Food Safety in the EU: a story of success
Challenges and opportunities for the future

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I. Who are Copa and Cogeca

Who are Copa and Cogeca:

- Copa: Created in 1958, Copa represents 23 million European farmers and family members.
- Cogeca: Created in 1959, Cogeca represents 22,000 European agricultural cooperatives.

Mission:

- To ensure a sustainable, innovative and competitive EU agriculture and agri-food sector capable of meeting growing food demand

How?

- By promoting European farmers and agri-cooperatives views to influence EU decision-makers, media, public opinion
II. How is Copa-Cogeca organised?

Commodities and Trade
• 25 Working Groups
• Current issues: trade negotiations, future of food and farming, quality, food and feed safety legislation, etc

General Affairs
• Specific Working Groups on quality of agricultural production, food policy, food & feed safety, food chain, etc

45 working parties

Prepare joint Copa & Cogeca’s positions
III. The General Food Law (GFL)

15 Anniversary General Food Law (GFL):

- It is crucial to ensure that the main objectives of this important piece of legislation are met and are effectively implemented.

- EU farmers and their cooperatives recognise the big achievement by the adoption of the food and feed safety principles of the GFL.

- The key elements for farmers and their Cooperatives are:
  - Guaranteeing a **high level** of protection of **human** and **animal health**
  - **Shielding** consumers **against misleading** and fraudulent practices
  - An effective functioning of the **internal market**
  - An integrated approach **from farm to fork**
IV. Risk assessment in the EU: the role of EFSA

- Copa and Cogeca are and have always been a **strong supporter** of the mission and objectives of EFSA ever since its inception.

- We fully support the steps taken to guarantee that EFSA assumed its role of an **independent, transparent and efficient EU authority** that ensures safe food to European consumers.

- Copa and Cogeca acknowledge the need for risk assessment (RA) to take place in a transparent and independent environment. This is fundamental to guarantee unbiased RA.

- It is essential to find the balance between transparency, independence and innovation.

- EFSA’s work clearly require professional judgment, which needs to be achieved by respecting the **highest standards of scientific expertise** -> Essential to continue to attract the best talent and new experts to EFSA’s work.
IV. Risk assessment in the EU: the role of EFSA

- **When it comes to communication** – It is vital that risk assessments and scientific reports are communicated in a *balanced, professional and pragmatic way*

- **Science cannot be politicised**, nor can it spread widely unfounded information as this could unsettle the public and create market problems

- **Harmonised EU safety assessments** (e.g. MRLs) and trust in the food chain are important elements to foster growth and competitiveness, to protect the functioning of the internal market and to support the EU’s trade agenda

- Essential to strength the role of EFSA by ensuring greater **consistency between** the different **EU risk assessment bodies**, attracting **good scientists**, providing **predictability** and guaranteeing **support** from the public authorities
V. Our way forward

Essential to ensure science-based decisions:

• It is necessary to remind that the GFL contributed to the establishment of EFSA, which plays a key role in providing scientific opinions and guarantees to EU consumers

• Decisions related to safety in the EU must be supported by sound scientific basis

Proportionality:

• This strong scientific basis must lead to the development of the relevant and necessary measures following a risk-based approach

• At all times, the less burdensome and onerous approach for operators must also be ensured
V. Our way forward

**Stability:**
- A reliable EU policy framework, especially at times when there are uncertainties on the markets, is fundamental, so that farmers can plan ahead
- EU legislation must contribute to enhance the competitiveness of the sector

**Consistency:**
- Adapted to the specificities of the different countries and types of production – EU legislation must be applied in a consistent manner
- It is essential to ensure a level playing field and a proper functioning of the internal market
- Support to EU initiatives such as “Better training for safer food”
V. Our way forward

Further coordination is essential:

- Coordination between the sector and Public Authorities is essential
- Need to further reinforce further coordination and a good functioning of the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) to anticipate and take the right decisions
- Important to reinforce the synergies between private (quality certification schemes) and public controls to avoid duplications

Risk communication:

- Essential to develop professional communication to avoid unfounded information being spread that could unsettle the public
- Food education is essential to ensure EU consumers have good knowledge about food – less driven by feelings
V. Our way forward

Promotion of our high safety standards

- The EU must continue to promote our highest safety standards – they will not be compromised by Free Trade agreements

A strong and common CAP that continues to support a sustainable, competitive and innovative agri-food sector

- Food and feed safety is of paramount importance and a priority for the agri-food sector
- Important also to avoid red tape and to help the European agricultural sector to be more competitive, innovative and sustainable reducing the administrative burden
Copa and Cogeca

Promoting and developing a sustainable model of agriculture

www.copa-cogeca.eu