



Food and Veterinary Office - Annual Report 2006

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The Food and Veterinary Office (FVO)

Mission



The Commission, in its role as guardian of the European Community Treaties, is responsible for ensuring that Community legislation on food safety, animal health, plant health and animal welfare is properly implemented and enforced. The Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) plays an important role in fulfilling this task.

The FVO is part of the Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection and is based in Grange, County Meath, Ireland.

The mission of the FVO is, through its audits, inspections and related activities, to:

- check on compliance with the requirements of EU food safety and quality, animal health and welfare 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 European Community policy in the food safety, animal health and welfare and plant health sectors,
- contribute to the development and implementation of effective control systems in the food safety, animal health and welfare and plant health sectors; and
- inform stakeholders of the outcome of its audits and inspections.

Activities

Inspections are the principal means by which the FVO performs its role. FVO inspectors carry out inspections in Member States, Accession Countries, Candidate Countries and other third countries. These inspections are primarily aimed at verifying the effectiveness of national control systems for enforcing Community legislation in the fields of food safety, animal health and welfare and plant health.

Each year a programme of FVO inspections is developed, identifying priority areas and countries for inspection. These programmes are published on the website of the Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection. In order to ensure that the programme remains up to date and relevant, it is reviewed mid-year. New inspections may need to be programmed, for example, in response to emerging risks such as disease outbreaks. These new inspections are reflected in modifications to the inspection programme.

The findings and conclusions of the inspections are presented in reports that are, in general, made public on the Directorate-General's website. These reports include recommendations to the country's competent authority to deal with any shortcomings revealed during the inspections. The competent authority is requested to present an action plan to the FVO on how it intends to address those recommendations.

Together with other Commission services, the FVO evaluates the action plan and monitors its implementation. Different means, such as follow-up inspections, requests for written reports and high-level meetings can be used by the FVO to ensure that improvements in the control systems are achieved. As a last resort, legal action under EU law may be taken by the Commission to ensure that Member States meet their obligations under Community law.

Where an inspection identifies an immediate threat to consumer, animal or plant health, the Commission may take emergency, or safeguard, measures. These may include legal action to prevent trade in, or imports of, animals, plants or their products. In other cases, where serious, but less urgent, problems are found, or where a competent authority fails to take satisfactory corrective action, the Commission may use the inspection report as one element in deciding to start infringement proceedings against a Member State or, in the case of a third country, to refuse, withdraw or modify authorisations for exports to the EU.

Where appropriate, reports may highlight areas where the Commission may need to consider clarifying or amending legislation or areas where new legislation might be required. In this way, the results of FVO inspections contribute to the development of EU legislation.

In addition, the FVO produces other reports, such as general overview reports that summarise the results of a series of inspections to a number of Member States on the same subject, or the annual EU-wide pesticide residues monitoring reports.

The FVO also publishes an annual report on its activities, which reviews the progress of its inspection programme and presents the global results.

FVO Inspections 2006

Objectives

Inspection Objectives

Food Safety:	68%
Food of animal origin	26%
Import controls	12%
TSE/Animal by-products	7%
General/horizontal issues	5%
Feed and food	5%
Pesticides	5%
Veterinary medicines and residues	3%
Contaminants, additives	2%
Food Hygiene HACCP	2%
Other	1%
Animal Health:	14%
Identification/certification	5%
Disease eradication/control plans	4%
Intra-Community trade	2%
Disease outbreaks	1%
Disease contingency plans	1%
Other	1%
Animal Welfare:	13%
Laying hens, pigs, calves	5%
Slaughter killing	4%
Transport	2%
On-farm and other	2%
Plant Health:	5%
Plant pest outbreaks	2%
Import controls	1%
Internal market – Plant passport	1%
Other	1%

In 2006, the FVO carried out 255 inspections.

An FVO inspection can cover a number of objectives. Each objective is categorised into one of four broad areas:

- food safety;
- animal health;
- animal welfare;
- plant health.

On this basis, more than two-thirds of the inspection objectives in 2006 concerned food safety. However, following the “farm to fork” approach, many food safety inspections also cover some animal health and welfare elements.

The table opposite gives the breakdown of inspection objectives in 2006.

Countries

Inspections in Member States	
Austria	3
Belgium	6
Cyprus	5
Czech Republic	4
Denmark	5
Estonia	3
Finland	3
France	9
Germany	11
Greece	6
Hungary	7
Ireland	4
Italy	11
Latvia	5
Lithuania	7
Luxembourg	3
Malta	2
Poland	10
Portugal	8
Slovak Republic	7
Slovenia	4
Spain	9
Sweden	3
The Netherlands	8
United Kingdom	16
Total	159
Accession and Candidate Countries	
Bulgaria	13
Romania	13
Croatia	2
FYROM	1
Turkey	2
Total	31

The 255 FVO inspections in 2006 covered 78 countries. Apart from the 25 Member States, 2 pre-Accession Member States ('Accession Countries') and 3 Candidate Countries, a further 48 countries worldwide (referred to as third countries) were visited.

There were 159 inspections in the 25 Member States during 2006. For Accession and Candidate Countries, 31 inspections took place in 2006, while 65 were carried out in other third countries.

The tables opposite give the separate breakdowns of the number of inspections per Member State and per Accession/Candidate Country.

Accession Countries are those countries in the process for accession to the European Union. Bulgaria and Romania signed Treaties of Accession on 25.04.2005, and joined the EU on 1 January 2007.

Candidate Countries are those countries which are candidates for future membership of the EU but which have not yet started the formal process for accession. From 17 December 2005, Candidate Countries are Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Turkey.

A full list of all the countries visited in 2006 is included in Annex 2 to this report.



Food and Feed Safety

The majority of the work undertaken by the FVO concerning the evaluation of official control systems, both in Member States and other countries, falls under this heading. It encompasses the total food chain "from farm to fork", including primary production, through processing of animal and non-animal origin foodstuffs, to retail and catering.

Evaluation of official control systems is undertaken to verify that the feed and food safety requirements established in EU law are being applied by the competent authorities in the Member States and in the third countries that export feed and food to the EU. In the case of Candidate and Accession Countries, such evaluations are performed in the context of the process of accession.

Member States



Activities

Missions were carried out to all Member States to assess the application of the Regulations governing the hygiene of red meat and milk, including certification procedures, which applied from 1 January 2006.

The FVO started in 2006 a new series of missions to Member States, concerning the risk of Salmonella infection in table eggs. Inspections were carried out in France, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom.

There were inspections in eight Member States (Austria, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Slovak Republic, Spain and the United Kingdom) to assess controls systems for the prevention, control and eradication of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). Inspections concentrated on the implementation of EU rules on:

- Epidemio-surveillance
- Removal of specified risk material (SRM)
- Official controls on the total feed ban

In addition, a mission to Poland focused on the total feed ban and controls on organic fertilisers.

A series of missions was carried out in four Member States (Belgium, Denmark, Portugal and The Netherlands) concerning official controls on feed and feed hygiene requirements. These missions focused on:

- the implementation of the new requirements set out in Regulations (EC) No 882/2004 and (EC) No 183/2005
- other feed legislation, in particular Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003

Findings

The overall picture which emerged was one of limited application of the basic hygiene rules. A wide range of shortcomings was identified in structures and maintenance, operational hygiene, inspection procedures and official supervision.

In particular, in the case of seven Member States the situation was such that they were asked to take immediate remedial action. These Member States will be re-visited in the first half of 2007.

Different situations were found, which partly confirmed the results of a baseline study carried out by the EFSA. All Member States visited are, however, trying to further reduce the level of contamination in their laying flocks.

In addition, in some of the Member States visited, deficiencies related to legislation other than that covered by the scope of the inspection were revealed during the missions. These concerned issues such as the correct use of 'best before dates' on eggs or testing of egg products for certain parameters.

All Member States concerned have provided the necessary guarantees that corrective actions were taken after the relevant mission.

The systems of BSE controls were largely satisfactory apart from minor shortcomings regarding epidemio-surveillance.

There were also minor shortcomings in SRM controls.

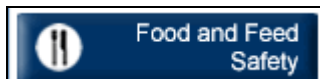
The systems put in place to give effect to the total feed ban were largely satisfactory but there was still some room for improvement of controls.

In the Member States visited the systems in place with respect to feed safety controls were largely satisfactory. However, there were some minor problems regarding approval and registration of feed business operators and primary producers of feed.



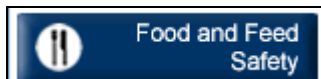
Food and Feed Safety

Member States	Activities	Findings
	Five missions to follow-up previous animal by-products (ABP) inspections were carried out in 2006. The Member States visited were Germany, Greece, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. The inspections checked the implementation of EU rules on ABP with respect to: • The arrangements and infrastructure in place for the handling of ABP from the point where they are produced until their safe disposal or permitted use; • ABP controls and traceability.	As regards ABP, all Member States visited had adequate arrangements and sufficient infrastructures in place to handle most of the ABP in accordance with the ABP Regulation. Progress was noted in the implementation of the recommendations of previous ABP missions but there remained some work to do. In particular, Member States need to improve the effectiveness and/or uniformity of official control of the ABP chain by ensuring: • Availability of adequate staff resources; • A clear definition and distribution of responsibilities amongst the competent authorities involved; • More guidance and training, and better co-operation between the various competent authorities responsible for these official controls.
Accession and Candidate Countries	Activities	Findings
	Inspections were carried out in Bulgaria and Romania to assess the progress made in the application of EU legislation, in particular in the field of hygiene of products of mammalian origin.	In Bulgaria, the situation in red meat and milk production and processing was found not to meet EU requirements. In both countries, the majority of raw milk did not meet EU requirements. Deficiencies were also found in both countries in the identification and registration of farm animals. Both countries gave undertakings to correct the deficiencies found and follow-up inspections will take place in 2007.
	An inspection was carried out in Croatia, to assess animal health and veterinary public health controls in relation to mammals and products of mammalian origin, with a view to accession.	Very little progress had been made since the previous mission in 2005. Most of the relevant EU legislation remained untransposed, no extra resources had been allocated to the competent authority and little progress had been made in upgrading establishments or setting up the necessary animal disease programmes. Recommendations for improvements have been made to the Croatian authorities.
	An inspection was carried out in Turkey to evaluate official controls over the production of milk, dairy products and casings for export to the EU.	Although the structure and hygiene of the majority of dairy establishments was satisfactory, the raw milk did not meet EU hygiene or animal health standards. In the production of casings, shortcomings were found in the traceability of the raw materials and in certification of products for export.
	Missions covering BSE, ABP and feed safety were carried out in Bulgaria and Romania.	In general progress was noted in the implementation of BSE controls. Systems covering approval and registration of feed establishments are in place in both countries but further work will be needed to ensure a level of feed safety comparable with EU standards.



Food and Feed Safety

Third Countries	Activities	Findings
	Inspections to evaluate the production of food of mammalian origin for export to the European Union were made to four countries in South America (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), and to Serbia.	In Argentina, standards in the EU export establishments were generally high. In Brazil, a mission in July found that standards had improved in EU export establishments. The mission to Paraguay found that the authorities had made considerable progress towards meeting the conditions for export of beef to the EU, but that some shortcomings remained in the official control of meat hygiene. A follow-up mission is planned for 2007. In Uruguay, the food hygiene standards were found to be largely satisfactory in all establishments visited, and the competent authority immediately initiated corrective action to address any deficiencies found. In Serbia, serious shortcomings were found in export slaughterhouses. The Serbian authorities voluntarily suspended exports of horses and casings and fresh meat from certain slaughterhouses.
	During the inspection in Serbia to evaluate the production of food of mammalian origin for export to the European Union, controls on health conditions for export of egg products, birds other than poultry, frogs' legs, snails and bees were also evaluated.	Weaknesses were identified in the official control system for establishments and holdings and in the issuance of health certificates for export to the EU of certain animals and products. These had, however, no direct consequences for the EU consumer as no export takes place apart of live birds.
	Inspections regarding public health conditions for exports of fishery products to the EU were carried out in 31 third countries included in part 1 of the list in the Annex to Commission Decision 97/296/EC. In three countries, the inspection also covered live bivalve molluscs and/ or animal health issues.	Although huge differences exist between the countries visited, both in relation to the structure and capabilities of the competent authorities and in the level of compliance of establishments with the EU standards, most of the countries inspected do not comply with all relevant conditions for exporting fishery products to the EU. In some countries, the deficiencies were so significant that the Commission had to impose certain restrictions on the trade, such as suspending the prelisting of establishments or suspending all imports from a listed country. As in previous years, problems were noted regarding the laboratory testing capacities and the shortage of sufficiently trained and motivated officials to supervise the production chain. This, combined with the poor hygiene conditions of fishing vessels and landing sites, led to situations where a potential risk for the EU consumer could not be ruled out. In addition, in countries also approved for export of aquaculture fishery products, weaknesses were noted concerning the animal health guarantees for the export of live fish and gametes, together with deficiencies as regards residue monitoring for certain substances and controls over the use of veterinary medicinal products. In order to improve the situation, the outcome of this ongoing inspection series has led the Commission to target better its technical assistance programmes in the developing countries concerned.



Food and Feed Safety

Third Countries	Activities	Findings
	A mission to Canada was carried out under the terms of the Agreement between the European Community and the Government of Canada on sanitary measures to protect public and animal health in respect of trade of live animals and animal products. The mission concerned public health conditions for fishery products.	Official controls were not implemented in a uniform way, in particular at establishment level. However, in spite of the deficiencies noted, the mission did not reveal any immediate risk for the EU consumer, mainly because of the nature of the products.
	BSE missions were carried out in New Zealand and Australia. The missions focused on gathering information on how control measures currently in place take into consideration the recommendations in Geographical BSE-Risk assessments and international standards on BSE. In addition, an assessment was made of the systems in place for the certification of export of certain products of animal origin to the EU.	Certification of beef to the EU was done in accordance with EU requirements and, in New Zealand the recommendations of the Geographical BSE-Risk assessment have been taken into consideration. In Australia there was room for improvement in the implementation of the ban on feeding ruminant protein to ruminants and in the surveillance programmes for BSE.



Animal Health

Animal health controls are important for two reasons:

- the protection of consumers from zoonotic diseases (i.e. transmissible from animals to humans) such as brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis (TB);
- the protection of animals from diseases with serious economic effects.

Member States	Activities	Findings
	Missions to assess the application of the veterinary legislation covering intra-Community trade in live farm animals were carried out in 8 Member States.	Only minor shortcomings were found in Germany, Hungary, Ireland and Italy. In France, Spain and the UK, the level of official supervision and control was inadequate, and in Poland serious shortcomings were found in the control and certification systems. The Polish authorities undertook to correct these.
	An inspection was carried out in the United Kingdom regarding animal health controls for intra-Community trade in semen and embryos of cattle.	The EU legislation was not fully transposed. Control systems in place, and their supervision, were insufficient to ensure the correct application of health and hygiene requirements for the processing and storage of semen and embryos. Recommendations for action were made to the competent authorities.
	Inspections on the application of Community rules on the identification and registration of sheep and goats were carried out in Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Spain, and The Netherlands.	In general, the situation was found to be satisfactory. However, in Cyprus up to 5% of sheep and goats, whose ears are not suitable for tagging, are not identified by other means; in France the absence of registers on holdings compromises traceability; in Greece the lack of enforcement powers by the veterinary service undermines the traceability system; and, in Spain a gap in the system for animals under 12 months renders certification unreliable. Recommendations for action were made to the competent authorities.
	Missions were carried out to Germany, Hungary and the Slovak Republic to assess controls on Classical Swine Fever in the wild pig populations.	In Germany, the vaccination and testing programme was progressing as planned. However, the recurrence of Classical Swine Fever outbreaks in domestic pigs in 2006 demonstrated the need for continued vigilance. In Hungary, the intensity of hunting was too low to ensure the collection of sufficient samples, and the communication between the Hungarian and Slovak authorities had to be improved.
	A mission was carried out to Germany to assess controls on rabies on foxes.	Some shortcomings in laboratory procedures were noted, which could affect the surveillance programme by underestimating the number of vaccine-related cases in wildlife. Recommendations were made to the competent authority to correct this
	Missions were carried out to Italy, Portugal and Spain to assess the control of bluetongue.	An improvement in the epidemiological situation was noted in Italy, but in all three countries shortcomings were found in the application of control measures, which could jeopardise the long-term situation.
	A mission was carried out to Italy, to assess the application of the programmes to eradicate brucellosis (<i>abortus</i> and <i>melitensis</i>).	The programmes were continuing as planned, and some progress had been achieved. However, brucellosis continued to be a problem in the southern regions.
	The FVO carried out a mission to the United Kingdom to assess quarantine of captive birds.	Due to the ban on captive bird imports throughout the EU the evaluation of the importing system was done retrospectively. While some weaknesses were identified; the system was in a transitional phase and changes have been made in order to be able to fulfil Community



Animal Health

Member States	Activities	Findings
		requirements for this sector if and when imports are resumed.
Accession and Candidate Countries	Activities	Findings
	Missions to Bulgaria and Romania were carried out concerning contingency plans, preparedness of the country and surveillance for Avian Influenza.	Deficiencies were noted concerning laboratory testing and surveillance schemes, undermining the efficiency of control and eradication efforts in Romania. In Bulgaria, inconsistencies existed in the contingency plans and their implementation on the spot. Follow-up missions have been planned for early 2007.
Third Countries	Activities	Findings
	Certain animal health aspects were evaluated during the inspections in four countries in South America (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), and in Serbia to evaluate the production of food of mammalian origin for export to the European Union, (already referred to under Food and Feed Safety above).	In Argentina, FMD controls were found to be generally effective. Some minor shortcomings were found in relation to animal identification and movement controls. In Brazil, a mission in July found that improvements were being made to the animal identification system. An outbreak of FMD had been controlled. A second mission in September to assess progress in the control of the FMD outbreak confirmed that the measures being taken were, in general, appropriate. The mission to Paraguay found that the authorities had made considerable progress, but that some shortcomings remained in FMD controls and laboratory procedures. A follow-up mission is planned for 2007. In Uruguay, animal health standards were found to be largely satisfactory. The competent authority immediately initiated corrective action where deficiencies were found. In Serbia, serious shortcomings were found in animal health controls. The Serbian authorities voluntarily suspended exports of horses.
	A mission was carried out to Iran to assess animal health controls of live horses and horse semen, with a view to export to the EU.	Although some inaccuracies were noted in the reporting of notifiable diseases, these diseases were under control in the population of registered horses. However, the Iranian laboratories were not capable of performing all the tests required by EU rules.
	Two missions were carried out to China in relation to the animal health conditions for the import of poultry meat products into the EU (the second mission being a follow up of the first).	Progress was noted but some problems remain regarding legislation and control measures.



Animal Welfare



Inspections dealt with EU animal welfare legislation applicable on farms, during transport and at slaughter.

Inspections

Member States

Austria
Belgium
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
France
Greece
Hungary
Ireland
Lithuania
Slovakia
Slovenia
The Netherlands
United Kingdom

Accession and Candidate Countries

Romania
Bulgaria
Croatia

Activities

Eight missions focused on animal welfare standards on farms and, as was the case in missions to other Member States in 2005, were particularly concerned with pigs and laying hens.

Five further missions included aspects of transport and slaughter of animals in addition to aspects of animal welfare on farms.

Three missions dealt specifically with animal welfare at the time of slaughter and, as it has been proposed to revise the current EU requirements on this topic, national measures additional to the current requirements were also assessed.

Findings

Generally there has been progress by the Member States in improving national inspections and these were mostly carried out in a more precise way. Steps have also been taken to ensure that no new unenriched battery cages have been brought into use following the EU wide ban, applicable from 1.1.2003. However, despite giving commitments to the contrary, Lithuania had allowed the continued use of non-compliant cages by a significant proportion of its laying hen sector.

Systems for group housing pregnant sows are increasingly being introduced, but apart from that, the implementation of other EU requirements has generally not been sufficient to ensure the provision of materials for manipulation, avoidance of tail-docking and adequate care of sick or injured pigs.

The effectiveness of actions taken following the detection of deficiencies was consistently the weakest aspect of the control systems evaluated.

Some progress had been made in Bulgaria and Romania, with more effective control systems set up, increased staff working on animal welfare at central level and improved guidance and training on this topic. Two major problems concerned unenriched cages not being in compliance with EU requirements and the high number of animals reared on subsistence farms for personal consumption which are slaughtered without prior stunning.

Missions with this scope also took place in Cyprus, Slovenia and Croatia. Slovenia had already developed comprehensive checks of transport and particular enforcement measures had been taken to ensure that animals, which were unfit for transport, were not transported alive to slaughterhouses. There were problems with stunning of poultry prior to slaughter in all of these countries.

The Netherlands and Denmark have adopted legislative measures which go further than EU requirements on the issue of religious slaughter.

Although not specified in EU legislation, both Denmark and The Czech Republic had implemented measures so that stunning of fish was included in the processing of farmed fish. Research in this area was being carried out in The Netherlands. More detailed parameters for the stunning of animals in slaughterhouses had been provided in all of these countries. Some benefits of the inclusion of animal welfare within the framework of feed and food controls were seen, as the systems for recording checks and supervision by the other levels of the competent authority are helping to identify problems and instigate corrective measures.



Animal Welfare

Activities	Findings
A mission to Greece was carried out in the context of an on-going infringement procedure in relation to controls for animal welfare during transport and at slaughter.	There was little progress in the implementation of the actions previously proposed by the competent authority. In relation to the transport of animals, the quality of the checks and enforcement actions were still insufficient. On occasions, the level of control at slaughterhouses was completely inadequate allowing major deficiencies to persist.



Plant Health

Inspections 2006

Member States

Hungary
Italy (4)
Latvia (2)
Lithuania
Netherlands (2)
Slovakia
Portugal (2)
United Kingdom (2)

Accession Countries

Bulgaria
Romania

Third Countries

Lebanon
Thailand

Plant health controls are important to prevent the introduction and/or the spread of organisms that are harmful to plants and that do not already exist commonly in the Community. Introduction of such organisms could result in:

- reductions in the yield or quality of agricultural or horticultural crops;
- increased use of plant protection products;
- damage to the environment, e.g. forested areas.

Member States



Activities

The control of plants and certain plant products that are imported from third countries is a cornerstone of the EU plant health regime. Revised, more specific legislation on this issue came into full effect in the Member States from 1 January 2005. Three Member States were inspected, partly to follow-up on problems found during previous missions, and partly to verify the implementation of this revised legislation.

A "Plant Passport" should accompany a defined range of plants and plant products moving in the internal market. It is intended to certify that the necessary plant health checks have been carried at the place of production and the origin of the material. Three Member States were inspected on their implementation of the Plant Passport system. In addition, three Member States were visited to evaluate their controls in the potato sector.

Findings

The missions found that some of the shortcomings found in previous missions had not been fully addressed and also that the revised legislation is still not being implemented fully. Action plans which address many of the shortcomings found have been submitted and the Commission will continue to assess progress and their implementation.

The results from missions carried out in 2004 and 2005 showed that in several Member States, the plant passport system was not being fully implemented and that many Member States do not have sufficient inspectors to supervise the system adequately. It was also found that many producers and other operators were not always sufficiently aware of the plant health requirements that should be met before they issued a plant passport, or of the relevant administrative requirements. In many cases the plant passport takes the form of a reference on accompanying commercial documentation and not a label as required. A number of the missions carried out during 2005 and 2006 showed that, with adequate resources and training of the involved parties, it is possible to implement the system fully. Action plans have been submitted by the Member States visited, which address most of the outstanding issues. The Commission will continue to monitor progress in their implementation. An overview report has been presented to the Member States in the Standing Committee on Plant Health as a result of which, further measures are being considered. The inspections on potato sector controls revealed a generally good degree of compliance with the requirements of Community legislation.



Plant Health

Member States	Activities	Findings
	Five missions were carried out to assess the situation and control measures taken by Member States against outbreaks of Pine wood nematode, Chestnut gall wasp, Western corn rootworm, Citrus long horned beetle and Black citrus aphid. Emergency legislation had been introduced for the first three of these pests and the missions evaluated its implementation. For the two remaining pests, there is a general requirement to eradicate or contain them and the missions evaluated the control measures taken.	Pine wood nematode is present only in one Member State. The mission did not reveal any major non-compliance with the relevant emergency legislation, although the affected area has expanded significantly. Substantial additional controls are now being implemented and the Commission continues to monitor the situation closely. For the four other pests, the missions showed that for such mobile organisms, eradication and even containment is difficult, especially since the control effort was often insufficient. Recommendations for improvements were made to the Member States involved and progress will be monitored by the Commission.

Accession and Candidate Countries	Activities	Findings
	In the context of enlargement, monitoring inspections were performed in Bulgaria and Romania.	The inspections showed good progress in the transposition and implementation of EU plant health legislation and that recommendations made in light of previous inspections had largely been satisfactorily addressed.

Third Countries	Activities	Findings
	Two inspections were carried out in third countries. The first in Lebanon following a request for access to the EU market for ware potatoes, and the second, based on data from EUROPHYT, in Thailand to evaluate their export controls for plants and regulated plant produce.	The mission to Lebanon found that there was a need for some changes to be made in order for the derogation for access to be progressed; recommendations were made and the response to these will be evaluated by the Commission. The mission to Thailand found shortcomings in many aspects of the system of export controls and recommendations were made to address these. The Commission is in dialogue with Thailand regarding improvements and will continue to monitor the situation.

Non-inspection activities

Overview Reports	The situation of certain harmful organisms is monitored by obligatory surveys. Member States submit reports of their inspection and sampling activities annually to the Commission. These are analysed and overview reports are compiled. In 2006, these overviews included reports on <i>Clavibacter michiganensis</i> ssp. <i>sepedonicus</i> (potato ring rot), <i>Ralstonia solanacearum</i> (potato brown rot), <i>Bursaphelenchus xylophilus</i> (pine wood nematode), <i>Phytophthora ramorum</i> (sudden oak death), <i>Diabrotica virgifera virgifera</i> (western corn rootworm) and Pepino mosaic virus. The survey reports confirm that there is very substantial survey activity taking place in the EU. E.g. some 115,000 potato samples, each consisting of 200 tubers, were taken of the 2005 crop and subjected to laboratory analysis for <i>Clavibacter michiganensis</i> ssp. <i>sepedonicus</i>. However, the results also showed a substantial variation between Member States in the intensity of their survey activity. Although EC legislation specifies no minimum intensity, the differences in approach have been brought to the attention of the Member States.
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Plant Health

EUROPHYT

“EUROPHYT” is a web-based notification system, managed by the FVO, which enables Member States to rapidly notify interceptions of harmful organisms and non-compliant plants and plant produce either imported from third countries or moving in the internal market. The Commission and other Member States use this information to assess risk when formulating plant health policy and to optimise their controls. 2006 saw further enhancements to the help-desk function and, under the guidance of a user group, the addition of important new functions, in particular a comprehensive data extraction and reporting module. Training was provided for the new users from Bulgaria, Romania and Switzerland.

Practically all Member States use EUROPHYT to submit and distribute their notifications; the FVO ensures that the data is complete and valid. There has been a significant increase in the use of data extracts and reports by Member States and the Commission to support development of plant health policy and controls by the Member State services and the FVO.

Enlargement of the European Union

In 2006, the FVO intensified its programme of inspections in the two Accession Countries Bulgaria and Romania.

Enlargement Inspections		Activities	Findings
Accession Countries		The FVO performed fourteen inspections in Romania and thirteen in Bulgaria in 2006. These inspections covered all areas of FVO activity, as part of the Commission's overall monitoring of the progress of these countries in their preparations for EU membership. Regarding Candidate Countries, pre-accession monitoring which had begun in 2005, continued in 2006 with three FVO inspections to Croatia.	While the Romanian and Bulgarian responses to the 271 recommendations made by the FVO were positive, with a satisfactory response in 93% of cases, the delivery on commitments was lower than hoped – with 47% of recommendations closed following action taken.
Romania	14		These inspections highlighted that the national competent authorities had made better progress in 2006 than 2005 in responding to FVO recommendations. However, the level of action taken in response to FVO recommendations was still less than the 60% level that had been achieved by the previous ten accession countries prior to joining the EU.
Bulgaria	13		
Total	27		
Candidate Countries			
Croatia	3		
Total	3		This was mainly due to severe financial constraints, as well as political, legal and institutional complications. This applied in particular to import control systems, animal health controls, upgrading of agri-food establishments (in particular in Bulgaria where many establishments did not meet EU requirements) and general food hygiene controls.

Country Profiles



On 29 April 2004 the European Parliament and the Council adopted Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules. The Regulation sets out a new framework for control activities conducted by national authorities and the Commission. As part of its preparations for the implementation of the new requirements, the FVO has been establishing country profiles of control systems in the Member States, based mainly on information compiled from previous inspections and on the responses of national authorities to FVO recommendations. At present, each country profile includes the following:

- the overall structure, organisation and responsibilities of competent authorities;
- the control processes operated by these authorities;
- the response to previous FVO reports by competent authorities.

The FVO continued in 2006 with general review mission to Member States to enable it, jointly with each national authority, to review, update and complete as far as possible, the country profiles, as well as to assess action taken on recommendations made in previous FVO inspection reports. The information contained in these profiles continues to form a baseline for future audits of national control systems in 2008.

By the end of 2006, eighteen Member States had been visited for the first time and six countries had been subject to a further update general review mission. The intention is to carry out general review missions to a further nine Member States by mid 2007 thus completing the cycle and to continue to carry out update general review missions where required.

The FVO published country profiles of thirteen countries on its website during 2006. The country profiles can be found on the Commission's website at: http://ec.europa.eu/food/fvo/country_profiles_en.cfm

Special Topic

Chemical residues in food of animal origin

Within the EU, there is a legislative framework to monitor and control the presence of chemical residues in food derived from animals. Third countries exporting food to the EU must have equivalent systems in place and be listed in the Annex to Commission Decision 2004/432/EC indicating that they have approved residues plans. Inspections carried out by the residues group in the FVO enable evaluation of control systems on-the-spot. Evaluations focus on the control systems for residues of veterinary medicines, pesticides and contaminants in animals and animal products, including controls on the distribution and use of veterinary medicines. In 2006, the FVO residues group also assumed responsibility for the evaluation of residue control plans from third countries exporting food of animal origin to the EU. This additional task resulted in fewer inspections being carried out in 2006 compared to previous years.

Inspections	Activities	Findings
Residues Inspections Member States Lithuania Hungary	Two 'new' Member States were inspected, the first residues missions since accession.	The overall implementation of residues control plans was generally satisfactory, although certain deficiencies in laboratory capability, accreditation status, analytical performance and implementation of follow-up sampling were observed. Controls on the use and distribution of veterinary medicines were generally acceptable and enforcement actions were effective.
Accession Countries Romania Bulgaria	Residues inspections in two Accession Countries were conducted in the framework of pre-accession monitoring. These inspections focussed on the implementation of relevant EU legislation in the run up to accession.	Both Romania and Bulgaria had been inspected in 2005 in the pre-accession monitoring phase. The 2006 inspections demonstrated significant improvements in the organisation of residues controls and alignment of national legislation on veterinary medicines with Community law. Investment in laboratory infrastructure, analytical capability, training of staff and equipment remains a priority in both countries.
Third Countries China India Thailand New Zealand	Third country evaluations focused on the ability of those countries to satisfy Community requirements with regard to food exported to the EU. New Zealand is the only one of these countries to have a veterinary agreement with the EU in which equivalence has been agreed for residues testing in red meat.	The inspection in China was a follow-up to a residues inspection carried out in 2003. Relative to that mission, significant improvements to residues controls had been made. Similarly, the inspection in India followed up the progress made since a 2003 residues inspection. Significant improvements to residues controls had been made, however, there were still ongoing problems in the aquaculture sector. Thailand had never previously had a residues mission. The control system in place was largely satisfactory though there were some shortcomings in laboratory capability. Residues controls in New Zealand had last been examined in 2001 as part of an overall mission on food controls. The current mission was the first to focus solely on residues and the first to examine the system following the inclusion of residues controls in red meat as being 'equivalent' under the EU-NZ veterinary agreement. Overall, controls carried out under the scope of the Agreement were satisfactory, however there were a number of deficiencies in the scope of testing performed on non-red meat commodities. The laboratory capability was judged to be excellent.
Dioxins Inspections Member States Poland Germany Latvia Lithuania Denmark	The series of inspections focussing on control of dioxins in Baltic sea fish which commenced in 2005 was completed in 2006 when the 5 remaining Member States fishing in the Baltic Sea were inspected. A general report of this mission series was also produced and published (see below).	The approaches taken to the implementation of the dioxin controls varied in each of the countries visited. The majority of countries had conducted dioxin monitoring in fish, however only two countries had effective control systems in place to ensure that no fish with dioxin levels exceeding Community Maximum Levels are placed on the market for human consumption in the EU.

Special Topic

Chemical residues in food of animal origin*Non-inspection activities***General Reports**

Two general reports were produced in 2006. The first dealt with the series of residues inspections, (October 2003 – June 2005) in the fifteen 'old' Member States. The second dealt with the mission series (September 2005 – June 2006) on dioxin controls in Baltic sea fish (eight Member States). In each case, prior to publication, the findings of the mission series were presented to the Member States in Commission-hosted expert group meetings. The findings have also led to a number of initiatives being taken by the Commission and Member States to address the issues identified.

Evaluation of third country residue control plans

The task of evaluating residue control plans from third countries was taken over by the FVO in early 2006. As a first step the website of the Health and Consumer Protection Directorate was updated with a 'third country residues' web page explaining the elements required for drawing up a residues control plan, and the process by which such plans, and the guarantees they offer, are assessed in order to determine equivalence with Community law or alternative guarantees. A number of templates were also added to the page to allow third countries to construct the plan and report results in a uniform format. Of 76 countries submitting residue control plans to the Commission, 21 of these were incomplete (i.e. did not include all of the commodities for which there are approved residues plans in place). A total of 63 preliminary evaluations (83%) were performed with 60 giving rise to a request for further information. By December 2006, 32 final evaluations had been carried out, representing 59% of the countries which submitted complete residue plans.

The evaluations have resulted in a number of recommendations being made for the listing of new commodities/countries following approval of the residues plans submitted and a number of commodities/countries being proposed for removal from the list in the Annex to Commission Decision 2004/432/EC.

Special Topic

Pesticide residues in food of plant origin

The inspections in Member States examined the control systems put in place for pesticide residues in foodstuffs of plant origin. As pesticide residue monitoring is related to the placing on the market and use of plant protection products, the control systems for marketing and use were also evaluated. The inspections also focussed on the implementation of the Rapid Alert System for Feed and Food (RASFF) regarding pesticide residues.

Inspections	Activities	Findings
Member States Luxembourg Belgium Finland Sweden France Accession Countries Bulgaria Romania Third Countries Thailand Morocco South Africa	The FVO continued to conduct inspections of the marketing and use of plant protection products, and the control of pesticide residues. It completed a series of missions to all Member States with 5 inspection visits in 2006. As part of the accession process for Bulgaria and Romania missions specifically covering pesticides were also conducted to these states. Inspection activity in third countries relating to pesticides in products exported to Europe increased in 2006.	The control systems for placing on the market and use of plant protection products varied between the Member States visited. In some of the Member States, these controls are well developed, but in other Member States strengthening of the control systems is needed. Monitoring systems for pesticide residues were generally in place. However, there was an inconsistent application of criteria for notification of noncompliant samples in the Rapid Alert System for Feed and Food and, frequently, the number of pesticides analysed for was insufficient. Recommendations were made to the Member States to address deficiencies noted, and action plans have been received. Actions taken will be verified in a new mission series commencing in 2007. Weaknesses in the official control systems were identified. Many laboratories have the potential to support a substantial control system. The majority of exporters of plant produce to the EU comply with standards imposed by European importers.
Non-inspection activities Pesticide Residue Monitoring Report	An overall report on pesticide residue monitoring in plant products in the EU and certain EFTA countries was collated by the FVO and published on the Internet (link: http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fvo/specialreports/pesticides_index_en.htm). This report contains the data from the national monitoring programmes, and the data from the EU co-ordinated monitoring programme, for pesticide residues for the calendar year 2004. The report has been published annually since 1996. This year, data from eight of the new Member States are included in the report for the first time. Overall, 60,450 samples were analysed in the participating States. In total, 4.7 % of the samples exceeded the legal residue limits. In recent years, the analytical capabilities of the laboratories have considerably improved to cover a total of 677 pesticides, which has allowed increased rates of pesticide detections. The frequency of samples exceeding the legal limits is slightly lower than in the previous two years. However, the percentage of samples with residues at or below the legal limits shows an increase in recent years.	

Special Topic

Contaminants



Inspections

Third Countries

China
Turkey
USA(2)

Council Directive 89/397/EEC lays down a general obligation for Member States to undertake random analysis of foodstuffs. There are also specific conditions imposed in Commission Decisions on products from certain third countries where the risk of contamination is considered greater. These specific conditions relate to mycotoxin contamination and to Sudan dyes in certain food commodities originating in some third countries, and intended for export to the EU.

Activities

In the area of chemical contaminants there were four missions in 2006, all in relation to mycotoxins. These were to Turkey (in relation to nuts and dried fruit, and including sulphites in dried apricots), to China (regarding peanuts) and to the USA in relation to almonds and peanuts. The latter was the first mission conducted under Article 23 of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and welfare rules, which allows the Commission to approve the pre-export controls for a commodity exported from a third country.

Findings

The mission to the USA regarding almonds was conducted due to an increased rate of rejection notified through the RASFF system. The mission identified deficiencies in the control system in place; a poor research base, no mandatory aflatoxin controls or sampling and poor laboratory performance.

The mission regarding peanuts in the USA was generally positive. Some deficiencies in certification were identified. The research in this area was thorough and there is a mandatory aflatoxin control in place.

A mission to China was carried out because of increasing RASFF notifications of aflatoxin in peanuts. China has made improvements regarding their control system for exporting peanuts into the EU. However, shortcomings were identified in relation to the implementation and supervision of Good Agriculture Practices (GAP), and the supervision of peanuts to be exported from the point of sampling and the expression of analytical results attached to the health certificates.

The Chinese authorities have provided a draft action plan. Further details have been requested from the Chinese authorities to fully address all recommendations.

The mission to Turkey regarding contaminants in nuts and dried fruits was conducted due to an increased rate of rejection notified through the RASFF system. The scope of this mission also encompassed the use of additives in dried fruits because of the increase in RASFF notifications. Although Turkey has improved since the last mission, some deficiencies were noted with regard to the supervision of export procedures, reporting procedures regarding laboratories and the sample preparation methods for pistachios.

An adequate response has been received from the Turkish Authorities to the recommendations. This will be verified during missions in 2007.

Special Topic

Additives, flavourings, food contact materials

Over the past three years there have been an increasing number of RASFF notifications for food contact materials, and specifically for products imported from certain third countries.

Activities	Findings
In the area of food contact materials, a pre-mission meeting was conducted in China. This is the first inspection activity undertaken by the office in this area.	A pre-mission meeting on safety of food contact materials took place in China as a result of the high RASFF notifications in this regard. The mission team made presentations on FVO inspection procedures, relevant EU legislation and laboratory requirements. It was also agreed to perform a mission to China on food contact materials in April 2007.

Special Topic

Genetically modified food and feed

Two Regulations extend labelling and traceability requirements to genetically modified food, feed and seed for cultivation: Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council on genetically modified food and feed and Regulation (EC) No 1830/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the traceability and labelling of genetically modified organisms and the traceability of food and feed products produced from genetically modified organisms and amending Directive 2001/18/EC. The objective of the inspections in 2006 was to evaluate control measures, including sample checks and testing (qualitative and quantitative) as appropriate, carried out to ensure compliance with the above Regulations.

Inspections

	Activities	Findings
Member States Belgium Czech Republic France Germany Hungary Poland Slovak Republic Slovenia United Kingdom Accession Countries Romania (2)	Inspections were made to nine Member States which were involved in the import or production of such commodities, and additionally inspections were conducted to Romania in the run up to accession.	All Member States visited had designated responsibility for control in this area. However, the level of controls varied, in particular with regard to analytical capacity of official laboratories and the level of sampling which was undertaken as part of official control. Most Member States responded with a satisfactory action plan, outstanding issues will be followed up. Two missions were undertaken to Romania and they verified that systems were in place concerning the cultivation of genetically modified soya. However it was noted that scope of the laboratory analysis was limited mainly to soya products. There remain potential problems in Romania that will be followed up in a mission there in spring 2007.
Third Countries Argentina	The FVO conducted its first third country inspection in relation to genetically modified food and feed with a mission to Argentina, which exports large quantities of GM products to the EU.	Argentina operates a satisfactory control system which ensures that only those genetically modified products which are authorised in the EU are commercially cultivated for the export to the EU. With the exception of organic products export controls are the responsibility of the economic operators.

Special Topic

Novel Foods

Novel Food
Desk Study

Novel Foods are foods that prior to May 15 1997 have not been used for human consumption in the European Union.

In order to be authorised for the intra-Community market, Novel Foods need to undergo a safety assessment or an evaluation resulting in a finding of substantial equivalence to food already on the market.

In Europe approval of Novel Food is handled by the Member State competent authority receiving the application in co-operation with the Commission and other Member States.

Activities

In the context of an on-going desk study on Novel Food, questionnaires were sent to all Member States in 2006. Responses were requested by February 2007.

Findings

The current level of control (imports and on the market) is unknown and therefore a desk study was undertaken by the FVO with the purpose of assessing the level of controls in place in Member States and to identify variances and encourage a minimum level of control. The responses are due in early 2007 and a summary report will be produced in 2007.

Special Topic

Import Controls

Special Topic

Import Controls

Products of
Plant Origin

The number of rapid alert (RASFF) notifications circulated within the European Union related to products containing mycotoxins, in nuts and dried fruit, and for the unauthorised dye Sudan I-IV, in a wide range of products, remains high, although there was a reduction in 2006 from 2005.

Controls at import on products of plant origin are not harmonised, with the exception of certain cases (such as: aflatoxins in nuts from certain third countries; Sudan I-IV in some spices and palm oil). In these cases, controls are imposed by Commission Decisions. The inspections specifically examined compliance with these Decisions. The mission series conducted in 2006 also followed up on recommendations made in the previous series, and assessed the implementation of newer requirements of Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and welfare rules that came into force in January 2006.

Activities

Findings

Member States

Belgium
Germany
Greece
Italy
Luxembourg
Poland
Spain
The Netherlands
United Kingdom

A second mission series was commenced in 2006 to examine the import controls of food of plant origin in nine Member States. All of these were visited in the previous mission series.

The office found a significant improvement in the performance of most of the Member States visited since the previous missions in 2003/2004. Some Member States had difficulties in implementing some of the requirements of the new Hygiene Package, the legislative requirements of which had come into force since the previous mission series.

Live Animals
and
Products of
Animal
Origin

Import and transit controls on live animals and products of animal origin are almost fully harmonised in the EU. These controls take place at specific EU-approved Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) at the external borders (land borders, ports and international airports) of the EU.

Risk based inspections of the BIPs take place at regular intervals to verify that they meet Community requirements, together with an assessment of the systems put in place by the Member States to ensure that the controls are carried out as foreseen. Inspectors also check, where appropriate, if previously identified shortcomings have been corrected through the implementation of action plans.

Inspections

Activities

Findings

**Member States**

Cyprus
Estonia
France
Hungary
Lithuania
Poland
Portugal
Sweden
Spain
The Netherlands
United Kingdom

Inspections were carried out in eleven Member States to evaluate the import control system in place and to verify compliance with EU requirements in 30 approved BIPs and six newly proposed BIPs.

These missions followed up the series of illegal import inspections carried out during the past year and the evaluation covered what measures have been put in place to detect illegal introductions, including those for personal consumption.

In most of the Member States visited a functioning import/transit control system was in place, which in many areas complied with the EU requirements. A number of corrective actions taken in relation to the recommendation of the previous missions were observed.

In general, progress was noted in the supervision of BIPs, training of staff and working procedures; good co-operation between the veterinary services and other services involved in import controls was noted in a few Member States. Nevertheless, common shortcomings, in general of a minor nature, were found in the areas of identification and selection of consignments, supervision of transit trade and non-EU complying consignments, destruction of galley waste, checks on non-commercial pet animals, BIP-facilities including equipment and hygiene. Some previously identified shortcomings continued to exist in some Member States.

In each inspected Member State the system in place to detect illegal imports in the luggage of travellers was further improved. However, in several Member States further measures for improvement are necessary to minimise the likelihood of illegal

Special Topic

Import Controls

introduction of relevant consignments.

All non-compliances are being pursued with the relevant authorities in the Member States concerned.

As a consequence of the outcome of the missions and of the action plans provided by the Member States, the approvals of several BIPs have been modified.

Accession and
Candidate Countries

Activities

Three inspections in Bulgaria and Romania were conducted to evaluate progress made with the implementation of the import control system in accordance with EU requirements and to assess facilities and operations at 16 proposed BIPs.

Findings

EU import/transit control requirements were not yet applied, although transposition of relevant legislation was mainly completed. The development of implementing measures was in progress and the application of the EU import control system was planned by 01.01.2007. Most of the BIP facilities visited were in compliance with EU requirements, apart from some deficiencies or facilities for which the construction was not yet finalised.

All non-compliances are being pursued with the relevant authorities in Bulgaria and Romania.

Third Countries

Activities

One inspection was carried out to the Faroe Islands to evaluate the import control system in place and to verify the application of EU requirements as laid down in the Protocol on Veterinary Matters between the EC and the relevant third country.

Findings

A functioning import control system for commercial products was in place and improvement was noted with respect to shortcomings described in the previous mission. The weaknesses found concerned the flow of information, procedures, veterinary checks, identification and selection of consignments and customs supervision of consignments as well as significant shortcomings in the three BIPs visited.

All non-compliances are being pursued with the relevant authorities in the Faroe Islands.

The FVO joins the EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) as an observer in inspections to BIPs in EFTA-countries, as these are also points of entry for the EU. One such mission was carried out in 2006 and three approved BIPs and one newly proposed BIP were visited in Norway.

An import/transit control system was in place in Norway and in many areas complies with the requirements and objectives of EU legislation. There were a number of areas where the system showed significant shortcomings, which are mainly caused by inadequate supervision, training and administrative measures put in place by the central competent authority.

All non-compliances are being pursued by ESA with the relevant authorities in Norway.

Non-inspection activities

Training seminars

FVO staff participated in two SANCO training seminars, in one for airport BIPs in Vienna (Austria) and in one for seaport BIPs in Felixstowe (United Kingdom). In the port and the airport BIP seminar the main outcome of FVO missions was presented and discussed with the participants.

Special Topic

Guidelines for multi-annual national control plans

Guidelines

Regulation (EC) No 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and welfare rules requires Member States to prepare a single integrated multi-annual control plan (MANCP) for the performance of these controls and to report annually on the implementation of this plan. Furthermore Member States are required to put in place national audit systems to verify competent authorities' compliance with the MANCP and the suitability and effectiveness of the control systems in place. The Commission is required to produce guidelines to facilitate this process. The Food and Veterinary Office is leading the preparation of these guidelines, which are being developed through an incremental process which will take account of experiences in the application of this new approach to official controls, in consultation with the Member States.

The first phase of the process concerns the preparation of the following guidelines:

- laying down criteria for the conduct of audits of national competent authorities
- to assist Member States in preparing the single integrated multi-annual national control plan
- to assist Member States in preparing the annual report on the single integrated multi-annual national control plan
- on information to be provided by third countries on the general organisation and management of their sanitary control systems

Consultations with the Member States which commenced in 2005 continued during 2006 and the guidelines laying down criteria for the conduct of audits of national competent authorities were adopted as Commission Decision 2006/677/EC¹ on 29th September 2006. Substantial progress on the preparation of the guidelines for the on the preparation of, and reporting on the multi-annual control plan was also achieved during the year.

¹ OJ L 278, 10.10.2006, p. 15

Glossary of terms used in the Report

ABP (Animal by-products)	Animal by-products are the parts of a slaughtered animal that are not directly consumed by humans, including dead on farm animals and catering waste (i.e. waste food originating from restaurants, catering facilities and kitchens) that contains or has been in contact with meat products, whether cooked or uncooked.
Accession Countries	Countries in the process for accession to the European Union. Bulgaria and Romania signed Treaties of Accession on 25.04.2005, with a view to joining the EU in January 2007.
Aflatoxins	A group of toxins (poisonous chemical compounds) that are produced by two fungi called <i>Aspergillus flavus</i> and <i>Aspergillus parasiticus</i> . These toxins occur naturally and have been found in a wide range of commodities used for animal and human consumption. Depending on the levels, the toxins can severely affect the liver and they are a known cause of cancer in humans.
Audit	A systematic and independent examination to determine whether activities and related results comply with planned arrangements and whether these arrangements are implemented effectively and are suitable to achieve objectives.
Avian influenza	An infectious viral disease in poultry and birds, causing mortality and disturbances which can quickly take epizootic proportions liable to present a serious threat to animal and public health and to reduce sharply the profitability of poultry farming. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) causes serious disease with high mortality (up to 100%) and is notifiable to the OIE. (See "OIE")
BIP (Border inspection post)	A facility approved for the carrying out of veterinary checks on live animals and products of animal origin arriving from third countries for import into the EU or transit to third countries.
Bovine tuberculosis (TB)	Tuberculosis in cattle caused by infection with <i>Mycobacterium bovis</i> ; it is transmissible to humans and other animals. Characteristics include tubercles or nodular lesions in lymph nodes and various organs, such as the udder, kidneys, uterus, and meninges.
Brucellosis	Zoonotic disease commonly transmitted through abrasions of the skin from handling infected mammals or by ingesting contaminated milk and dairy products. Symptoms are non-specific and "flu-like".
BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy)	See "TSE"
Candidate Countries	From 17.12.2005, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey
Competent authority	A domestic government body made responsible under that country's national law for the control or regulation of a particular area of legislation.
Contaminant	Any substance not intentionally added to food, which is present in such food as a result of the production, manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment, packing, packaging, transport or holding of such food, or as a result of environmental contamination.
CSF (Classical swine fever)	Classical swine fever can be found among pigs and wild boar. It is an OIE List A disease. (See "OIE")
Dioxin	In this report "dioxins" is used for the sum of polychlorinated dibenzo-para-dioxins and polychlorinated dibenzofurans, as defined in Commission Regulation (EC) No 466/2001.
EEA / EFTA / ESA	The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is an intergovernmental organisation promoting free trade and strengthening economic relations. EFTA's Member States are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. The European Economic Area (EEA) is an agreement between EFTA and the EU, designed to allow EFTA countries to participate in the European Single Market without having to join the EU. Switzerland is a member of EFTA but chose, by referendum, not to participate in the EEA. The EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) ensures that Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway respect their obligations under the EEA Agreement.
EFSA	The European Food Safety Authority is a decentralised agency of the European Union, financed by the Community budget. In close collaboration with national authorities and in open consultation with its stakeholders, it provides objective scientific advice on all matters with a direct or indirect impact on food and feed safety, including animal health and welfare and plant protection. EFSA is also consulted on nutrition in relation to Community legislation.
EUROPHYT	An electronic rapid alert system between the Member States and the Commission ² . Its aim is to transmit information concerning plant quarantine matters (notifications of interceptions of plants, plant health legislation, documents of the Standing Committee on Plant Health).
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) is a system for monitoring food processes to reduce the risk of food contamination. HACCP focuses on how food flows through the food processes – be it food production, distribution or retail – and identifies potential hazards at each step. By identifying "critical control points" (CCPs) where bacteria may grow or food may be contaminated, HACCP provides a framework for implementing control procedures for each hazard.
Illegal imports	The introduction onto the territory of the Community of products of animal origin or live animals that, either accidentally or intentionally, have not been subject to, and cleared following, the veterinary checks foreseen in Community legislation.

² Council Directive 2000/29/EC lays down in Article 21(6) first indent that « the Commission shall establish a network for the notification of new occurrences of harmful organisms ».

Infringement proceedings	Treaty infringement proceedings form a procedure for establishing whether a Member State has failed to fulfil an obligation imposed on it by Community law. The procedure starts with a pre-litigation phase, involving contacts between the Commission and the Member State, and may conclude with a legal action before the European Court of Justice.
Mycotoxins	A group of naturally occurring toxic metabolites produced by some species of fungi – especially strains of <i>Aspergillus flavus</i> . These fungi grow on many plant-based foodstuffs, such as grains, cereals, nuts and fruit, and mycotoxins may be produced by these fungi under certain conditions.
New Member States	The ten countries that joined the EU on 1 May 2004: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.
OIE (Office International des Epizooties)	The OIE (Office International des Epizooties / World Organisation for Animal Health) is an intergovernmental organisation established in 1924. In May 2003 it had 164 member countries. The EU Member States are all members. The European Commission is actively involved in the OIE's work and co-ordinates the input of the EU Member States.
OIE List A diseases	OIE Classification List A diseases are defined as transmissible diseases that have the potential for very serious and rapid spread, irrespective of national borders, that are of serious socio-economic or public health consequence and that are of major importance in the international trade of animals and animal products. (See "OIE")
Phytosanitary	Pertaining to the health of plants.
Rabies	An acute, infectious, often fatal viral disease of most warm blooded animals especially foxes, wolves, cats and dogs. The virus attacks the central nervous system and is transmitted by the bite of an infected animal.
RASFF	The Rapid Alert System for Feed and Food (RASFF) is a network of national authorities, managed by the Commission, that exchanges information on the presence of potential health risks to consumers presented by a food product.
Residue	That portion of the administered dose of a veterinary medicine or other substance present in the tissues, body fluids, products or excreta of an animal arising from treatment of the animal. The total residue includes the parent compound plus any metabolites.
SRM (Specified Risk Material)	Tissues designated as specified risk material in connection with TSE are laid down in Regulation (EC) No 999/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council, as amended, and comprise mainly: the skull including the brain and eyes, the vertebral column and the spinal cord of bovine animals aged over 12 months; the tonsils, the intestines from the duodenum to the rectum and the mesentery of bovine animals of all ages; the skull including the brain and eyes, the tonsils and the spinal cord of ovine and caprine animals aged over 12 months or which have a permanent incisor erupted through the gum; the spleen and ileum of ovine and caprine animals of all ages. (See "TSE")
Sudan dyes	Sudan I, II, III and IV are industrial dyes normally used for colouring plastics and other synthetic materials. Sudan dyes may have a carcinogenic effect. The presence of these dyes in food contravenes EU legislation.
TB	See "Bovine tuberculosis"
Traceability	The ability to trace and follow a food, feed, food-producing animal or substance intended to be, or expected to be incorporated into a food or feed, through all stages of production, processing and distribution.
TSE	Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSE), of which Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) is one. BSE is a transmissible, neuro-degenerative, fatal brain disease of cattle. Also known as prion diseases, TSEs are a group of rare degenerative brain disorders characterised by tiny holes that give the brain a "spongy" appearance.
Zoonoses / Zoonotic diseases	Infectious animal diseases which usually affect other animals, but which can also afflict humans. They can be carried over through food (food borne zoonoses) or through direct contact with animals.

List FVO mission report references in 2006

Member States:	Subject	Report No:
Austria	Animal Welfare - Laying Hens	8049/2006
	BSE	8071/2006
	Animal Welfare Slaughter and Killing	8176/2006
Belgium	Animal Welfare - Laying Hens	8043/2006
	Animal Nutrition	8077/2006
	Genetically Modified Food and Feed Controls	8102/2006
	Pesticides - Residues	8103/2006
	Import Controls - Food of Non-Animal Origin	8121/2006
	Food Production - Red Meat, Products and Preparations	8151/2006
Cyprus	General Review Mission	8033/2006
	Animal Welfare - On-Farm	8037/2006
	Import Controls System and Border Inspection Posts	8057/2006
	Animal Welfare - Slaughter and Killing	8173/2006
	Identification/Certification - Live Mammals	8228/2006
Czech Republic	General Review Mission	8027/2006
	Food Production - Milk/Products	8177/2006
	Genetically Modified Food and Feed Controls	8110/2006
	Animal Welfare - Slaughter and Killing	8040/2006
Denmark	Contaminants (Dioxins in Baltic Sea Fish)	8004/2006
	Animal Welfare - Slaughter and Killing	8039/2006
	Animal Nutrition	8078/2006
	Food Production - Red Meat, Products and Preparations	8153/2006
Estonia	General Review Mission	8021/2006
	Import Controls System and Border Inspection Posts	8058/2006
	Evaluation of Competent Authority in a Member State - Partial	8194/2006
Finland	General Review Mission	8026/2006
	Pesticides - Residues	8108/2006
	Food Production - Milk/Products	8170/2006
France	General Review Mission	8034/2006
	Animal Welfare - Laying Hens	8045/2006
	Import Controls System and Border Inspection Posts	8055/2006
	Genetically Modified Food and Feed Controls	8086/2006
	Pesticides - Residues	8113/2006
	Disease Eradication/Control Programmes - Salmonellosis	8137/2006
	Intra-Community Trade of Live Animals	8152/2006
	Food Production - Milk/Products	8179/2006
	Identification/Certification - Live mammals	8218/2006
Germany	Contaminants (Dioxins in Baltic Sea Fish)	8005/2006
	BSE	8068/2006
	Animal By-Products	8087/2006
	Genetically Modified Food and Feed Controls	8105/2006
	Import Controls - Food of Non-Animal Origin	8112/2006
	Identification/Certification - Live Animals	8149/2006
	Food Production - Milk/Products	8183/2006
	Identification/Certification - Live Mammals	8208/2006
	Disease Eradication/Control Programmes - Rabies	8213/2006
	Disease Outbreak – Classical Swine Fever	8308/2006
	Feedstuffs	8326/2006
Greece	Animal Welfare - Slaughter and Killing	8167/2006
	Identification/Certification - Live Mammals	8193/2006
	Import Controls - Food of Non-Animal Origin	8114/2006
	Animal Welfare - Slaughter and Killing	8042/2006
	BSE	8076/2006
	Animal By-Products	8090/2006
Hungary	Control of Residues in Live Animals and Animal Products	8012/2006

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	Animal Welfare - Laying Hens	8050/2006
	Import Controls System and Border Inspection Posts	8061/2006
	Genetically Modified Food and Feed Controls	8109/2006
	Intra-Community Trade of Live Animals	8150/2006
	Animal Welfare - Slaughter and Killing	8209/2006
	Evaluation of Competent Authority in a Member State - Potatoes	8263/2006
Ireland	Animal Welfare - Laying Hens	8052/2006
	BSE	8082/2006
	Food Production - Red Meat, Products and Preparations	8166/2006
	Intra-Community Trade of Live Animals	8182/2006
Italy	BSE	8072/2006
	Import Controls - Food of Non-Animal Origin	8119/2006
	Animal Welfare - Slaughter and Killing	8145/2006
	Intra-Community Trade of Live Animals	8171/2006
	Disease Eradication/Control Programmes	8184/2006
	Disease Eradication/Control Programmes - Brucella abortus	8204/2006
	Identification/Certification - Live Mammals	8207/2006
	Import Controls - Plants/Plant Products	8260/2006
	Plant Pest Outbreak -Forest Plants/Products	8272/2006
	Plant Pest Outbreak -Arable Crops	8273/2006
	Plant Pest Outbreak -Forest Plants/Products	8274/2006
Latvia	Contaminants (Dioxins in Baltic Sea Fish)	8013/2006
	General Review Mission	8031/2006
	Food Production - Milk/Products	8206/2006
	Internal Market - Plant Passport	8257/2006
	Evaluation of Competent Authority in a Member State - Potatoes	8270/2006
Lithuania	Control of Residues in Live Animals and Animal Products	8007/2006
	Contaminants (Dioxins in Baltic Sea Fish)	8014/2006
	General Review Mission	8030/2006
	Animal Welfare - Laying Hens	8046/2006
	Import Controls System and Border Inspection Posts	8056/2006
	Food Production - Milk/Products	8154/2006
	Evaluation of Competent Authority in a Member State - Potatoes	8262/2006
Luxembourg	Pesticides - Residues	8099/2006
	Import Controls - Food of Non-Animal Origin	8133/2006
	Food Production - Red Meat, Products and Preparations	8189/2006
Malta	General Review Mission	8022/2006
	Animal welfare Slaughter killing	8180/2006
Poland	Contaminants (Dioxins in Baltic Sea Fish)	8003/2006
	Import Controls System and Border Inspection Posts	8063/2006
	Genetically Modified Food and Feed Controls	8106/2006
	Import Controls - Food of Non-Animal Origin	8132/2006
	Disease Eradication/Control Programmes - Salmonellosis	8141/2006
	Intra-Community Trade of Live Animals	8169/2006
	Food Production - Milk/Products	8210/2006
	Total Feed Ban	8310/2006
	Food Production - Red Meat, Products Preparations and Transit	8320/2006
	Plant Health - Export Controls	8322/2006
Portugal	Animal By-Products	8067/2006
	Animal Nutrition	8084/2006
	Import Controls System and Border Inspection Posts	8097/2006
	Food Production - Red Meat, Products and Preparations	8172/2006
	Identification/Certification - Live Mammals	8181/2006
	Disease Eradication/Control Programmes	8197/2006
	Plant Pest Outbreak -Fruits, Fruit Plants, Vegetables	8264/2006
	Plant Pest Outbreak -Forest Plants/Products	8265/2006
Slovak Republic	Animal Welfare - Laying Hens	8047/2006

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	BSE	8070/2006
	Genetically Modified Food and Feed Controls	8100/2006
	Food Production - Red Meat, Products and Preparations	8192/2006
	Identification/Certification - Live Mammals	8229/2006
	Internal Market - Plant Passport	8268/2006
	Disease Outbreak – Classical Swine Fever	8313/2006
Slovenia	General Review Mission	8028/2006
	Animal Welfare - Slaughter and Killing	8038/2006
	Genetically Modified Food and Feed Controls	8104/2006
	Food Production - Red Meat, Products and Preparations	8195/2006
Spain	Import Controls System and Border Inspection Posts	8062/2006
	BSE	8069/2006
	Animal By-Products	8088/2006
	Import Controls - Food of Non-Animal Origin	8128/2006
	Disease Eradication/Control Programmes - Salmonellosis	8143/2006
	Intra-Community Trade of Live Animals	8174/2006
	Disease Eradication/Control Programmes	8196/2006
	Animal Welfare - Slaughter and Killing	8205/2006
	Identification/Certification - Live Mammals	8230/2006
Sweden	Pesticides - Residues	8115/2006
	Food Production - Red Meat, Products and Preparations	8186/2006
	Import Controls System and Border Inspection Posts	8330/2006
The Netherlands	Animal welfare Slaughter killing	8041/2006
	Import Controls System and Border Inspection Posts	8059/2006
	Animal Nutrition	8079/2006
	Import Controls - Food of Non-Animal Origin	8111/2006
	Food Production - Milk/Products	8146/2006
	Internal Market - Plant Passport	8256/2006
	Import Controls - Plants/Plant Products	8258/2006
	Identification/Certification - Live Animals	8311/2006
United Kingdom	General Review Mission	8029/2006
	Animal Welfare - Laying Hens	8044/2006
	Animal By-Products	8073/2006
	Import Controls System and Border Inspection Posts	8098/2006
	Import Controls - Food of Non-Animal Origin	8107/2006
	Genetically Modified Food and Feed Controls	8116/2006
	Disease Eradication/Control Programmes - Salmonellosis	8144/2006
	Intra-Community Trade of Live Animals	8148/2006
	Food Production - Milk/Products	8190/2006
	Import Controls - Plants/Plant Products	8259/2006
	Disease Contingency Plans - Avian Influenza	8304/2006
	Animal Health - AI/Embryo/Semen Collection Centres	8314/2006
	Import Controls - Plants/Plant Products	8315/2006
	BSE	8316/2006
	Food Production - Milk/Products	8323/2006
	Food Production - Milk/Products	8325/2006
Accession and Candidate Countries:		Report No:
Bulgaria	Enlargement - Control of Residues in Live Animals and Animal Products	8017/2006
	Enlargement - General Accession Assessment Inspections	8023/2006
	Enlargement - Animal Welfare	8054/2006
	Enlargement - Import Controls Including BIPs	8064/2006
	Enlargement - BSE	8074/2006
	Enlargement - Animal Nutrition	8091/2006
	Enlargement - Animal By-Products	8092/2006
	Pesticides - Residues	8123/2006
	Enlargement - General Food Hygiene Controls	8129/2006

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Bulgaria	Enlargement - Food Processing, Transport and Intermediate Storage	8214/2006
	Enlargement - Plant Health	8266/2006
	Disease Contingency Plans - Avian Influenza	8306/2006
	Enlargement - Import Controls including BIPs	8328/2006
Croatia	Enlargement - Animal Welfare	8048/2006
	Food Production - Red Meat, Products and Preparations	8223/2006
FYROM	Western Balkans General Assessment	8036/2006
Romania	Enlargement - Control of Residues in Live Animals and Animal Products	8009/2006
	Enlargement - General Accession Assessment Inspections	8024/2006
	Animal Welfare - On-farm	8053/2006
	Enlargement - Import Controls Including BIPs	8065/2006
	Enlargement – BSE	8075/2006
	Enlargement - Animal Nutrition	8093/2006
	Enlargement - Animal By-Products	8094/2006
	Enlargement - Pesticides	8120/2006
	GMO Food and Feed Controls	8124/2006
	Food Production - Milk/Products	8215/2006
	Enlargement - Plant Health	8267/2006
	Disease Contingency Plans - Avian Influenza	8305/2006
	GMO Soya in Food, Feed and Seed	8318/2006
Turkey	Evaluation of Competent Authority in a Third Country - First	8199/2006
	Contaminants	8101/2006
Third Countries:		Report No:
Albania	Fishery Products and Bivalve Molluscs	8178/2006
Argentina	Genetically Modified Food and Feed Controls	8118/2006
	Food Production - Milk/Products	8203/2006
Australia	BSE	8081/2006
Brazil	Disease Outbreak – Foot and Mouth Disease	8198/2006
	Identification certification	8301/2006
	Disease Eradication/Control Programmes - Foot and Mouth	8327/2006
	Fishery Products	8233/2006
Canada	Fishery Products	8246/2006
China	Contaminants	8126/2006
	Food Contact Material	8127/2006
	Poultry Meat Products	8244/2006
	Control of Residues in Live Animals and Animal Products	8294/2006
	Poultry Meat Products	8329/2006
Colombia	Fishery Products	8164/2006
Cuba	Fishery Products	8156/2006
Faroe Islands	Import controls system and Border inspection posts	8060/2006
Gambia	Fishery Products	8231/2006
Greenland	Fishery Products	8248/2006
Guinea	Fishery Products	8175/2006
Honduras	Fishery Products	8161/2006
India	Control of Residues in Live Animals and Animal Products	8015/2006
	Fishery Products	8158/2006
Iran	Animal welfare - Transport	8211/2006
	Fishery Products	8250/2006
Ivory Coast	Fishery Products	8001/2006
Jamaica	Fishery Products	8237/2006
Kenya	Fishery Products	8163/2006
Lebanon	Evaluation of Competent Authority in a Third Country - Potatoes	8261/2006
Maldives	Fishery Products	8303/2006
Mauritania	Fishery Products	8238/2006
Mauritius	Fishery Products	8155/2006
Montenegro	Western Balkans General Assessment	8282/2006
Morocco	Pesticides - Residues	8131/2006

Mozambique	Aquaculture	8147/2006
New Zealand	Control of Residues in Live Animals and Animal Products	8020/2006
	BSE	8080/2006
Nicaragua	Aquaculture	8249/2006
Norway	Animal welfare - Slaughter and Killing	8309/2006
	Import Controls System and Border Inspection Posts	8317/2006
	Food Production - Wild Game Meat/Products/Preparations	8324/2006
Oman	Fishery Products	8232/2006
Paraguay	Food Production - Red Meat, Products and Preparations	8202/2006
Peru	Fishery Products and Bivalve Molluscs	8234/2006
Philippines	Fishery Products	8312/2006
Russian Federation	Fishery Products	8187/2006
Serbia	Western Balkans general assessment	8281/2006
	Evaluation of Competent Authority in a Third Country - subsequent	8298/2006
Seychelles	Fishery Products	8252/2006
South Africa	Pesticides - Residues	8122/2006
Sri Lanka	Fishery Products	8095/2006
Suriname	Aquaculture	8251/2006
Taiwan	Fishery Products	8159/2006
Tanzania	Fishery Products	8241/2006
Thailand	Pesticides - Residues	8002/2006
	Control of Residues in Live Animals and Animal Products	8019/2006
	Import Controls Third Country - Plant Health	8275/2006
The United States	Contaminants	8117/2006
	Contaminants (Aflatoxins)	8300/2006
Tunisia	Fishery Products and Bivalve Molluscs	8242/2006
Uganda	Fishery Products	8240/2006
Ukraine	European Neighbouring Partners (ENP) General Assessment	8293/2006
Uruguay	Food Production - Red Meat, Products and Preparations	8224/2006
Venezuela	Fishery Products	8243/2006
Yemen	Fishery Products	8160/2006



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March 2007

Further Information

Websites

Further information on the subject matter contained in this Annual Report can be found on the Internet, on the following websites:

EUROPA website

<http://ec.europa.eu>

The EUROPA website is the official website of the European Union. It provides a guide to what the EU does and how it works, with links to the activities and institutions of the EU, as well as many items of interest to EU citizens.

Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-General website

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm

The website of the Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-General of the European Commission provides information on the three main areas of activity within the Directorate-General – public health, consumer affairs and food safety, the area with which the FVO deals.

Food Safety website

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

The Food Safety website provides information on the EU's approach to food safety and on the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), as well as all the latest news within the food safety sector. The website of the FVO can be found within the Food Safety website.

FVO website

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

This gives a brief description of the work and role of the FVO, and contains separate sections on feed and food safety, animal health and welfare, and plant health. These sections provide a detailed overview of a range of topics within each area. There is also a section containing the inspection reports published by the FVO.

Inspection Reports

The FVO website includes a search tool that enables visitors to the site to look up published FVO inspection reports more easily:

http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/fvo/ir_search_en.cfm

The tool provides a number of options, some of which can be combined:

- If you know the relevant inspection report number (which, for 2006, can be found in the list of inspections given in annex 2 of this Annual Report), you can simply type this number into the search engine to access the report directly.
- If you are interested in finding out about inspections in a particular country, you can click on the name of the country to access all the inspections that were carried out in that particular country.
- If you prefer to see the reports for a particular period, you can select the month and year for the start and end of the period that interests you.
- If you would like to see reports for a particular topic, you can enter words and search for reports that contain these words.
- If you want to know what reports were published during a particular month, you can select a single month.

Other Reports

There are also a number of special reports on the FVO website. Reports published under this heading give an overview of a specific theme based on a series of inspections carried out in Member States or third countries. Some of these overview reports have already been mentioned elsewhere in this Annual Report. The website also contains further reports dealing with other themes.