EFSA

Risk communication in practice: what role for scientists?

Simon Terry

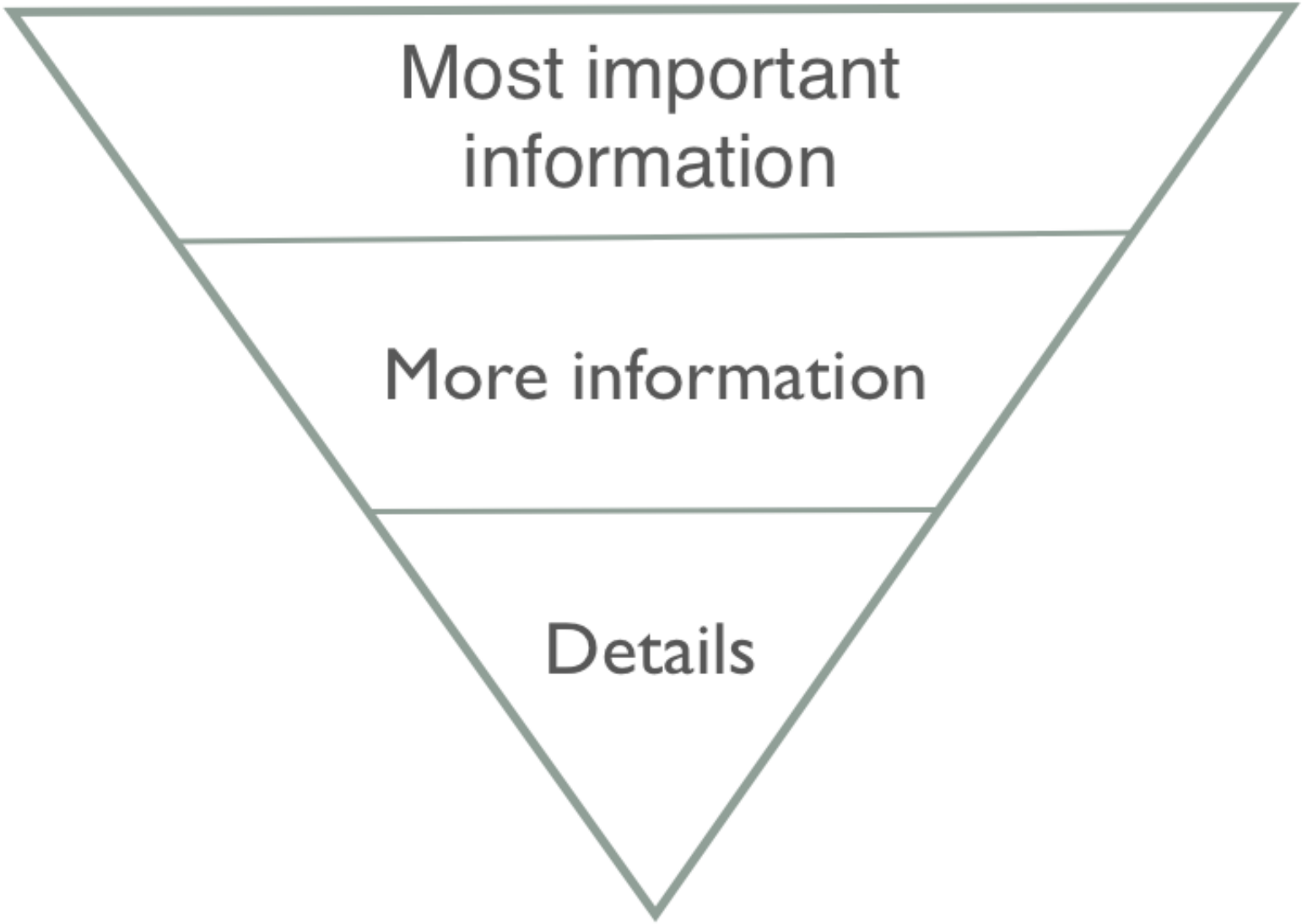
Communication, Engagement & Cooperation

Parma Summer School, 15-17 May 2018

efsa
European Food Safety Authority


Budget Has Rough Path
Chris Trees
TREVOR · NOLAN
BRAD

HOW EDITORS WRITE



HOW SCIENTISTS WRITE

- Long, descriptive title
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusions
- References

EFSA'S MANDATE IS TO

Food and feed safety advice to its principal partners, stakeholders and the public at large in a clear and accessible way.

HOW?

MULTIMEDIA

- Videos
- Interactive tools
- Infographics,
- Data visualisation

EFSA JOURNAL

- All EFSA scientifc outputs

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Twitter,
- LinkedIn
- YouTube

EFSA WEBSITE

- News,
- Topics
- Alerts,
- Newsletter
- Lay Summaries
- Factsheets
- Events

SCIENTIFIC OUTREACH

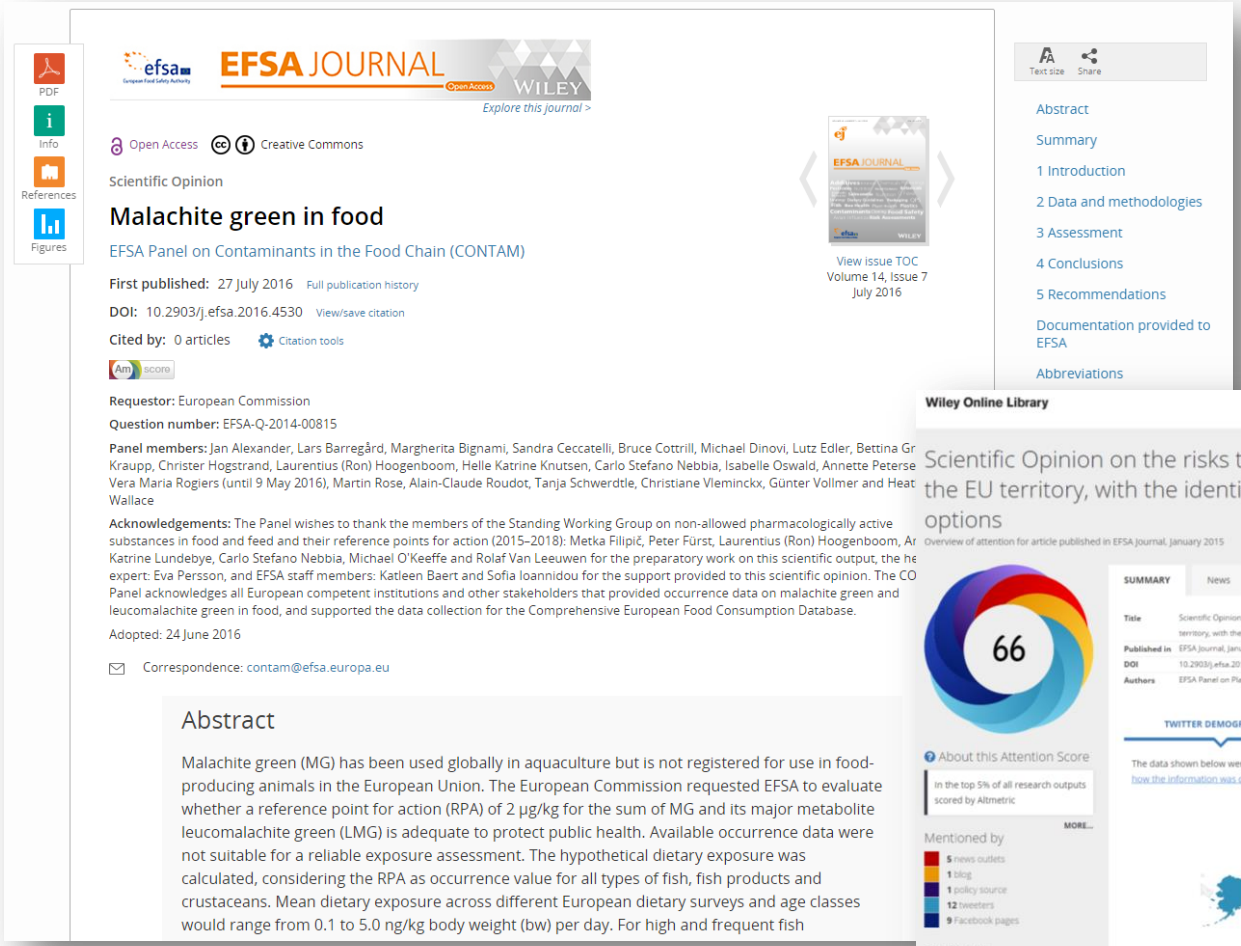
- Science networks
- Infosessions
- Scientific Conferences
- Webinars

HOW: CREATE A BRIDGE SCIENCE - CITIZENS

More complex science – new ways to explain

- Visual representation: Infographics ….
- Engaging: interactive infographics, videos, blogs
- Campaigns
- Social media: YouTube, LinkedIn, ResearchGate, Twitter
- Data visualisation

EFSA JOURNAL



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Scientific Opinion

Malachite green in food

EFSA Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain (CONTAM)

First published: 27 July 2016 Full publication history

DOI: 10.2903/j.efsa.2016.4530 View/save citation

Cited by: 0 articles Citation tools

Requestor: European Commission

Question number: EFSA-Q-2014-00815

Panel members: Jan Alexander, Lars Barregård, Margherita Bignami, Sandra Ceccatelli, Bruce Cottrill, Michael Dinovi, Lutz Edler, Bettina Gr Kraupp, Christer Hogstrand, Laurentius (Ron) Hoogenboom, Helle Katrine Knutsen, Carlo Stefano Nebbia, Isabelle Oswald, Annette Peterse Vera Maria Rogiers (until 9 May 2016), Martin Rose, Alain-Claude Roudot, Tanja Schwerdtle, Christiane Vleminckx, Günter Vollmer and Heat Wallace

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Adopted: 24 June 2016

Correspondence: contam@efsa.europa.eu

View issue TOC
Volume 14, Issue 7
July 2016

Text size Share

Abstract
Summary
1 Introduction
2 Data and methodologies
3 Assessment
4 Conclusions
5 Recommendations
Documentation provided to EFSA
Abbreviations

Abstract

Malachite green (MG) has been used globally in aquaculture but is not registered for use in food-producing animals in the European Union. The European Commission requested EFSA to evaluate whether a reference point for action (RPA) of 2 µg/kg for the sum of MG and its major metabolite leucomalachite green (LMG) is adequate to protect public health. Available occurrence data were not suitable for a reliable exposure assessment. The hypothetical dietary exposure was calculated, considering the RPA as occurrence value for all types of fish, fish products and crustaceans. Mean dietary exposure across different European dietary surveys and age classes would range from 0.1 to 5.0 ng/kg body weight (bw) per day. For high and frequent fish

Wiley Online Library

Scientific Opinion on the risks to plant health posed by Xylella fastidiosa in the EU territory, with the identification and evaluation of risk reduction options

Overview of attention for article published in EFSA Journal, January 2015

66

SUMMARY News Blogs Policy documents Twitter Facebook

Title Scientific Opinion on the risks to plant health posed by Xylella fastidiosa in the EU territory, with the identification and evaluation of risk reduction options

Published in EFSA Journal, January 2015

DOI 10.2903/j.efsa.2015.3989

Authors EFSA Panel on Plant Health (PLH)

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1 blog
1 policy source
12 tweeters
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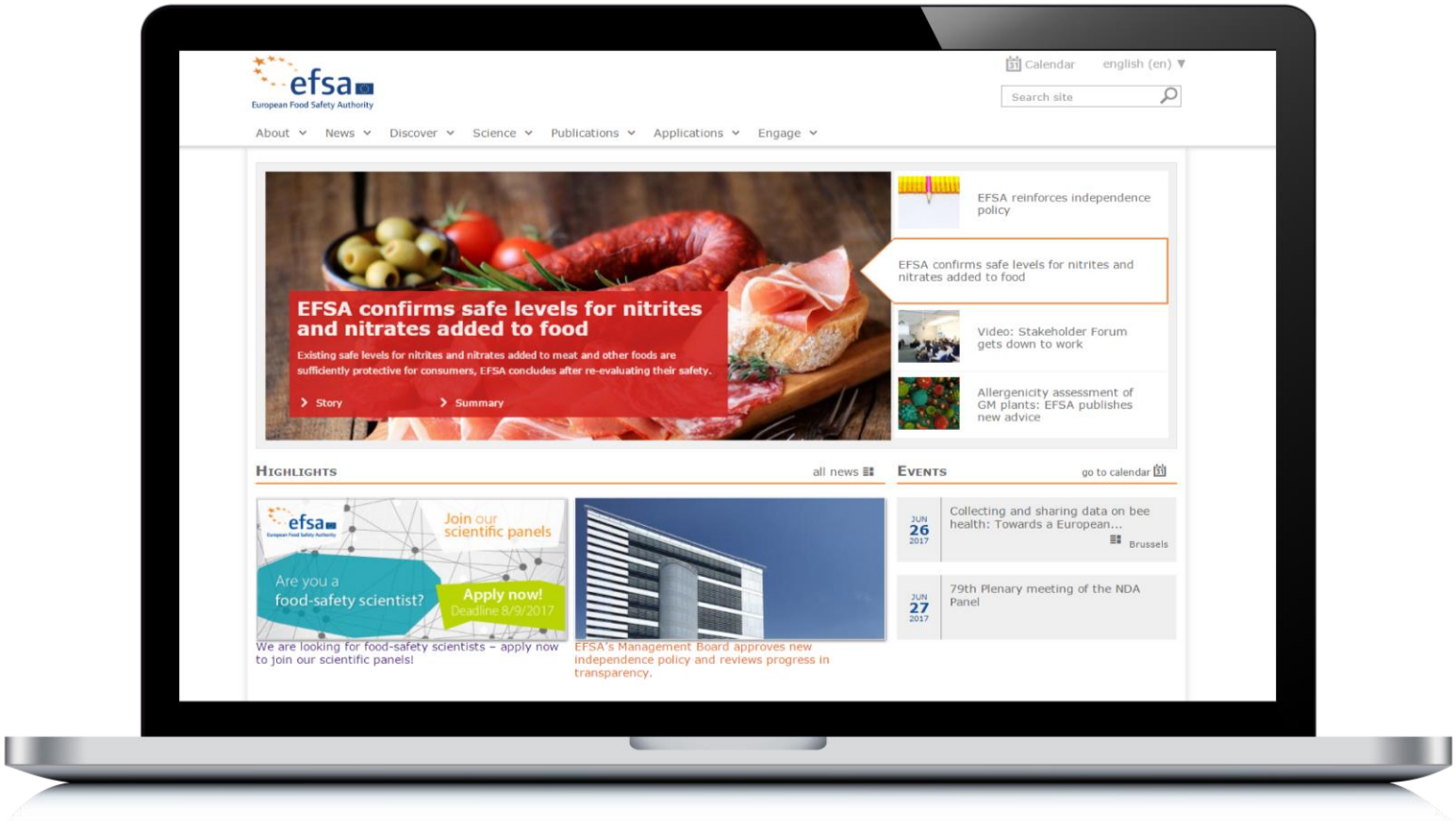
Readers on

22 Mendeley

HOW: WEBSITE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Existing safe levels for nitrites and nitrates added to meat and other foods are sufficiently protective for consumers, EFSA concludes after re-evaluating their safety.
Story
Summary
EFSA reinforces independence policy
EFSA confirms safe levels for nitrites and nitrates added to food
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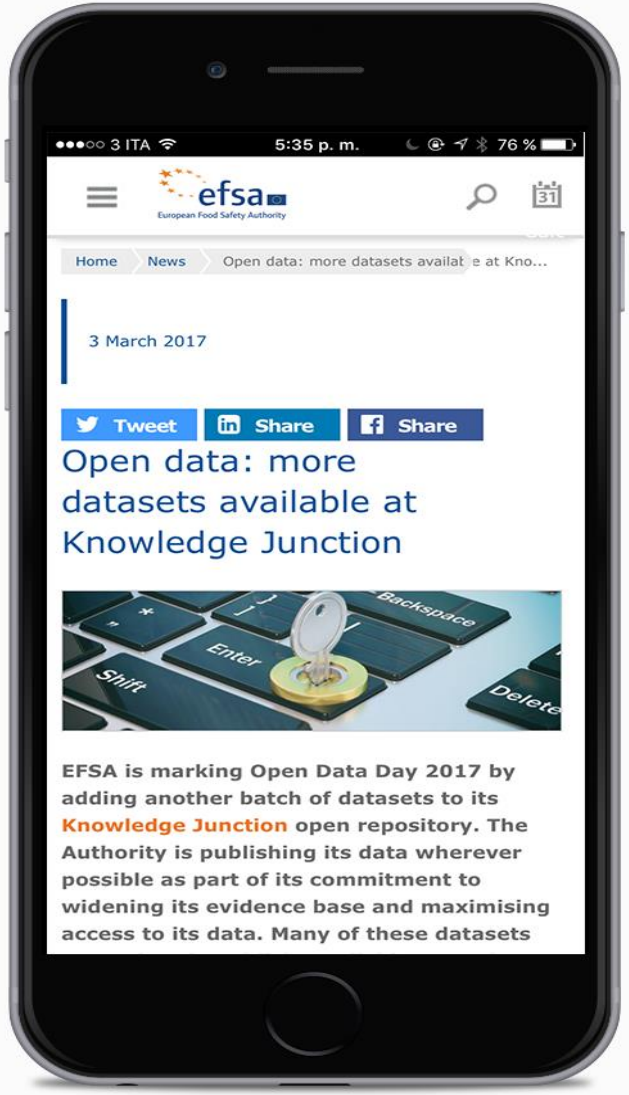
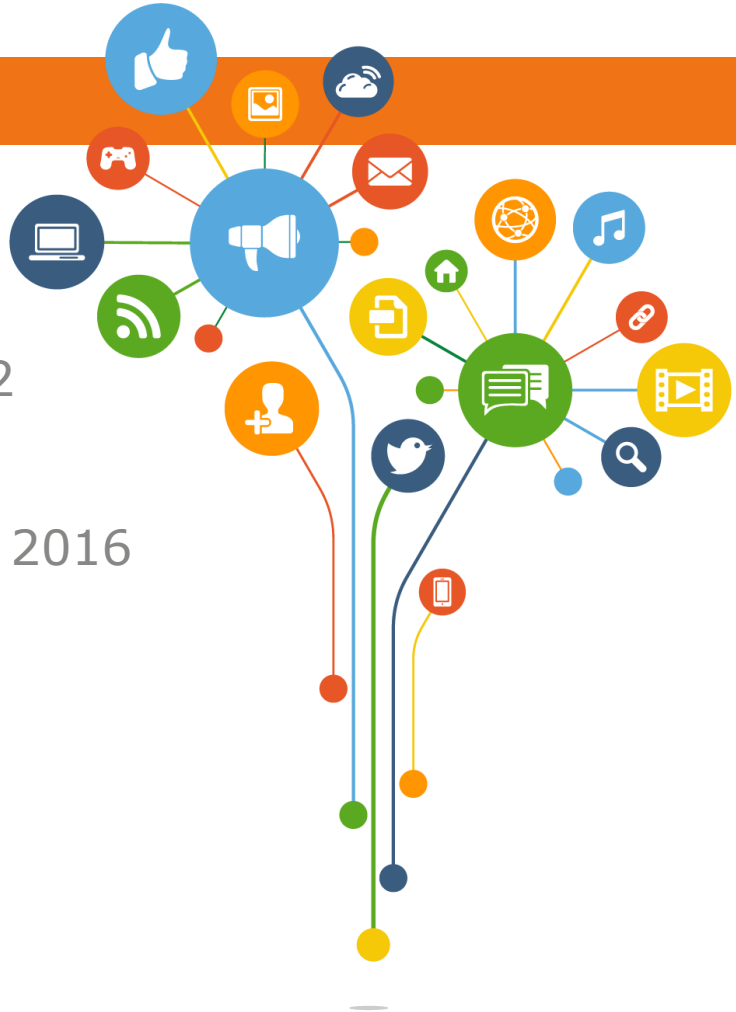
HOW: A SCIENCE HUB



Evolving from a “noticeboard” service only to an interactive hub

SOCIAL MEDIA



Main account launched in 2012

- Followers: +16k

Thematic accounts launched 2016

- @Plants_EFSA
- @ Methods_EFSA

Channel opened in 2012

- +200 videos
- +500k views

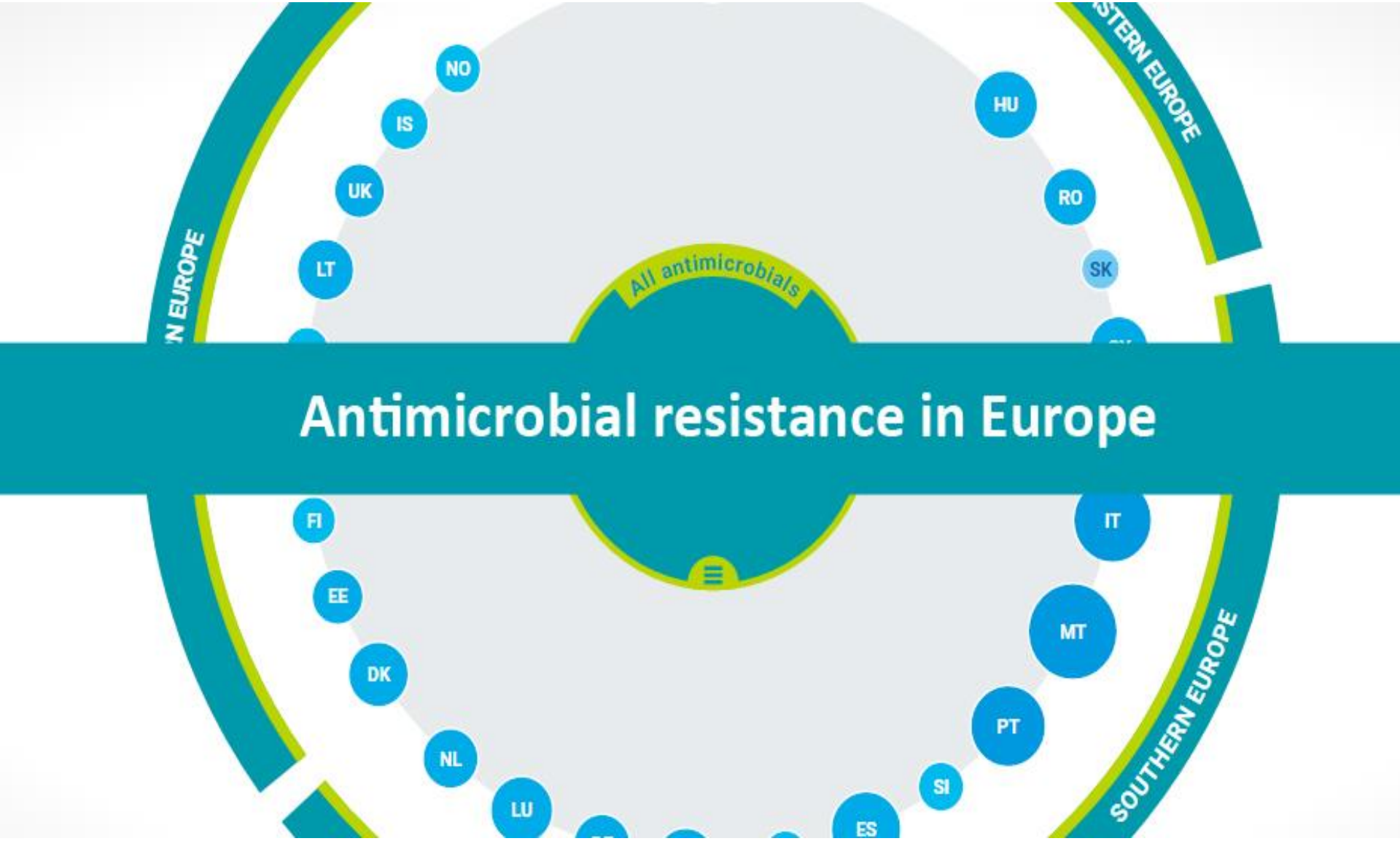
LinkedIn account launched in 2012

- +20k followers

UNDERSTANDING SCIENCE VIDEOS

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyySfT4_1Ss&list=PL77B6F5984D1D92AE

DATA VISUALISATION



SHARING EXPERTISE: COMMUNICATION EXPERTS NETWORK

CASE STUDY: GLYPHOSATE

BACKGROUND

Glyphosate is a chemical substance widely used in a number of pesticide products, notably Roundup. Its use in Europe is subject to strict regulation.

The EU assessment concluded that glyphosate is unlikely to pose a carcinogenic hazard to humans.

This was at odds with a report from the WHO's International Agency for Cancer Research, which concluded that glyphosate was "probably carcinogenic to humans".

CASE STUDY: GLYPHOSATE

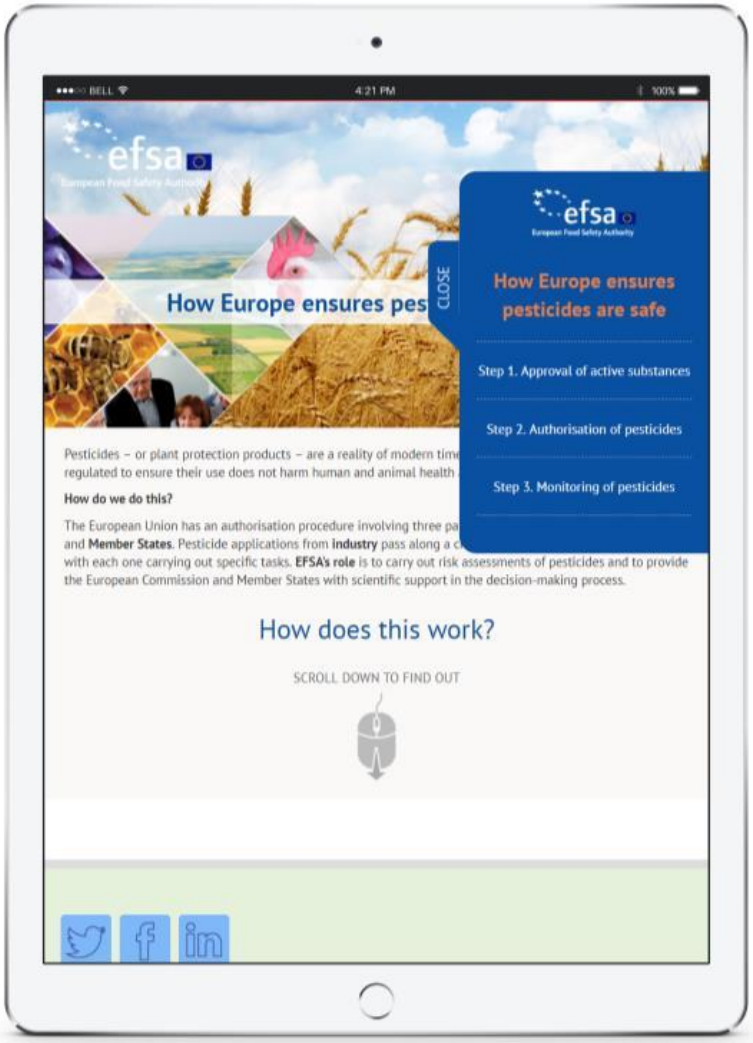
The challenge

Complex issue, with media attention focused on the issue of carcinogenicity.

Strong anti-glyphosate feeling among wider public – e.g. France banned sale of Roundup following IARC announcement.

How to explain EFSA's role as risk assessor NOT regulator.

INTERACTIVE SCROLLER



European Food Safety Authority

FACT SHEET

Why do some **scientists** say that glyphosate is carcinogenic?

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) said earlier this year that glyphosate was genotoxic and would "probably" cause cancer in humans.

However, the IARC report looked at both glyphosate – an active substance – and glyphosate-based formulations, grouping all formulations regardless of their composition. The EU assessment, on the other hand, considered only glyphosate. Member States are responsible for evaluating each plant protection product that is marketed in their territories.

This is because the EU and IARC take different approaches to the classification of chemicals. The EU scheme –assesses each individual chemical, and each marketed mixture separately. IARC assesses generic agents, including groups of related chemicals, as well as occupational or environmental exposure, and cultural or behavioural practices.

This is important because although some studies suggest that certain glyphosate-based formulations may be genotoxic (i.e. damaging to DNA), others that look solely at the active substance glyphosate do not show this effect. It is likely, therefore, that the genotoxic effects observed in some glyphosate-based formulations are related to the other constituents or "co-formulants". Similarly, certain glyphosate-based formulations display higher toxicity than that of the active ingredient, presumably because of the presence of co-formulants. In its assessment, EFSA proposes that the toxicity of each pesticide formulation and in particular its genotoxic potential should be further considered and addressed by Member State authorities while they re-assess uses of glyphosate-based formulations in their own territories.

This distinction between active substance and pesticide formulation mainly explains the differences in how EFSA and IARC weighed the available data. For the EU assessment, studies conducted with glyphosate were more relevant than studies conducted with formulated products containing other constituents, particularly when the other constituents could not be clearly identified.

What data was used in the **EU assessment**?

The EFSA-led review considered a large body of evidence, including the IARC report. In addition to the original studies submitted by the applicants in line with the legal requirements, all available and published studies were considered.

IARC included a number of epidemiological studies in its monograph that were absent from the draft EU assessment; these studies were later added to the EU dossier.

In total EFSA assessed more evidence including additional key studies that were not considered by IARC.

How is the safety of pesticides assessed in the EU?

Under EU legislation, pesticide active substances in plant protection products are approved in the EU only if it may be expected that their use will not have any harmful effects on human and animal health or the environment.

The evaluation of both existing and new active substances follows a phased approach:

1. For each substance an initial draft assessment report (DAR) or renewal assessment report (RAR) is produced by a designated rapporteur Member State (RMS). Regarding applications for renewal of an approval, the Commission decides on the designation of a rapporteur Member State in consultation with all Member States and industry.
2. The RMS's risk assessment is peer reviewed by EFSA in cooperation with all Member States.
3. EFSA drafts a report ("Conclusion") on the active substance. The EFSA Conclusion informs the European Commission in the approval process, the subsequent assessments of plant protection products by the Member States, and the revision of maximum residue levels in food by EFSA.
4. The European Commission decides whether or not to include the substance in the EU's list of approved active substances. This determines whether the substance can be used in a plant protection product in the EU.
5. EU Member States assess or re-assess the safety of pesticides containing the active substance that are sold in their territory.

How were the **animal studies** on carcinogenicity interpreted?

The EU peer review concluded that no significant increase in tumour incidence could be observed in any of the treated groups of animals in the nine long term rat studies considered. IARC, on the other hand, interpreted two studies as showing statistically significant carcinogenic effects. Similarly, with the mice studies, IARC identified positive carcinogenic trends in two studies that the EU peer reviewers assessed as insignificant.

The main differences between the EFSA and IARC evaluations are explained in detail in a special background document published by EFSA. As well as reviewing a larger number of studies, EFSA for example considered that carcinogenic effects observed at high doses were unreliable as they could be related to general toxicity.

What happens **next**?

The EFSA conclusion will inform the European Commission in deciding whether or not to retain the active substance glyphosate on the EU's list of approved active substances, in other words to authorise its continued use in pesticides in the EU.

CASE STUDY: GLYPHOSATE

Response

- Press release + social media
- Plain-language summary in accessible format.
- Infographic: Who assesses pesticides in the EU?
- Published all documents related to the assessment/ peer review (transparency).

GLYPHOSATE: IMPACT

- 24,000 views

Press release

- 5,500 views

Plain-language summary

- 4,000 views

Background documents:

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