

**The work of the Food and Veterinary Office and  
Border Inspection Posts  
(controls, checks, contribution to EU policy,  
programmes, reports, evaluations, actions, reviews)**

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30 minutes



# Scope of presentation

- The FVO – position in DG SANCO
- The FVO – role and responsibilities
- Nature and scope of FVO inspection missions
- Overview of a residues inspection
- Reporting and outcomes from inspections
- Sources of further information



# Context: The EU Commission

- Role of the Commission
  - Guardian of the Treaty of European Union
  - Initiate and negotiate draft legislation
  - Ensure implementation and application of EU Law
  - Represent EU and its Citizens
  
- Commission services
  - Directorates-General
    - **Health and Consumers– DG SANCO**
    - Enterprise / Trade / AIDCO



# DG SANCO Activities

- Food safety, animal health, animal welfare, plant health

- Public Health
- Consumer Affairs

All fall within remit of the FVO

# DG SANCO – staff and location

- Staff ± 700
- Sites in:
  - Brussels
  - Luxembourg



- Grange (Ireland) – FVO here since 2002



# History and context

- 1979 → : Commission controls/inspections organised in AGRI (veterinary and phytosanitary matters) and ENTR (general food hygiene),
- 1996 : BSE crisis
- 1997 : Commission response: a new Food Safety Policy
- April 1997: FVO established (September 1997 in Ireland)
- April 2002 : FVO in Grange



# FVO - key roles (1)

- Eyes and ears of the Commission
- Carry out on-the-spot inspections
  - Member States, third countries, candidate countries
- Assess the performance of national competent authorities and compliance with, or equivalence to EU requirements



# FVO - key roles (2)

- Report on findings to:
  - Commission services, Member States, European Parliament, Council
  - other stakeholders via internet publication
- Make recommendations to Competent Authorities
- Follow up on implementation of action plans

# FVO - key roles (3)

- Contribute to the development of EU policy in the food safety and quality, veterinary and plant health sectors
- Promote effective control systems in the food safety, veterinary and plant health sectors
  - On-the-ground knowledge/capability to assist SANCO policy development/response
  - Direct contacts with food/feed operators



# FVO Structure

- 5 inspection Units (F2-F6) (thematic)
  - F2: Food of animal origin: Public Health – Mammals
  - F3: Food of animal origin: Public Health - Birds/Fish
  - F4: Food of non-animal origin & plant health
  - F5: Horizontal: Feed (TSEs), Residues, Import Controls
  - F6: Animal Health and Welfare
- 2 non-inspection Units (F1 and F7)
  - F1 Country-based Follow-up, Country Profiles
  - F7 Quality, Planning, Development Consistency & quality of operations via development of SOPs, advice, checks



# FVO Inspections (1)

- 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 third countries
- Inspections: to verify effectiveness of national control systems for enforcing Community legislation in the fields of food safety, animal health and welfare and plant health.



# FVO Inspections (2)

- Each year a programme of FVO inspections is developed, identifying priority areas and countries for inspection.
- Inspection programmes are published on the website of the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers.
- Reviewed mid-year. New inspections may need to be programmed, for example, in response to emerging risks such as disease outbreaks.



# FVO Inspections (3)

- Findings and conclusions of the inspections are presented in reports - made public on the Directorate-General's website
- Include recommendations to the country's Competent Authority (CA) to deal with any shortcomings revealed during the inspections.
- The CA is requested to present an action plan to the FVO on how it intends to address those recommendations.



# FVO Inspections (4)

- Together with other Commission services, the FVO evaluates the action plan and monitors its implementation.
- Follow-up inspections, requests for written reports and high level meetings - to ensure that improvements in the control systems are achieved.



# FVO Inspections (5)

- If an inspection identifies an immediate threat to consumer, animal or plant health, the Commission may take emergency, or safeguard, measures.
- 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 CA fails to take satisfactory corrective action, the Commission may refuse, withdraw or modify authorisations for exports to the EU.



# FVO Inspections (6)

- General overview reports are also produced e.g the annual EU-wide pesticide residues monitoring reports.
- The FVO also publishes an annual report on its activities

# FVO Inspections (7)

- Each 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.
- Typically two-thirds (66%) of the inspections concern food safety.



# FVO Inspections (8) – 2006 as an example

## **In 2006:**

Total of 255 inspections in more than 75 countries.

In addition to the 25 EU Member States,

- 3 Candidate Countries (Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey), and
- 48 countries worldwide (referred to as third countries) were visited.



# FVO Inspections (9) – 2006 as an example

<b>Food Safety:</b>	<b>68%</b>	
Food of animal origin	26%	
Import controls	12%	<b>Animal Health</b>
TSE/Animal by-products	7%	<b>14%</b>
General/horizontal issues	5%	<b>Animal Welfare</b>
Feed and food	5%	<b>13%</b>
Pesticides	5%	<b>Plant Health</b>
Veterinary medicines/residues	3%	<b>5%</b>
Other (including contaminants)	5%	



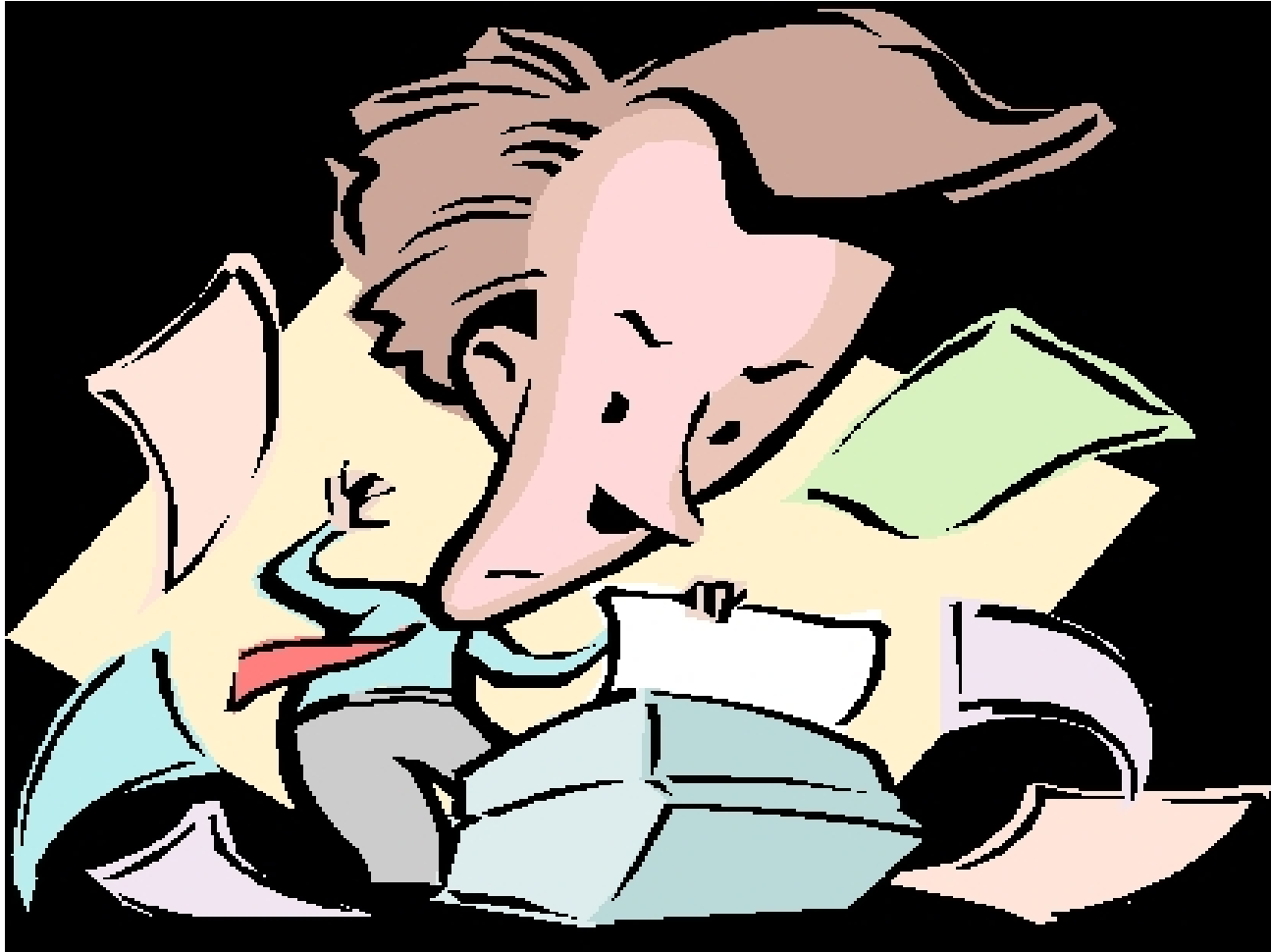
# FVO Residues Missions

Year	AC	MS	TC	Total
2003	8	2	4	14
2004	6	9	2	17
2005	3	10 (3 - dioxin)	3	16
2006	2	7 (5 - dioxin)	4	13
2007	1	0	11	12
2008	0	7 (of which 5 General audits)	7	14

AC – Accession Country; MS - Member State; TC – Third Country



# FVO Missions – an example for residues



# Mechanisms (1): Mission Planning

- Annual mission programme – published after consultation
- Third countries (~30% of total - 89 / 272 in '2007)
  - Volume of trade, other risks
- Member States
  - Inspected on a cyclical basis ~ 4 years
  - Average 5.9 inspections per MS in 2007
  - Series of missions on specific topics
  - 'General Audit' – new model



# Mechanisms (2): Mission Performance

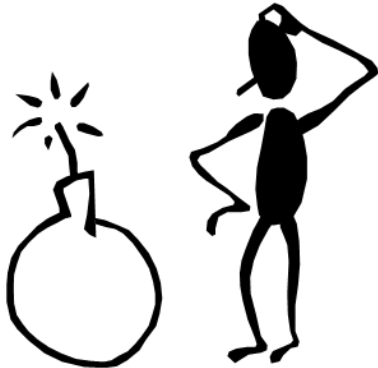
- Pre-mission questionnaire and evaluation plan
- On-the-spot verification and document checks e.g.
  - Central Competent Authorities
  - Regional / local veterinary services / BIPs
  - Slaughterhouses / feed mills / farms / pharmacies
  - Private veterinary practitioners



# Mechanisms (3): Mission Reports

- Findings

- Main findings in each of the areas listed – objective not subjective



- Conclusions

- Significance of those findings - e.g. do the deficiencies constitute a systematic failure or one-off?

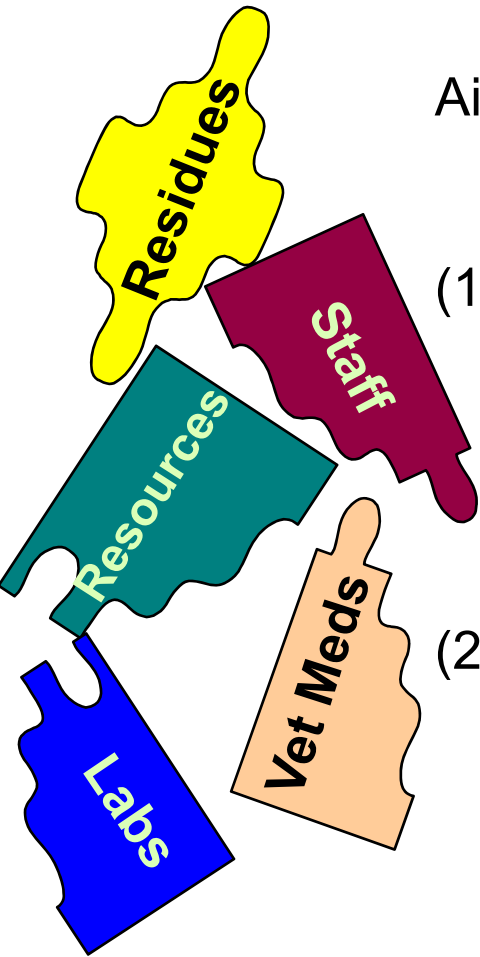
- Recommendations to Competent Authorities

- Address the specific conclusions
- Require actions to be taken - non prescriptive

# Mechanisms (4): Mission Reports

- **Draft report**
  - 20 working days -> competent authority
  - 25 working days -> response
- **Final report**
  - Takes account of competent authority comments
- **Publication**
  - Available to European Parliament, Member States, general public
  - [http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/inspections/vi/reports/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/inspections/vi/reports/index_en.html)
- **Follow-up – ‘General Review’**

# FVO residue missions – an example



Aim: To evaluate the performance of the system

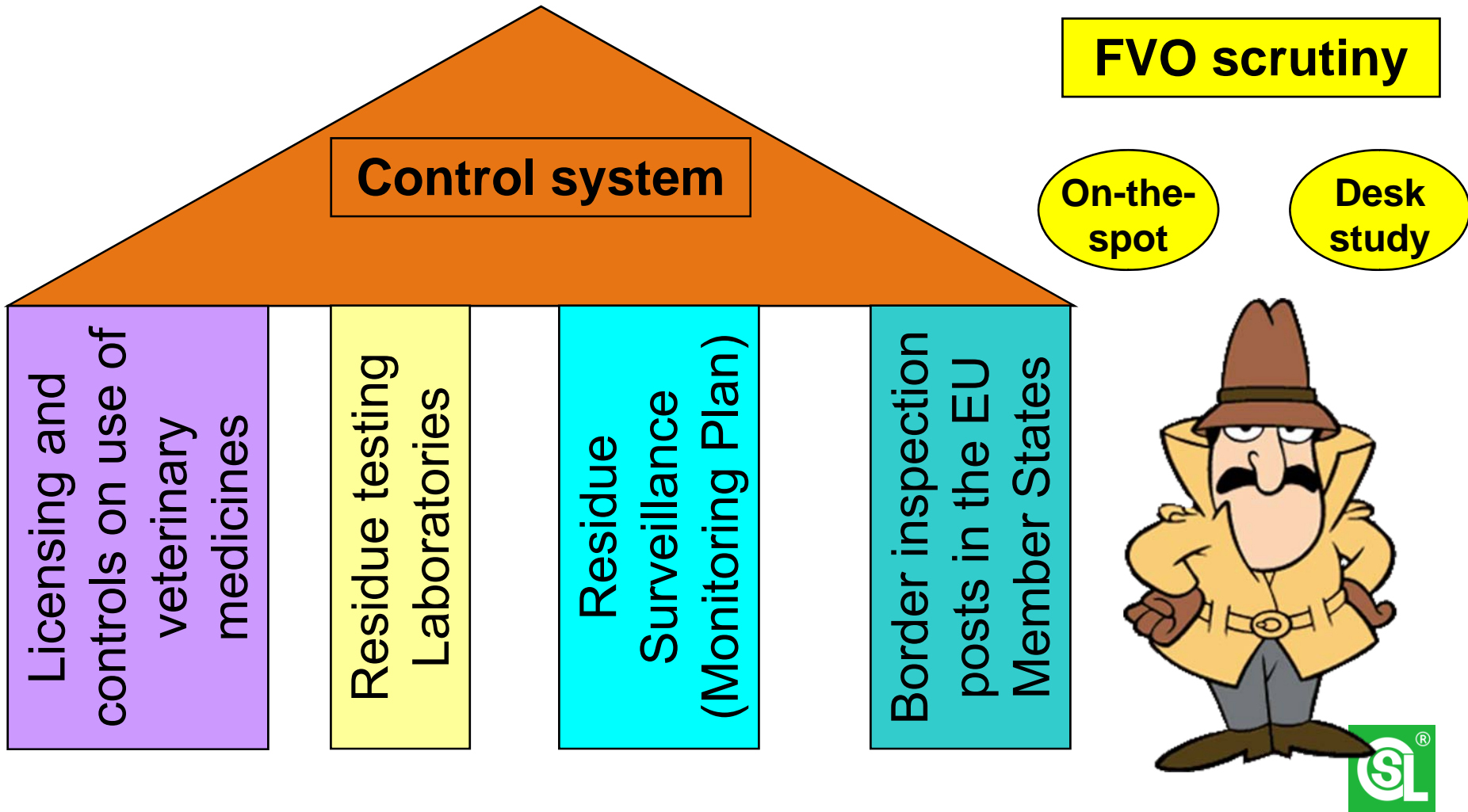
(1) Is there a system of control?

- Residues and contaminants
- Authorisation, distribution and use of veterinary medicines

(2) Can it work and (3) Does it work?

- Adequate resources
- Clear roles, responsibilities and staff instructions

# Typical elements of a residue control system



# EU Traces system at Border Inspection Posts (BIPs)

- An EU IT system to manage animal movements and prevent the spread of animal diseases
- Control and traceability of animals and animal products
- Import of products from outside the EU: After controlling the products, the veterinary authority at the BIP will give or refuse authorisation. If the consignment is rejected, all BIPs within the EU will be informed via TRACES.



# Further Information

## Health and Consumers Directorate

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/dgs/health\\_consumer/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm)

## Food Safety website

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/index_en.htm)

## FVO website

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/fvo/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/fvo/index_en.htm)

## Inspection reports

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/fvo/ir\\_search\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/food/fvo/ir_search_en.cfm)

