

Risk, Governance and Society

Volume 15

Editors

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Editors

Food Safety Governance

Integrating Science, Precaution
and Public Involvement

 Springer

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Foreword by Robert Madelin

The fundamental question of good governance has risen steadily up the political agenda in recent years. The turn of the millennium has seen a marked shift towards a more inclusive approach to policy development. Indeed the European Commission makes strenuous efforts to modernise the way it goes about its business, with particular emphasis on forecasting and measuring the impacts of its proposals and actions. The White Paper on Governance of 2001 marked the beginning of this new era, identifying five principles which serve as key drivers – openness, accountability, participation, effectiveness, and coherence. The principles of Better Regulation are now fully enshrined in the policy making process. The consultation of stakeholders prior to forming proposals has become standard practice; and likewise impact assessment.

Turning to food safety, this is a good time to reflect on governance. The new European food safety system is fully up and running and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is well established. By creating a fully independent body responsible for risk assessment, the new food safety governance clearly separates risk assessment and risk management. But the setting up of these new arrangements is not an end in itself. In the dynamic and ever changing world of food production, new challenges continue to arise. We face the constant challenge of balancing the freedom and rights of individuals, industry and organisations with the need to reduce the real and potential adverse effects of products and processes on human, animal and plant health or the environment. Finding the correct balance so that proportionate, non-discriminatory, transparent and coherent actions can be taken requires a structured decision-making process, based on scientific and other objective information within the overall framework of risk analysis.

I warmly welcome this book's valuable contribution towards the ongoing development of food safety governance, and applaud the authors for their expertise and dedication to the cause – the cause we all share of seeking to ensure the very highest standards of food safety for all European citizens.

Robert Madelin
Director General
Health and Consumers
European Commission
Brussels, March 2008

Foreword by Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle

EFSA is one of the pillars of the European system for ensuring the safety of the food chain. Our *raison d'être* is the separation of risk assessment from risk management, a principle underpinning the White Paper on Food Safety, to ensure maximum independence and transparency in the decisions that govern the safety of foods. We operate independently from the regulatory authorities that request our scientific advice on risks. At the same time we work together in a single institutional framework with risk managers, national risk assessment bodies and other actors to co-ordinate our efforts in the interests of effective, science-based decision-making.

EFSA has always placed a strong emphasis on its own internal governance principles. We know that to ensure confidence in the decision-making processes, the institutions protecting health need to communicate clearly and demonstrate their independence, openness and transparency. That is why our Founding Regulation stresses the independence of our scientific advice and we apply a robust set of mechanisms to safeguard it including the Declarations of Interests made by our scientific experts.

To operate transparently we develop dialogue with our many stakeholders – ranging from other scientific bodies and regulators to food producers, retailers and consumer groups. EFSA proactively seeks their input through regular stakeholder meetings, in-depth scientific discussions and online public consultations. We use our website to provide maximum accessibility to our Management Board discussions and Scientific Panel meetings. We communicate our scientific findings independently to all interested parties, again co-ordinating with national authorities and risk managers to make sure consistent messages reach the different audiences concerned and in particular European consumers.

At the same time we are working with our national counterparts to help reinforce food safety governance even further, by building co-operative European networks to gather comprehensive EU-wide data, share scientific information, carry out monitoring and reporting, and support co-ordinated responses when required to issues of common concern.

I welcome the contribution this book makes to the efforts that we, the actors involved in the food safety system, are making to constantly progress and improve our

working mechanisms and to develop the overall governance framework in which we operate.

Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle
Executive Director
European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)
Parma, March 2008

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This book and the *General Framework for the Precautionary and Inclusive Governance of Food Safety* that it presents and critically discusses have grown out of research undertaken within one of the subprojects (work package 5) of the research project SAFE FOODS, 'Promoting Food Safety through a New Integrated Risk Analysis Approach for Foods'. The Integrated Project SAFE FOODS has been funded by the European Commission under the 6th Framework Programme (April 2004 to June 2008) and coordinated by Dr H.A. Kuiper and Dr H.J.P. Marvin of RIKILT-Institute of Food Safety at the University of Wageningen in the Netherlands. Subproject 5 of SAFE FOODS has dealt with institutional aspects of food safety governance with a focus on ways (procedural and structural mechanisms) to improve the implementation of precaution, participation and a politics-science interface, and has been coordinated by the editors of this book. The *General Framework* and this book have been a collaborative effort of subproject 5 in which all contributors to the first part of this book were involved. We have very much appreciated this exceptionally fruitful cooperation. It has always been both greatly intellectually inspiring (with many intensive, focused discussions) and very pleasant (highly cooperative and reliable).

Our efforts in developing the General Framework have benefited a lot from the valuable feedback obtained from many colleagues of SAFE FOODS at the various project meetings. Further, we owe a considerable debt of gratitude to the participants in the workshops that we undertook to reflect an early version of the governance concept with the perspectives, insights and experiences of non-governmental organisations, industry actors, risk managers and risk assessors, all of whom were selected from across Europe. We acknowledge with appreciation that these knowledgeable and experienced individuals took their time to commit themselves to our concept and provide us with feedback and advice at the deliberative events. We are especially grateful to the commentators who have taken additional time and effort to compose thought-provoking and constructive written statements about the revised governance framework that appear in the second part of the book. In addition, special thanks go to those who have helped in the production of the book manuscript, including Charlotte Reule-Giles who polished the English language of

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Stuttgart, 31 July 2008,
Marion Dreyer
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFSSA	Food Safety Agency (France)
ALARP	As low as reasonably practicable
BfR	Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (Germany)
BMELV	Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (Germany)
BSE	Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy
Bt	<i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i>
BVL	Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (Germany)
CAC	Codex Alimentarius Commission
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
CGB	Commission for Genetic Engineering (France)
CIAA	Confederation of the Food and Drink Industries of the EU
COCERAL	European Grain Traders Association
DALYs	Disability-adjusted life years
DG SANCO	Directorate General for Health and Consumer Protection (European Commission)
EC	European Community
ECJ	European Court of Justice
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EGE	European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies
EP	European Parliament
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (US)
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FEFAC	European Feed Manufacturers' Federation
FSA	Food Standards Agency (UK)

General Framework	General Framework for the Precautionary and Inclusive Governance of Food Safety in Europe
GFL	General Food Law
GM	Genetically modified
GMO	Genetically modified organisms
HACCP	Hazard analysis and critical control points
HSE	Health and Safety Executive (UK)
IAC	Interface Advisory Committee
IRGC	International Risk Governance Council (Geneva)
ISC	Interface Steering Committee
MS	Member State (EU)
NGOs	Non-Governmental organisations
NOAEL	No observable adverse effect level
NRC	National Research Council (US)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
QSAR	Quantitative Structure-Activity Relationships
QUALYs	Quality-Adjusted Life Years
PLH	Panel of Plant Health (EFSA)
PRAPeR	Pesticide risk assessment Peer Review (EU)
rBST	Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone
SACs	Scientific Advisory Committees (FSA, UK)
SAFE FOODS	‘Promoting food safety through a new integrated risk analysis approach for foods’ (EU Integrated Project, 6 th Framework Programme)
SCFCAH	Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (European Commission)
SPS Agreement	World Trade Organisation agreement on the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures
STOA	European Parliament’s scientific and technological options assessment unit
STS	Science and technology studies
ToR	Terms of reference
TSE	Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies
vCJD	Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease
VWA	Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (The Netherlands)
WHO	World Health Organisation
WP5	Work Package 5 (of the EU Integrated Project SAFE FOODS)
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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