I - Legal Framework and Essentials

II – Practical Experience

III - Lessons Learned

IV - Summary and Perspective
I - Legal Bases

- Regulation (EC) No 178/2002; Art. 55 - 57
- Decision 2004/478/EC concerning the adoption of a general plan for food/feed crisis management
- Regulation (EC) No 882/2004; Art. 13
- German Food and Feed Code (LFGB); Art. 40, 49, 75
- General administrative provision on the framework of control (AVV RÜb); Art. 23 - 25
I – Definition of Crisis

**Definition (Reg. [EC] No. 178/2002, Art. 55 [2])**

“direct or indirect risks to human health deriving from food and feed which are not likely to be prevented, eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level by provisions in place or cannot adequately be managed solely by way of the application of Articles 53 and 54.”

**Perception of crisis**

- **Public → influenced by media**
  
  "Dioxins in feed fat" versus “STEC O104:H4 in sprouted seeds"

- **Politics → reaction depends on media coverage**
  
  influence on crisis communication

- **Scientific opinion**
  
  risk communication
I - Risk Management / Risk Assessment EU - GER

- **European Parliament**
  - Risk management

- **EU Member States**
  - Risk management, coordination, data collection, rapid alert systems, situation report

- **European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)**
  - Risk assessment
  - Risk communication
  - Requests
  - Scientific opinion
  - Risk assessments
  - Scientific advice

- **Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection**
  - Risk management

- **Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung (BfR)**
  - Risk assessment
  - Risk communication
  - Requests
  - Scientific opinion
  - Risk assessments
  - Scientific advice

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I - Risk Management Tools

- Contingency plans
- Traceability
- Rapid alert systems
- EU Reference Laboratories
- European level
- National level
- Situation report
- Data management
- National Reference Laboratories
- Situation centre
I - Legal Framework and Essentials

II - Practical Experience

III - Lessons Learned

IV - Summary and Perspective
L. monocytogenes in syrečky cheese (Quargel cheese) from Austria (2010)

The chart just gives an excerpt of the complex communication between the authorities involved during this incident.
II - Serious Incidences and Crises in 2011

- Dioxins in vegetable feed fat for pigs and poultry
- Chloramphenicol in vitamin A/D3 premix from China
- Radioactive contamination in Japan
- Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) O104:H4 in sprouted seeds
Reviewing the EHEC crisis

Total of 2,987 cases of EHEC gastroenteritis in Germany

- 885 cases of HUS
- 53 cases of death

Beginning: second week of May 2011
End: July 5th, 2011
II - Challenges and Solutions

Challenges after 10 days investigation into the outbreak:

- STEC O104:H4 was not found in any of the food samples analysed
- Lack of a validated method detection of STEC in vegetables
- Risk-based inspections along the food chain without positive findings
- The usual food-borne outbreak investigations were not successful
- Pressure to find the STEC contaminated food rose steadily
II - Challenges and Solutions

Action taken: establishment of an EHEC Task Force

- to develop new approaches for outbreak investigation
- in close collaboration with all players in the outbreak investigation

[Logos of BVL, EFSA, and Robert Koch Institut]
Solution: Improved tracing

• Detailed trace-back for five outbreak clusters

• Trace-forward approach from the suspicious sprout producer in Lower Saxony

Challenge: Trace-back information for vegetable lots was only available on paper
Overview of Food Safety Crisis Management

Task Force
Food - Epidemiology
BVL, BfR, RKI, federal state and EFSA experts

EHEC Crisis Unit
Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection / Federal Ministry of Health
Daily coordination in telephone conferences

Epidemiological illnesses in humans: Robert Koch Institute (RKI)

Federal State Ministries
Food Monitoring Authorities
Food (on-site)

Trade and Industry
Regional Administrations

Inspection
Public Health Authorities
II - Main Issues of the Task Force Concept: Structure/Tasks

Rapid clarification of causes/sources in crisis situations

**TASK FORCE:**

- BVL situation center
- Federal Government experts
- Länder (=states) experts

Direct transfer of expert knowledge out of involved authorities

Scientific support of joint crisis communication (targeted)

Specialist support of BVL situation center within traceability approaches, ad hoc data assessment

Practical advice towards removal of causes and elimination of contamination sources

BVL situation center

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II - Main Issues of Task Force Concept: Requirements

**TASK FORCE:**

Rapid clarification of causes/sources in crisis situations

**Cooperation office**

- securing of structural and operational organisation
  - location
  - information and communication technology
  - interface to situation center
  - preliminary work (anticipatory)

**Quality management/training courses**

**Securing availability of expert networks**

**Incident relevant data and knowledge management**

**Analysis/monitoring of RASFF-hot spots**

**Practical crisis exercises to optimise interagency coordination within Federal Government and Länder level**
Overview

I - Legal Framework and Essentials

II - Practical Experience

III - Lessons Learned

IV - Summary and perspective
III - Improved Crisis Coordination - Requirements

Requirements of future crisis coordination:

• Faster provision of data for the purpose of traceability across all stages

• Defining formats and systems of digitalisation

• Creating structures of information exchange among health and food control authorities on all levels

• Setting up the legal framework necessary for the given technical requirements (e. g., amending the IfSG [Act on Infection Control] and the LFGB [Food and Feed Code])

• Improvement of data management

• Further development of databases with early recognition tools
III - Further Improvement of Data Management in Germany -
The Aims of the Pilot Project Nationwide Database (eFl)

- Use of nationwide control data for early risk identification
- Supporting the preparation of situation reports in accordance with § 49 LFGB
- Development of indicators for operative goals in the area of control
- Simplified reporting
- Use of data for research
- Basis for consumer information
III - Improved Crisis Coordination

Crisis coordination (Länder and Federal Government level)

Crisis council on political level
Communication board

Crisis management on operational level

Data management
Task Force
Situation centre

Federal and Länder authorities

Scientific risk assessment
III - Cooperation with European Commission

- EFSA
- ECDC
- EURL

European Commission (crisis unit)

Rapid alert systems
RASFF
RAPEX
EWRS
INFOSAN
RAS

Situation reports
State of play

Data Surveillance
Monitoring Epidemiology

Exchange of experts

National authorities
Food & Feed / Public Health
Overview

I - Legal Framework and Essentials

II - Practical Experience

III - Lessons Learned

IV - Summary and Perspective
IV - Upcoming Challenges

• Establishing coordinating structures
• Regular national / international crisis exercises
• Shortening action and response time
• Information exchange with food/feed industry
• Crisis communication
IV - Common Aims of Improved Crisis Coordination

Appropriateness
Definiteness
Promptness
Transparency
Cooperation
Definition of interfaces
Communication
Thank you for your attention!

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