

## **Advice 15-2018 of the Scientific Committee of the FASFC on the analysis program regarding microbiological analyses in prepared products, fish products, vegetables, fruit, herbs, vegetable oil, fertilizers, beverages and water not intended for drinks.**

### **Background & Terms of reference**

In the context of evaluating the analysis program of the Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC), the Scientific Committee has been asked to evaluate possible trends based on analysis results between 2012 and 2016. Furthermore, it is asked to comment on the 2018 analysis program, and this concerning microbiological contaminants in prepared products, fish products, vegetables, fruit, herbs, vegetable oil, fertilizers, beverages and water not intended for drinks.

### **Methodology**

Trends of the results of the FASFC analysis program for the period 2012-2016 are evaluated using logistic regression. The 2018 analysis program, i.a. the relevance of the parameter/matrix combinations and the application of the statistical approaches, was evaluated by expert opinion.

### **Results**

No strongly pronounced biologically relevant trends are found in the results of the FASFC analysis program for the period 2012-2016. Only the increasing trend of *Escherichia coli* in sprout vegetables was considered to be biologically relevant. The Scientific Committee approves the choices of the statistical approaches that are applied. Several optimizations are proposed concerning the choice of parameter/matrix combinations. Some special temporary actions are also proposed. Finally, the Scientific Committee has provided an answer to the questions that were posed.

### **Recommendations**

The Scientific Committee has formulated recommendations for the optimization of the analysis program. Target values are formulated for the evaluation of ice blocks, ice scales, tap water, washing water and water used in the primary production that comes into direct contact with the edible part of products intended for the production of ready-to-eat foods. In addition, it is recommended to review the matrix layout for water. Recommendations were also formulated on the choices of the parameter/matrix combinations and the execution of a number of special temporary actions (among others for fertilizers, products originating from primary production and vegetables on oil). Some additional recommendations are also formulated in response to concrete questions from the experts of the DG Control policy, such as the implementation of the European Commission guideline of 2017 in the Belgian primary production.

The full text is available on this website in dutch and in french.