

FOOD SAFETY: WHAT THE EU DOES FOR CONSUMERS

(Part 2)

Facts: EU protecting consumers from scandals

- Animals and plants health
- Novel foods / Genetically Modified Organisms
- Feed legislation and feed labeling



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FACTS:

In the wake of the horsemeat scandal and other cases of food fraud, the Parliament called for mandatory indication of origin, particularly of meat used as an ingredient in processed foods. The Parliament and the Council agreed on new rules to intensify official food controls to improve traceability and combat fraud. In the negotiations, Parliament secured the strengthening of enforcement measures regarding fraudulent or deceptive practices. Parliament is also particularly vigilant with regard to consumer health threats associated with cloned animals, nanomaterials or GMOs. It closely scrutinizes and regularly rejects draft proposals concerning the authorization or renewal of authorization of new genetically modified plants, such as corn or soybeans.

the organization of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption. The common framework also includes specific rules for fresh meat, bivalve molluscs as well as milk and dairy products. This package assigns responsibility for

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH

European regulations include general provisions for the surveillance, notification and treatment of infectious diseases and their vectors in order to ensure the safety of the food chain. The original legislative framework applicable to the organization of official controls was established to ensure that compliance with feed and food law and animal health and welfare rules is verified. In May 2013, the Commission presented a new legislative package including proposals on animal and plant health, plant reproductive material, and official controls. The package included a more risk-based approach to animal health protection, with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of official controls to prevent food crises and fraud as much as possible. This resulted in new EU animal health legislation (Communicable Animal Disease Regulation), adopted in March 2016 and applicable from April 2021, which emphasizes prevention and elimination of animal diseases by clarifying responsibilities and ensuring early diagnosis and control. The new phytosanitary regime (regulation on protective measures against plant pests) aims to protect crops, fruits, vegetables, and forests from the entry or spread of pests or diseases. For the most part, the legislation has been in force since December 2019, in the same way as the new regulation on official controls, also covering plant health and animal by-products.



(From CABI Digital library)



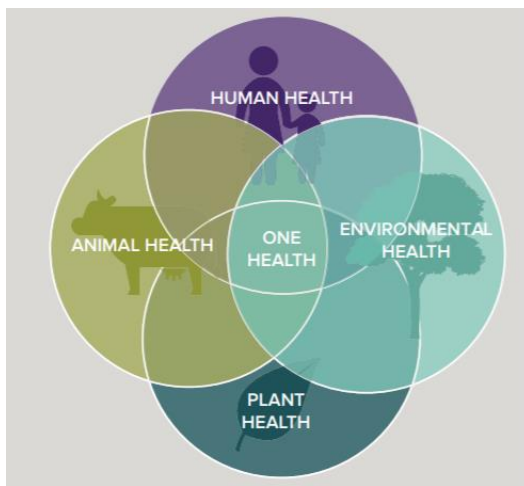
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NOVEL FOODS

Novel foods, i.e., those whose use was not widespread before May 1997, must undergo a safety assessment before being marketed in the Union. As of 2018, a new regulation is in effect that, while maintaining a high level of food safety, provides easier access to novel foods. This regulation introduces a simplified and centralized online authorization procedure at the EU level for novel foods and traditional foods from third countries (considered novel foods in the Union). Before authorizing them, EFSA carries out a scientific assessment of the safety of these foods centrally, defining their conditions of use, food designation and labeling requirements. All newly authorized foods will appear on a positive list. Until specific legislation on foods made from animal clones comes into force, such foods fall under the scope of the aforementioned regulation and should therefore be properly labeled.



(by Amanda Berrian Ohio State University)

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMOs)

A GMO is "an organism, other than a human being, whose genetic material has been modified in a way that is different from what occurs in nature by natural mating and/or genetic recombination." [1] Thanks to modern biotechnology, it is possible to make modifications to plants, for example, to make them resistant to disease or to increase their yield. In accordance with the precautionary principle, the EU has established a strict legal framework for the cultivation and marketing of GMOs used in food or feed. The placing of a GMO on the market is tied to a scientific risk assessment conducted by EFSA, in cooperation with the scientific bodies of the member states, in order to rule out any danger to human or animal health and the environment. Upon receipt of EFSA's opinion, the Commission (possibly departing from it) will prepare a draft decision, in which it grants or refuses authorization, to be voted on by a qualified majority by an expert committee composed of representatives of the member states. If no opinion is adopted, such as in the absence of a qualified majority for or against the authorization, the final decision rests with the Commission. Any authorized food or feed produced from or containing GMOs must be traceable and clearly labeled as such so that consumers can make informed choices. Member states are allowed to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of crops containing GMOs on their territory, even if the practice is permitted at the EU level

FEED LEGISLATION AND FEED LABELING.

Feed business operators must ensure that all stages of production, processing and distribution under their control comply with EU feed hygiene rules and must ensure full traceability. This includes imports and exports of feed from and to third countries. When feeding food-producing animals, farmers are required to keep the risk of biological, chemical and physical contamination of feed, animals and animal products as low as reasonably achievable. A specific directive sets maximum limits for undesirable substances in animal feed, including heavy metals, and prohibits dilution of contaminated raw materials. Existing feed labeling and marketing regulations are intended to ensure a high level of feed safety and ultimately public health protection, as well as to provide adequate information for users and consumers.

To know more access the following link: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en>

SAFFI: THE SINO-EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM PARTNER CENTERS



- Coordination: French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE),
- Five international infant food companies (Friesland Campina, HiPP, YIOTIS, Beingmate, YFFC)
 - Two food safety authority institutions (ZAIQ and ANSES)
 - Three European technological SMEs (CremeGlobal, Computomics, BDS)
 - The Union of 49 National European Societies of Pediatric (EPA-UNEPSA)
 - Seven leading European and Chinese academic institutions (WU, UNITO, IRTA, IVV; ZJU, ZAAS, JAAS)



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