Control of Imports of Food in the EU

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Delegation of the European Union

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27 Member States
5 candidate countries
500 Million people,
23 official languages
European Institutions

Institutional Triangle: Decision Makers

- European Commission
- Council of the EU
- European Parliament

Advisory Committees

- Economic & Social Committee
- Committee of the Regions

European Institutions

- European Council
- European Court of Justice
- European Court of Auditors
The Role of the Commission

- Initiate & negotiate draft legislation
- Ensure implementation of EU policies
- Apply European Union laws
- Represent the European Union on the world stage
DG SANCO

- Over 1000 staff
- Core activities: Public Health, Food Safety, Animal health and welfare, Consumers

5 EU Agencies

- European Food Safety Authority
- European Centre for Disease Prevention & Control
- Community Plant Variety Office
- European Medicines Agency
- Executive Agency for Health and Consumers
Imports

- EU the largest importer of food and feed
  - Not produced in the EU (tea, coffee, spices,...)
  - Short of demand (fish, animal feed)
- Harmonized, risk-based control system
- Consistent with international standards
Figure 4.22: Extra-EU trade balance in quantity, food and beverage products, EU (million tonnes)

Source: Eurostat (Comext)
Figure 4.23: Extra-EU trade balance in value, food and beverage products, EU
(EUR 1 000 million)

Source: Eurostat (Comext)
EU legal framework

- R. 178/2002 (General Food Law)
  - Compliance/equivalence
  - Traceability
  - Non compliance \(\rightarrow\) withdrawal/inform authorities
- R. 882/2004 (Official Controls)
- Sectoral legislation
- Bilateral agreements
- Food of animal origin vs. Food of non-animal origin
- Regulation vs. Directives
Food of animal origin - Requirements

- Food Hygiene requirements
  - General requirements (R. 852/2004)
    - Monitor food safety, hygiene primary production, after primary production, microbiological requirements, procedures based on HACCP principles...
  - Specific requirements (R. 853/2004)

- Other health requirements
  - Contaminants and residues, hormones, additives, radioactivity, materials in contact...
  - Product specific (dietetic foods, GMOs)

- Animal welfare requirements
  - Slaughtering conditions
Food of animal origin - Requirements

- Obligation of importers
  - Country on a Community list, listed establishment, Health or identification mark, Health certificate, Available for control at BIP, comply with animal health requirements

- Obligation of competent authorities
  - Guarantees of compliance or equivalence
    - Official controls, updated list of establishments, certification requirements
Food of animal origin - Procedures

- Presented at Border Inspection Post
- Veterinary Checks (20-50% physical checks)
- Prior notice of arrival
- Accompanied by health certificates
- Approved countries, regions, establishments
- Other controls (additives, materials in contact, irradiation...)

Safeguard measures
- Currently 9 commodities from 9 countries (mainly residues of vet. Drugs)
- Pre-export testing + certificates + testing at entry
Food of non-animal origin - Requirements

- Food Hygiene requirements
  - Monitor food safety, hygiene primary production, after primary production, microbiological requirements, procedures based on HACCP principles...

- Other health requirements
  - Contaminants, MRLs for pesticides, additives, materials in contact, radioactivity, novel foods...
  - Product specific (dietetic foods, GMOs)

- Plant health requirements
Food of non-animal origin – Procedures

Food Safety
- Importer is responsible
- No certification / no pre-notification
- Controls by Member States
  - Control plans based on risk
  - Appropriate place (point of entry, importer premises, retail...)

Plant health requirements
- Phytosanitary certificate
- Compulsory checks (entry point or destination)
- Advance notice
Food of non-animal origin – Procedures

- Food subject to increased controls (R. 669/2009)
  - List of selected products (known or emerging risk)
  - Prior notification – common entry document
  - Designated points of entry
  - Increased checks
    - Documentary
    - Identity and physical (10 – 50%)
  - Currently 21 groups (commodity/country)
    - Groundnuts / aflatoxins
    - Fruits and vegetables / pesticides
    - Chilli / Sudan dyes
    - Herbs and spices / Salmonella...

- Quarterly review
Food of non-animal origin – Procedures

- Special conditions aflatoxins (R. 1152/2009)
  - Safeguard measures
  - 7 Foods & countries
  - Health certificates + results of analysis
  - Prior notification
  - Designated points of entry
  - Physical checks (10 – 100%)

- Other safeguard measures

- Pre-export checks
  - Peanuts/aflatoxins/US
Effectiveness of controls

- FVO audits
  - Performance of the competent authorities
  - Import control systems in MS
  - Third countries
    - Pre-listing audits (food of animal origin)
    - To verify compliance or equivalence (of legislation and systems)
    - Frequency criteria (risk)
    - Bilateral agreements

- Annual reports from Member States (MS)
- EFSA, RASFF, EUROPHYT, TRACES, BTSF
Future

- Risk and evidence-based system but complex
- Streamlining and improving consistency and efficiency and assessment of risk
- Legislative Improvements
  - Review of R. 882/2004
  - New animal health law and review of plant health regime
- Non-legislative improvements
  - TRACES (expansion, e-certification)
  - RASFF and EUROPHYT
  - Coordination animal health and public health
  - Optimal use of resources