

Conditions for import to the EU

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Conditions overview

- The EU has established a harmonised system for import of food of animal origin and live animals from countries outside the EU (Third Countries)
- A frame of rules, taking due account of the WTO rules
- The commercial operators are free to trade within that frame
- Checks at EU border for verification of rules

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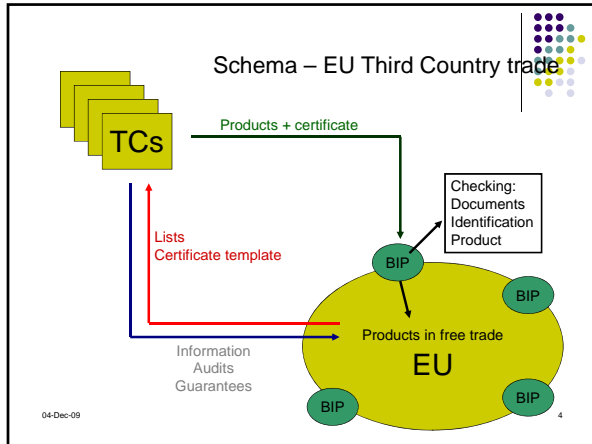
General aim

- To protect human and animal health
 - Ensure that no diseases or contamination which could endanger human or animal health are introduced to the EU Member States
- To fulfil veterinary public health requirements
 - To guarantee that food of animal origin imported into EU Member States is produced under equivalent condition as own products

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- ### General approach
- The Third Country (TC) applies to EU
 - EU request for information
 - Evaluation of info - a visit by the FVO*
 - The FVO will verify if requirements are fulfilled
 - The FVO reports back – EU takes decision
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- ### Checks on Competent Authority
- Must have legal powers, manpower and facilities to deliver efficient control
 - Management structure ensuring adequate communication: Central, regional, local
 - Independence from political and commercial interference
 - Personnel must enjoy independent status within the organisation – be allowed to carry out their tasks according to professional rules at all times
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Checks on Competent Authority



- The staff must be subject to continuous professional training
- The service must be sufficiently staffed at all times
- Legal powers for enforcement must be ensured
- Prioritisation should be used for supervision, based on risk posed to the different parts of the production chain

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Animal health requirements



- The country concerned must be a member of the OIE*
- Must formally agree to notify the EU within 48 h in case of outbreak of inf. Disease
- Either use own labs or agreement with others
- Have an efficient animal disease control system
 - Including animal identification, registration and movement control and,
 - Contingency plans in case of outbreaks of disease

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*The international animal health organisation

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Veterinary public health requirements



- Standards in establishments at least equivalent to EU internal standards.
 - See "Hygiene package"
- Competent authority must ensure these conditions or equivalent ones are met
- Internal control as laid down in hygiene package and Codex (pre-requisite and HACCP)

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*The international animal health organisation

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Veterinary public health requirements



- Officials auditing/ inspecting in establishments must be independent of operators, e.g. not be paid by them
- There must be in place a system to supervise these officials, e.g. by auditing
- This system must take due account of required checks i.a. for trichinella spiralis, BSE (depending on category), Micro Criteria etc.

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*The international animal health organisation 10

Import controls in a Third Country



- Import controls are an essential part of disease prevention and control
- Investment in eradication is wasted if infectious disease is introduced continuously from abroad
- Therefore, imports in TCs is taken into account as well as animal health situation in neighbouring countries

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Controls on residues

See also separate lecture later



- Efficient residue control is a precondition for import
- A residue monitoring plan must be submitted to the EU
- Will be approved **prior** to country approval
- Legislation and control of residues in the TC concerned is important, including enforcement of ban on some substances
- Results of residue control to be submitted annually to the EU

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Food safety controls, zoonosis



- Legislation on zoonosis
- Action taken when detected
- System of checks for zoonosis and registration when detected
- Coordination between public health and animal health authorities

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Methods applied by the FVO

Audit



- Information is requested from the TC in advance
- Normally at least 2-3 officers in each mission
- Mission starts with opening meeting explaining mission, scope and methods
- Followed by visits to sites

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Methods applied by the FVO

Audit - proceed



- The audit team will compare facts on the ground with material submitted
- Mission concluded by final meeting with the Competent Authority
 - Provide main conclusions
 - Are not supposed to give advise
- Following mission – a report is compiled, submitted to the Commission and published on the website of the Commission

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Requirement which are checked by FVO



- Legislation on veterinary matters
- Organisation of Competent Authority including enforcement powers
- Animal health requirements applied to production of products of animal origin
- Assurances for compliance / equivalence
- Earlier experience with the TC

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Items checked by FVO – cont..



- Results of audits by the FVO
- Health status of animals in that country
- Speed of notification of disease – cooperation with the OIE
- Rules on monitoring infectious diseases and import controls from other TCs
- Rules on preventing, eradicate and control infectious diseases

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Items checked by FVO – cont..



- In case of food of animal origin the following sites might be visited / checked
 - Farms, slaughterhouses, transport vehicle, processing establishments, warehouses and cold stores – if they fulfil EU requirements
 - Laboratories, animal health, public health and residues including contaminants
 - Border inspection posts for products of animal origin

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Items checked by FVO – cont..



- In case of live animals
 - Farms, markets, transport vehicles
 - Laboratories for veterinary diagnostic – central and regional
 - Laboratories for residues including contaminants
 - Border inspection posts for live animals

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Items checked by FVO – cont..



- In case of both live animals and products, laboratories for
 - Animal health – veterinary diagnostic
 - Veterinary public health
 - Residues such as veterinary medicinal products and illegal substances (growth promoters)
 - Residues such as environmental contaminants
 - Radiation

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Decisions by the EU



- The Commission is assisted by a committee on animal health, food and feed
- The Member States have representatives in this committee
- Each Member State pre-determined number of votes – related to number of inhabitants

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Decisions by the EU



- Two main procedures in the committee
- Written: The proposal of the commission is send to the Member State, if no objection within certain time, the proposal is accepted (routine procedure)
- Oral: The proposal is tabled in the Committee and the votes are counted
- The lists are public – on website

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Decisions by the EU



- Decision include:
 - To approve the residue control program
 - To draw up and issue the certificate to be used – could be regional differences
 - To add the TC concerned to the list
 - To prepare a list of establishment approved to export to the EU

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Continuous audits



- When approved, the Competent Authority of a TC is empowered to approve establishments and preliminary to put them on lists for export
- After initial assessment, audits on regular basis, perhaps every 2-3 years
- In case of breach of trust, deficiencies are detected which indicate that information has been concealed or is deliberately incorrect the country could be disapproved

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Certification



- Using certificate as in 02/99 or specific decisions
- Important – based on trust and the audit referred to before
 - The Competent Authority responsible for issuing (signing) certificate
 - They thereby guarantee that content correctly complies notified earlier
- Use rules as in Directive 96/93/EC

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End



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Definitions



- **Third Country**, a country which is neither a Member State, associated country (such as EFTA/EEA) or a candidate country to the EU.
- **CVED** means the Common Veterinary Entry Document.
- **TRACES** is the computer system designed to enable one Member State to send a message to another confirming that a consignment is on its way which may require further checks at destination.
- **RAS** is the Rapid Alert System which Member States use to communicate public health risks.

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Definitions proceed



- **A Consignment** means a quantity of product of the same type covered by the same veterinary certificate(s) or veterinary document(s), or other document(s) provided for by veterinary legislation, covered by the same means of transport and coming from the same third country or part of such country.

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Definitions proceed



- **A documentary check** is defined as "the examination of the veterinary certificates or documents accompanying a product"
- **An identity check** is defined as "a check by visual inspection to ensure that the veterinary certificate(s) or veterinary document(s) or other document(s) provided for by veterinary legislation tally with the product itself"
- **A physical check** is defined as "a check of the product itself, possibly including sampling and laboratory testing"

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