require considerable human and financial resources, which are unlikely to be available. The advantage is that the European message can be disseminated by a system close to policy development.

A European training body, in the form of a **regulatory agency**, could be seen as independent from the Commission. It could deliver training, train and recruit tutors, develop training material, and provide publicity. It would reduce the administrative burden for the Commission by recruiting its own staff and managing its own budget. However, a regulatory agency works independently from the Commission, running the risk of lack of coordination.

An **executive agency** could take responsibility for technical tasks unrelated to political decision-making, and requiring high levels of technical and financial expertise. This could include procedures for the implementation of training programmes. The Commission could then focus on the core functions which cannot be outsourced, without relinquishing control over training activities. In addition, such an agency would also increase the visibility of the training project. The executive agency option is thus thought to be the **most efficient method** for establishing a permanent training structure.

Further choices still need to be made. Firstly, the Commission must decide whether to create a **new structure** or to extend the remit of an existing one. The Commission is particularly interested in merging training activities with those of the **Executive Agency for the Public Health Programme**. This would incur lower costs than having a brand new structure.

The Commission first intends to reflect further on the options outlined above. Moreover, various procedural steps need to be undertaken, such as the ordering of a **cost-benefit analysis** and the adoption of implementing rules including procedures for establishing an annual training programme, consultation of stakeholders, and possibly the establishment of contact with a training body. It is expected that the cost-benefit analysis will be completed during the second quarter of 2007.

When this process has been finalised, further steps towards implementation of the permanent set up for EU training in food and feed law, animal health and welfare, and plant health rules can be taken. It is hoped that the long-term structure will be ready in time for the development of training activities in 2008-2009.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The work done in relation to Better Training for Safer Food in 2005 and the implementation of the first training programmes in 2006, has represented the first stage in the development of the Community training strategy for food and feed law, animal health and welfare rules, and plant health rules. It has been a positive first step, with participation levels well in line with expectations, and positive, constructive feedback coming from those who have been involved.

2007 will represent a year of further expansion for the initiative both in terms of the extent of the activities to be organised, and in terms of increased standards of training provision. Whilst the experience of 2006 has been very positive, there is always room for improvement, and the lessons learned in 2006 will provide the foundations for improved performance both in 2007 and the years that follow.

With the adoption of the Commission Communication on Better Training for Safer Food, in September 2006, the shape of the long-term training structure has become clearer. There is still work to do before this can be finalised, but once the appropriate procedural steps have been taken, the Commission will have at its disposal an efficient, economical system for the provision of high quality EU-level training.

Finally, the DG Health and Consumer Protection training sector members would like to express their appreciation to all Commission personnel who have contributed to the success of Better Training for Safer Food activities. 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 the work carried out by the DG Health and Consumer Protection financial cell, in particular Ludwig Vandenberghe and Marc Vallons, and the following project coordinators:

Willem Daelman (HACCP), Isabelle Rollier (Highly pathogenic avian influenza control and EU import standards for third country products), Neil Brooks (Veterinary checks at air- and seaport BIPs), Moustapha Magumu, Kirsten Sander-Vornhagen and Tim Gumbel (Animal by-products), Denis Simonin (Animal welfare).

The training sector would also like to thank the staff of the European Commission 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 Protection DG representative in the EC Delegation in Thailand, for the coordination and help he has provided for the organisation of training in the south-east Asian region.

ANNEX

TRAINING SECTOR MEMBERS

The members of the Health and Consumer Protection 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).

The Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-General, training sector members



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

European Commission

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