



Why should we believe the evaluations of official bodies?

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EGEA 2018, 8 November 2018

EFSA: an overview

A BRIEF HISTORY

EFSA was established under **EU law in 2002** following a series of food crises as part of a programme to:

- **improve** the EU food safety system
- **help ensure** a high level of consumer protection
- **restore and maintain** confidence in the EU food supply
- **clearly separate** risk assessment and risk management functions

WHAT EFSA DOES



Provides independent scientific advice and support for EU risk managers and policy makers on food and feed safety



Provides independent, timely risk communication

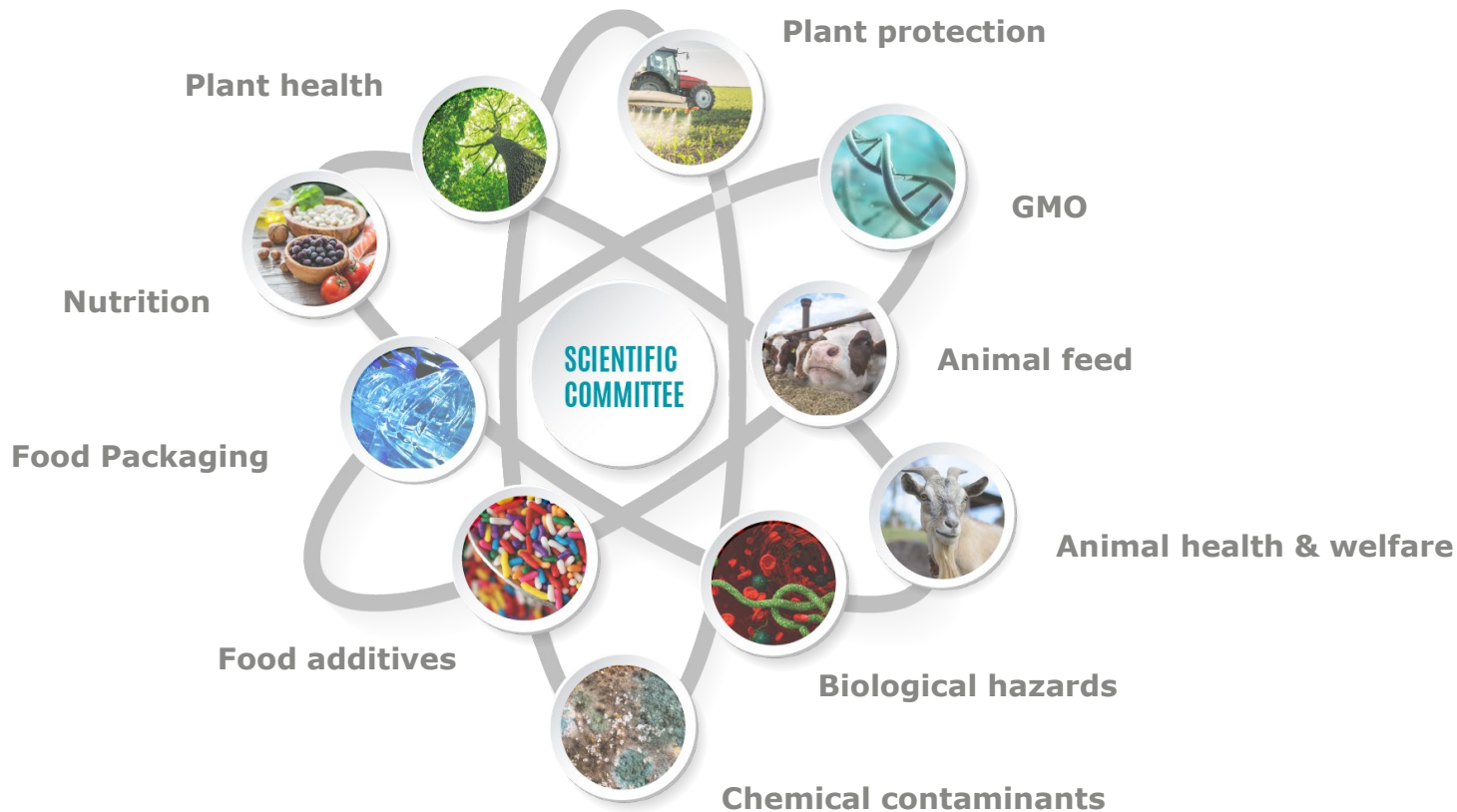


Promotes scientific cooperation

WHAT EFSA DOES **NOT** DO



THE SCIENTIFIC PANELS



EFSA in the public debate: the case of glyphosate

EFSA PESTICIDES OUTPUTS (BY END 2017)

542

EFSA final conclusions

764

MRL Reasoned Opinions

136

Technical Reports

GLYPHOSATE

- **2002:** glyphosate approved for the first time in EU
- **2012 – 2015:** renewal assessment by Member States and EFSA
- **2015:** EFSA final conclusion, unlikely to be genotoxic and does not pose a carcinogenic threat to humans.

- **2015:** IARC publishes monograph on glyphosate classification, deems it to be “probably carcinogenic”
- **2015 onwards:** US, Japan, New Zealand, WHO-JMPR, ECHA and others agree with EFSA assessment

GLYPHOSATE IN THE MEDIA

 EURACTIV

Green NGOs blame Monsanto for 'buying science' to save glyphosate

 theguardian

EU report on weedkiller safety copied text from Monsanto study

 L'EXPRESS

Round Up: le glyphosate, entre lobbying, bataille d'experts et conflits d'intérêts

 DW Deutsche Welle

Glyphosate weed killer found in German beers, study finds

 Le Monde

Il est temps d'arrêter le grand manège des pesticides !

 AFP

NGOs sue Monsanto, EU food safety watchdog over pesticide

 EUBusiness

EU whitewash on cancer risk from world's most used weedkiller

GLYPHOSATE: FICTION VS FACT

FICTION

- “EFSA decides to base its assessment on industry studies therefore inherently biased”
- “Studies are *secret* – no transparency in the EFSA process!”
- “EFSA’s pesticides panel have conflicts of interest with industry”
- “Parts of the assessment were copied and pasted directly from industry’s application dossier”

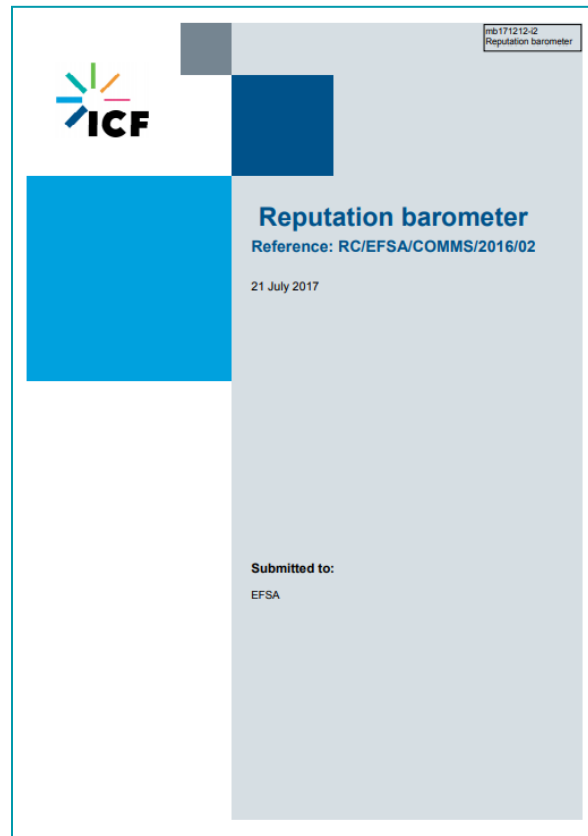
FACT

- EU legislation requires that industry assumes the burden to pay for and carry out safety studies
- Final conclusion, 6,000 pages of background docs, experts’ appraisal – all published + public consultation
- EFSA’s pesticides panel does not evaluate pesticide active substances – this is done by EFSA staff and Member State experts
- The “copy and paste” example didn’t form part of the actual risk assessment of glyphosate

EFSA: a crisis of trust?

REPUTATION BAROMETER 2017

- Aim: measure EFSA's reputation
identify opportunities to improve it
- Pilot study, first of its kind
- Designed to complement and inform EFSA's external evaluation
- Participants: EC, MS, Business, NGOs, Scientific Community, MEPs



12 ATTRIBUTES OF REPUTATION

- Approach to providing **scientific advice**
- The **quality** of EFSA's risk assessment opinions
- The **efficiency** of EFSA in producing risk assessments
- The identification and characterization of **emerging risks** by EFSA
- EFSA's work to **harmonize** risk assessment methods
- EFSA's **independence** and objectivity
- The level of **transparency** at EFSA
- How EFSA **communicate risks**
- **Engagement** by EFSA with external partners
- EFSA's provision of **scientific and technical assistance** to Member States for crisis management
- The quality of EFSA's **governance**
- EFSA's **innovativeness**

OVERALL RESULTS

On a scale from -100 to +100, EFSA's reputation with the 5 following audiences in 2017 is:

Member state authorities	European Commission	Businesses, farmers and primary producers	Consumers and environmental NGOs	Scientific community
46	33	20	3	42

FOCUS ON INDEPENDENCE AND TRANSPARENCY

On a scale from -100 to +100, EFSA's reputation with the 5 following audiences in 2017 is:

	Member state authorities	European Commission	Businesses, farmers and primary producers	Consumers and environmental NGOs	Scientific community
Independence	43	52	33	-4	44
Transparency	48	37	29	-11	50

What can EFSA do to improve trust?

LESSONS LEARNT

- **EFSA and food safety system is fundamentally sound**
- **Citizens and risk managers can have faith in scientific advice provided by EFSA**

EFSA should invest in:

- Meaningful engagement and consultation with stakeholders
- Increased transparency
- Better understanding of risk perception and societal concerns – investment in social science
- Better communication: facts are not enough ... science must connect on an emotional level
- Better at explaining scientific divergence

WHERE SUPPORT IS NEEDED

- EFSA is a scientific organisation – not equipped to argue for/against societal issues
- Policy makers and legislators should make clear when they base their decisions on science and when they include other factors (economic, societal, ethical etc.)
- Short-termist, “cherry-picking” approach to campaigns erodes long term trust in official bodies.
- Advocacy from within scientific community

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