The Food and Veterinary Office

Overview – February 2008
Second Round Negotiation
EU-CA Association Agreement
SPS Chapter

Tuesday, 26 February – Exchange of Information


Dr Graham Wood (SANCO F1)
Overview of presentation

Brief history
General information
Mission statement & areas of activity
Structure
Key functions/core activities
New developments
Brief History

- **1979:** Commission controls/inspections organised in AGRI (veterinary and phytosanitary matters) and ENTR (general food hygiene)

- **1996:** BSE crisis

- **1997:** Commission response: a new Food Safety Policy

- **1997:** FVO established (September 1997 in Ireland)

- **2000:** White Paper on Food Safety

- **2002:** FVO in Grange
General information – Location & Staff

Location: Grange, Co. Meath, Ireland (Since 2002)

Staff:
- 171 posts (shortly to be augmented)
- 90 Inspectors

Qualifications:
- Veterinarians
- Agronomists
- Other qualifications
2. Mission statement:

Through its audits, inspections and related activities, to

- check on **compliance** with the requirements of EU food safety and quality, veterinary and plant health legislation within the European Union and on compliance with EU import requirements in third countries exporting to the EU,

- contribute to the **development of EU policy** in the food safety, animal health and welfare and plant health sectors,

- contribute to the **development of effective control systems** in the food safety, animal health and welfare, and plant health sectors,

- **Inform stakeholders** of the outcome of its audits and inspections.
3. How does the FVO accomplish the mission statement?

- Assess the performance of national Competent Authorities (CA) and compliance with EU requirements
- Carry out ON-THE-SPOT inspections  
  "Eyes and ears of the Commission"
- Report on findings to CS, MS, EP/Council, and other stakeholders via internet publication  
  (http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/inspections/index_en.html)
- Recommendations to CA and CS
- Follow-up with CA and CS
3. Legal basis for the on-the-spot inspections (missions)

Missions are carried out under the general provisions of Community legislation and in particular:

- Art. 45 (MS) and Art. 46 (TC) of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules.

- For plant health, Articles 21 and 27(a) of Council Directive 2000/29 on the protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community.
4. Areas of activity

- Food safety
- Animal health
- Animal welfare
- Plant health

In MS, CC and TC
Directorate F - Food and Veterinary Office
Colm Gaynor - Director

Unit F1
Country Profiles, Coordination of Follow-up
Head of Unit – Hugh Quigley

Unit F2
Food of Animal Origin – Mammals
Head of Unit – John Wilson

Unit F3
Food of Animal Origin - Birds & Fish
Head of Unit – Jacky Le Gosles

Unit F4
Food of Plant Origin, Plant Health, processing and distribution
Head of Unit – Nandor Pete

Unit F5
Animal Nutrition, Import Controls, Residues
Head of Unit – Carlos Alvarez Antolinez

Unit F6
Quality, Planning and Development
Head of Unit – Frank Andriessen
Structure – cont.

6 FVO Units:

- 4 inspection Units (F2-F5)
  - Food of animal origin: Mammals
  - Food of animal origin: Birds/Fish
  - Food of non-animal origin & plant health
  - Horizontal: Feed (TSEs), Residues, Welfare, Import Controls

- 2 non-inspection Units (F1&F6)
  - Follow-up, Country Profiles
  - Quality, Planning, Development
Key functions/core activities

1. Performance of missions
2. Report on the Results
3. Follow up on corrective action
4. Country Profiles (CP)
5. Input into legislative process
6. Input into SANCO policies
7. Information to the consumer
8. Additional core activities
Key Functions (1) – Performance of missions

Mission type:
- Inspections – verification of compliance
  (official controls and application of EU standards by FBOs)
- Initial assessment & monitoring (CC)
- Fact-finding
- General review (GRM-CP) - general audit
  GA (new in 2007)
The Mission Programme

In 2007 FVO carried out 252 inspections:

- 159 MS, 12 CC, 81 TC
- 176 Food Safety (70%)
- 27 Animal Health (10%)
- 17 Animal Welfare (7%)
- 17 Plant Health (7%)
- 15 GRM (6%)

2008: 256 audits/inspections scheduled, including 20 GRM + 6 GA
General Review Missions

- 27 Country Profiles on website
- 20 update GRMs in 2008

General Audits

- 2 Pilots in 2007 (AT and NL)
- 6 first round in 2008 (SK, HU, EE, ES, IE + DE)
Mission Prioritisation

The Process:

- SANCO planning process starts early in year chaired by DDG.
- Detailed proposals agreed mid-year. (various inputs including identified risks, policy/legal priorities, trade considerations etc).
- Proposed programme presented to MS at Heads of Service and CVOs meeting (before summer break).
- Further refinement and input from other related DGs (e.g. DG AGRI).
- Programme submitted to DG & DDG (and Commissioner) for approval.
- Detailed programme distributed to MS in final quarter of year.
- Forwarded to EP and published on SANCO Europa
- Programme adjusted to deal with emergencies/cancellations/political issues etc.
Key Functions (2) – Report on the Results

Report type:

1- Individual reports (draft/final*)
2- General reports (end/interim). For example:
   - Animal Welfare,
   - Animal Nutrition,
   - TSEs,
   - Plant protection products,
   - GMOs, food hygiene.
3- More recently, production of the Country Profile and from 2008, the GA reports.

* Distribution of final report to CS, CA, EP/Council, stakeholders
Report writing

The process:
- Manual of Procedures
- PMQ & evaluation plan for mission series
- LI produces draft report on return from mission
- Review by HOU and report co-ordinator
- Legal & compliance checks pre/post mission (F6)
- Clarity, coherence & consistency (i.e. is consistent approach being taken in comparison with similar missions to other countries, or earlier mission to the same country)
- Draft report to CA for comment & action plan
- Finalise report (repeat points 4 to 6)
Key functions (3) - Mission Follow-up

- Initial phase in Inspection Units (individual reports). Assessment of CA action plans, request for further information/clarification (where required) & final unit assessment + CN;
- Subsequently co-ordinated in Unit F1 (on a country basis) – see Country Profile for MS;
- Ongoing correspondence, F1 meetings with CA, “high level meetings”;
- Co-ordination with A/D/E : SANCO Management Committee on Follow-Up.
Key function (4) – Country profiles (MS)

- Meeting with all CA on 11 control systems
- Description of control systems: who is doing what
- Follow up: progress on FVO recommendations

Animal health
Food of animal origin
Imports of animals/food of anim.
Feedstuff
TSE/ABP
Residues
Food hygiene
Imports of food of plant origin
Pesticides
Animal welfare
Plant health
Why Country Profiles? They provide a horizontal, country-based overview which:

- helps to identify the main strengths and weaknesses of each national control system,
- assists the overall prioritisation of FVO audits, inspections and other monitoring activities,
- supports the systematic follow up of recommendations in FVO reports,
- facilitates the conduct of audits and inspections, in particular General Audits under Regulation 882/2004,
- serves as a basic source of background information for stakeholders (e.g. briefings).
Country Profiles – the work behind the scenes

For the 27 MS:

• 1200 reports
• 8000 recommendations
• 1250 reviewed in GRM
• 500 remain on radar screen
• 100 no adequate response
Country Profiles – Examples

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Key Functions (5) – Input into the legislative process

Examples:

- Decisions taken on the basis of FVO inspections (e.g. 2008/61/EC on beef export from Brazil)
- Intra/Inter-service consultations,
- Guidelines for MS related to official food and feed controls, for example:
  - preparation of the MACP - Decision 2007/363/EC
  - criteria for the conduct of audits - Decision 2006/677/EC
Key Functions (6) – Input into SANCO policies

Examples:
- Individual and general reports
- Follow-up activities
- Participation in SANCO and other fora
  - SANCO Management Committees,
  - Safeguard cell meetings,
  - Commission Working Groups (e.g. BIPs, residues) and SCoFCAH,
  - Veterinary Agreement related work.
Key Functions (7) – Information to the consumer

Information includes:

- Individual country reports available on the SANCO internet site together with CA comments + AP
- General reports
- MS Country Profiles
- FVO Annual Report (since 1997)
- i.e. The state of application of Community legislation.
Additional Core Activities (8)

- Desk-studies (questionnaires, data review)
- Other reports: *on Pesticide monitoring programme*
- Operation of Europhyt
- Assessment of plans *BIPs, Third country Residue Plans*
New Developments

Reg. 882/2004, MS obligations:

- MS to develop Multi-annual, National Control Plans (MANCP)
- MS to develop National Audit Systems
- National, Annual Reports + modification National Plan
- Additional provisions for sanctions and for support measures (training)
New Developments (cont.)

- Reg. 882/2004, Com. obligations:
  - FVO to develop guidelines:
    - for the National Control Plans (2007/363/EC),
    - for the National Audit Systems, (2006/677/EC)
    - for the Annual Reports,
    - for third country information.

- Commission to submit annual report on operation of controls in MS

- New support tools: databases, country profiles (CP)
More information - FVO Web-site

- Mission programme
- Audit/inspection reports
- Special reports (e.g. pesticides)
- FVO annual report
- Country profiles

http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/index_en.htm