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Livestock and Products

EFSA releases Draft Opinion on Animal Cloning 2008

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Report Highlights:

On January 11, 2008, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) released a Draft Scientific Opinion on Food Safety, Animal Health and Welfare and Environmental Impact of Animals derived from Cloning by Somatic Cell Nucleus Transfer (SCNT). EFSA is launching a public consultation on its draft scientific opinion on the implications of animal cloning on food safety, animal health and welfare and the environment. This draft report received considerable press coverage.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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On January 11, 2008, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) released a "[DRAFT Scientific Opinion on Food Safety, Animal Health and Welfare and Environmental Impact of Animals derived from Cloning by Somatic Cell Nucleus Transfer \(SCNT\) and their Offspring and Products Obtained from those Animals](#)¹". EFSA is launching a public consultation on its draft scientific opinion on the implications of animal cloning on food safety, animal health and welfare and the environment. Interested parties are invited to submit comments and pertinent scientific information by means of the [electronic form available on this page](#)² by 25 February 2008, 17:00 CET. EFSA will further hold a stakeholder meeting in February and it will also consult with EU Member States. A revised draft of this opinion may be up for adoption at EFSA's Scientific Committee's April meeting and could be published in May 2008.

The key conclusions of the draft opinion include:

- Although death and disease rates of clones are significantly higher than those observed in conventionally reproduced animals, healthy clones and their offspring indicate that somatic cell nucleus transfer (SCNT) can be successfully used as a reproductive technique in cattle and pigs. Based on a number of parameters including physiological and clinical ones, healthy clones and healthy offspring do not show any significant differences from their conventional counterparts.
- The health and welfare of a significant proportion of clones have been found to be adversely affected. The proportion of unhealthy clones is likely to decrease as the technology improves.
- Food products obtained from healthy cattle and pig clones and their offspring, i.e., meat and milk, are within the normal range with respect to the composition and nutritional value of similar products obtained from conventionally bred animals. In view of these findings, and assuming that unhealthy clones are removed from entering the food chain as is the case with conventionally bred animals, it is very unlikely that any difference exists in terms of food safety between food products originating from clones and their progeny compared with those derived from conventionally bred animals.
- No environmental impact is foreseen as a result of animal cloning, but there is only limited data available.

Reactions and press coverage

A press release from the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organizations in the EU and the General Confederation of Agricultural Co-operatives in the EU (COPA-COGECA) can be downloaded at: http://www.copa-cogeca.be/pdf/cdp_08_62_1e.pdf. European and international press sources have given extensive coverage on this EFSA report, including raising questions on how the EU might react on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) soon expected final approval of food products from cloned animals.

¹ http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/DocumentSet/sc_opinion_clon_public_consultation.pdf

² http://www.efsa.europa.eu/EFSA/efsa_locale-1178620753812_1178676922939.htm

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