



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

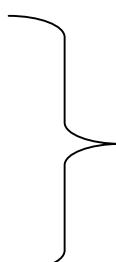
Proposal 2 (a) : Comprehensive analysis of sanitary and phytosanitary risks of imports

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