

Advice 26-2017 of the Scientific Committee of the FASFC on risk associated to the spreading of manure and digestate contaminated by *C. botulinum*

Background & Terms of reference

An outbreak of botulism in cattle has occurred in a holding using manure in its biomethanisation plant. The Scientific Committee has been requested to evaluate the animal health risks associated with the spreading of manure or digestates contaminated with *Clostridium botulinum* toxinotype D. Specific questions have been formulated.

Methodology

Answers to the specific questions have been provided based on data from the literature, on a risk assessment and expert opinion.

Results

The literature data concerning emission, exposure and consequences suggest that spreading of manure and digestate contaminated by *C. botulinum* can potentially increase the spore concentration in the environment. This higher spore concentration can lead to an increased risk of intoxication (ingestion of already formed botulin toxins). This risk was however assessed by the Scientific Committee as very low within the two considered scenarios (spreading of either manure or digestate).

Conclusion

Although the risk associated with manure or digestates contaminated by *C. botulinum* has been assessed as 'very low' by the Scientific Committee, recommendations based on measures minimizing the environmental contamination should prevail. Responses to the specific questions have been formulated. General and specific recommendations have also been presented.

The conclusions and recommendations formulated in this Advice are only valid for *C. botulinum* toxinotype C or D. The risk should be re-evaluated in the case of any other toxinotype of *C. botulinum*.

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