**Availability and Information Needs in the Chemical Contaminants Domain – PortFIR Assessment**

**Introduction**

Chemical contaminants (Chc) can be present and/or be introduced in food and feed as result of the various stages of the production/manufacturing process, treatment, handling, packaging and transport and/or due to environmental contamination. Collecting and studying Chc analytical data from the food chain are essential procedures to generate fundamental information to support dietary exposure and risk-benefit assessment associated with food, to strengthen knowledge acquisition and dissemination and to provide better scientific advices, contributing for the continuous improvement of food safety and protection of public health.

In order to define priorities for the development of the Contaminants Database of the Portuguese Food Information Resource (PortFIR), the PortFIR Information Management Working Group (GTG), of the Food Chemical Contamination Network (RPCQA), decided to identify and assess the availability and information needs on Chc present in food and feed of the main Portuguese stakeholders in the area.

**Material and Methods**

PortFIR Information Management Working Group (GTG), developed a questionnaire to evaluate the availability and information needs of Portuguese stakeholders, from different sectors, namely: food production, industry, health, education and research. The survey was implemented online between August and September 2017. In order to reach a larger number of respondents, it was requested to external entities (ex: Directorate-General for Food and Veterinary (DGAV) and Portuguese Agro-Food Industries Federation (FIPA)), the dissemination of the questionnaire.

**Results**

The application of the survey resulted in the participation of 457 people. 93.4% of the respondents are “Economic operators” (Fig. 1) having as main activity the “Production and processing of foodstuffs (including supplements)” (56.9%). Only 0.9% indicated to be in the “Production and processing of feed” sector (Fig. 2). In addition, 55.2% of the respondents indicated to produce/available analytical data on Chc due to their professional activities (Fig. 3).

Regarding the information needs, 42.5% indicated the need of more information on the data they produce/have and simultaneously 57.6% pointed out the same need on Chc in general (Figs. 4 & 5). The “Maximum Permissible Values / Maximum Residue Limits” and the “Main contaminants by food/product groups” were indicated in 17.5% and 39.8% of the valid responses of the participants, respectively (Figs. 6 & 7).

Finally, 96.9% respondents signalled the importance of having a national platform that can provide useful data and information in this domain and 65.7% indicated to be available to share data/information with this platform.

**Conclusions**

A significant number of stakeholders (55.2%) produce and/or have available information on Chc but the majority (57.6%) need more information. It was stated (96.9% respondents) the importance of having a National platform that can provide useful data, information and knowledge in Chc domain, accordingly to the stakeholders needs.

**References**