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SCENIHR issues opinion on biocides

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Report Highlights:

On November 4, 2008, the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) published a preliminary opinion "Effects of the Active Substances in Biocidal Products on Antibiotic Resistance." The SCENIHR compiled this report on request of the European Commission (EC) with the aim to serve as a basis for a review of biocide Directive 98/8/EC. Comments are invited until November 30 before release of the final version.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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On November 4, 2008, the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) published its preliminary opinion "[Effects of the Active Substances in Biocidal Products on Antibiotic Resistance](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihhr/docs/scenihhr_o_020.pdf)¹", inviting comments until November 30 before releasing the final version. The SCENIHR compiled this report on demand of the European Commission (EC) with the aim to serve as a basis for a review of [Directive 98/8/EC](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/1998/l_123/l_12319980424en00010063.pdf)² of the European Parliament and of the Council on the placing on the market of biocidal products, which was adopted in 1998. The objective of this opinion is to review evidence on the emergence of biocide resistance and cross-resistance between biocides and antibiotics in bacteria, and to determine if the increasing use of biocides may be associated with an increase in antibiotic resistance in bacterial pathogens. The opinion meant to exhaustively review the impact of all antibiotics and biocides having a bactericidal/bacteriostatic effect on bacteria. The opinion reviews the use of biocides in health care, in consumer products, in food production, in animal husbandry, in foods of animal origin, including the potential use of carcass washes as a hygiene measure under [Regulation \(EC\) 853/2004](http://europa.eu/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2004/l_226/l_22620040625en00220082.pdf)³ on specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin and in the environment. The opinion acknowledges approval and widespread use of Pathogen Reduction treatments (PRTs) in other parts of the world, especially in the United States, but identifies a deficit of scientific research in order to draw conclusions about the risk for antimicrobial resistance.

Comments on this preliminary opinion from the SCENIHR are invited through a web link on the [SCENIHR webpage](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihhr/scenihhr_cons_09_en.htm)⁴ through November 30, 2008. Comments submitted after this date will not be considered anymore, as the SCENIHR finalizes its opinion and the EC is expected to launch a proposal for the update of the biocide Directive 98/8/EC.

Relevance for the approval of poultry PRTs

In the spring of 2008, DG Environment (DGENVI) opposed a proposal for the approval of poultry PRTs because of environmental concerns and because of fear of creating a precedent for the review of the biocide Directive. However, on Wednesday October 29th, 2008, the college of Commissioners approved a renamed [Proposal for a Council Regulation as regards the use of antimicrobial substances to remove surface contamination from poultry carcasses](http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st15/st15214.en08.pdf)⁵, after the original proposal was rejected by the standing committee (SCoFAH) last June. The EC has forwarded the proposal to the Council secretariat on November 4. It is expected that the proposal will be put up for a vote at an Agricultural Council meeting before the end of 2008.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihhr/docs/scenihhr_o_020.pdf

² http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/1998/l_123/l_12319980424en00010063.pdf

³ http://europa.eu/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2004/l_226/l_22620040625en00220082.pdf

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_scenihhr/scenihhr_cons_09_en.htm

⁵ <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st15/st15214.en08.pdf>

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