



EFCOVAL project

For effective formulation and evaluation of European health and food safety policy, data are required on the food consumption of the European population. At present many member states collect such data at the national level using different methodologies; however some EU member states do not have food consumption surveys in place. This limits the development and evaluation of European food policies.

What is the EFCOVAL project?

EFCOVAL *European Food Consumption Validation* is devoted to the development and validation of a trans-European food consumption survey instrument, designed to evaluate the intake of foods and nutrients, and potentially hazardous chemicals in the European population. EFCOVAL continues the work of a former EU project that recommended a detailed recording of all food intake of a person in a 24h period as the best method to obtain reliable and comparable data from European countries. The specific designed interview-based EPIC-SOFT program was recommended to gather that data.

What activities are undertaken ?

- the upgrade of the software, both functionally and technologically, for use in pan-European dietary monitoring.
- to test the validity of the software by using it to gather dietary data among adults in five European countries and comparing the results within and between those countries with biological markers of dietary intake.
- to test the feasibility to use EPIC-SOFT for dietary monitoring among children.
- to explore the possibilities to use EPIC-SOFT to estimate exposure to a specific category of potentially hazardous substances
- to work on statistical tools to translate the data as collected to the dietary indicators as needed by the food policy makers
- to disseminate the knowledge to prepare new country-specific versions of EPIC-SOFT and to implement the use of the software in food consumption surveys to other European countries.

What is EFCOVAL going to produce?

Finally, an upgraded EPIC-SOFT program will be available for use in pan-European food consumption surveys, thereby stimulating better comparison of European data. Specific advice will be given on how to set up the program in countries that have not previously used it.

EFCOVAL started in October 2006 and will run until September 2009. 14 partners are involved from 11 countries. The Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) coordinates the project.

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For more information visit www.efcoval.eu.

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