



Better Training for Safer Food

Annual Report 2009



The Health and Consumers Directorate-General of the European Commission and the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers manage the Better Training for Safer Food initiative. This report describes the activity of Better Training for Safer Food in 2009.

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

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and information on the Better Training for Safer Food initiative at:
http://ec.europa.eu/food/training_strategy/index_en.htm

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2010
ISBN 978-92-79-15581-9
doi 10.2772/98409

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1 INTRODUCTION



The European Commission's Better Training for Safer Food initiative (BTSF) has now completed its fourth year of activity. It serves to train Member State control staff and third country participants dealing with food, veterinary and plant health issues.

BTSF continued its expansion during the year with participation levels reaching the 5,000 mark. The majority of programmes which had run in 2008 continued and training was launched for the first time on new subjects including feed law and analysis of genetically modified organisms.

In addition, concrete activities within the specific development-oriented BTSF Africa programme began and are set to run through 2010. This programme runs in parallel to the standard BTSF training and provides capacity building activities including training for African countries in sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) fields. Implemented jointly with the African Union Commission's Department for Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA), it supports in particular, harmonisation of frameworks and regional integration processes across the continent.

Aside from the training activities, the past year represents a real landmark in the development of the initiative as it has seen the finalisation of the transfer of certain executive and administrative responsibilities to the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers. This step brings to an end the pilot phase of BTSF and marks the launch of the long-term organisational structure, able to cater for the high levels of demand which exist for Community-level training in the areas covered by the initiative.

There remain however, many challenges ahead and these were highlighted by the findings of the intermediate assessment on BTSF which was carried out between 2008 and mid-2009. The past year has seen the Commission set to work on the task of elaborating strategies which will enable the initiative to face and successfully overcome these challenges.

The first step in this has been the drafting of a staff working document. It identifies the main goals of BTSF for the coming years and sets out the best ways of reaching them. It describes both those strategies which can be put into practice in the short term and those which should be implemented in the medium to long term.

This annual report describes the full range of activities which have taken place during 2009, including the training programmes themselves and the work carried out in support of them. It also looks ahead to 2010 and beyond by giving an overview of planned future activities.

I would like take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in BTSF for their contribution to its success over the past year.

Paola Testori Coggi

Director-General for Health and Consumers

2 BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD – FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE PRESENT DAY

The Better Training for Safer Food initiative (BTSF) has now been running for four years. Over these years the initiative has expanded rapidly from one comprising seven programmes to one providing training on around 20 different areas related to food and feed law, animal health and welfare rules and plant health rules.

The year 2009 marks a pivotal moment for the initiative. It has seen the finalisation of the transfer of relevant financial and administrative competences to the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) with the Commission Directorate-General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO) retaining its guiding policy role. It has also seen the creation and launch of a specific programme targeted at Africa. Moreover, the year has marked the beginning of the mapping out of a long-term strategy to enable the initiative to respond to the high demand which exists for EU and third country-level training in the relevant areas.

This has led to the drafting of a staff working document which is discussed in more detail later in this report. This section looks back at the origins of BTSF and its development over the last few years.

2.1 ORIGINS OF BTSF

The roots of BTSF lie partly in the emergence of food safety as an important concern of EU citizens. This was largely due to factors such as food emergencies, increased consumer awareness, globalisation of the food trade and a lack of fully harmonised implementation of food law and official controls.

Such factors, allied to the need to support the development of the Internal Market, led the EU to overhaul its food law. Once this overhaul was complete Member States' food and feed law, animal health and welfare rules and plant health rules were almost entirely based on EU-level rules.

This marked the achievement of the Internal Market objectives in these fields and it was now necessary to apply this body of law effectively and in a harmonised way across the EU. This would ensure the same level of protection for all consumers and a level playing field for businesses, thereby allowing the Internal Market to function properly.

The Commission recognised that training of relevant national-level control staff would play a key role in achieving these aims. Many EU Member States already had a long tradition of providing training for their control staff although the development of national-level training systems had not been uniform across the EU. With the adoption of Regulation 882/2004 in April 2004, the provision of such training became compulsory for all Member States.

Article 51 of the Regulation provides the legal basis for BTSF by empowering the Commission to provide training for competent authority staff of Member States in the relevant areas. EU-level training could now complement national-level provision in areas where potential for Community added-value was identified and ensure harmonised development of training at national level.

At the same time, experience gained from sources such as the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) demonstrated that food consignments from third countries do not always comply with EU requirements. Given that the EU is the world's largest food importer, it was considered advantageous to develop specific training programmes for third countries¹.

Training third countries would have a range of positive effects such as contributing to the safety of the EU's imports and helping third and particularly developing countries to comply with EU standards and thus facilitate access to the EU market for their products. It would also play a key role in making the EU the global point of reference in the field and facilitate the transfer of the EU framework model across the globe, with possible positive knock-on effects on intra-regional trade amongst third countries based on international standards. For these reasons, it was decided that places on some EU-based training courses would also be open to participants from third and particularly developing countries, and where necessary as in the case of BTSF Africa to set up targeted programmes.

The Commission also recognised benefits of training business operators such as increasing the efficiency of skilled workers and enabling food businesses to adapt their procedures for checking compliance. However, the legal basis only provides for training to be organised and funded from the Community budget for staff from official competent authorities. Nonetheless, the Commission left open the possibility for representatives of EU, national and international private-sector organisations to attend certain courses at their own expense.

¹ This was also in line with obligations under the WTO SPS Agreement.

2.2 FOUNDATIONS OF A STRUCTURE

The adoption of the Regulation paved the way for the establishment of a Sector within DG SANCO responsible for training and the subsequent inception of BTSF. An initial step in the development of the initiative was the appointment of an informal Inter-service Steering Group which met for the first time in November 2004. It has met on a regular basis ever since in order to discuss general and technical aspects of training activities, set training priorities, ensure coordination with other Commission services organising training and monitor activities and results.

At the same time, the Commission recognised the need to maintain extensive coordination with national authorities. To this end, national contact points (NCP) were designated for EU, candidate, European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and third countries and contact points in EU Delegations were also identified.



The main task of these contact points was to channel information related to the initiative between the Commission and its external contractors responsible for the organisation of training on the one hand, and the national authorities and stakeholders on the other. This coordination would mainly concern aspects such as the nomination of training participants, subsequent provision of feedback on the training and suggestions for new training subjects and improvements to existing programmes.

As with the Inter-service Steering Group, the DG SANCO Training Sector has and continues to meet regularly with the Expert Group of NCPs in order to discuss and reflect upon all matters related to BTSF. The first meeting of this group took place in early 2006.

The Training Sector also took account of other sources including notifications received by the RASFF and the findings of inspections carried by the EU's Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) and, as regards BTSF Africa, other credible sources from international and multilateral organisations. A similar process would be followed each year for identification of needs and finalisation of the training offer.

In the first instance, training took the form of ad-hoc programmes comprising workshops and for some programmes, sustained missions. These programmes were to be organised by external contractors designated through public procurement procedures launched in 2005.

2.3 TRAINING 2006

Training began in 2006 with seven programmes running. Five of these were EU based and covered:

- » Hazard analysis and critical control point principles,
- » Veterinary checks at airport border inspection posts,
- » Veterinary checks at seaport border inspection posts,
- » Animal welfare at slaughter and killing for disease control,
- » Animal by-products.

A further two programmes were set up specifically for third country participants and dealt with:

- » EU standards for fishery and aquaculture products and fruit and vegetables,
- » Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza control.

These seven programmes comprised 41 different events and were attended by around 1.400 people from all EU Member States and across the globe. The training was implemented for a total budget of €3.5 million.

2.4 COMMUNICATION ON BTSF AND FOLLOW-UP

An important step towards the development of the long-term training strategy was taken in September 2006 with the adoption of Communication (2006) 519 on Better Training for Safer Food. This gave an overview of the options for long-term organisation of BTSF and attempted to identify the best option for offering efficient training using available resources in the most cost-effective way.

Four different options were considered:

- » Issuing of contracts,
- » A specialised Commission service,
- » A regulatory agency,
- » An executive agency.

The last option was thought to be the most efficient method for establishing a permanent structure as an executive agency could take responsibility for administrative tasks, thus allowing the Commission to focus on political decision-making. The Commission was particularly interested in merging training activities with those of the Public Health Executive Agency (PHEA) as this would incur lower costs than creating a new structure.

In accordance with the findings of the Communication, the Commission ordered a cost-benefit analysis to further investigate the possibility of outsourcing certain tasks to an executive agency. This analysis was completed in September 2007 and confirmed the Communication's conclusions as well as the advantages of an extension of the mandate of PHEA to include administrative and financial tasks related to BTSF.

2.5 TRAINING 2007

The training launched for 2007 built on the strong start which had been made in 2006. Following consultation of all relevant sources and parties including the Inter-Service Steering Group, NCPs, RASFF notifications and FVO reports, it was decided to continue the seven programmes which had run during 2006. In addition, three new EU programmes were launched on:

- » Monitoring and controls of zoonoses and applying microbiological criteria in foodstuffs,
- » Controls on food contact materials,
- » Evaluation and registration of plant protection products.

Two new third country programmes also began involving:

- » Training for laboratory staff of Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries in the application of food testing,
- » Training on the RASFF with a view to the introduction of similar systems in other regions of the world.

This brought the total number of programmes to twelve, representing a considerable increase on 2006. At the same time the number of individual events rose to over 70 within which almost 3,000 people from EU, associated and third countries were trained. This was all carried out for a budget of €7 million.



2.6 TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Once the Commission's conclusions concerning the advantages of outsourcing had been confirmed, it was necessary to complete the final stage of the process towards the new set-up for BTSF. This began in 2008 with the extension of the mandate of PHEA to include administrative and financial tasks related to BTSF. With Commission Decision 2008/544, PHEA became the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) and relevant tasks were outsourced. This transfer was finalised over the course of 2009 and 2010 and the tasks outsourced included the following:

- » Monitoring of contracts including operational and financial aspects as well as definition of benchmarks to measure the success of projects;
- » Processing of contract amendments;
- » Supplying DG SANCO with regular information on progress and results of training programmes;
- » Assessing technical and financial reports as well as other training-related deliverables and taking necessary corrective action;
- » Financial transactions, including interim and final payments and monitoring of transaction times;
- » Preparation and launch of calls for tender, evaluation of offers and subsequent award of contracts;
- » Dissemination of information on BTSF.

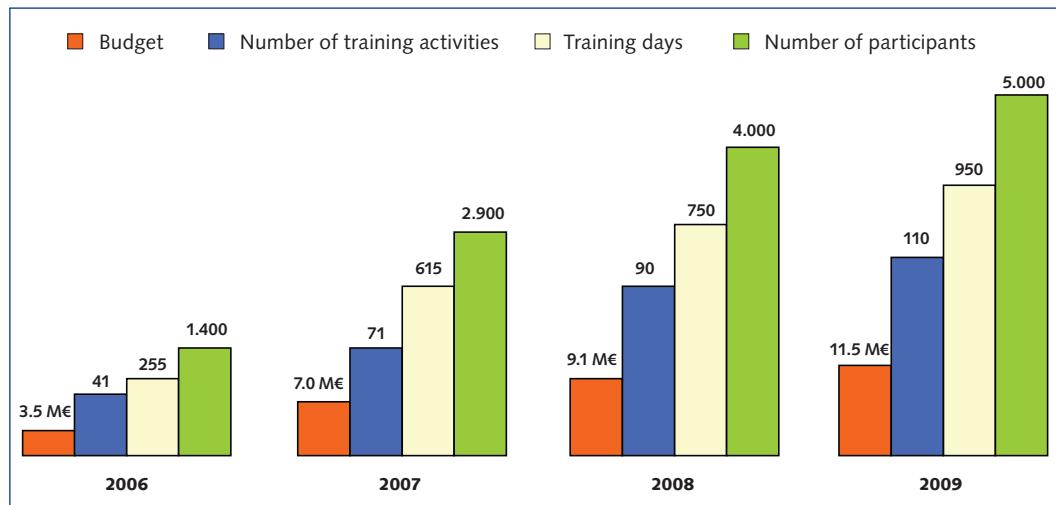
2.7 TRAINING 2008

As regards the training itself, 2008 saw a further increase in activity levels, with all 2007 programmes continuing with the exception of the one on food contact materials. In addition three new EU programmes were launched on:

- » Food hygiene and controls for meat, dairy and fishery products,
- » Prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE),
- » Plant health controls.

Further increases were registered in all other areas as 4,000 people from almost 150 countries were trained during around 120 training events for a budget of €9 million.

BTSF Evolution 2006-09



2.8 BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD IN AFRICA

In addition to the standard training programmes, concrete activities within the Better Training for Safer Food in Africa programme (BTSF Africa) began with an opening conference in April 2009 in Addis Ababa.

BTSF Africa is developed by DG SANCO jointly with the African Union (AU) Commission, in coordination with other Commission services and the EU Delegations in Africa. Owing to the growing importance of the programme, SANCO has seconded a staff member to the EU Delegation to the AU to coordinate infield activities.

BTSF Africa is implemented under the Trade, Regional Integration and Infrastructure partnership of the Joint Africa-Europe Strategy's first Action Plan 2008-2010, agreed by Heads of State and Government in Lisbon in 2007. The first series of training activities are to run until the end of 2010 for a budget of around €10 million.

The main aim is to support food security by providing technical expertise and policy advice on animal health and welfare, plant health and food safety and quality. This will help African countries to produce and distribute agro-food products compatible with international standards and in turn reduce the likelihood of food-borne disease and related health and socio-economic burden.



The activities will help to improve the use of products such as fertilisers, pesticides and veterinary drugs and good hygiene practices in the production and distribution chains. They will also strengthen animal and product management systems in areas of control and certification as well as competent authorities, producer associations and small and medium enterprises (SME). At macro level, the activities will support the gradual integration and competitiveness of the agro-food sector, intra-African trade and strengthen the contribution of agriculture to rural development and food security, with possible positive knock-on effects on growth and employment in Africa.

The training is comprised of seven activities:

1. Evaluation of the performance of veterinary services (PVS), follow-up PVS Gap Analysis and accompanying measures;
2. Improving national and regional animal health and food safety legal frameworks;
3. Strengthening capacity of laboratory technicians through twinning;
4. Training for Chief Veterinary Officers (CVO) on the role of veterinary services, and national focal points on food safety;
5. Training trainers during regional workshops on harmonisation of food hygiene procedures;
6. Strengthening capacity of SMEs via deployment of experts to address SPS deficiencies;
7. Training sessions for officials of the Regional Economic Communities, AUC and specialist bodies on international policy, standards and norms.

2.9 INTERMEDIATE EVALUATION OF BTSF

An intermediate assessment of BTSF was launched in 2008 in order to review the first two years of training. The assessment had three main aims: to assess the impact of the training in terms of improvements to participants' work; to learn more about the implementation of training and its strengths and weaknesses and to obtain recommendations for the future.

A survey was carried out consisting of questionnaires and interviews involving around 3.000 participants.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The implementation and impact of the training were assessed very positively. The learning objectives were very clear and usually achieved to a large extent. Some EU participants underlined a lack of indications regarding the level of knowledge required to participate.

Perceptions regarding visibility of the training ranged from sufficient to weak. It was considered sufficient in cases where national authorities organised systematic communication on the events or when potential participants were already in contact with DG SANCO. In other cases, it was considered as moderate to weak due to the lack of regular mailings or newsletters providing information on upcoming events and the fact that information was only accessible via the BTSF website.

The training usually conformed to participants' expectations and needs. Content, delivery, format, tutors' performance, implementation and organisation were rated highly.

The content is considered relevant and enough opportunity is provided for discussion amongst participants, although the language barrier has been mentioned as a problem. Tutor performances were usually strong in terms of technical and teaching ability, language skills and in-depth explanation. Organisation and implementation were judged positively in terms of accommodation, catering, travel and the participant selection process.

BTSF complements other training addressing similar issues well due to the fact that it offers a European dimension, provides an up-to-date, in-depth approach to the topic covered and gives insight into the practices and facilities of other countries through networking and site visits.

IMPACT

BTSF activities raise participants' knowledge from an upper-moderate level to a high to very high level. They provide up-to-date information on relevant EU legislation and foster harmonised controls in the EU and increased compliance with EU hygiene and safety requirements in Third Countries. The training improves the quality of participants' work, their networking capacity and ability to exchange views to solve problems.

The results of the training were disseminated by 85% of participants, mainly through informal discussion, distribution of learning material and to a lesser extent, meetings and presentations. Transfer of knowledge took place within a train-the-trainer approach. 38% of participants, mostly from third countries, transferred knowledge by training other people.

The learning materials are useful for work and dissemination. The most useful materials are in electronic format and consist of a mix of documentation and tools such as check lists and guidelines.

POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS

According to respondents, BTSF training is very useful and must continue. Most participants had no suggestions, indicating a high satisfaction level. Issues for which most suggestions were made were duration and content.

Regarding duration, participants asked to extend workshops to five days to allow for more networking and practical sessions, and give more time to digest information.

As concerns content, participants want more practical activity with theoretical presentations serving as a starting point for practical sessions. They would also like to see more tutors with extensive experience of practical enforcement of EU legislation involved during practical sessions. Third Country participants suggested including more in-depth practical cases tailored to their regional specificities. Some participants felt that the content could better address the wide range of professional needs of participants.

Amongst other recommendations, it was thought useful to indicate the knowledge level required to participate in order to allow interested parties to assess the suitability of courses. Separate workshops could be organised for different experience levels.

To take more account of the different backgrounds of participants, questionnaires on areas of interest could be sent before events. Prospective participants should also prove that they have sufficient knowledge of the languages to be used during training.

Respondents feel that learning material should be provided in electronic format and include presentations delivered by tutors, related publications, web links, legislative references, practical cases and guidance tools. This would serve as a good reference source for participants and facilitate dissemination.

EVALUATION OF HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA CONTROL

A further evaluation was carried out in 2008. This entailed a review of HPAI control training from 2006 and 2007. A conference was organised on the subject and missions were undertaken to countries having received training in 2006 and 2007 to review the activities.

The conference covered areas such as global HPAI training programmes, their effectiveness and experience gained, HPAI training needs and options. Discussion groups examined organisational and technical issues of training and the Commission's contribution, with conclusions presented in plenary.

Various recommendations were made. These included better adapting training to local needs, carrying out needs analysis prior to launching training so as to avoid overlaps, developing the train-the-trainer approach and organising training based on a common platform to be adapted as appropriate.

Feedback from the missions also emphasised the importance of initial needs analysis and practical training. It was also felt that dissemination should be increased so as to reach a broader cross-section of stakeholders.

BTSF AFRICA MID-TERM EVALUATION

A mid-term evaluation of BTSF Africa was carried out at the end of 2009. From initial analysis of statements collected through phone interviews, it is clear that the quality of the capacity building activities and their relevance to the professional needs of beneficiaries were rated highly, with average scores of around 8 out of 10.

Strengths identified were **content** (up-to-date topics and generally relevant to the areas of work of beneficiaries), **delivery and format** (appreciated due to the diversity of learning approaches, especially working group sessions), **tutors and experts** and **workshops and PVS evaluations** (well organised, with active engagement of participants in practical sessions).



Possible areas for improvement concerned the need to **further tailor content and delivery** to the level of development of some African countries and to **balance theory and practice** for some activities with **more time for on-site visits involving more local experts**.

An interesting recommendation dealt with possible advantages of incorporating interventions such as evaluations of PVS activities and laboratory twinning projects into a broader set of cooperation projects. This could contribute to the sustainability and impact of such undertakings.

3 FUTURE STRATEGIES

Based on the main conclusions of the Intermediate Evaluation, a Strategy Paper was drafted in mid-2009 to highlight challenges facing BTSF and the best ways of overcoming them. Short and medium-long term strategies were drawn up and the document, widely discussed with Member State representatives and other relevant Commission services, is now being transformed into a Staff Working document in order to increase its visibility and importance.

The main goals identified can be summarised as follows:

- » A level of training provision capable of responding to a high and increasing demand;
- » Clearer identification of training priorities and target audience;
- » Improvements in the quality of the training offering basic and advanced courses with the latter focusing extensively on practical work;
- » Increased dissemination and more effective implementation of the train-the-trainer approach;
- » Establishment of a standard evaluation procedure both in terms of quality and impact of the training;
- » Improvements to organisational and procedural aspects including planning of training.

Certain strategies could be put into practice by the end of 2011. One of the first things to be done should be to gain a more accurate idea of size of the training demand. To this end, a **study of training demand** will be launched.

A key factor in responding to high levels of demand is an increase in training supply. There are several possibilities for this. One is the development of an **e-learning tool** as a means to reach a larger audience.

A pilot project is underway, about which more details are given below. This should help to identify the most suitable model which can be adapted for different programmes. The idea is to create an e-learning tool for basic training and for use as a starting point for practical training. On the basis of World Bank experience, an interactive e-learning forum is already being considered for BTSF Africa.

Using e-learning would enable workshops to focus on advanced practical training and reduce the need to increase their duration, which was another recommendation made by the intermediate evaluation. Applying e-learning to basic courses for all programmes could improve quality by clarifying technical focus and facilitating identification of participants.

Based on the results of the pilot project, an e-learning tool for basic-level training will be set up for all programmes. Ultimately, a specific interactive e-learning forum for developing countries will be considered for basic and advanced courses.

An additional way to increase output would be to **develop closer cooperation** with Commission services, Member State and third country authorities, international organisations and the private sector. Information sharing with international bodies could be improved and BTSF could provide training for other DGs involved in food and feed. This is proving successful for BTSF Africa, where multilateral organisations² regularly participate actively and provide tutors and specialised input.

Methods for developing co-financed training with Member States could be explored. Possibilities for similar cooperation with third country authorities and international organisations could also be considered.

After having explored possible methods, co-financed training should be developed in the long term. The possibility of arranging training jointly with the private sector may be further explored.

More effective coordination with Commission services, Member State and third country authorities and other stakeholders could also ensure clearer **identification of training priorities**.

For this, the preparation of a standard questionnaire to ascertain training needs should be considered. Systematic input and feedback could be obtained from SANCO staff attending events. Consideration should also be given to arranging training back-to-back with important events of international bodies in order to focus in greater depth on specific subjects.

In the long term, the possibility of organising international expert meetings on a regular basis, in order to reflect further on needs and priorities should be borne in mind.

The Commission aims to reach the highest possible level of **participant homogeneity** while maintaining an international selection for each activity. The need to successfully implement a train-the-trainer approach requires that potential participants' capacity to act as training disseminators should be taken into account in the selection process.

Although BTSF's primary target audience is competent authority staff, the Commission has, from the outset, recognised the benefits of training the private sector. It should be ascertained to what extent training is necessary for competent authority staff and groups such as industry, academia, NGOs and producer associations. Ways of involving more private sector participants at their own expense should be explored.

² Such as Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), Codex Alimentarius and African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO).

Differences in **knowledge levels** between participants can render the training less effective. Requisite knowledge levels should be defined more explicitly and communicated in advance of training.

The intermediate assessment pinpoints the development of **basic and advanced level courses** as an appropriate response. This has been implemented for certain programmes and should be considered for all subjects.

Given the international nature of BTSF, a further element affecting definition of the target audience is the **language** issue. Proper regard must be paid to the principle of multilingualism, allowing participants to be trained in their mother tongue. Requesting proficiency in a specific language risks distorting the selection process.

As concerns **third country training**, the wide variety of national needs requires additional efforts to combine homogeneity and international participation. Third country training has so far been mainly aimed at ensuring the safety of imports. However, the training is beginning to concentrate on objectives such as the need to strengthen control systems and legal frameworks³. Each training action should thus have an overarching aim based on which participant countries will be selected.

Third country training has so far focused primarily on developing countries. However, attention should be paid to increasing the involvement of European Neighbourhood Policy countries, Mediterranean basin countries, developed third countries and possibly the private sector.

Appropriate format and content are essential to ensure high quality training. A study on **best practices in training** was thus launched in late-2009 in order to investigate these factors and further details of this study are provided below.

The availability of high quality tutors is fundamental to raising standards. Due to the need to convey a Community interpretation, the Commission has a role to play in the provision of expert tutors. To this end, the development of a **summer school for tutors** in the long term is being considered.

This would represent a step towards the creation of a community of good practice and would ensure that the EU message is conveyed not only through Community training but also through other training involving summer school graduates.

Another way to increase the number of potential tutors could be through **exchanges** of National Authority officials. This would enable participants to exchange knowledge and experience of implementation of EU legislation and to put it into practice and disseminate it within their services.

An additional element could be the creation of a **database of international experts** who could be called upon to carry out training activities and also FVO missions.

³ From the outset, the BTSF Africa programme has taken a development-oriented approach focusing on intra-African trade (harmonisation of frameworks as a pillar of regional integration).

The impact assessment shows that participants appreciate the opportunity BTSF offers to share knowledge through social interaction. In some cases, staying in touch following training has contributed to solving professional problems. An **alumni network** could be set up for this purpose in the long term.

The overriding aim of BTSF is to **disseminate** knowledge of relevant EU legislation, norms, standards and practices as widely as possible amongst the target audience. Factors have been identified which could increase dissemination:

- » Provision of simple and clear learning tools and documentation;
- » Development of an e-learning platform;
- » Establishment of expert training networks;
- » Creation of stable relationships with stakeholders through recurrent training and follow-up;
- » More coordination, possibly including a formal commitment with Member States for dissemination;
- » Maintenance of contact with EC delegations for all third country programmes.

Regular reports from all stakeholders could help to evaluate the extent of dissemination, which, along with the quality and impact of the training, is one of the three principal factors which should be subject to regular **evaluation**. A general assessment could be carried out biennially by independent specialist bodies.

The quality of the training is usually evaluated by participants at the end of each activity. An electronic evaluation system managed by an independent body could help to ensure that participant evaluations accurately reflect the standard of training.

It is vital to develop benchmarks of good practice against which training can be evaluated. To this end, a study on similar activity implemented by other bodies could be undertaken.

It is perhaps too early to quantify the impact of the training in terms of higher standards of food and feed safety, animal health and welfare and plant health. This could be done in the long term through sources such as FVO inspection reports and RASFF notifications.

3.1 ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE FUTURE STRATEGIES

Against the background of the preparation of the draft Staff Working Document, steps have been taken in 2009 to launch certain of the actions described in the document. In the first instance, they concern the pilot e-learning project and the study on best training practices.

3.1.1 E-LEARNING PILOT PROJECT

As seen above, one of the main challenges to which the future training strategy must respond is the increasing demand for training both at basic and advanced levels. An increased supply is key to this.

Due to budgetary and administrative constraints, an option that should be explored is to provide basic training through e-learning, with workshops and sustained missions used for advanced training. Providing basic and advanced courses for all subjects should improve aspects such as participant selection and audience homogeneity. E-learning could also contribute to increasing dissemination.

A pilot project has thus been launched in order to identify suitable e-learning tools and provide concrete examples of a functional e-learning system.⁴



One main output should be a study outlining the strengths and weaknesses of all available options and identifying the most appropriate e-learning system. The system must be able to provide basic training in all BTSF subjects and increase dissemination.

The study should analyse current BTSF implementation, training needs and potential demand in terms of participation and dissemination. It should provide comparisons with policies of other Commission services in this field and benchmarks for success. An implementation strategy should be set out for the best option with a view to preparing the ground for the launch of an e-learning programme on a wider scale.

⁴ For BTSF Africa, an interactive e-learning forum is being set up on the basis of discussions which began in 2007 and on experience from the World Bank and ARSO.

In parallel to the study, three prototypes of e-learning systems are to be developed, each covering a different BTSF subject. These should take full account of BTSF's aims, target audience and scope and be compatible with the Commission's e-learning environment.

The final modules will be suitable for autonomous use or during training sessions with a tutor and will be tested on a sample audience of potential trainees. Together with the study, the prototypes should provide the basis for the development of a larger e-learning platform. Both outputs should be finalised during the second half of 2010.

3.1.2 STUDY ON BEST PRACTICES IN TRAINING

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

The study will identify modern training methods employed in education centres and universities implementing similar training programmes. Theoretical and practical aspects of the methods will be defined by interviewing tutors, consulting academic centres, managers and heads of organisations.

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

The analysis will take into account the fact that BTSF covers different technical areas, audiences and global regions. Best practices may differ in relation to those elements. It is also necessary to define benchmarks of good practice against which BTSF can be evaluated.

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

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

TRAINING

2009

STANDARD BTSF

Around 110 events

Over 5.000 participants

Budget of €11.5 million

BTSF AFRICA

Around 36 events

Around 1.100 participants

Budget of €3.5 million

4 TRAINING 2009

The 2009 training offer included the majority of subjects which had run in 2008. Two new areas identified for training were feed law and analysis of genetically modified organisms. In addition e-learning modules were offered as part of the training on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza control.

The final selection of subjects was mainly prepared during 2008. The Training Sector met with European National Contact Points in January, June and December to receive feedback on the training and areas for improvement.

Outcomes and needs were discussed within the Inter-service Steering Group in December 2008. Consultation within the DG took place, with colleagues providing support in their area of competence. Additional discussions were carried out with the EC's External Relations services in relation to the specific programme on Africa. The Training Sector also used Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed notifications and outcomes of Food and Veterinary office inspections in order to ascertain needs.

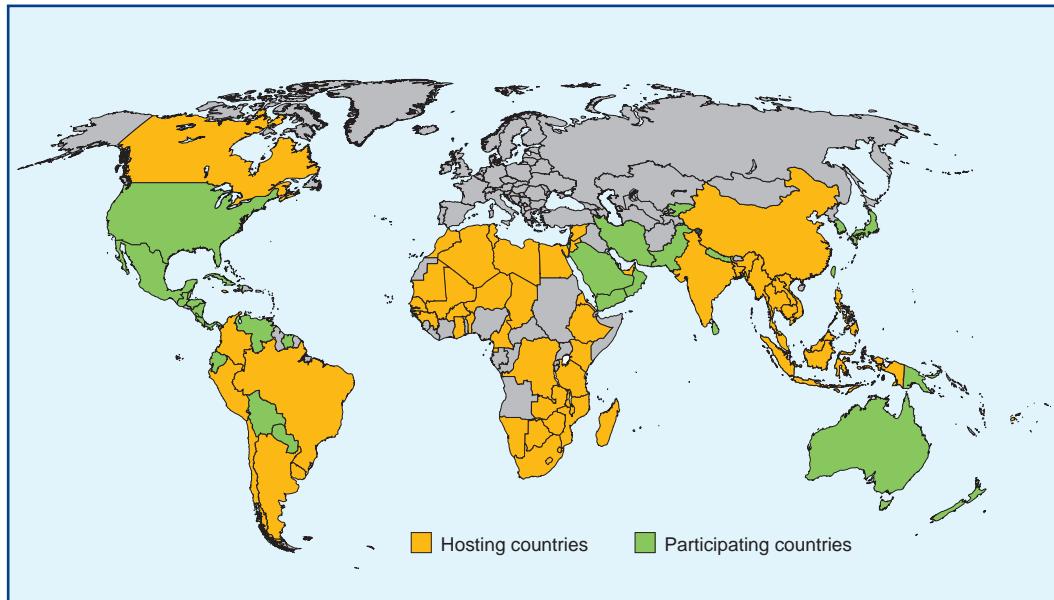
TRAINING ACTIVITIES 2009⁵

Training programmes	No. of events	Overall participants
EU-based programmes		
Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point principles	19	370
Seaport, road, rail border inspection posts	3	115
Airport border inspection posts	1	39
Microbiological criteria and control of zoonoses	4	136
Food hygiene and controls	15	302
Plant health controls	9	209
Animal welfare	4	284
Plant protection products	3	94
Feed law	5	149
Third country programmes		
EU food standards	15	868
Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza control	12	2.594 ⁶
Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed and Trade Control and Expert System	9	187
Food testing for ASEAN countries	6	115
Analysis of Genetically Modified Organisms	1	34
Total	106	5.496
BTSF Africa	36	1.070
Grand Total	142	6.566

5 Figures for food standards, HPAI and RASFF programmes include sessions held during sustained training missions and estimated numbers of participants.

6 This figure includes 2,362 users of the HPAI e-learning portal.

COUNTRIES HOSTING AND PARTICIPATING IN TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN 2006-2009



4.1 EU-BASED ACTIVITIES

4.1.1 HAZARD ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL CONTROL POINT

EU food and feed hygiene regulations require businesses to implement and maintain procedures based upon Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles. HACCP consists of seven principles to follow in sequence. These are hazard analysis, identification of Critical Control Points (CCP), establishment of critical limits, monitoring of CCP, corrective actions, verification and documentation.

Member States have to develop control systems to monitor and verify that these requirements are met. EU-level training is aimed at ensuring that competent authority staff are qualified to carry out these controls.

Contractor	Campden and Chorleywood Food Research Association
Workshops 2009	<p>Course one: 6 workshops on HACCP development, implementation and maintenance in Stratford-upon-Avon (April), Budapest (May, June, September), Marseille (July), Bonn (October)</p> <p>Course two: 13 workshops on HACCP auditing in Stratford-upon-Avon (May, July, September, November), Porto (June x2, July x2, September, October), Marseille (October) Budapest and Bonn (November)</p>
Participants/countries of origin	<p>370 participants from all EU Member States, candidate countries and EFTA countries except Liechtenstein</p> <p>ENP countries: Albania, Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, Ukraine</p> <p>Third countries: Argentina, Botswana, Ghana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Panama, Thailand, Vietnam</p>
Tutors	22 tutors from 5 EU countries
Satisfaction index	91%
Future training	50 workshops planned for 2010-11 of which 10 on HACCP development, implementation and maintenance and 40 on HACCP auditing

Workshops on HACCP development, implementation and maintenance contained five sections. The first covered the background to HACCP. This included its development and current status, EU requirements, the role of international organisations, international standards, benefits and limitations, barriers to introduction, certification schemes and guidance sources.

The second section focused on prerequisite programmes (PRP) and their role in food safety as well as examples of typical PRP. Following this, the training turned to HACCP planning covering the need for management commitment, staff resources, consultancy roles and linear, modular and generic approaches.

HACCP principles were covered in the fourth section. This included preparatory stages, hazard analysis, identification of CCP, establishment of critical limits, monitoring plans, corrective actions, verification, validation and review and documentation. The final section looked at auditing principles such as the main stages in HACCP audits and the role of checklists.

Practical activities included exercises on areas such as prerequisite programmes, terms of reference, flow diagrams, document review and checklist preparation as well as blank slides to be completed by participants on benefits of HACCP and barriers to its implementation. A case study on development of part of a HACCP plan for a breaded chicken operation was performed by participants in small groups.

Participants visited food and feed businesses and in small groups, worked on flow diagrams, identified hazards and proposed control measures. The groups presented verbal reports on their findings.

Workshops on HACCP auditing contained the same main sections as those on development, implementation and maintenance but allocated more time to auditing and less to basic principles. An additional feature on PRP covered methods of assessing their effectiveness. The auditing section also looked at questioning techniques, preparation for audits and differences between third party audits and those carried out by public health officials.



Practical activities included group exercises involving blank slides. Case studies aimed to develop skills in assessing documentation. A further exercise focused on flexibility of approach to regulations and aimed to gather information on appropriate approaches for different types of food and feed operation.

During visits to food or feed businesses, participants performed exercises on flow diagrams and assessed implementation of CCP, presenting verbal reports of their findings.

4.1.2 VETERINARY AND FOOD SAFETY CHECKS AT BORDER INSPECTION POSTS

Border controls are fundamental to safeguarding public and animal health and control staff must implement effective, harmonised veterinary and food safety checks. EU legislation imposes health and supervisory requirements on imports of live animals and products of animal origin⁷ so as to ensure that they meet relevant standards.



Training during 2009 focused on best practices for veterinary and food safety checks in seaport, road and rail border inspection posts (BIP) with one workshop on veterinary and food safety checks in airport BIPs. The training was intended to increase control staff's understanding of EU legislation and help to devise strategies for harmonising controls across the EU.

⁷ Import requirements are, in particular, included in Directives 97/78/EC and 91/496/EEC

Contractors	Euro Consultants-JVL-BSI Consortium (seaport/road/rail) Austrian Federal Ministry of Health, Family and Youth (airport)
Workshops	Seaport: 2 workshops in Southampton (May, November) Road/rail: 1 workshop in Terespol/Kukuryki, Poland (October) Airport: 1 workshop in Vienna (March)
Participants/countries of origin	154 participants of which 39 for airport BIPs from all EU Member States, all candidate and EFTA countries except Liechtenstein ENP countries: Algeria, Tunisia, Ukraine Potential candidate countries: Bosnia Herzegovina
Tutors	Airport: 9 tutors from 5 EU Member States, 1 EFTA and 1 third country Seaport/road/rail: 13 tutors from 3 Member States
Satisfaction index	86%
Future training	4 workshops scheduled for 2010 of which 3 are on seaport BIPs and 1 on road and rail BIPs

Both **seaport** and **road/rail BIP** workshops contained presentations followed by question and answer sessions and discussions, group exercises, practical workshop sessions and visits to BIPs.

Presentation subjects for seaport workshops included import procedures, documentary and physical checks, customs procedures, veterinary checks, transits, transhipments, ship supplies, warehouses and illegal and channelled consignments. Further presentations were given on inland controls and microbiological matters, auditing, FVO inspections, animal diseases, animal by-products, welfare issues and roles of importers and forwarding agents.

Workshop sessions covered fishery products, pre-notification, TRACES, transits and transhipments, returned consignments, composite products and documentary checks. The BIP visits allowed participants to view the examination facility and tour both the BIP itself and the port in order to observe control activities.

Road/rail presentations covered co-operation with customs, transits and warehouses, fraud animal welfare at BIPs and staging points, export subsidies, FVO inspections, trade samples, composite products and monitoring of animal disease.

Practical workshop sessions took place on a range of fields including pre-notification, transits, returned consignments, fraud, animal by-products, documentary and exit checks, slaughter and personal imports and sampling.

During visits to road and rail BIPs participants viewed the facilities and observed control procedures including documentary checks, liaison with customs, transit exit checks and procedures for rejected consignments.

The **airport BIP** workshop was mainly intended for veterinarians working as heads or deputy heads of BIPs or in management and organisation of BIPs and import control.

Presentations dealt with subjects including auditing of BIPs, FVO inspections, multi-annual control plans, fraudulent practices, residue control plans and BIP management. Further areas covered were international agreements, International Air Transport Association rules and single window systems for information sharing between customs services.

The workshop also included working group sessions on sampling, international negotiations, understanding of EU-texts, animal welfare, preparation of audits and floor plans of BIPs. The BIP itself was visited by participants in order to view relevant facilities and procedures.

4.1.3 MONITORING AND CONTROLS OF ZOONOSES AND APPLYING MICROBIOLOGICAL CRITERIA IN FOODSTUFFS

The Commission has laid down criteria for certain micro-organisms in specific foodstuffs⁸. Competent authorities verify compliance with these criteria.

EC rules aim to ensure that zoonoses, zoonotic agents and related antimicrobial resistance are properly monitored and that food-borne disease outbreaks receive appropriate epidemiological investigation⁹. This enables evaluation of the risk for human infection presented by different foods.

Training in this field should increase participants' understanding of relevant EU legislation. This should in turn improve their ability to verify compliance with microbiological criteria in foodstuffs and investigate food-borne outbreaks. It will also contribute to harmonising Member States' approaches in this area.

Contractor	The European Training Platform for Safer Food Consortium
Workshops	4 workshops on microbiological criteria and investigation of food-borne outbreaks in Berlin (June, September, October) and Lyon (October)
Participants/countries of origin	136 participants from all EU Member States and candidate countries EFTA countries: Norway, Switzerland ENP countries: Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia Third countries: Vietnam
Tutors	11 tutors from 6 EU Member States
Satisfaction index	98%
Future training	6 workshops planned for 2010 with 1 on microbiological criteria and investigation of food-borne outbreaks and 5 on control and eradication of salmonella in poultry and pigs

Training on implementation of microbiological criteria and investigation of food-borne outbreaks is provided through presentations, panel discussions and case studies. The 2009-10 activity is based on the conclusions of that carried out in 2007 and 2008 in the same field.

Workshops on microbiological criteria focused on use of microbiological criteria as risk management tools in EU legislation and for harmonising monitoring of foodstuffs. Related topics covered were implementation of process hygiene and food safety criteria by businesses and verification of implementation by competent authorities.

Within the same workshops training was provided on investigation of food-borne outbreaks. This included tools for identifying and investigating outbreaks and use of data from outbreak investigations for assessing risks posed by different foodstuffs. Additional subjects were classi-

⁸ Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005.

⁹ Directive 2003/99/EC.

fication of outbreaks based on epidemiological and sample evidence and outbreak reporting and communication at national and EU level.

Panel discussions concentrated on harmonised application of food safety criteria in foodstuffs, official control systems and outbreak investigation. Case studies dealt with implementation of food safety criteria, verification of process hygiene criteria and outbreak investigation.

As part of the same programme, workshops on control and eradication of salmonella in poultry and pigs begin in 2010. These are aimed primarily at the development of best practices for and a uniform approach to monitoring and control of zoonoses. Areas to be covered by presentations include EU provisions for monitoring and control of zoonoses and zoonotic agents and their application, the EU zoonoses data reporting system and monitoring and control of antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic bacteria.

Participants will also consider examples of monitoring and control strategies for varying levels of prevalence and different production systems. Aspects for consideration are risk factors in primary production and processing, assessment of the public health impact of salmonella in pigs and poultry and risk management options including guides for good hygiene practice.

Case studies are to focus on monitoring and risk assessment of salmonella and salmonella control programmes. Each case study is to be followed by presentation and discussion of the results. Panel discussions are to cover subjects including data reporting and the public health impact of Salmonella in pigs, poultry and eggs in different EU Member States.



4.1.4 FOOD HYGIENE AND CONTROLS

The EU has developed measures aimed at ensuring high standards of hygiene during food production and effective control of compliance. General hygiene requirements apply to all stages of production, processing and distribution and require implementation of procedures based on HACCP principles.



Training on food hygiene and controls ran for a second year in 2009. It was intended to give food inspectors a better understanding of the implementation of EU food law regarding hygiene and controls.

Contractor	The AETS consortium
Workshops	<p>5 workshops on meat and meat products in Lyon (May x2, June, September x2)</p> <p>5 workshops on fishery products and LBM in Seville/Cadiz (April, May, July) and Santander (June, September)</p> <p>5 workshops on milk and dairy products in Brescia (April, May (x2), June, September)</p>
Participants/countries of origin	<p>302 participants from all EU/candidate/EFTA countries except Liechtenstein.</p> <p>Potential candidate countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia</p> <p>ENP countries: Algeria, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine</p> <p>Third countries: Canada, Malaysia, Russia, UAE</p>
Tutors	30 tutors from 10 EU Member States
Satisfaction index	87%
Future training	33 workshops scheduled for 2010-11 of which 11 on each of meat, fishery and dairy products

Time during all workshops was divided fairly evenly between presentations, discussion and site visits. For the **meat and meat products** workshops the main topics covered were EU food law, organisation of control services, implementing measures, farm-level and general hygiene requirements and specialised inspection procedures.

Topics covered during discussion included best ways to tackle faecal contamination, differences between official veterinarians and auxiliaries in terms of tasks and training and use of food chain information. Site visits took place to slaughterhouses and processing establishments.

Main subjects of the **fishery product** workshops also included food law and organisation of control services. Further areas featured were fish processing establishments, aquaculture, live bivalve molluscs, fishing vessels, landing sites and markets.

Principal subjects for discussion were structural and hygiene requirements for vessels and processing plants, auditing of Hazard Analysis and Control Point principles (HACCP), requirements during and after landing and standards for frozen products. Packaging, labelling, storage, transport, documentation and traceability were also discussed. During the workshops

participants visited processing plants, purification centres, freezer, factory and fishing vessels, landing sites and auction halls.

Milk and dairy product workshops likewise focused on food law and organisation of control services. Other areas of focus were quality requirements at farm level, production control and milk processing establishments.

Main topics for discussion were organisation of official controls, including inspection, testing and approval of establishments, verification of good hygiene practice and HACCP and heat treatment systems. Site visits were undertaken to milk production farms, dairy and cheese factories and a milk quality laboratory.

4.1.5 FEED LAW

Feed production is an important sector of agricultural activity. Approximately 230 million tonnes of feed are fed annually to farmed animals in the EU. The emphasis of feed rules has shifted over time from productivity of livestock farming to protection of human and animal health and the EU has developed measures aimed at ensuring safety at all stages of production.



Additives are used in animal nutrition in order to improve the quality of feed and food of animal origin subsequently produced or to improve animals' performance and health. Authorisation for marketing of such products is given following scientific evaluation demonstrating that the additive has no harmful effects on human and animal health or the environment.

Training on animal feed ran for the first time in 2009. It was aimed at spreading knowledge and best practice so as to increase feed safety during production, processing and distribution.

Contractor	Euro Consultants-JVL-BSI Consortium
Workshops	5 workshops in Brussels in May, September, in Warsaw in September and in Barcelona in October and November
Participants/countries of origin	149 participants from all EU Member States and candidate countries except Malta. ENP countries: Switzerland Third countries: Argentina
Tutors	6 tutors from 4 EU Member States
Satisfaction index	95%
Future training	5 workshops planned for 2010

Participants at the training received an overview of the general rules of feed hygiene, including requirements at primary production and all other levels. Details were given of a proposal for a Regulation on the placing on the market and use of feed.

Presentations on feed safety requirements gave details of the responsibilities of feed businesses in areas such as notification, product recall and liability registration. Registration, approval and inspection of feed establishments were also covered, as were requirements for marketing and labelling of raw materials and compound feed.

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point principles were run through and a case study was carried out on their application. Further case studies involved tests on homogeneity and carry-over of feed additives, labelling and transport documents for raw materials and compound feedstuffs and requirements for animal proteins and feed for ruminants.

Feed additives were dealt with extensively, including aspects such as additive groups, authorisation procedures for additives, status of existing products and labelling and packaging. General aspects of authorised and prohibited ingredients were also discussed including TSE-related prohibitions and use of animal by-products in feed.

Further presentation subjects were import controls of raw or processed materials including feed of animal or non-animal origin and genetically modified feed. Areas covered under this last topic were authorisation procedures, genetically modified organisms currently authorised and labelling and traceability issues. Training was also provided on bio-proteins in animal nutrition, feedstuffs intended for specific nutritional purposes, nutritional supplements and medicated feedstuffs.

Field visits took place to border inspection posts where participants performed practical exercises on sampling methods and inspection procedures. Participants also visited either manufacturing plants producing compound feed or premixes for non-medicated feed.

4.1.6 PLANT HEALTH CONTROLS



FVO missions have revealed a lack of implementation of potato control directives in some Member States¹⁰. Inspections also show differences between Member States in the approach and knowledge of inspectors with regard to controls under the Plant Passport Regime. Further differences have been recorded in efficiency in handling outbreaks of new pests.

Plant health controls training thus ran for a second year in 2009 in order to provide a common understanding of EC legislation and encourage a uniform approach to official controls. This should better enable plant health services to protect the EU from introduction of harmful organisms and prevent the spread of and eradicate those present.

10 Council Directives 93/85/EC and 98/57/EC.

The 2009 programme included a workshop covering pinewood nematodes (PWN). This is a harmful organism which lives in conifers and causes wilt diseases. The nematode spreads with the help of forest insects such as long-horn beetles.

Within the EU, PWN was first observed in Portugal in 1999. The training on this issue was aimed at assisting in development of appropriate policies for containment of PWN and improving systems for rapid detection.

Contractor	The European Training Platform for Safer Food Consortium
Workshops	2 workshops on the EU plant quarantine regime for potatoes (October) 3 workshops on the internal plant quarantine regime (July, August, September) 3 workshops on the plant quarantine regime for imports (June x2, July) All in Budapest 1 workshop on pinewood nematodes, wood packaging material and forestry in Lisbon (September)
Participants/countries of origin	209 participants from all EU Member States except Denmark, Luxembourg and Romania and all candidate countries
Tutors	16 tutors from 8 EU Member States
Satisfaction index	98%
Future training	18 workshops planned for 2010-11: 2 on each of the quarantine regime for potatoes, the internal plant quarantine regime and the quarantine regime for imports 4 on each of the quarantine regime for wood packaging material and internal controls required by EU emergency decisions for harmful organisms typical for non-forestry and forestry areas

Internal control workshops began with an overview of global plant health legislation. Plant passport requirements and practical elements of passport inspection were discussed, as were requirements for nursery stock, fruit trees, ornamentals, vegetables and soft fruit plants and harmful organisms affecting such plants.

Details were given of requirements for national surveys and surveys for forestry pests subject to emergency measures. These included legal requirements, planning procedures, inspection and sampling methods.

Further subjects were inspection and sampling requirements, issuing of phytosanitary certificates and the legal basis for action against harmful organisms including actions to be followed and notification procedures. Additionally, information was given on requirements of EC Marketing Directives and the role of inspection services in monitoring compliance with them.

Group exercises were performed related to definitions of terms, requirements for wood packing material (WPM), development of inspection timetables for key hosts and pest risk analysis. Participants performed case studies on surveys carried out in response to findings of harmful organisms.

Field visits took place to a nursery to consider all aspects of the plant passport system. An agricultural office was also visited where presentations were given on the work done there. In addition, participants toured the laboratories and glasshouses.

Import control courses covered plant health legislation, policy making, control planning, internal coordination and requirements for inspection of and additional declarations for imports. Further presentations looked at WPM, sampling, scientific imports and non-compliant consignments. One session focused specifically on the European Network of Plant Health Information Systems (EUROPHYT), a web-based network facilitating information exchange between Member State plant health services and the Commission.

Group exercises dealt with global plant health legislation, policymaking, import control planning, additional declarations and assessment of scientific facilities. Group discussion focused on internal coordination.

A field visit took place to a border inspection post (BIP) and began with a presentation by the deputy head of the BIP. Following this participants visited inspection facilities where they took part in sessions on inspection and notification procedures.

Potato quarantine regime workshops featured presentations on EU legislative requirements, particularly control directives for potato quarantine organisms, survey planning and inspection and sampling for pests and diseases. Further areas covered were outbreak measures, traceability and checks after outbreaks, notifications of findings and legal and practical aspects of import controls.

Field visits were organised to a potato store and watercourse to discuss inspection and sampling of tubers and water for quarantine potato bacteria. The groups toured the potato processing plant and store where sampling methods were demonstrated. This was followed by a group exercise aimed at identifying symptoms of pests. Finally, the group visited the plant's water reservoir where water sampling methods were demonstrated.

Training on **PWN, WPM and forestry** began with an overview of the spread of PWN, the current situation and actions taken and suspected sources of current problems. A summary was given of the biology and life-cycle of the nematode and its vector and their potential impact in different areas of the EU.

Further presentations covered WPM regulations, risks associated with movement of consignments, WPM import inspection requirements, internal controls and sampling, recognition of PWN symptoms and biology. Training was also provided on monitoring and surveillance, inspection and sampling of forests, awareness raising and official surveys for other forestry pests.

Attention was also paid to production of WPM in heat treatment facilities and by other methods. This included approval of facilities and manufacturers as well as procedures for repaired, remanufactured or recycled WPM.

Discussion sessions concentrated on measures to be taken following findings of harmful pests and diseases. Delegates performed exercises where they examined and commented on the markings on various examples of WPM. Additional group work focused on practical problems during inspection of refrigerated trucks, action against fraudulently marked WPM and measures to reduce risks posed by wooden furniture.

Three visits took place. The first was to an area of forest where inspectors demonstrated techniques for identifying and sampling infected trees. A sawmill was also visited where participants observed the process for storing and processing timber, followed by treatment, construction of pallets, marking of WPM and attribution of passports. The final visit was to a unit where bark is treated by composting prior to sale.

4.1.7 ANIMAL WELFARE ISSUES

The European Commission is committed to paying proper regard and raising awareness of animal welfare issues, in particular as regards EU legislation on protection of animals during transport, slaughter and killing for disease control as well as internationally recognised animal welfare standards.¹¹ Humane treatment of animals is also of interest to European consumers and high welfare standards can have positive effects on animal health and on the quality of the food subsequently produced.



¹¹ Directive 93/119 EC, Regulation (EC) 1/2005.

This programme included training on welfare at slaughter and killing for disease control and during transport.

Contractor	The IZS Teramo consortium
Workshops	3 workshops on welfare during transport and related operations in Giulianova, Italy (January) and San Martino in Campo, Italy (September, November) 1 workshop on welfare at slaughter and killing for disease control in Budapest (March)
Participants/countries of origin	284 participants from all EU Member States, all candidate and EFTA countries except Liechtenstein Potential candidate countries: Serbia ENP countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine Third countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Eritrea, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru, Thailand, Uruguay
Tutors	31 tutors from 8 EU Member States, 4 third countries and representatives from international organisations such as the World Organisation for Animal Health and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Satisfaction index	96%
Future training	4 workshops in 2010 on welfare during transport, standard slaughter procedures, killing of major species for disease control and religious slaughter

Participants at both types of workshop were mainly veterinary officers from competent authorities of EU, candidate or third countries. For training on transport they were involved in enforcement of animal transport legislation, controls on documents and structural and physical aspects of transport. For workshops on slaughter and killing they mainly worked on official controls on welfare during stunning and killing of animals at slaughter or for disease control. In addition, both types of training were attended by people involved in development of best practices to improve application of European and international standards.

Presentation subjects for transport workshops included EU legislation and OIE standards, inspections during long distance transport, the scientific basis for proper handling of animals during transport, and critical control points during transport, loading and unloading. Further topics were risk analysis, temperature during transport, satellite navigation, national-level policies, FVO findings, the TRACES system and stakeholder perspectives.

Field activities allowed participants to assess transport conditions for horses and to view a lorry used for cattle, pigs and sheep. Practical group activity involved simulating an inspection in accordance with EU legislation. Each group wrote a report and presented their findings in plenary.

Main topics for slaughter workshops were EU legislation and its impact, OIE standards, capacity building leading to improved welfare practices and the scientific basis for proper handling, stunning and killing. Transport of animals to slaughterhouses and lairage facilities was discussed as were the main stunning and killing techniques in Europe for pigs, small ruminants and poultry. A further topic was the influence of culture and religion on slaughter policy and practice. Participants also gained insight into the perspectives of various stakeholders.

Participants visited slaughterhouses for cattle, poultry or pigs. During the visits they split into small groups to consider welfare criteria and measures to assess it, hazards affecting welfare and possible improvements. Discussion following the visits focused on these topics and each group wrote a report on their findings from the visit.

Moreover, in both types of training, the benefits of improved animal welfare on livestock-related livelihood in developing countries and FAO animal welfare capacity building activities were presented.

4.1.8 PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS

Active ingredients used in plant protection products in the EU must not pose a threat to human health or the environment or exceed Maximum Residue Levels. Substances authorised for use in plant protection products are listed in Annex I of Directive 91/414. All substances authorised for use in Member States must comply with conditions for inclusion on this list. Member States joining the EU in 2004 and 2007 need to ensure that active substances used in products on their markets comply with these conditions. Moreover, the review programme of existing substances is now finalised and all Member States have to re-evaluate national authorisations.



A new legislative framework based on a Commission proposal has recently been adopted by the European Parliament and the Council. It covers **placing of plant protection products on the market, specifying strict criteria for approval of substances**.

The EU has also laid down rules for official controls of use and marketing of plant protection products. Effective controls in this area will increase worker, consumer and environmental protection.

Contractor	The European Training Platform for Safer Food Consortium
Workshops	2 workshops on evaluation and registration (February, October) 1 workshop on control of use and marketing (March) All workshops in Vilnius
Participants/countries of origin	94 participants from all EU Member States except Ireland, Luxembourg, Italy and Portugal, all candidate countries and Norway
Tutors	12 experts from 7 Member States
Satisfaction index	100%
Future training	3 workshops in 2010 of which 2 on control of use and marketing and 1 on evaluation and registration

The training was aimed at national authority staff responsible either for evaluating and registering plant protection products or for control of their use and marketing. The first workshop on evaluation and registration and that on control of use and marketing were both primarily for participants from EU Member States having joined since 2004 and candidate countries. The second workshop on evaluation and registration was for participants from all Member States, candidate and EFTA countries.



The first evaluation and registration workshop was aimed at building on past training in the area within BTSF. It examined improvements in new Member States since previous workshops and identified actions taken by candidate countries to bring their practices into line with EU requirements. At same time, work to be done following the active substance review process was outlined. Possibilities for harmonisation and collaboration in planning and implementation of re-registration activities were also discussed.

The first part of the second evaluation and registration workshop built on the training provided during the first one as well as that held in previous years for newer Member States. It focused mainly on the re-registration process for active ingredients, examining progress and necessary improvements. The second part of the workshop looked at the new regulation with particular emphasis on zonal authorisations, mutual recognition and renewal, withdrawal and amendment of authorisations.

The workshop allowed participants to consider progress in meeting re-registration requirements, share experience and discuss remaining challenges. Updates were given on aspects such as the new format for submitting applications, work-sharing, use of the risk envelope, confirmatory data and voluntary withdrawals. Participants also worked on identifying and sharing best practices and considered the suitability of current processes for meeting requirements of the new legal framework.

The workshop on control of use and marketing was aimed at informing participants of current EU legislation and giving them a through understanding of the framework under development, particularly as regards requirements arising from the EU Thematic Strategy. Other areas covered were Member State control systems, identification of problem areas, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms and identification of best practices.

The workshops provided recommendations in the form of a framework for use by Member State authorities in fulfilling their legal obligations. These included a checklist of points to consider when conducting re-registration and compiling guidance documents.

4.2 ACTIVITIES IN THIRD COUNTRIES

4.2.1 EU FOOD STANDARDS

The EU is the world's biggest food importer and has legislation aimed at ensuring that imports reach its standards. However, in some developing countries there is a lack of surveillance structures and insufficient ability to provide safety guarantees. Training on EU standards can help to improve verification of compliance in developing countries, thereby facilitating trade and reducing risk of importing food-borne diseases and reducing the cost of controls at EU borders.

Contractor	The AETS consortium
Activities	6 workshops: Codex Alimentarius Malaysia, February; plant protection products , Thailand, March, residue and contaminant monitoring , Brazil, May, meat import conditions , Syria, July, pesticide residues , Argentina, October, meat hygiene , Bangkok, December Sustained training: SPS issues, Ethiopia, March/April, fishery products , Myanmar, April/May, requirements for fishing vessels , Chile, May, live bivalve molluscs legislation , Spain, May, food contact materials , Thailand, June, marine biotoxins , Chile, June
Participants/countries of origin	868 participants from: Asia: Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Iran, Laos, Macao, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Syria, Thailand, Vietnam Africa: Ethiopia (see BTSF Africa) Americas: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela
Tutors	37 tutors from 11 EU Member States and third countries. For some workshops local tutors have also been invited.
Satisfaction index	85%
Future training	8 workshops currently scheduled for 2010 on fishery products, pesticide and veterinary drug residues, food contact materials, GMO, rabies, Codex Alimentarius issues, animal welfare, meat hygiene and controls, official laboratory controls and food labelling and novel food Sustained training missions planned on fishery products, live bivalve molluscs, animal welfare, heat treatment and mycotoxins

WORKSHOPS

The Forum on EU-ASEAN Cooperation on **Codex Matters** was held back-to-back with the 21st session of the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils. Participants were informed about ASEAN Codex Task Force missions, ASEAN risk assessment activities, coordination on Codex matters amongst EU Member States and ASEAN perspectives.

Discussion was held on the direction of EU-ASEAN cooperation on Codex and risk assessment and recommendations were drafted. These included information sharing on issues of mutual interest and further capacity building on Codex-related matters in the ASEAN region.

Workshops on **plant protection products (PPP)** and **residues** were aimed at providing a clear understanding of relevant EU legislation. Presentations covered FVO inspections, EU legislation on official controls, PPPs and their sustainable use, maximum residue levels, risk assessment, plant health, export, certification and traceability. Information was given on the new Regulation concerning the placing on the EU market of PPPs.

Two days were taken up by site visits and discussion, followed by debriefing sessions. Participants visited farms, export premises and official control laboratories. Work during visits was focused on primary production controls, traceability, export checks, sample management, certification, traceability and residue analysis.



Training on **meat controls** included presentations on food safety principles, EU legislation, organisation of official controls and FVO inspections. Further subjects were animal health and welfare controls in primary production and during transport, compliance with hygiene rules at slaughter, ante- and post- mortem inspection and residue control plans.

Field visits took place to a slaughterhouse and meat production plant. Participants were guided along the production chain and received explanations of the entire process, with particular focus on Critical Control Points. Discussion and debriefing gave participants the chance to share their views on aspects of the visit such as building layout and maintenance, cleaning of equipment, premises and personnel, hygiene and traceability.

A workshop on **meat import conditions** in Syria took place as part of a mission which also included meetings with local authorities. An overview was given of Syrian and EU food law and obligations for businesses, with emphasis on slaughterhouses and processing facilities. Other topics were animal health and certification aspects of import controls, health requirements, role of competent authorities and supervising mechanisms for meat products.

SUSTAINED TRAINING

These training missions are different from the workshops, which in most cases, have a regional character and consist of explanation of EU SPS requirements. The sustained missions are performed in one single country by one or two experts, to address a specific topic of concern to the country. In most cases these have been identified following an FVO inspection mission. The missions provide for in-depth analysis of the problem with recommendations for improvement or remedial actions.

An expert was seconded to participate at an intensive training session in Ethiopia on **SPS issues** for officials of the African Union Commission (AUC), Regional Economic Committees (REC) and specialised bodies on harmonisation of SPS measures. Initial subjects covered were international and regional SPS frameworks, harmonisation within the EU and the role of the Commission and Member States in applying SPS measures and control mechanisms.

The training also looked at harmonisation of SPS measures in Africa, technical assistance and activities of African Union bodies. Round-table discussions gave participants the opportunity for further discussion on areas such as proposals for facilitating implementation of SPS measures.

A mission on **fishery products** was organised in Myanmar to train national authority staff on development and implementation of control processes. This followed up on the recommendations of a previous mission in November 2008 aimed at helping the Myanmar Authorities to meet EU requirements for fishery products.

The Chilean government requested training for fishermen on **requirements for fishing vessels** and for national authority staff on application of these requirements. The assistance took place over ten days and in four regions and was aimed at helping relevant actors to comply with EU requirements in these areas. It was recommended that a standard protocol for sanitary controls be elaborated for use by official bodies and operators at vessel, landing site and transporter level.

A further mission to Chile on marine biotoxins in **Live Bivalve Molluscs** (LBM) was aimed at improving compliance with hygiene and control requirements for LBM exported to the EU.

Exercises were carried out related to identification of the main species producing toxins. Other activities included observation of samples containing toxic specimens, inter-laboratory exercises, calibration of equipment and evaluation of analysts' ability to identify toxic species. Recommendations were made for improving procedures in these areas and control of monitoring systems.

The training should increase national authorities' ability to develop risk assessment that facilitates design of controls appropriate to each production area. It should also improve monitoring and controls on the composition and abundance of toxic species and use of this information in designing sampling plans.

Technical assistance was provided to improve the Peruvian Authorities' capacity to apply **EU requirements for fishery products and LBM**. This entailed a study visit by a Peruvian delegation to an EU laboratory monitoring and controlling LBM production areas.

The training started with a description of the classification process for production areas, examinations of the frequency of toxins and phytoplankton analysis. Exercises were carried out on sampling of marine bio-toxins and analytical methods were demonstrated. Trainees also consulted internal quality control documents.

Visits to harvesting areas provided practical examples for sanitary surveys, sampling plans and preparation of testing and analysis for classification and monitoring of production areas. Delegates also visited a purification and expedition centre for LBM and fishery products as a basis for discussion of criteria for selection of monitoring stations and sampling points for microbiological analysis.

A training mission was organised in Thailand on EU legislation on **Food Contact Materials** (FCM). In a series of meetings, the designated expert discussed improving the Thai FCM regulatory system with representatives of relevant agencies responsible for design and enforcement of FCM legislation. It was concluded that a new law should be prepared to better regulate food packaging, kitchen utensils and machinery and that responsibilities of the ministries involved in FCM should be better clarified in order to avoid overlaps.

A seminar for industry representatives gave the private sector a view of EU FCM regulations. The mutual recognition principle between EU Member States was explained as were provisions on biodegradable materials. Further presentations compared the Thai and Japanese FCM systems.

4.2.2 HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA CONTROL

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreaks in poultry began to increase sharply in 2004, mainly in South-East Asia, and spread to other parts of the world in 2005. International organisations have concluded that a long-term coordinated effort is necessary to control the situation. The outcomes of an assessment of the current HPAI situation which took place in 2008 contributed to the development of the HPAI training programme which was launched in 2008 and concluded in mid-2009.

Contractor	Development Solutions
Activities	1 laboratory workshop in Padua, Italy in January 4 missions in 2009 to Bulgaria (January/February), India (February/March), Morocco (April) and China (May)
Participants/countries of origin	20 workshop participants from Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Morocco, Philippines 212 sustained training participants from Bulgaria, India, Morocco, China 2,362 users accessing training through the e-learning portal on the project website
Tutors	19 experts from 6 EU Member States, 1 candidate country, 1 potential candidate country and 1 third country
Satisfaction index	89%
Future training	For 2010-, 4 laboratory workshops and around 260 days of sustained training and technical assistance to competent authorities on development of control measures for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and other animal diseases are foreseen.

The laboratory workshop focused on the latest virological and serological diagnosis methods. Particular attention was paid to the role of laboratory diagnostics in disease control, laboratory capacity and equipment, virological and serological methods and the DIVA strategy to distinguish infected and vaccinated animals.

The workshop began with a general introduction to avian influenza before turning to diagnostics including the use and interpretation of AI diagnostic tests. Details of molecular diagnostics were given, in particular conventional and real-time polymerase chain reaction techniques and participants were trained in how to identify HPAI by sequencing and use of the DIVA strategy.



The majority of the workshop was composed of laboratory sessions involving hands-on exercises using the identified methods. Active participation was encouraged through question and answer sessions and extensive discussion of results of the laboratory tests.

Although this programme was originally only intended for third countries, a mission also took place to Bulgaria where sustained training was delivered in the western, central and eastern regions (Sofia, Stara Zagora and Varna). The mission to India was delivered to three groups in the western, southern and northern parts of the country (Kolkata, Bangalore and Chandigarh). In Morocco the locations were Rabat, Fes and Marrakech. In China the programme was delivered in Beijing with participants coming from around the country.

Training during the missions provided a general introduction to HPAI, its epidemiology and clinical signs as well as global and national situations. Introductions were given to AI epidemiology, characteristics of the H5N1 strain, post-mortem examinations, sampling, human pandemic risk and participatory epidemiology.

Training on bio-security covered farm bio-security for poultry, farm risk assessments, bio-security plans for poultry holdings and public health issues. In India, the training also covered bio-security's link to food safety. Sessions on decontamination and disinfection focused on basic principles, decontamination and disinfection after outbreaks.

Outbreak management training covered culling and depopulation, disposal of carcasses, composting, movement control and zoning, outbreak recovery and restocking of previously infected farms. Disease investigation, outbreak response and ways to reduce the risk of re infection were also discussed.

Surveillance-related training looked at general principles and strategies of surveillance, including for poultry holdings, wet markets and wild birds. This introduced participants to risks from wild birds and field sampling strategies. In India and Bulgaria, collection and dispatch of samples was covered. Also in India, training was given on diagnostic techniques for confirmation of AI and the role of vaccination in control programmes.

Zoning and compartmentalisation presentations gave details of definition of infected areas, movement control and establishment of control zones. Topics related to laboratory bio-security included handling of infectious substances, laboratory design and certification.

A complementary activity was the development of an e-learning portal for wider dissemination of HPAI information and facilitation of contact between practitioners and experts. The portal may be used as a primer for study or as a means to refresh knowledge. It is comprised of fact-sheets, interactive exercises, practical learning tools and a discussion forum. The main issues addressed are surveillance and monitoring, bio-security, zoning and compartmentalisation, stamping out, vaccination and epidemiology.

4.2.3 TRAINING ON THE EU RAPID ALERT SYSTEM FOR FOOD AND FEED AND THE TRADE CONTROL AND EXPERT SYSTEM

The Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) is a network involving European Economic Area Member States, the Commission and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). It is primarily an information exchange tool for instances where health risks have been identified. It allows members to identify whether a problem affects them and take appropriate measures.

In many developing countries, control systems lack resources and a relevant number of cases notified through the RASFF concern third country products. Training on the RASFF for third countries aims to help them to improve controls and to explore the possibility of setting up similar systems in other parts of the world.

This programme also includes training on the EU's Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES), a risk management tool for animal and public health. TRACES creates a database for electronic exchange between national authorities of trade certificates and import documents for animals and products of animal origin as well as Common Veterinary Entry Documents (CVED) provided by Border Inspection Posts (BIP).

TRACES allows third country actors to produce health certificates for exports to the EU and give electronic notification of consignments sent to the EU. They can also get information on the consignments once an EU BIP has made an entry decision.

Contractor	AETS consortium
Activities	2 RASFF workshops in Vietnam/Macao (November) and South Africa (December) 5 TRACES sessions in Mauritius (March), April, French Polynesia (June), Morocco (October x2) 1 sustained training mission in Indonesia (October)
Participants/countries of origin	187 participants from: Africa: Botswana, Cape Verde, D.R. Congo, Guinea, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mayotte, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, Zimbabwe Asia/Oceania: Brunei, Cambodia, French Polynesia, Indonesia, Laos, Macao, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam
Tutors	17 tutors from 4 EU Member States and 8 third countries
Satisfaction index	86%
Future training	2 RASFF workshops, 5 TRACES sessions and 2 sustained training missions currently planned for 2010



Training sessions on TRACES began with a general overview of the system including how to access it and available languages and modules. The rest of the sessions consisted of practical exercises on the functionalities of the system.

Customs codes and their use in creating import certificates were covered as was certification for BIPs including the structure, creation and validation of CVEDs. Other certification tasks featured were related to copying, modifying, saving, deleting, replacing, printing and searching for certificates. Participants were shown the difference between CVEDs for animals and those for products of animal origin.

Following exercises looked at certification reminders and follow-up as well as specific procedures for transits and transhipments and distinctions between public authorities and private users. Another topic covered was support for decision making including links to relevant EU legislation as well as physical checks and rejected consignments. Training was also provided on support for reference data.

The RASFF workshop in South Africa began with an overview of the history of the system followed by details of its general principles, legal basis and practical organisation. Participants were provided with perspectives from EU Member States on issues such as collection of information at national level, notification procedures and follow-up to alerts.

Further presentations looked at the rapid alert system in South Africa and the RASFF Window for which an introduction was given to the software and interface. Pre-requisites for the implementation of rapid alert systems were also discussed.

Case studies were carried out on preparation of and reaction to notifications and the conclusions were presented and discussed. Practical exercises dealt with notification, validation, dissemination and synthesis of rapid alerts.

The EU-ASEAN RASFF workshop in Vietnam was the third of its kind and aimed to provide further technical support to the development of the ASEAN RASFF network (ARASF). It began with an update on the EU RASFF. Following presentations looked at intra-ASEAN food trade including the relevance of the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) to future ARASF operations.

Consumer perspectives on food safety and those of EU Member States on the RASFF were discussed as was the development of rapid alert systems outside of the EU. Latest ARASF software and applications were demonstrated and ASEAN working groups were updated on the system's progress.

Attention then turned to the subject of rapid alert systems within member states and the challenges encountered during their development. Details were given of member state systems, experience gained from their implementation and the functioning of certain national systems.

Management of ARASF was discussed and recommendations were prepared for operating procedures for its Steering Committee and other mechanisms to be set up. A final plenary session adopted the conclusions of the workshop and mapped out the future direction including the follow-up to delegates' recommendations and matters to be discussed at the next ARASF workshop.

The sustained training mission provided additional training on the operation and maintenance of ARASF to the Indonesian authorities.

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

Six ASEAN Reference Laboratories (ARLs) have been established under the EC-ASEAN Economic Cooperation Programme on Standards, Quality and Conformity assessment. ARLs disseminate approved analysis methods to National Reference Laboratories (NRL) in the ASEAN region. Training in this area is partly aimed at reinforcing cooperation between EU Community Reference Laboratories (CRL) and ARLs by enabling ASEAN laboratory staff to develop, apply and disseminate CRL-validated analysis methods.

Contractor	The European Training Platform for Safer Food Consortium
Activities	6 workshops in ARLs: on mycotoxins, Singapore, microbiology, Dong Nai, Vietnam, GMOs, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia and veterinary drugs, Pathum Thani, Thailand (June) and pesticides, Singapore and heavy metals, Nonthaburi, Thailand (July)
Participants/countries of origin	115 participants from all ASEAN member states
Tutors	13 tutors from 5 EU Member States
Satisfaction index	96%
Future training	6 2-week sessions scheduled for 2010-11 on food testing on SPS issues for third countries: 2 2-week sessions on mycotoxins and microbiology 2 2-week sessions on residues of which 1 on veterinary drugs and 1 on pesticides

The content of the workshops was defined during a preparatory meeting in Bangkok in late-2008. The EU's motivations for encouraging the development of laboratory facilities in the ASEAN region were explained, including the fact that the Community imports large quantities of food from the region. Delegates gave an overview of the facilities in their respective countries and the subjects for inclusion were defined.

The workshop on **mycotoxins** provided theoretical and practical training on analysis of mycotoxins in nuts and cereals. Lectures covered EU legislation, quality assurance, methodology, sample preparation, method validation and measurement uncertainty.

Hands-on training focused on preparation and calibration of standard solutions and analysis of aflatoxins in nuts and of ochratoxin A and deoxynivalenol in cereals, followed by calculation of analysis results. Each laboratory session was followed by a debriefing, discussion and questions and answers.

Theoretical training during the **pesticides** workshop covered EU residue regulations, control strategies, use of residue-related information, characteristics of pesticide residue analysis and multi-residue method (MRM) analysis. Further topics in the theoretical part of the workshop were EU method validation, quality control guidelines and proficiency tests.

Initial laboratory sessions looked at selection of MRMs and modified MRMs, evaluation of residues, databases, the main single-residue methods and sample handling approaches to analysis of fruit and vegetables. Further sessions dealt with optimisation of practical parame-

ters, technical difficulties, maintenance aspects, method validation parameters, routine analysis and analytical criteria.

Two open discussion sessions took place. The first focused on use of web-based CRL information sources to assist decision-making for design of residue analysis. The second looked at quality assurance and control provisions and measures stipulated in DG SANCO quality control guidelines.

Lectures on **heavy metals** covered control of levels of heavy metals in food, EU sampling requirements, validation principles for analysis methods and approaches to estimating measurement uncertainty.

Practical exercises addressed definition of measures, documenting traceability of measurement results and measurement uncertainty for calibrating solutions. Laboratory activities were organised on determination of mass fraction of mercury and arsenic in fish and meat samples and pre-treatment of samples.

The course on **veterinary drugs** started with discussion of participants' needs and expectations. They identified various topics of interest including sample preparation, detection techniques and interpretation of results.

Laboratory activities looked at method and instrument optimisation, strategic approaches to method development and data processing and interpretation. Theoretical sessions were conducted on method validation, relevant EU legislation, design and coordination of National Residue Control Plans, handling deviant samples, quality assurance and control, accreditation and guidance from EU-CRLs.

Microbiology sessions consisted partly of presentations followed by discussion. Presentations looked at characteristics, epidemiology, detection and confirmation of vibrio, campylobacter, salmonella and other food-borne pathogens, investigation of food-borne outbreaks, EU microbiological criteria and proficiency testing. Practical work included detection of vibrio, campylobacter and salmonella using culture and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) methods.

The aim of **GMO** courses was to accustom laboratory staff to molecular detection techniques and to provide theoretical knowledge required for adapting their facilities to EU requirements. The course was composed of theoretical lessons and experimental work and gave an overview of EU GMO legislation and specific requirements.

Further subjects were experimental planning and sample preparation, DNA extraction, PCR application, GMO quantification by PCR, data analysis and reporting. Training was also given on sampling concepts, quality assurance for GMO detection laboratories, method validation criteria and laboratory accreditation.

4.2.5 ANALYSIS OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 129 GMO events used to generate transgenic plants are commercialised in various parts of the world and this number is constantly increasing. Of these, only about 20 are authorised for food or feed use in Europe. A specific event may therefore be authorised in an exporting country but not in an importing country.

A more uniform approach to GMO analysis, including good understanding of EU control and safety requirements will help international trade. Training began in this field from late-2009 and is set to run through 2010. It should increase the expertise of non-EU operators, thus helping them to adapt their procedures for checking compliance with EU requirements.

Contractor	Joint Research Centre Institute for Health and Consumer Protection
Activities	1 workshop in Foz de Iguazu, Brazil in December
Participants/countries of origin	34 participants from Latin American and Caribbean countries
Tutors	14 tutors from 5 EU Member States and 5 third countries
Satisfaction index	88%
Future training	3 workshops (for Asia, Africa and new Member States, candidate, potential candidate and ENP countries) planned for 2010

The workshop which took place in late-2009 was for participants from across Latin America and the Caribbean, including representatives of enforcement bodies and project leaders involved in GMO analysis. It began with a presentation on the EU GMO legislative framework and future challenges. An overview was given of the role of the Joint Research Centre in supporting implementation of EU legislation and encouraging harmonisation.

The European Network of GMO Laboratories (ENGL) was presented along with the possibilities it provides for information exchange. An update was given on the status of Codex guidelines for analysis methods for specific DNA sequences and proteins, including GMOs and future perspectives arising from these guidelines.

An overview of GMO detection approaches was provided as well as information on quality assurance for testing laboratories and specific requirements for GMO analysis and measurement of uncertainty. National perspectives were provided on laboratory coordination and implementation of legislation. Networking experiences from different regions were also shared.

The International Life Sciences Institute presented their experience in advancing the science underpinning GM sampling and detection methods. A further presentation discussed establishment of GMO analysis laboratories in countries which grow and market GMO.

The workshop also featured general and round table discussion. This focused on capacity building and future collaboration with the ENGL network.



4.3 BETTER TRAINING FOR SAFER FOOD IN AFRICA

BTSF Africa began in earnest with a **high-level Africa-EU conference** on institutionalising SPS issues in Africa in April 2009 in Addis Ababa. Organised jointly by the EU and the AU Commissions, the conference aimed at promoting regional integration on rules, standards, controls and procedures.

It was attended by EU Health Commissioner, Androulla Vassiliou and AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Rhoda Peace Tumusiime¹². The conference included an explanation of the programme and was aimed at generating political momentum and collecting views on the way forward. The AU and EU Commissions undertook to strengthen cooperation in order to ensure successful implementation of BTSF Africa. A closing conference is planned for Brussels in late-2010 to discuss outcomes and future perspectives.

Of BTSF Africa's seven activities, four are implemented by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), two by the Agriconsulting consortium and one by the AETS consortium.

ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY THE WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH

1. The first of these aims to evaluate the **performance of veterinary services** (PVS) in 15 countries and carry out **PVS Gap Analysis** of needs and priorities and **follow-up evaluations and accompanying measures** in 40 countries.

PVS helps to bring Veterinary Services (VS) in line with international standards, in terms of legislation, structure, organisation, resources, capacities, role of the private sector and paraprofessionals. It should also strengthen public-private partnerships in the field of prevention and control of animal diseases.

Evaluations are carried out by independent experts in order to identify strengths and weaknesses of VS. This involves designation of trained experts for 10 to 15-day missions. Findings are presented to the authorities and a comprehensive country report is prepared. An independent expert then conducts a peer-review and the final report is submitted for national authority approval. Following acceptance, and on basis of the results of the evaluation, a detailed PVS Gap Analysis is carried out or a national action plan and investment programme drawn up to help the VS to take corrective action and improve performance. The reports are used to submit requests to national governments or international donors.

¹² Other key guests included relevant Ministers from Africa and the EU, representatives of African Regional Economic Communities, specialised and standards setting bodies and international organisations and donors (95 registered participants).

2. Another activity managed by the OIE involves **improving national and regional animal health and food safety legal frameworks in 15 countries**.

An incomplete or unclear legal basis can prevent effective implementation of sanitary measures. Experts are therefore seconded to review veterinary legislation, identify gaps and propose ways of consolidating the legal framework. This should help VS to clearly define responsibilities, ensure sufficient financial resources and effective organisation and establish conditions for implementing controls and amending legislation¹³.

3. Strengthening **laboratory technicians' capacity** through twinning is the subject of the third OIE-run activity.

Effective control of major diseases relies on the quality of VS, whose decisions must be based on sound scientific evidence. In the case of emerging or exotic diseases, early detection for rapid response is crucial for containment and eradication. For this, VS need laboratories able to carry out reliable and timely diagnosis, using the best techniques available in accordance with international standards.

This activity consists of creating partnerships between laboratories in Africa and OIE Reference Laboratories over one to two years in order to improve African laboratory technicians' expertise in specific areas. The expertise is disseminated through assessments and workshops. This should lead to the creation of sub-regional networks of expertise, thereby giving countries fast access to top quality diagnosis. These developments will provide strong support for appropriate decision making on health issues and more efficient response to outbreaks.

4. The final task undertaken by OIE concerns **training for Chief Veterinary Officers (CVO)** and OIE National Focal Points (NFP) on prevention and control of zoonoses.

In order to reinforce public and private components of VS and to strengthen regional harmonisation, the PVS process and post evaluation must be carried out in parallel with training of CVOs and NFP.

OIE has requested each country to nominate a NFP specialised or competent in wildlife, animal health information systems, aquatic animals, veterinary drugs, animal welfare and food safety. Regular training of NFPs helps to meet basic requirements for good governance, legislation, policies and resources of veterinary services. This facilitates development of appropriate legislation and its strict implementation through national animal health systems¹⁴.

¹³ In many African countries, the current legislation was designed during the colonial period and may not be up-to-date or reflect recent changes in international instruments.

¹⁴ With possible positive effects on early detection, transparency and notification, rapid response to animal disease outbreaks, bio-security, compensation, vaccination, efficient epidemiological surveillance networks, development of services which conform to OIE standards and improved food safety inspection, collaboration with agriculture and fishery associations and communication with consumers.

STATE OF PLAY OF THE OIE ACTIVITIES

Activity	State of play
Evaluation of the performance of veterinary services – PVS (15 countries). A team leader, an expert and an observer spend about 15 days in each country.	8 PVS evaluation requests have been earmarked, 5 of which have been completed (Eritrea, Gambia, Libya, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe) and 3 are to come (Equatorial Guinea, Somalia, Botswana).
Follow-up gap analysis of needs and priorities (40 countries). An expert spends about 5 days in each country.	21 country requests for PVS Gap Analysis missions have been earmarked, of which 9 have been completed (Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia) and 12 are to come (DR Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda)
PVS follow-up evaluation mission to assess and accompany progress (40 countries). A team leader, an expert and an observer spend about 15 days in each country.	Official requests still to be made by African States
Improve national and/or regional animal health and food safety legal frameworks (15 countries). An expert spends about 9 days in each country.	11 legislation missions requested, of which 1 completed (Togo) and 10 to come (Burkina Faso, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Malawi, Mauritius, Mauritania, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia)
Strengthen capacity of laboratory technicians via twinning (10 laboratories). 2 experts (1 EU + 1 Africa) each carry out 7 3-day missions over 26 months, with provision of diagnostic kits and lab materials.	4 laboratory twinning projects planned: UK, Weybridge, Veterinary Laboratory Agency (VLA) (parent lab) and the National Veterinary Laboratory of Botswana (BNVL) (candidate lab) Italy, ISS (Istituto Superiore Di Sanita), Rome (parent lab) and Botswana – BNVL (candidate lab) UK, Weybridge, VLA (parent lab) and Sudan, Central Veterinary Research Laboratory (candidate lab) South Africa, ARC-Onderstepoort (parent lab) and Nigeria, National Veterinary Research Institute (candidate lab)
Strengthen capacity of CVOs and NFPs on international sanitary standards (all African countries). 3-day workshops for about 30 participants (2 per country).	11 regional workshops were planned, 3 of which have been held in Yaoundé (September), Tunis (November) and Gaborone (January) with 8 still to come (Tanzania, Namibia, Ethiopia, Botswana, Tunisia, Mali, S. Africa and Mali), dates to be confirmed.

ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY AGRICONSULTING CONSORTIUM

5. The first of these is aimed at **training trainers during regional workshops**. Eight of these cover the five Economic Partnership Agreement regions (Western Africa, Central Africa, East-Southern Africa, Southern including South Africa and East Africa) and two cover North Africa.

Five (of 10 foreseen) five-day workshops took place in 2009. Each workshop gathered a wide range of interests: four participants (public and private sector) from each country of the region concerned, plus representatives of international organisations, the AU Commission and the relevant Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Each workshop was implemented by a group of six international experts (four for those in Northern Africa), at least two of which were African. The European Commission was represented at each workshop by DG SANCO, the EU Delegation to the AU and the EC Delegation in the host country. The workshops were attended by 221 people in total.

The training included case studies, simulation exercises and field visits to farms and processing establishments. The main topic was auditing of compliance with general food hygiene principles, with the aim of fostering mutual understanding and recognition between competent authorities of the REC concerned.

The overarching objective was the elaboration of a reference document for harmonising food hygiene inspection and authorisation procedures for establishments. A draft has been prepared, inspired by a common inspection methodology and certification scheme, based on the standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS (2009)

Dates	Venues	Participants
6-10 July	Accra, Ghana	68 supported participants from 15 West African countries ¹⁵ . The Economic Community Of West African States, the West African Economic and Monetary Union, AUC, FAO and UNIDO were represented.
21-25 September	Brazzaville, Congo	32 participants from 7 Central African countries ¹⁶ . AUC, FAO, WHO and UNIDO were represented.
18-22 October	Cairo, Egypt	23 supported participants from 5 North African countries ¹⁷ (plus an equivalent number of local participants). AUC, the United Nations World Food Programme and UNIDO were represented.
23-27 November	Johannesburg, S. Africa	51 supported participants from 12 Eastern and Southern African countries ¹⁸ . AUC and UNIDO were represented
7-11 December	Lusaka, Zambia	47 supported participants from 12 Eastern and Southern African countries ¹⁹ . AUC, ARSO and UNIDO were represented

6. The second activity organised by Agriconsulting was aimed at **strengthening capacity of SMEs** via deployment of experts to work with beneficiaries on addressing SPS deficiencies identified by FVO or other credible reports. In 2009, missions took place to 15 (out of 26) countries in order to prepare for deployment of experts and ascertain needs of beneficiary enterprises, in collaboration with National and EU Delegation Contact Points.

Countries visited were Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Chad, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia. These were followed by initial training missions in nine of the countries (Benin, Botswana, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia).

ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY AETS CONSORTIUM

7. One activity is implemented by AETS. It comprises training sessions for officials of RECs, AUC and specialist bodies on **international policy, standards and norms** with special focus on harmonising SPS frameworks in Africa.

The first workshop was held on 30 March–2 April 2009 in Addis Ababa and was attended by 36 delegates, with strong input from international organisations.

¹⁵ Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

¹⁶ Cameroon, Central Africa, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (RDC), Gabon and S. Tome y Principe

¹⁷ Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

¹⁸ Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda.

¹⁹ Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

TRAINING

2010

STANDARD BTSF

Around 120 events

Almost 6.000 participants

Budget of €13 million

BTSF AFRICA

Around 60 events

Almost 3.000 participants

Budget of €6.5 million

5 TRAINING 2010

5.1 OVERVIEW

Training on new subjects begins in 2010 and almost all subjects featured in 2009 continue. Subjects which were included in past years return after an absence. Preparation for the 2010 activities was undertaken throughout 2009.

Meetings with National Contact Points were held in March and September to receive feedback. Discussion of outcomes and needs took place within the Inter-service Steering Group in June 2009.

Intra-SANCO coordination, discussion with EC External Relations services and consultation of RASFF notifications and FVO findings further contributed to setting out the subjects. Details are outlined below.

EU-based programmes
Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point principles
Food hygiene and controls
Plant health controls
Animal by-products
Animal health controls for aquaculture animals NEW
Animal health controls for bees and exotic zoo animals NEW
Seaport/road/rail Border Inspection Posts
Zoonoses and microbiological criteria in foodstuffs
Plant protection products
Animal welfare
Feed law
Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies
Food contact materials
Controls on food and feed of non-animal origin NEW
Third country programmes
Control of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and other animal diseases
EU food standards
Food testing and SPS issues NEW
Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed/TRACES
GMO analysis
BTSF Africa

5.2 NEW SUBJECTS

ANIMAL BY-PRODUCTS

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

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

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

Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 lays down measures to prevent ABP from presenting health risks. It establishes rules for collection, transport, storage, handling, processing, use, commercialisation, import, export and transit of ABP.

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

In 2008, the Commission adopted a proposal for a revised Regulation in order to clarify health rules applicable to ABP and make them more risk-proportionate. The Commission is also preparing measures for application of the new Regulation to the sectors handling ABP. As the new rules apply from 2010, it is important to spread knowledge of the changes.

Against this background, training on ABP has been re-introduced in 2010, having featured during the first three years of BTSF. Four training sessions are scheduled.

Each workshop caters for around 65 people, mainly public officials responsible for implementing ABP health rules in EU Member States, candidate, EFTA, ENP and selected third countries. Private sector representatives may also be invited.

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

The training will identify and describe good ABP practices for the feed, technical and disposal sectors and explain how to improve compliance with EU requirements. It should also provide a forum for exchange between practitioners on techniques for handling ABP.

PREVENTION, CONTROL AND ERADICATION OF TRANSMISSIBLE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHIES

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

Training on prevention, control and eradication of TSEs took place in 2008 and returns in 2010. The programme comprises five three-day workshops, each of which includes a day's practical training on feed sampling and testing for BSE. Around 30 people should attend each workshop, mainly from EU Member States and candidate countries.

The aim is to help to harmonise approaches to TSEs so as to allow for comparison of the situation in Member States. The training should also better enable competent authorities to verify compliance with TSE requirements.

The training focuses on implementation and control of risk reducing measures to combat and eradicate BSE and includes details of past experience and difficulties encountered at field level. Main topics are EU provisions on risk material removal, feed ban, monitoring and commercialisation and application of these provisions as well as the EU reporting system on surveillance and monitoring programmes.

FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

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

To avoid contamination of food, migration limits have been established for plasticisers. However, reports have shown that these limits are often exceeded.

Training in this area ran in 2007 and returns for 2010 with six three-day courses planned. Of these, four are for inspectors of food and FCM premises and the other two are for national authority staff responsible for setting up control plans.

Each course caters for around 45 participants. In the first instance they will come from EU Member States and candidate countries. Additional participants may come from ENP and third countries.

Topics for **both courses** include EU FCM provisions with a special focus on those adopted in recent years and good management practice. Further issues are setting up of national control plans, preparation of checklists for inspectors and information on materials used in FCM.

The training will have a strong emphasis on practical exercises. These cover inspection of declarations of compliance and supporting documents and inspections of FCM premises including sampling.

ANIMAL HEALTH - AQUACULTURE ANIMALS, BEES AND EXOTIC ZOO ANIMALS

Feedback from Member States and stakeholders has shown a need for training on diseases affecting fish, molluscs, crustaceans, bees and zoo animals. The training launched on these issues for the first time in 2010 is aimed at conveying a common understanding of the current situation of certain diseases and related EU legislation. One programme covers aquaculture animals while the other focuses on bees and exotic zoo animals.

This should contribute to effective, harmonised implementation of relevant legislation. The training should equip veterinary services to protect the EU against such diseases and implement best practices for approval of zoos.

For **aquaculture animals**, six three-day workshops are planned. Two focus on **mollusc and crustacean diseases** and the other four are on **fish diseases**.

Both types of workshop look at application of EU provisions for control of aquatic diseases, as well as EU legislation on aquaculture animals, in particular as concerns placing on the market and import. Other subjects are pathogen and disease description, surveillance, inspection, sampling, outbreak measures and internal and EU level-notifications.

The programme on **bees and exotic zoo animals** comprises four three-day workshops on veterinary controls on bees and two three-day workshops on best veterinary practices for exotic animals destined for EU zoos and approval of zoos.

Workshops on bees cover application of EU provisions for control of bee diseases and pests and legislation relevant to honey and bumble bees. Other subjects include pathogen and disease description, monitoring, planning and provision of resources, inspection and sampling of hives, outbreak measures, traceability, follow-up checks, internal and EU-level notifications and import controls.

Application of EU provisions for control of diseases affecting exotic zoo animals and EU legislation relevant to exotic zoo animals are discussed at **zoo animal workshops**. Other topics include approval procedures for bodies, institutes and centres, controls at destination on imported animals from third countries and internal and EU-level notifications. In addition, training looks at measures for moving animals between approved centres and from non-approved to approved establishments, as well as quarantine procedures upon introduction of animals into approved zoos.

Workshops in **both programmes** cater for around 40 people from EU Member States, candidate and EFTA countries. Experienced control staff who are familiar with relevant legislation and in a position to pass on training to others are an important target group.

Presentations are supported by study cases and workshops include at least half a day's practical training. For aquaculture workshops this should take the form of field trips to mollusc, crustacean or fish farms to view practical elements of inspection and sampling.

For workshops on bees, participants visit beehives to view inspection and sampling. Workshops on zoo animals include visits to zoos to observe inspection and management procedures.

CONTROLS ON FOOD AND FEED OF NON-ANIMAL ORIGIN

EU food and feed imports have to comply with Community requirements and Member State control staff checking compliance should be suitably qualified. Training on import of products of non-animal origin has thus been launched as a new subject for 2010.

The aim is to provide national officials responsible for implementing EU rules in these fields with solid knowledge of the requirements. This should improve implementation of EU legislation and contribute to developing best practices for controls on certain feed and food of non-animal origin.

Three three-day courses take place in EU border inspection posts (BIP), designated as points of entry. The training will consist of theoretical and practical sessions with emphasis on practical simulation exercises in BIPs.

Each course caters for around 50 people. Places are offered to participants from EU Member States, in particular those sharing land or sea borders with eastern third countries. Participants from candidate and other European Economic Area countries will be invited as will representatives of Community Reference Laboratories. Inspectors from the EFTA surveillance authority may also attend.

Topics addressed include relevant EU legislation, import control procedures on certain products of non-animal origin and standard operating procedures. The workshops also cover information exchange and cooperation with customs, best practices for laboratory testing and documentary, identity and physical checks.

FOOD TESTING AND SPS ISSUES

The EU imports a high volume of foodstuffs from third countries but many developing countries (DC) fail to fulfil EU food testing requirements. This has led to an increase in SPS-related trade concerns between the EU and exporting DCs in recent years.

These issues have often been related to deficiencies in aflatoxin, microbiological and residue controls in exporting DCs, leading to increased detection of non-compliance during import inspection in the EU. Technical assistance in this area, and in particular hands-on training on analytical techniques at EU accredited laboratories, would help to reduce these difficulties.

The new programme on food testing and SPS issues which runs during 2010 is based on the food testing training provided for laboratory staff from ASEAN countries in previous years. The scope has now broadened to include third countries in general and the training takes place in EU laboratories.

The programme comprises six two-week sessions of which two focus on each of mycotoxins and microbiology. A further two deal with residues, with one focusing on veterinary drugs and the other on pesticides.

5.3 BTSF AFRICA

The BTSF Africa work during 2009 was primarily focussed on launching the programme, mobilising support and implementing the first series of activities. This has been carried out successfully, with involvement from the EU and AU Commissions, African RECs, other specialised bodies and the EU Delegations in Africa. As a deliverable of the Joint Africa-Europe Strategy, the programme's outcomes will be the subject of future joint Africa-Europe discussions.

Special efforts are being devoted to setting up and running an interactive e-learning forum. Discussions are ongoing with the African Standardisation Organisation (ARSO), with the World Bank experience in this field serving as a basis.

The implementation of **OIE work** will continue, based on the willingness of each country to request independent evaluation of the conformity of their veterinary services with international standards, using the OIE PVS and PVS Gap Analysis tools. Countries will also be assisted in development of national programmes to improve governance and better comply with global standards as well as modernisation of veterinary legislation and strengthening of laboratory capacity through twinning programmes.

The focus of **Agriconsulting activities** is now on training trainers using the guidelines for implementation of the reference document developed in 2009. The aim is to support African regional and national authorities in application of the document. This should increase mutual recognition between competent authorities, facilitate adoption of a common food hygiene inspection methodology and promote a common certification scheme as an initial step towards establishing frameworks compatible with international (Codex Alimentarius) standards.



Five more regional workshops are planned in 2010:

22-26 February in Douala for Central Africa, 15-19 March in Casablanca for North Africa, 19-23 April in Kampala for Eastern and Southern Africa, 24-28 May in Bamako for West Africa and 14-18 June in Lilongwe for South-Eastern Africa.

Ad-hoc missions will be completed in 2010 in countries where work started in 2009. Further missions will take place in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique and Sao Tome y Principe.

As concerns **AETS activities**, two more sessions are foreseen in 2010. The first takes place in Dakar, Senegal on 8-12 February and the second is planned for Cape Town in October.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The year 2009 has been a landmark within BTSF. With some executive responsibilities now transferred to the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC), it can be said that BTSF's pilot phase has been concluded successfully.

The initiative is now firmly focused on long-term challenges and the Commission has embarked on the task of identifying ways to ensure continued success. One main aspect of this has been the compilation of the Staff Working Document outlining appropriate strategies. The Commission will now turn its attention to putting these strategies into practice in the short, medium and long term.

Within the training itself, steady increases have again taken place in the number of participants and the range of programmes. This will continue in 2010-11, with further expansion in the years which follow.

The launch of training within BTSF Africa is an important step in the initiative's implantation in new global regions. Indeed, BTSF is now truly global in scope, having involved people from almost 180 different countries as of the end of 2009.

The positive results achieved in 2009 would not have been possible without contributions from within and outside of the European Commission. The Training Sector would like to express its appreciation to all who have played a part in BTSF's success. Special mentions should go to Salvatore Magazzù, Markus Brunner and Andras Badacsonyi from EAHC, Isabelle Rollier, coordinator for much of the third country activities, Moustapha Magumu, coordinator of BTSF Africa, Maura Waters coordinating relations with the FVO and Ludwig Vandenberghe and Marc Vallons from the DG SANCO financial cell.

Thanks go to all other colleagues within DG SANCO, the Food and Veterinary Office and EAHC, as well as members of the informal Inter-Service Steering Group from other Commission DGs and services. The SANCO Training Sector is also grateful to the National Contact Points whose coordination has been essential and to the staff of EC Delegations in countries where training has been held, for their assistance and support.

ANNEX

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European Commission

The Better Training for Safer Food Annual Report 2009

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2010

2010 – 80 pp. – 21 x 29.7 cm

ISBN 978-92-79-15581-9

doi 10.2772/98409

Better Training for Safer Food

Annual Report 2009



Publications Office

ISBN 978-92-79-15581-9



9 789279 155819