



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Crisis preparedness in food, animals and plants
Unit G.4 Official controls

Minutes Expert Group on Veterinary Import Controls Legislation Monday, 27 March 2023, 10:00 – 17:00 Centre Albert Borschette Chair: Bruno Saimour, Unit G4		
1	Introduction	This was a face-to-face meeting with interpretation in 6 languages, for which a webstreaming link was also available for remote participants.
2	Composite products	COM informed the MSs that the published guideline on composite products is under revision. A first draft has been presented to the Expert group on food hygiene and once the draft will be ready, it will be shared also with this Expert group for further comments.
3	Food fraud – results of the coordinated control plan on honey	<p>COM presented the results of the EU coordinated action “From the Hives” that focused on honey adulteration with extraneous sugars. More information at: https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/eu-agri-food-fraud-network/eu-coordinated-actions/honey-2021-2022_en</p> <p>COM invited the MSs to adapt their import control check frequencies to deter non-authentic products from entering the EU market.</p>
4	Animal by-products – used cooking oil (UCO)	COM informed the MSs that a new draft on harmonised requirements for imports of UCO is under preparation. Following discussion with MSs, COM took note of comments and will address MSs suggestions in a revised draft. The draft will be further discussed in the ABP WG meeting.
5	Frequency of physical checks in TRACES	<p>COM presented issues related to the frequency groups and criteria used to define the frequency of physical checks in TRACES for concerned consignments. MSs were reminded that the correct CN code and product type must be selected in the CHED-P to avoid the attribution to a wrong frequency group.</p> <p>COM presented the results of rejection rates at EU BCPs, calculated over the last 12 months, and classified according to the product categories listed in Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2019/2129. This exercise should help verify the relevance of the legal criteria that will be used to vary the frequency rate of physical checks in TRACES. Feedback from participants is welcome.</p>
6	Intensified official controls (IOC) issues	COM presented a statistical analysis of IOC requests submitted by MSs during the last two years and highlighted IOC rejection rate and reasons for rejection. COM reminded the MSs of the mandatory information to be provided with the request, including legal basis for the non-compliance and nomenclature group. Also, COM presented the IOC procedure in relation to label check for allergens, which was added as an Annex to the IOC operational guidelines. MSs were invited to provide feedback before COM publishes the revised guidelines. COM clarified to MSs that they should not request an IOC exemption in cases where the allergens are correctly mentioned in the labels,

		<p>since the satisfactory result must be registered in the IOC planned controls.</p> <p>COM reminded MSs that it is possible to sample a consignment under IOC procedure for the purpose of the national monitoring plan, although not encouraged. COM clarified that, for those consignments under IOC, for which the IOC results have already been recorded in TRACES and the CHED finalised, it is currently not possible to register the monitoring plan results at a later stage. IT developments are underway to resolve this issue.</p> <p>COM reminded MSs that TRACES allows MSs to take their final decisions on consignments under an IOC procedure regardless of the laboratory result ; e.g. where there are no harmonised EU criteria, such as in the case of detection of <i>Vibrio spp.</i> This is possible due to the disconnection in TRACES between an IOC result and the final BCP inspector decision. Following MS request, COM will propose a section in the IOC operational guidelines with scenarios where an IOC may be triggered following detection of <i>Vibrio spp.</i></p>
7	Transit to NATO bases	<p>COM took stock of the current discussions with the US Command of NATO concerning the certification issues on products of animal origin and the required official controls for their transit to military bases. COM is considering a solution for the transit certification of composite products.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the current recommendation concerning application of flexibility for the certification of goods in transit to NATO bases is valid until further notice, provided that consignments in transit can be properly channelled from the BCP of entry to the military base of destination.</p>
8	EU-UK relations	<p>COM reminded the MSs that it is regularly exchanging with UK and NI at technical level and, for the purpose of a harmonised approach on official controls at EU borders, Q&A documents are circulated to the UK, to the MS and to stakeholders (last document No 27).</p> <p>COM shared main topics addressed during bi-monthly technical meetings GB & NI issues, including both export and import-related matters.</p>