

**Role of public policy in ensuring effective food safety
- a Competent Authority perspective**

Courtesy of Dr Simona Origgi
Food Standards Agency

Overview

- Work of a Competent Authority
- Official Controls
- Contaminants
- Incidents
- websites

Competent Authority

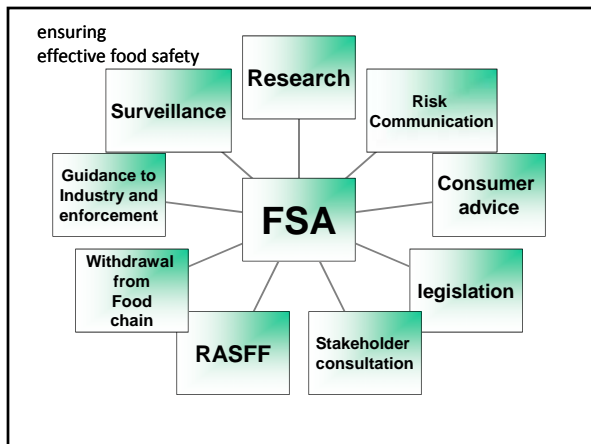
- 'Competent Authority' means the central authority of a Member State competent for the organisation of official controls or any other authority to which that competence has been conferred

UK Food Standards Agency

- Non-Ministerial Government Department
- Run by an independent Board appointed through open competition
- Accountable through UK Health Ministers
- Devolved Administrations with own Parliament in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Food Standards Agency Core Values

- to put the consumer first
- to be open and accessible
- to be an independent voice



Research

Triggers for work include:

- expert and consumer concern
- need for updates
- availability of new or improved analytical techniques
- identification of new contaminants or new toxicological information
- EC proposals
- assessing effects of legislation, codes, new manufacturing methods

Surveillance

Additional to the compulsory national control plan

conduct surveys to protect consumers:

- consumer exposure assessments and monitor trends
- consumer advice
- assess the effectiveness of legislation
- inform EU negotiations

Regulation on official feed and food, and animal health and welfare controls

What are the general principles for control systems?

- Controls carried out regularly using a risk-based approach.
- Unless necessary, controls without prior warning.
- Controls at all stages of production, processing and distribution.
- Controls on EU products and 3rd country imports and exports.

Regulation on official feed and food, and animal health and welfare controls

What are the requirements for methods of sampling & analysis?

- Comply with Community rules, international protocols or rules, national legislation or scientific protocols.
- Characterised by appropriate criteria - accuracy, applicability, limit of detection etc.
- Implementing rules - new Community methods, interpretation of results etc.

Regulation on official feed and food, and animal health and welfare controls

What are the requirements for official laboratories?

- Designated by the competent authority.
- Accredited to EN 17025, EN 45002 and EN 45003
- If private laboratory, audit / inspection arranged by competent authority.

Community Reference Laboratory



National Reference Laboratory



Official Control Laboratories

Official Control Laboratories

Community Reference Laboratories (CRL)

within their area of competence, CRLs are responsible for coordinating the national reference laboratories by:

- organising comparative testing with internationally accepted protocols
- providing details of analytical methods and reference methods
- new analytical methods
- dissemination of information
- training courses
- providing scientific and technical assistance to the Commission, especially in cases where Member States contest the results of analyses

National Reference Laboratories (NRL)

Member States shall designate one or more national reference laboratories for each CRL for their area of competence. NRLs shall:

- collaborate with the CRL
- coordinate national official laboratories
- organise comparative tests between the official national laboratories and ensure and follow up
- dissemination to the competent authority and official national laboratories of information from the CRL
- provide scientific and technical assistance to the competent authority for the implementation of coordinated control plans

Official Control Laboratories (OCL)

Control bodies - independent third party organisations to which specific control tasks have been delegated by the competent authority – e.g. chemical analysis, inspection, or sampling.

Official control laboratories – designated for the purposes of chemical analysis or microbiological examination of feed or food samples taken by enforcement practitioners. Laboratory must meet certain standards (i.e. is accredited to the European Standards specified in Regulation 882/2004).

National Control Plans

- **Member States must prepare a single, integrated, 'multi-annual'**
- ensure effective implementation of official controls in respect of feed and food law, animal health and welfare rules and, as appropriate, plant health law
- basis of assessments of the performance of national control systems by the Commission's Inspection Services (the Food and Veterinary Office)
- details of the roles and responsibilities of the different authorities and associated bodies that are involved in official controls and how these authorities meet the requirements set out for them in Regulation 882/2004

Special Import Conditions

- Member States required to have systems of control in place
- Sampling of affected products at point of first import into the Community
- Specified frequency of sampling, e.g. 100% for Iranian pistachios
- Information to other MS via the Rapid Alert system

ANALYSIS

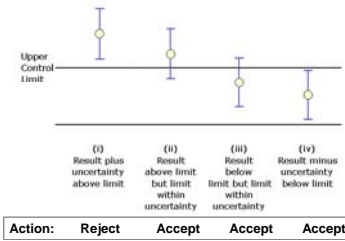


Example: mycotoxins analysis

- Method of analysis used must comply with the performance parameters specified in Regulation 401/2006
- Full analytical procedure to include sample preparation must be accredited
- The analytical result can be reported corrected or uncorrected for recovery
- The analytical result corrected for recovery and minus the measurement of uncertainty is used to check compliance

Measurement Uncertainty

- All analytical results have a variability known as the measurement uncertainty. The Eurachem/CITAC interpretation of the definition of measurement uncertainty is "the range of values that the analyst believes could be reasonably attributed to the measurand"





Rapid Alert System on Food and Feed

- Legal basis is Regulation EC 178/2002
- Provides control authorities with an effective tool for exchange of information on measures taken to ensure food safety



Incidents

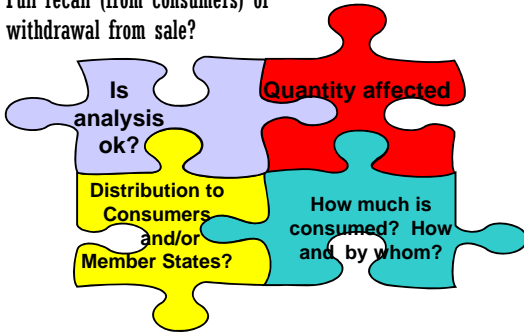
- Determine the implications for food safety
- Take action to ensure that food contaminated to an unacceptable level does not enter the food chain.
- Provide advice and information to the public
- Ensure the safe disposal of contaminated foodstuffs
- Ensure remediation measures

Incidents - practicalities

- Gather information on incident
- Perform a risk assessment
- Issue precautionary advice
- Consider imposing restrictions (voluntary or statutory)
- Undertake a sampling regime

Considerations

Full recall (from consumers) or withdrawal from sale?



When Communication goes wrong....

The Sun
14 March 2012
NATURAL PRAWN 'KILLERS'
Shellfish cancer alert

Mail, Post
10 Nov 2011
Toxic levels of cancer agent found in crisps

10 November 2011 12:00
SUDAN 1: THE BUNGLES THAT PUT POISON ON OUR PLATES

10/11/11 you take every 10p bundle of crisps
COKE TAP WATER IN CANCER WARNING

Websites

CONTAMINANTS LEGISLATION – limits:

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_364/l_36420061220en00050024.pdf

Sampling and Analysis Legislation

http://eur-led.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_070/l_07020060309en00120034.pdf

SAMPLING - Commission Guidance Document for enforcement authorities for the control of compliance with EU legislation on aflatoxins:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/chemicalsafety/contaminants/aflatoxin_guidance_en.pdf

more Websites

Other relevant Legislation:

- EC Regulation 178/2002
http://europa.eu.int/ear-lex/pr/en/oj/dat/2002/l_031/l_03120020201en00010024.pdf
- EC Regulation 882/2004
http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2004/l_191/l_19120040528en00010052.pdf
- Commission Decision 504/3006
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_199/l_19920060721en00210032.pdf
