Food Safety EU legislation

International student conference "Safety in local communities-legal and criminological perspectives"

Aleksandar Lelević

Faculty of Law - University of Montenegro

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Reform beginnings

- In Europe, food legislation was reformed in response to various food scares, such as the BSE crisis (aka "mad cow desease") in the 1990.
- Risk assessment procedures were established.

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy

Synonym	Mad cow disease

A cow with BSE which has lost its ability to stand.

Specialty	Veterinary medicine
Symptoms	Abnormal behavior, trouble walking, weight loss, unable to move[1]
Usual onset	4-5 years after exposure[2]
Types	Classic, atypical[1]
Causes	A type of prion[3]
Diagnostic method	Suspected based on symptoms, confirmed by examination of the brain[1]
Prevention	Not allowing older animals to enter the food supply, disallowing certain products in animal food[4]
Prognosis	Death within weeks to months[2]
Frequency	4 cases (2017)[1]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bovine_spongiform_encephalopathy

Developments

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1993:
  "A reasonable certainty that no harm will result from the intended uses"
- In 1997, the Novel Food Regulation (Regulation (EC) 258/97) entered into force and risk analysis procedures are put in place. Premarket authorisation procedure for all food products newly placed on the market but only for significantly changed or completely new products.

Implementation

- The European Commission aims to assure a high level of food safety and animal and plant health within the EU through coherent farm-to-table measures and adequate monitoring, while ensuring an effective internal market.

https://ec.europa.eu/food/overview_en

New Regulation

- As of 1 January 2018, the new Regulation (EU) 2015/2283 on novel foods is applicable.
- The main changes from the 1997 to Regulation 2283/2015 concern the:
  (a) definition of novel foods (NFs);
  (b) creation of a centralised authorisation procedure;
  (c) establishment of a Union list of authorised NFs with a generic authorisation decision;
  (d) immediate involvement of European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in the risk assessment process.

https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/novel_food/legislation_en

Key points

- In the authorisation decision under the novel food regulation, the scientific dossier dealing with the food product's safety is crucial. To foster mutual understanding and to improve the use of science in regulatory acts, it is of utmost importance to bridge the gap between both fields of expertise.
- Food safety dossiers still heavily rely on the use of experimental animals, whereas other legislative documents and guidance documents throughout the EU promote the use of new methods to reduce resources and the need for animal experiments.

Boer, A., Bast, A. (2018). Trends in Food Science & Technology, 72, 125-133, doi: 10.1016/j.tifs.2017.12.013.

Thank you for your attention!