

**The Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture and Food from South Eastern Europe
held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
April 5th, 2013**

Ministers of Agriculture and Food and Head of Delegations from South Eastern European countries gathered in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina on 5th of April 2013 under the joint auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South Eastern Europe.

Due to high levels of aflatoxins in maize used for animal feed and subsequent high level of aflatoxin in milk and milk products, the Ministers of Agriculture and Food and Head of Delegations from South Eastern Europe discussed the necessary measures to control aflatoxin levels in animal feed and dairy products, including:

- Establishment of permanent communication channels of the Institutions in SEE countries which are dealing with Risk Assessment; Risk Management, Control and Quality testing of feed and food;
- Exchange of information about the Control mechanisms in the Feed and Food Safety Chain;
- Agreement about the measures and provisional action plan for improved coordination and communication among the Ministries of SEE.

CONCLUSIONS

We, the Ministers of Agriculture and Food and Heads of Delegations from South Eastern European countries welcome the recommendations for measures and actions related to the problem of the appearance of the aflatoxins, as proposed by the ad hoc SEE Regional Expert Advisory Working Group meeting held on 4th of April 2013 in Jahorina, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

After the elaboration of the measures and actions proposed by the SEE Regional Expert Advisory Working Group, Ministers of Agriculture and Food and Heads of Delegations from South Eastern Europe adopt the following conclusions:

1. The countries from SEE have the intention to follow the current EU legal limits related to aflatoxins in animal feed and milk as the basis for control.
2. To establish the Regional Expert Group consisting of nominated contact persons with mandate to discuss the mycotoxin issues, in order
 - a. to improve communication between institutions and authorities at a regional level-SEE and with the European authorities;
 - b. to harmonize activities on risk assessment and risk management in SEE countries;
 - c. to establish the action plan about the future activities including programs to monitor aflatoxins in feed and milk.
3. To create a system which specifies details about the communication channels and exchange of information between the relevant institutions of the SEE countries.

4. To stress the importance to the feed and food operators of preventive measures and application of GAP, GHP, GVP and GMP including the HACCP principles.
5. To enhance capacity building i.e. training and continuous education at various levels (governmental officials/inspectors/laboratory staff, food and feed business operators including farmers) especially on prevention and sampling procedures.
6. To consider the possibility of having a regional reference laboratory for the analyses of mycotoxins in feed and food.
7. To align the sampling procedures of food and feed with those laid down in the EU legislation.
8. To make an effort to provide additional means of support for the milk producers in order to enable them to feed their dairy cattle with safe feed to maintain the level of production and quality of milk.
9. To establish protocols how to deal with contaminated feed in compliance with EU legislation.

We highly appreciate the support provided by the convening organizations and institutions: the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in SEE, Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), commissioned by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

We, express our appreciation for the kind hospitality provided on behalf of institutions responsible for agriculture and food of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the meeting in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina we have discussed and defined the possible measures and actions for resolving the aflatoxin contamination in feed and food in the region of South Eastern Europe. With reference to this gathering we continue to stress the importance of regional cooperation and policy dialogue in the region of South Eastern Europe when emerging issues of common concerns especially in the process of EU integration.

MEETING DELEGATIONS:

1. Ministry of Agriculture Food and Consumer Protection, Republic of Albania
2. Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Bosnia and Herzegovina
3. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina
4. Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnia and Herzegovina
5. Ministry of Agriculture, Republic of Croatia
6. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Montenegro
7. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Republic of Serbia
8. Embassy of the Republic of Macedonia in Bosnia and Herzegovina
9. The Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe (SWG)