



Press Kit

ANSES presents its 2012 work programme

7 February 2012

Contents:

The French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety presents its work programme for 2012

1. 2012 work programme: 1 Focus on three key themes for 2012

1.1 Microbiological risks

1.2 Bee health

1.3 Manufactured nanomaterials

2012 work programme: Review and continuation of major projects initiated in 2011

2. ANSES governance

3. Key dates for ANSES in 2012

Maisons-Alfort, 7 February 2012

Press release

The French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety presents its work programme for 2012

Every year, ANSES draws up a work programme for the following year as a part of its process of open consultation with supervisory ministries and stakeholders. For each of the Agency's major fields of competence, the programme is translated into orientations, as published on its website. Together with presentation of its work programme for 2012, ANSES takes the opportunity to report on the work carried out in 2011, particularly singling out the three issues on which it will be focussing in 2012:

1. Microbiological risks in food: the sudden emergence in Germany (and, to a lesser extent, in France in the spring of 2011) of an outbreak related to the contamination of plant products by the bacteria *E. coli* O104:H4 that affected more than 3500 people, or the recent episodes of contamination of plant products in the UK and the United States, call for greater vigilance regarding microbiological risks. In 2012, ANSES will be addressing this issue by concentrating on three key themes: (i) **setting up the health component of the French Food Observatory** for centralising all available data on microbiological and chemical hazards in foods; (ii) **consumer information** via publication of a guide covering all ANSES recommendations to consumers concerning food hygiene; and lastly (iii) **research** on ways of improving diagnostic methods and the surveillance of major and emerging foodborne pathogens.

2. Bee health: ANSES will use its full range of competences to combat the phenomena associated with bee mortality. This issue, which has become recurrent, is of considerable concern, present in varying degrees throughout the world but with what seem to be very complex origins, owing to multiple factors. The **mandate it has recently acquired as European Union Reference Laboratory** for bee health has given the Agency a central position on the subject. In 2012, within the framework of the collaborative French epidemiological surveillance platform, it will contribute to the development of an **epidemiological surveillance system** for bee diseases to determine the current state of bee health. At the same time, it will implement the new European regulations (which ANSES helped draft) for **assessing the risks of plant protection products to bees**, and, more generally, to the environment. Lastly, ANSES will set up, before September 2012, an Expert Group to study the effects of **co-exposure of bees to both toxins and pathogens**, with the possibility of issuing recommendations by 2014 for inclusion in the regulations.

3. Nanomaterials: among emerging risks, one of the most important challenges for health is the development of manufactured nanomaterials. On this subject, ANSES intends to set up the same type of structure as the one created for radiofrequencies in 2011. In 2012, the Agency will set up a **permanent working group (WG) on “Nanomaterials and health – in food, the environment and at work”** to monitor the latest scientific developments on this topic in real time. To mirror this WG, the Agency will also create a **dialogue committee** to enable stakeholders to participate in the ongoing scientific discussions, on the issues of exposure, risk assessment methodologies and current knowledge of health risks.

In 2012, ANSES will continue to pursue the priorities it had set for 2011, including the key issues studied last year such as **antimicrobial resistance**, assessing the risks faced by **farm workers exposed to pesticides**, **contaminants in food**, **radiofrequencies** and **endocrine disruptors**.

In addition, in 2011 the Agency set up its **Commission for Ethical Standards and the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest**, in advance of one of the requirements of the new French law concerning the reforms to drugs and health products.

In 2012 ANSES will also finalise a new **agreement with the government on its objectives and performance** for 2012-2015 as well as continuing with its policy of **open cooperation with stakeholders from civil society**.

Press liaison:

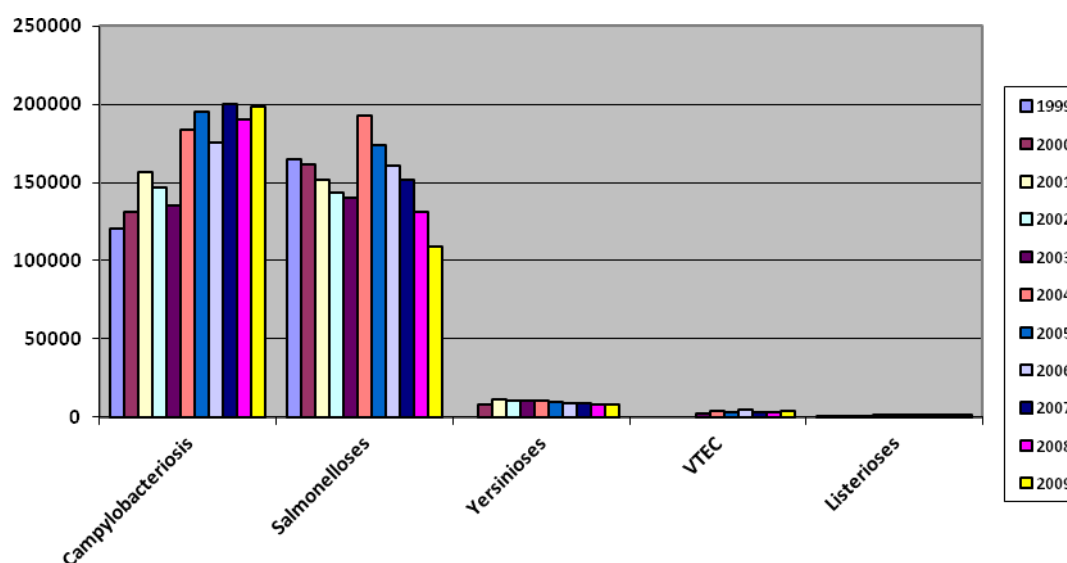
Elena Séité – +33 (0)1 49 77 27 80 – elena.seite@anses.fr

1. 2012 work programme: Focus on three key themes for 2012

1.1 Microbiological risks

Many microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, parasites) can potentially contaminate food and cause various diseases. The measures implemented by health authorities and professionals have led to a sharp reduction in the main food-related diseases (*Salmonella*, *Listeria*, etc.), while microbial hazards are generally well controlled in foods. For example, the number of *Salmonella*-related foodborne diseases in Europe fell by nearly 50% between 2004 (when Regulation 2160/2003/EC came into effect) and 2009. However, vigilance must be maintained with respect to microbial hazards.

Accordingly, the serious problem of campylobacteriosis (the main cause of food poisoning in Europe, associated with consumption of food contaminated with *Campylobacter*), the sudden emergence in Germany and France in 2011 of the outbreak associated with plant products contaminated with *E. coli* O104:H4 that affected more than 3500 people, as well as recent episodes of contamination of plant products in the UK and the USA, all call for greater vigilance regarding microbiological risks, particularly emerging ones, and closer attention to plant products that were previously rarely involved in foodborne disease outbreaks.



In this context and following on from the missions and work it has already undertaken, ANSES will be addressing this issue in 2012 through three main actions:

1) Establishment of a health component to the French Food Observatory

Created by the French Act for modernisation of agriculture and fisheries, the Food Observatory will have three components: nutrition, health and socio-economics. With regard to the health aspect, a system centralising all the available data on microbiological and chemical hazards in food will be set up, with all the partners concerned (Directorate General for Food, industry stakeholders, ANSES). The challenge will be to make use of the results of numerous self-inspections conducted by professionals within the framework of the European regulations known as the "Hygiene Package", alongside the results of ministerial surveillance plans and ANSES studies. This centralisation will ensure that risk analysis is based on a larger amount of objective data and will enable long-term monitoring of quality indicators for food safety.

In September 2011, the French Ministry of Agriculture asked ANSES to conduct a feasibility study for this health component. The Agency is therefore responsible for making detailed recommendations on its operational implementation, in particular the procedures for validating the data supplied and the ways in which they will be exploited within this observatory.

The Agency will propose a legal and operational framework for data collection, management and processing, and will recommend foods and chemical and microbiological agents for priority surveillance. It will also submit proposals for quality **indicators** for food safety. Particular attention will be paid to communicating and understanding these indicators. The results of this work are expected in mid-2013.

2) Consumer information

Controlling microbiological risks is necessary at each stage of the food chain, including in the home.

In order to provide consumers with clear, practical and scientifically-validated information on how to control risks in their own kitchen, in the last quarter of 2012 ANSES will produce a **guide listing all its recommendations to consumers** relating to microbiology. Similarly, the Agency decided to make good domestic hygiene practices a theme of the **game** offered to **8-12 year olds** on its stand at the **2012 Paris International Agricultural show**.

3) Diagnosis and research

ANSES will be calling on its network of laboratories to help it improve diagnostic methods and surveillance for major and emerging foodborne pathogens. It will also be proposing new tools for modelling the risks associated with some of these pathogens.

- Improving diagnostic methods

The research work conducted by ANSES's laboratories in 2012 will focus on both "traditional" pathogens such as Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC), whose **evolution will be monitored** so as to **adapt diagnostic methods** accordingly and extend them to **new food matrices**, as well as **emerging or re-emerging pathogens** such as the main viruses that cause nonbacterial gastroenteritis and hepatitis (norovirus, hepatitis A virus (HAV), hepatitis E virus (HEV)) for which **tools need to be developed to allow routine monitoring** in at-risk foods.

- Surveillance of foodborne pathogens

Campylobacter infections are the leading cause of foodborne diseases in Europe (nearly 200,000 cases were recorded by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in 2009). While the presence of these bacteria in the poultry industry is widely monitored and documented at both national and European level, this is not the case in other production sectors. In 2012, the French health authorities will therefore be implementing a surveillance plan in the swine and cattle sectors.

As the National Reference Laboratory for *Campylobacter*, the ANSES Ploufragan-Plouzané Laboratory will be responsible for implementing qualitative and quantitative analyses of these samples (500 for each of the two sectors).

Meanwhile, work on controlling *Campylobacter* contamination in the poultry sector will continue through the **European research programme CamChain**, which aims to learn more about the **bacterium's ecology, conditions for survival and spread** in the environment, as well as methods to control the level of contamination in the digestive tract of poultry.

Finally, genetic analysis of *Campylobacter coli* of swine, avian and human origin will be conducted in collaboration with the National Reference Centre for *Campylobacter* (Bordeaux-Segalen University) in order to **better assess the respective roles of the various animal production sectors in human infections**.

- **Quantitative assessment of microbiological risks**

To better assess the impact of the introduction of risk control standards and measures, in 2012 **ANSES will develop tools to model the risks** associated with the presence of ***Campylobacter* in the poultry industry**, and of **entero-haemorrhagic *Escherichia coli* (STEC)** in the meat, milk and unpasteurised cheese production sectors.

1.2 Bee health

Because of its structure, unique in Europe (a health agency combining expertise units for risk assessment, the French Agency for Veterinary Medicinal Products, and laboratories for research, reference and scientific and technical expertise), ANSES can mobilise quickly to respond to emerging health issues. Its comprehensive approach to issues of animal health and welfare, which involves studying the interactions of pathogens and xenobiotics with the animal, the farm and its environment (ecotoxicology and ecopathology) enables our research to be placed in its health and economic context, taking into account society's expectations and risk assessment needs. In 2012, capitalising on the highly complementary nature of its different activities, ANSES will be investing considerable efforts in studying the **health of bees**, which as well as being essential insect pollinators are also producers of food.

1) Determining the current state of bee health

The appointment in 2011 of one of ANSES's laboratories as the European Union Reference Laboratory for bee health (Sophia-Antipolis Laboratory) was an essential step in the recognition of the Agency's research and reference efforts in this sensitive area over the past few years. This new mission and the resources it offers, by enhancing skills in microbiology and epidemiology, should lead to significant progress in the coming years in understanding the multifactorial syndromes affecting bee colonies.

Meanwhile, as part of its National Reference Laboratory (NRL) missions, **the laboratory will continue to support the establishment of a network of accredited laboratories** by offering training, disseminating methods and organising an inter-laboratory trial.

It will also continue its research to **develop or validate** ever more powerful **analytical methods** to better identify biotic and abiotic hive contaminants.

2) Implement the new European guidelines on assessing the risks of plant protection products to the environment, and to bees in particular

Capitalising on its internationally recognised expertise in the assessment of plant protection products, ANSES has been heavily involved in the revision of the applicable rules, under European regulations, on assessing the risks of plant protection products to the environment (flora, fauna, aquatic environments), and to bees in particular. Discussions are underway on amending EU regulations¹ defining the data needed for the assessment, especially with a view to introducing additional requirements for bees. The EPPO² guideline document on assessing the risk to bees was revised in late 2010 and now states the procedure to follow for seed treatments and substances able to migrate into plants.

¹ Commission Regulation (EU) no 544/2011 of 10 June 2011 implementing Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the data requirements for active substances and Commission Regulation (EU) no 545/2011 of 10 June 2011 implementing Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the data requirements for plant protection products

² European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization

3) Provide insight into the effects of co-exposures

With the aim of further improving this multifactorial approach to bee diseases, ANSES is to develop experimental systems suitable for **studying co-exposures of bees to toxins and pathogens**. The establishment of a working group on this theme by the Expert Committee on animal health will be a crucial first phase to this project, in order to define future models for pesticide risk assessment.

This work follows on from the recommendations made by AFSSA in its 2008 report. It will be put into practice in 2012 with **the establishment of a multidisciplinary, collective expert working group** bringing together knowledge on bees and beekeeping, ecotoxicology, infectiology and insect physiology-immunology. This work will contribute in terms of:

- assessment of new experimental methods for determining the effect of pathogens or substances, not only on the individual bee, but also (and especially) on colonies placed in their environment;
- a study of the effects of co-exposures (periodic, prolonged or repeated) of bee colonies to pathogens and chemicals at sub-lethal doses: assessment of experimental methods, analysis of the mechanisms of action possibly involved;
- determination of toxic values taking into account synergies between infectious factors and the chronic effect of exposure. Assessments of methods and proposed values.

The Working Group's conclusions will include **recommendations on the standardisation of methods for assessing the effects of co-exposure** on the expression of pathogenicity, as well as recommendations for research aiming to **understand the interactions between different factors** involved in mortality and the underlying **biological mechanisms** and lastly, recommendations on the **determination of toxic values**, taking into account chronic toxicity and possible synergy phenomena between factors.

These findings may lead to recommendations on beekeeping and/or farming practices, or even new guidelines for the assessment of plant protection products that could be proposed at European and international level.

1.3 Risks related to manufactured nanomaterials

Among emerging risks, one of the most important challenges for health is the development of manufactured nanomaterials. Since 2006, the Agency has published several expert reports on the health risks from exposure via food, the environment and the workplace.

Alongside these expertise activities, the Agency has made a major contribution to actions to develop new risk assessment methodologies, aimed at professionals, in the definition of safety tests or through standardisation activities. These have been conducted both nationally and internationally (ISO, OECD, European Commission).

ANSES's work on nanomaterials for 2012 will be broken down into three main areas:

- Expertise in risk assessment.
- Methodology developments.
- Creation of forums for discussions with affected groups.

1) Creation of a comprehensive scheme to address the risks associated with nanomaterials

ANSES wishes to set up for nanomaterials the same type of structure it created for radiofrequencies in 2011.

In 2012, the Agency will set up a permanent working group on "Nanomaterials and health – in food, the environment and at work" under the aegis of its Expert Committee (CES) on assessment of the risks related to physical agents, new technologies and development areas. To avoid any redundancy or failure to take account of issues addressed by the Agency with regard to nanomaterials, the group's work will be conducted in conjunction with all the Agency's CESs concerned.

This working group will mainly be responsible for:

- producing an annual review of the state of knowledge on any potential health and environmental risks associated with manufactured nanomaterials, for all their uses;
- detecting emerging signs of hazards and risks associated with manufactured nanomaterials, for all their uses;
- contributing to the investigation of requests for expertise made to the Agency. For 2012, this includes examining the health consequences to the general population or the environment from uses of nanomaterials, and conducting an expert appraisal on occupational exposures to nanomaterials;
- providing annual recommendations on research directions mainly intended to help with the Agency's call for research proposals on environment and occupational health;
- supporting the Agency in its dialogue with society in the area of risks associated with manufactured nanomaterials.

As a complement to this working group, the Agency will also create a dialogue committee to enable stakeholders to participate in the ongoing scientific discussions on the key issues of exposure, risk assessment methodologies and understanding the health risks. This committee will also help define the research directions put forward by the Agency's call for proposals.

2) Methodology developments

The ANSES report entitled "Assessment of the risks associated with nanomaterials for the general population and the environment" (March 2010) clearly highlighted both the great scientific uncertainty about the potential risks associated with end products containing manufactured nanomaterials, and the lack of traceability in the nanomaterials industry. This makes the assessment of the population's exposure to these products extremely complex. It is therefore important in this context of scientific uncertainty to rapidly improve the available knowledge.

ANSES proposes **constructing a pragmatic method for assessing the risks** of these products. The methodology used, based on a **semi-quantitative risk assessment approach**, will primarily involve the use of parameters specific to the nanomaterial contained in the studied product.

Alongside this work, ANSES will provide **technical support** to its supervisory ministries **for the introduction of mandatory reporting of the identity and uses of nanomaterials**.

The planned database on nanomaterials is in line with the regulatory context of the French "Grenelle 2" environment Act, which aims to organise the traceability of information associated with the production and use of nanomaterials, and also follows on, more generally, from the Agency's expert appraisal work.

3) Acquisition of new knowledge about exposure

Lastly, ANSES is coordinating various European research projects. The NANOGENOTOX project is a European joint action launched on the initiative of the French Directorate General for Health and coordinated by ANSES. This three-year programme primarily aims to provide the European Commission with an alternative, robust and reliable method for determining the genotoxic potential of nanomaterials. The work focuses on three groups of nanomaterials (titanium dioxide, silica and carbon nanotubes) selected on the basis of their possible uses in different types of products (cosmetics, food, common consumer goods), the potential route of exposure (oral, dermal or by inhalation) and production. The work conducted in the framework of the NANOGENOTOX project is reinforcing other international initiatives, such as the OECD's sponsorship programme for the testing of manufactured nanomaterials and the characterisation work of the International Organization for Standardization's Technical Committee on Nanotechnologies (ISO TC229). The work is scheduled to be completed in March 2013.

2. 2012 work programme: review and continuation of major projects initiated in 2011

Following on from the priorities ANSES set itself for 2011, 2012 will be marked by the continuation of the major projects initiated last year.

1) Control of antimicrobial resistance in animal health

In 2011, ANSES announced the establishment of a working group to assess the risks of emergence of antimicrobial resistance related to patterns of antibiotic use in the field of animal health. This group was set up in late 2011 with a mandate to improve understanding of the mechanisms of resistance and identify the practices most at risk with regard to the emergence of resistance. The purpose of this formal request was to assess the risks of emergence of antimicrobial resistance related to patterns of antibiotic use in the field of animal health. In particular, the pooling of expertise from the French Agency for Veterinary Medicinal Products (ANMV) and the ANSES laboratories was intended to help develop "treatment protocols" for certain diseases, aiming for appropriate use of antibiotics to limit consumption to what is strictly necessary.

Since then, many plans and initiatives in the field of antimicrobial resistance control have been announced at national (plan launched by the Minister of Agriculture) and European level (European Parliament Resolution and action plan announced by the European Commission), and even at international level (ban on *in ovo* injection of 3GCs in the USA).

By late 2012, the ANSES Working Group plans to **provide insight specifically on the patterns of use** in veterinary medicine of antibiotics considered **of critical importance** because they are often the last line of treatment in the event of therapeutic impasse (newer-generation cephalosporins, fluoroquinolones, etc.). In 2012 and early 2013, this group's work will continue with the aim of finding **alternative treatments**. The work is scheduled to be completed in the last quarter of 2013.

Finally, ANSES will continue its action at Community level for the establishment of European surveillance of antibiotic use led by EMA (the European Medicines Agency) and its collaboration within the HMA group (Heads of Medicines Agencies), on the theme of antimicrobial resistance.

2) Assessing the impact of plant protection products on farm workers

On its creation, ANSES decided to issue an internal request on the question of the real impact to agricultural workers of exposure to pesticides through two issues: **assessment of the risks to workers *a posteriori***, in order to propose targeted, proportionate actions to reduce or eliminate exposure and, in parallel, **personal protective equipment (PPE)**.

With regard to the first issue, four main objectives have been defined:

- to characterise the categories of farm workers potentially exposed to pesticides in relation with the different agricultural production systems affecting specific agricultural tasks and the resulting exposures.
- to identify and describe the occupational situations responsible for direct or indirect exposure (treatment residues in treated areas).

- to collect and analyse the available knowledge on exposure levels for these situations.
- to place the exposure data in context with the health data.

The work on this issue was initiated in 2011, beginning with the **definition of the population of workers to study**. The corresponding working group was then formed in early 2012. The work will extend over a three-year period.

In parallel, an internal request on the effectiveness of protective clothing worn by workers applying plant protection products was also initiated. The study will be conducted in two stages:

- the equipment on the market will be characterised with the help of a survey of equipment distributors and equipment available on the internet,
- a description of farming practices and the protective equipment actually worn by farm workers in the field.

For this purpose an **agreement was signed with the National Research Institute of Science and Technology for Environment and Agriculture (IRSTEA)** for conducting this study. On this basis, **equipment performance will then be characterised** to compare it with what is expected under the assumptions used in the risk assessments carried out by ANSES. The results of this study are expected in 2013.

The aim is to be able to suggest improvements to the Agency's recommendations on protection of farm workers, an objective that is also a major focus of the Ecophyto 2018 plan. These various studies are being conducted in close partnership with organisations such as the CCMSA, the ANACT and other agencies of the R31³.

3) Assessment of the risks associated with endocrine disruptors

Following on from work the Agency started in 2009, assessing the risks associated with **endocrine disrupting substances** will continue to be a major objective for ANSES in 2012. This ambitious project is targeting about fifty substances identified as being of concern, according to an INSERM report, with regard to their reproductive toxicity and/or endocrine disrupting action. The Agency has begun **identifying the uses** of these substances, from existing databases and by conducting industry surveys, to gain insight from the field. **Work to assess the toxicity of substances, quantify exposure and assess the risks** has begun with the substances identified as priorities.

³ The R31 is a network of 31 scientific organisations led by ANSES, which coordinates their work for the purpose of health risk assessment in its sphere of competence.

In 2011, **the initial results of this work were published** with two reports on the health effects and uses of bisphenol A. This work, showing health effects that are recognised in animals and suspected in humans, even at low exposure levels, led ANSES to identify as a priority the prevention of exposure of the most susceptible population groups (infants, young children and pregnant or breastfeeding women). It recommended a reduction in exposure to bisphenol A, mainly through its substitution in food contact materials. This work was **submitted to the scientific community for consultation** and a call for papers was issued to collect any scientific data primarily on the available substitute products, as well as on their safety and effectiveness.

This year will see this work continued for other classes of substances (including phthalates, parabens, brominated compounds and phenols) and for bisphenol A substitutes on which a risk assessment report will be published in the final quarter of 2012.

4) Expert work on radiofrequencies

Faced with the rapid increase in publications and research work conducted in this area and following the transfer of the "Health and Radiofrequencies" Foundation's competences to ANSES, in 2011 the Agency set up a scheme to consider extensively the issues raised by radiofrequency emissions.

It has therefore created a **permanent working group on "Radiofrequencies and Health"** made up of a dozen independent scientific experts who are responsible for monitoring the scientific literature "in real time", in order to update, if necessary, the collective expertise on the health effects of radiofrequencies (2009), to meet occasional needs for scientific and technical support and in particular to make recommendations and propose research directions. Meanwhile, ANSES has created a **"Radiofrequencies and Health" research programme**, with a €2M annual budget. Led by a dedicated scientific board, it issues annual calls for research proposals following the same schedule as the "Environmental and Occupational Health" programme. Finally, a **"Radiofrequencies and Health" dialogue committee**, bringing together all the stakeholders, has been established to inform the Agency about society's expectations in this area.

5) Food contaminants

Last June, ANSES published the results of its second Total Diet Study (TDS2), an analysis campaign conducted periodically to monitor the presence of a series of substances of interest in terms of public health (heavy metals, pesticide residues, mycotoxins, etc.) in processed foods and foods as consumed (washed, peeled, cooked). This type of study, advocated by the WHO, makes it possible to monitor actual exposure of populations to these substances.

Conducted on an unprecedented scale, the second Total Diet Study (TDS2) has produced **the broadest picture so far of nutrient intakes and dietary exposure to chemicals** in the French population. In general, it confirms that the health risks associated with the potential presence of chemical contaminants in food are adequately controlled in France. However, the study also points to areas requiring vigilance regarding certain substances for specific population groups.

The findings of this work, which was funded with support from the French ministries responsible for food, health and consumer affairs, as well as a contribution from the French Observatory for Pesticide Residues, will be used in a number of ways from 2012, such as the development of new analytical methods to improve detection of certain substances, the analysis of the study results on a regional level, and the screening for other contaminants (endocrine disruptors, drug residues) in the food samples stored as part of the study.

In parallel, in the second half of 2011, ANSES initiated an infant TDS (on the diet of children aged 0 to 3 years).

Infant and non-infant **foods representative of over 80% of the diet of children aged 0-3 years have been identified** and will be analysed in this study. A total of about 5400 products will be purchased and more than 300 substances will be screened for with the help of around ten laboratories. **Food sampling began in July 2011** and will continue for a period of one year. The analytical results are expected in early 2013.

The Agency is also working on developing a European TDS.

Finally, 2012 will see the end of the Pericles Project, which aims to develop methods for determining the main cocktails of pesticides to which the French population is actually exposed through food and understanding the potential combined effects of the substances contained in these cocktails.

Following identification of the main cocktails of pesticides to which the population is predominantly exposed, and with the help of a specially designed statistical method, **seven major cocktails of substances have been defined. Their toxicity is currently being examined** via *in vitro* toxicology studies conducted by ANSES (Fougères) and INRA (Sophia-Antipolis and Toulouse) laboratories, on different types of models of human origin. The ultimate goal is to try to identify the nature and possibly the mechanisms of the cocktail effect. The results of this work will be available in the second half of 2012.

3. ANSES governance

Excellence, transparency and independence were the prevailing values when ANSES was founded. To ensure that they permeate every phase of its work, the Agency has implemented a series of mechanisms, some inherited from the functioning of the agencies it sprang from, others conceived during the process that led to the creation of ANSES. Here is a look back at a few key figures and examples of the achievements in this area for 2011.

1. Opening the governance of ANSES to its stakeholders

The transparency of the Agency's work and its openness to civil society are daily concerns for ANSES. Thus, its board of administrators includes representatives of the State, stakeholders from associations, professional and labour unions, and elected officials. In addition, this board is supported by five thematic steering committees (COTs), open to external figures from civil society particularly involved in and/or representative of these themes, who help determine ANSES's policy orientations and oversee the use of resources allocated to each of its topics. Finally, a dialogue committee on radiofrequencies brings together all the stakeholders involved in this subject so that they may provide the Agency with an insight into society's expectations in this area.

In 2011, the board of administration met six times, the COTs met ten times and the radiofrequency dialogue committee was convened twice. In particular, a meeting of members of the COTs was held in late 2011 to present the draft objectives and performance contract that ANSES will sign with the State for 2012-2015.

2. Communicating and explaining the Agency's work

Providing everyone with clear and scientifically validated information is an integral part of ANSES's missions. Accordingly, the Agency has an obligation to make public all its opinions and reports. To do this, various tools have been developed to facilitate the dissemination of the Agency's work.

In 2011, 254 documents resulting from expert appraisals following formal requests (opinions and reports) were issued by the Agency and published on its website, as well as approximately **2000 product assessment opinions under the applicable regulations**. **Fifty-eight news updates** explaining the work conducted by the Agency were also published on its website, which registered **1.6 million visits** plus a further **900,000 visitors to ANSES's thematic sites**. The Agency also launched a monthly newsletter which has nearly **18,000 subscribers**.

To inform stakeholders about its work, ANSES regularly organises **exchange meetings** with them, including **feedback sessions** when certain works are published.

In 2011, some ten feedback sessions were held on topics as diverse as the 2nd French Total Diet Study, work on identifying the hazards and uses of bisphenol A (BPA), etc.

3. Ensuring the independence and excellence of ANSES's work

The independence and excellence of its work are essential values for ANSES, which decided from the outset to establish mechanisms to include them in every one of its processes.

Therefore mirroring the public declarations of interest that its external experts have already completed, which are published on its website, the Agency decided in 2011 **to also publish online the public declarations of interest of those of its officials** who are involved in expert appraisal processes.

In April 2011 ANSES set up a **Commission for Ethical Standards and the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest**. This group is made up of six members all with acknowledged expertise and experience in ethical matters. It issued its first two opinions in late 2011. Finally, to prevent potential conflicts of interest, ANSES also uses a **matrix to analyse links of interest** in order to detect any potential conflicts of interest prior to each Expert Committee meeting and for each point on the agenda.

Key dates for ANSES in 2012

- **Paris International Agricultural Show**, 25 February-4 March, Porte de Versailles, Paris

To mark the 2012 Paris International Agricultural Show, ANSES invites you to discover its new 2012 stand with the theme "From the fridge to the oven: do it right!" The stand will be set up to resemble a cheerful family kitchen. A fun and informative approach will be used to emphasise the importance of a balanced diet and food hygiene in the home. The area will be accessible to all, offering a fun way for 8- to 12-year-olds and their families to discover or rediscover the keys to healthy eating.

'What is the "use-by date" for?' 'Which provides the most vitamin C, an orange or a bell pepper?' 'Should any special precautions be taken when eating raw fish?' An imaginative set design will be the backdrop for a life-size quiz to help both young and old learn about nutrition and food safety rules. So that everyone can "do it right" while having fun!

- **European Days of Reference for plant health**, 26-27 March 2012, Maison Internationale, Paris
- **International PPTOX Conference (Prenatal Programming and Toxicity) III**, 14-16 May 2012, Paris

Prenatal and perinatal development constitute the most vulnerable period of human life, with regard to the adverse effects of the environment. The hypothesis which states that such effects, during early development, may lead to altered programming and thereby increased susceptibility to disease and dysfunction later in the individual's life, is supported by both experimental and epidemiological studies. Similar observations have been made on the long-term impact of nutritional imbalance during early development.

The PPTOX III conference brings together scientists from several countries to discuss these issues. The third International PPTOX conference on prenatal programming and toxicity will be devoted to "Environmental stressors in the developmental origins of disease: evidence and mechanisms".

- **ANSES Scientific Conferences**, 30 May 2012, Maisons-Alfort

Among its other missions, ANSES coordinates and supports research. This includes running the National Research Programme for Environmental and Occupational Health (PNREST), an essential resource for acquiring the knowledge necessary to assist the authorities and for health risk assessment at the Agency. In order to showcase these studies and in the context of its Scientific Conferences, ANSES organises two sessions a year for programme feedback at which the research teams can present their work to the public. The next Scientific Conferences will be held on 30 May 2012 on the theme of "From exposure indicators to biomarkers: tools for assessing and monitoring health risks".

- **Occupational Medicine and Health Convention**, 5-8 June 2012, Clermont-Ferrand

- **ERA-ENVHEALTH Final Conference**, 13-14 June 2012, Paris

In late 2006, with the support of the French Ministry of Ecology, the Agency developed a proposal for a European network designed to bring together the coordinators of national environmental health research programmes. Selected as part of the EU's FP7 (Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development), the European ERA-ENVHEALTH network, coordinated by ANSES, was launched on 1 September 2008 for a period of four years. It brings together 16 partners from 10 countries with the aim of establishing lasting cooperation between the different organisations, by studying the results and methods of support for research in environmental health in these various organisations, defining priority work themes and addressing them through joint activities and calls for transnational research projects.

- **Symposium on the phototoxicity of light**, June 2012, Les Cordeliers, Paris
- **International Rhodococcus Workshop**, 9-12 July, Deauville

The bacterium *Rhodococcus equi* is the leading cause of death in foals up to the age of six months. In humans, it is also an opportunistic pathogen that can affect immunocompromised individuals. Bringing together about a hundred international specialists (epidemiologists, microbiologists, immunologists and veterinary clinicians), around a large discussion forum, this seminar will review recent advances aiming to understand and control this particular pathogen. In particular it will address the clinical and epidemiological aspects, as well as pathogenesis and immunity.

- **Inauguration of BioAgroPolis**, 2nd half of 2012, ANSES Fougères Laboratory

Initiated in 2005 by the Ille-et-Vilaine General Council, BioAgroPolis is the future animal health and agro-environment centre, under construction in Fougères. It was set up to provide a tool for research and development in activities related to these sectors and a showcase of technological and scientific know-how. It will ultimately include the Agri-Environment Health Institute of Ille-et-Vilaine (its departmental veterinary laboratory), the ANSES Fougères laboratory and a business incubator.