



The Consumer Voice in Europe

Trade rules for poultry and pork: the EU consumer perspective

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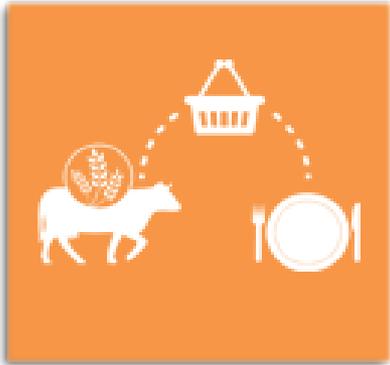
TTIP and agriculture webinar

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Poultry meat rinses - What's at stake for EU consumers?

How is chicken meat safety ensured today in the EU?

- **No decontamination treatment** approved for use on poultry carcasses and meat in the EU (only water)
- **“Farm to fork”** approach: preventive and control measures **all along the food chain** to guarantee food is safe without the need to resort to an ‘end-of-chain’ fix (e.g. Pathogens Reduction Treatments).
 - ✓ Biosecurity to prevent food-poisoning bacteria getting into the poultry flocks
 - ✓ Proper transportation conditions
 - ✓ Good slaughter hygiene
- If all these steps are in place and correctly implemented, there should be **no need for ‘decontaminating’** meat.



Why favour prevention and good hygiene over end-of-chain treatments?

- Both approaches are **NOT equivalent** for public health!
- Campylobacter is a food-poisoning bacteria carried primarily by poultry.
 - Handling, preparation and consumption of chicken meat may account for 20% to 30% of human cases of Campylobacteriosis ...
 - ... **whilst 50% to 80%** of cases may be attributed to the **chicken reservoir** as a whole (European Food Safety Authority, 2011).
- By minimising risk of transmission **not only via meat but also via the environment** (direct contact with infected live chickens, water, etc.), the **'farm to fork' approach delivers greater public health benefits.**
- PRTs focus on the food pathway only.



Consumer concerns with meat PRTs ...

- **Safety and efficacy?**

- ✓ Peroxyacids and chlorine washes on poultry have not been authorised in the EU so far due to **insufficient proof of efficacy** and/or concerns over **risk of antimicrobial resistance** as a result of their use.

Source: EFSA (2005, 2008); SCHER and SCENIHR (2008)

- ✓ Recent **EFSA Opinion on Peroxyacetic acid (PAA)** following an USDA application:
 - ✓ HEDP, a component of commercial PAA solutions, may pose environmental risks (water pollution)
 - ✓ Risk of AMR not fully excluded (further research needed)
 - ✓ Occupational safety risk not considered
 - ✓ **Efficacy is equivocal**: studies submitted to EFSA mainly show effect on non-pathogenic bacteria or are of low/medium strength of evidence
- Reliance on PRTs may lead to abattoir staff becoming less vigilant on **preventing** meat contamination and seeing decontamination treatments as a **substitute for good slaughter hygiene**.

... are reflected in low acceptance of these treatments

- 2007 survey found meat washes with chlorine **totally unacceptable to 85% of Danes**. Freezing or steaming more acceptable.

Source: Sara Korzen, Peter Sandøe, Jesper Lassen, (2011) "Don't wash my meat: public perceptions of decontamination in meat production", British Food Journal, Vol. 113 Iss: 5, pp.598 – 612.

- In a Finnish study, **nearly 90% of respondents said they would not choose** chemically treated poultry meat.

Source: Heikkilä, J., Pouta, E., Forsman-Hugg, S., Mäkelä, J. (2011) Consumer risk perceptions of zoonotic, chemical and GM risks: the case of poultry purchase intentions in Finland. Paper prepared for presentation at the EAAE 2011 Congress Change and Uncertainty.

- 2011 survey by UK consumer organisation **Which?**
 - ✓ **82% of respondents** wanted **labelling** of decontamination treatments if used on chickens.
 - ✓ **60% unlikely to buy** chicken sprayed or washed with a **mild acid** (e.g. lactic acid)
 - ✓ **67% unlikely to buy** chicken been treated with **chlorine**

Source: Which? 2011 online survey of 1,406 UK adults (aged 16+) between 10 Feb-14Feb 2011.

Ractopamine-fed pork: a TTIP red line for the EU

What is ractopamine and what are the concerns?

- Ractopamine is a **veterinary drug** approved for use as a feed additive in the US **to promote growth and leanness** in pigs (60% to 80% of US pigs).
- Ractopamine is **banned in the EU** for growth promotion on safety grounds since 1997.
- **Human health** concerns
 - ✓ No clearance period before slaughter
 - ✓ EFSA found that there is insufficient data to propose MRLs for ractopamine and that risks to human health cannot be ruled out
- **Animal health and welfare** concerns
 - ✓ Increased risk of injury and lameness in pigs
 - ✓ Increased stress during handling and transport

A stumbling block in TTIP?

- In 2012, following a very unusual procedure (vote), **adoption by Codex Alimentarius of MRLs for ractopamine** (69 vs. 67 votes).
 - ✓ Based on only one human study (involving 6 individuals), JECFA, an Expert Committee linked to Codex, set an Acceptable Daily Intake for ractopamine, thereby allowing to derive MRLs for this substance in food.
- EU and Member States **reaffirmed zero tolerance policy**
 - ✓ EU statement

<p>Codex Alimentarius Commission (35th Session) Rome, 2 - 7 July 2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annotated Agenda    indicating the division of competence and right to vote between the European Union and its Member States in respect of each particular agenda item <p>Codex Alimentarius : statement by the EU on ractopamine</p> <p>Following the vote at the Codex Alimentarius, the European Union reaffirms its position that an international standard for ractopamine is not justified. The European Union remains strongly opposed to the adoption of maximum residue limits (MRLs) for the growth promoting substance, ractopamine, in pigs and cattle as there remain outstanding safety concerns. The European Union's risk assessment body, the European Food Safety Authority, has concluded that there is insufficient data upon which to make a proposal for MRLs for ractopamine and that thereby risks to human health cannot be ruled out. Given its outstanding safety concerns, the European Union's current legislation will remain in place. The European Union, together with other European countries, numbering close to 45 countries, was supported by an overwhelming number of some of the world's most populous nations, namely: China, the Russian Federation, India, Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Kenya, Zimbabwe and others. These countries indicated that they too will maintain their positions and not approve the use of this growth promoting substance. The European Union believes that the decision-making process that led to this result is regrettable. The decision was taken on the basis of a single vote difference. As an international organisation seeking to harmonise standards across the globe, Codex should respect consensus-based decision-making, one of the fundamental principles of the organisation. It is clear that for standards to be universally applicable, they also need to be universally accepted.</p>	
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- ✓ Council [conclusions](#) questioning validity of standard adopted 'by *slim majority voting*'.
- U.S. National Pork Producers Council on TTIP:

*"Many of the **unjustified SPS measures that U.S. pork producers face around the world, such as ractopamine bans, emanated from the EU.** Thus, the TTIP should be used to send a message to trading partners around the world that science and legitimate food safety considerations should be the basis for the establishment of SPS measures, consistent with the WTO SPS Agreement."*

Safe meat for consumers on both side of the Atlantic

- **No lowering** of food safety and consumer protection standards
- Go for **upward**, not downward harmonisation
- **Transparency** of negotiations
- Put **public interest first**





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