



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations**



**World Health
Organization**

FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Viruses in Food

Call for data

FAO and WHO in collaboration with RIVM (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment) and VWA (Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority) in the Netherlands are organizing an expert meeting in May 2007 to review the current state of knowledge on viruses in food and their public health and trade impact. The objective is to provide advice and guidance to Codex Alimentarius on the virus:commodity combinations of particular concern, the issues that need to be addressed by risk managers and the options available to them. The meeting will also aim to identify any additional scientific information needed to provide scientific advice on managing the risks associated with viruses in foods. Additional background information is available at: <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/micro/jemra/meetings/virus/en> or http://www.fao.org/ag/agn/jemra/viruses_en.stm

In order to ensure that this meeting has at its disposal all available and relevant information and data, FAO and WHO are issuing an international call for data to raise awareness about data needs and invite all interested parties to provide to both organizations any relevant information/data, particularly that which may not be readily available in the public domain.

Data requirements:

Viral contamination of food

In order to establish the virus:commodity combinations of particular concern data are specifically required in the following areas;

- Types and subtypes of viruses found on foods
- Foods most frequently associated with viral contamination (specifying which virus)
- Frequency and level of viral contamination
- Sources and routes of viral contamination
- Route of contamination, including for example water in the case of fishery products
- Details and outputs of monitoring programmes
- Impact of the environment on occurrence of foodborne viruses
- Impact of conditions during food processing/preparation or characteristics of the food on survival of viruses
- Data on the presence of viruses other than those known to be human pathogens

Foodborne viral illness

- Incidence of potentially foodborne viral illness (including difficulties faced in their diagnostics/surveillance)
- Epidemiology of disease
- Studies assessing the level of evidence for foodborne sources of infection/illness
- Data on burden of illness of viruses known to be (partly) foodborne
- Data from intervention studies
- Dose-response data

Methodology for detection of viruses

- Sampling methods
- Extraction methods
- Qualitative and quantitative (real-time) PCR techniques
- Tissue culture techniques

- Immunological assays
- Other detection methods

Please indicate the application of the method e.g. for clinical purposes, for food etc.

Risk assessments implemented in this field

Food/type of virus combination
 Methodology to assess the risk/uncertainties
 Results of the risk assessment(s)

Control and management of virus contamination of food and prevention of foodborne viral disease

- Specific measures taken and the scientific basis for their use
- Decontamination/disinfection
- Impact of viral contamination on food trade
- Legislation and regulations
- Control and surveillance
- Training, consumer education

It is important to gain an understanding as to whether there are differences in the main virus:commodity combinations of concern in different parts of the world as well as possible differences in the sources of viral contamination. Therefore, we are seeking the aforementioned data from all countries and regions.

IMPORTANT: When providing quantitative data on viruses, please also include information on the sampling plan and methodology used if possible.

Request for risk assessments and other relevant information

FAO and WHO are requesting governments, interested organizations, health care providers, academia, laboratories and individuals to submit any available data on the specific areas indicated above. This data may be published or unpublished. Reference should be made to related published studies, where applicable.

Confidential and/or unpublished risk assessment

FAO and WHO recognize that some of the information and relevant data which is now required may be unpublished or of a confidential nature. With regard to unpublished information and data, this remains the property of the author for subsequent publication by the owner as original material. Unpublished confidential studies that are submitted will be safeguarded in so far as it is possible to do so without compromising the work of FAO and WHO. Specific issues relating to confidentiality should be discussed directly between the information and data owners and FAO/WHO. For these and other issues please contact FAO and WHO at the contacts provided below.

Deadline: Please submit any relevant information (electronic and / or hard copies) to either of the following addresses, not later than **15 April 2007**:

Contact Information:

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