



Food, feed, animal and plant imports : safety and compliance with Community rules

*Symposium « Health risks assessment and imports »
- 3 October 2008 -*

Context :

- ➡ International trade – WTO rules
- ➡ Increased pressure on EU market (1st food importer)

→ *EU and MS must guarantee that agricultural and food-industry products imported from third-countries are safe and comply with the European standards*

Main issues :

- ☛ EU conditions applying to import controls and inspections (vegetal / animal) → **deficit of harmonisation**
- ☛ **Deficit of risk analysis** for imports
- ☛ Some differences between the requirements to be met between EU and imported products (cf. chemical inputs and residues in foodstuffs) → **distortion of competition**
- ☛ SPS agreement : science / health risks = only criterion → not possible to take into account other **legitimate factors and collective preferences** (political or societal choices : animal welfare for instance)

Method :

- Submission of a **memorandum** to the AGRI Council on 23 June 2008
- Adoption of **Council conclusions before the end of 2008**

Proposal 1 : Improvement in import controls and definition of a new strategic framework (animal / vegetal)

- revision on some provisions applying to imports for more **harmonisation**
- control conditions based on **risk analysis**
- extended use of information system (**TRACES**)
- optimised **cooperation with customs**
- rules applying to **travellers**
- international **cooperation** and technical assistance

Proposal 2 (a) : Comprehensive analysis of sanitary and phytosanitary risks of imports

➔ Definition of **appropriate sanitary and phytosanitary levels of protection** for the EU (ALOP)

➔ **Risk assessment :**

- ✓ Development of **harmonised methodologies**
- ✓ More important role for **EFSA** in the coordination and performance of scientific assessments
- ✓ Establishment of its **working programme in coordination** with competent national and regional bodies

Proposal 2 (b) : Comprehensive analysis of sanitary and phytosanitary risks of imports

➔ Recognition of **equivalence** and exporting countries' **compliance with EU rules**

✓ **FVO inspections** (low number in plant sector) : to be selected on the basis of **risk analysis**

✓ Results of FVO inspections and analysis of non-compliance

✓ Scientific risk assessments

Identification and quantification of risks arising from imports

Proposal 3 : putting an end to distortion of competition and consideration for legitimate factors and collective preference

- ➡ **Promotion of EU standards at international levels**
- ➡ Further consideration for **societal choices** (ex: animal welfare) in international trade
- ➡ **Consumer information – adding value to EU products**

What can we expect from this symposium ?

→ **to issue proposals** in order to strengthen the current system and improve the **contribution of scientific risk assessments to support risk management measures applying to imports**

☛ **What role could EFSA and the competent national and regional bodies play :**

- ✓ in the risk assessement of imports ?
- ✓ to help select FVO inspections ?
- ✓ to help define products which should submitted to strengthened controls ?
- ✓ to help risk managers define ALOP for the EU ?
- ✓ ...?