

The French
General
Directorate for
Food

Activity
Report

The DGAL in brief 2018



Liberté • Égalité • Fraternité
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

MINISTÈRE
DE L'AGRICULTURE
ET DE
L'ALIMENTATION

**The French
General
Directorate
for Food**

Activity Report

THE DGAL IN BRIEF 2018

Food inspection services

The DGAL watches over **the safety and quality of food** at every point in the food chain, and over the **health and protection of animals and plants**, working in conjunction with the various actors concerned: farming professionals, consumers, veterinarians, non-profits, and many others. It drafts **regulations** relating to its core tasks, adherence to which is verified by its offices in the French regions and *départements*. At EU and international levels, the DGAL **promotes the French food, sanitary and phytosanitary models**.

Core tasks relating to public health and management of food-related risks

Protecting the health

of consumers, animals, plants and the environment

by defining and verifying the sanitary conditions in which animal and plant products are produced and placed on the market or brought into the country

The DGAL carries out its assigned tasks using:

applicable **EU and national regulations** it has helped **draft and implement**

veterinary and phytosanitary public health **inspection services** it **coordinates** in France's *départements* and regions

The DGAL's tasks also include the **coordination of food policy**, in addition to steering the **interministerial national food programme (PNA)**.

Applying a holistic approach, the DGAL

anticipates and risks and assesses them

implements appropriate measures and plans for **future changes in those risks**

The **surveillance systems** under DGAL management enabling it to take **preventive** steps are particularly useful. The complexity of the issues involved requires **integrated, horizontal risk management** that calls on a range of technical, scientific and organisational **skills**.

Faced with:

the major expansion of **global trade**

the emergence of **new harmful organisms** for humans, animals or plants

climate change

A **more international vision** of health risks

Guarantees provided to consumers.

Transparent **communication on risk**.

Sanitary safety throughout the food chain

The DGAL watches over **the quality and safety of food** at every point in the food chain from the **basic commodities** required for **growing crops** and **farming livestock** up to and including **the delivery of food to consumers**.

The scope of its activity is very wide-ranging



Other core tasks undertaken by the DGAL

Combating organised crime in the sanitary domain by means of an investigations unit

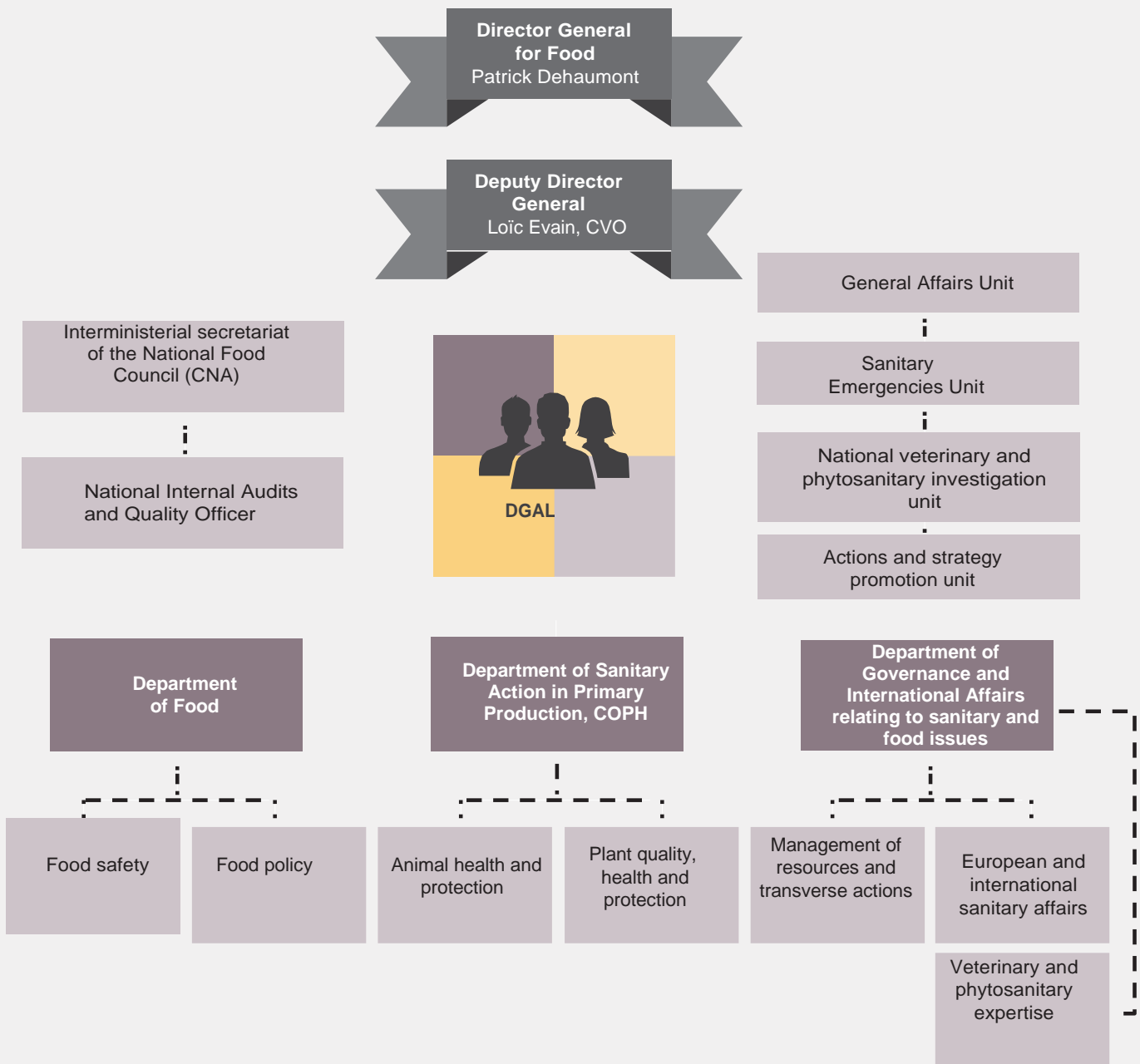
Quality-led management of the DGAL “as an organisation” comprising the DGAL and its field offices

Optimisation of performance

Promotion of DGAL programmes and strategy.

Internationally, the DGAL provides advocacy for the French food, sanitary and phytosanitary models.

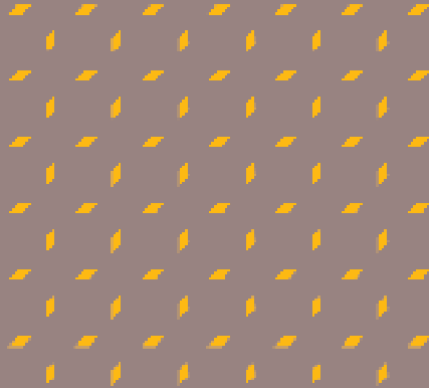
An organisation chart constructed...



... around three departments

The Department of Food

is responsible for national food policy and the safety of foodstuffs



The Department of Sanitary Action in Primary Production

is dedicated to primary production, animal health and protection, the health of plants, including forests, and inputs used in farming (veterinary drugs, plant protection products, seeds, GMOs and animal feed)



The Department of Governance and International Affairs relating to sanitary and food issues

is responsible for international affairs, imports and exports of animals, plants, food and feed. It coordinates horizontal activities relevant to technical functions (e.g. the budget, human resources, the expertise department, laboratory operation and the organisation of all information systems, and more)

The core tasks of DGAL decentralised services

in order to carry out its assigned tasks, the DGAL is reliant on **government agencies answering to the Prefects in French territorial *départements* and regions**. The DGAL has **operational authority** over those agencies, **with which it is in constant contact**.

Their core tasks

Protecting public health

The DD(CS)PPs (directorates for social cohesion and protection of the public in the *départements*) verifies adherence to regulations aimed at controlling diseases of animal origin communicable to human beings. They endeavour to ensure safety for health and full control over food hygiene and conduct programmes to prevent food contamination risks. They carry out inspections and monitor self-inspections by agricultural holdings and agrifood firms, producing annual food surveillance and control plans.

Protecting animal health and welfare

The DD(CS)PPs ensure constant surveillance of animal diseases. Any suspicion or notification of such diseases triggers a predetermined operational control system (emergency plans). This was the case in 2017 for bluetongue and avian influenza.

Protecting plant health

The DRAAFs (regional food, agriculture and forestry directorates) are responsible for a number of tasks relating to plant health protection (combating the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa*) and the control of plant protection products.

The organisation of controls and risk assessment



The DGAL's assigned tasks are carried out within a **national, European and international legislative environment.**

The national body of legislation and regulations comprises the **Rural and Maritime Fisheries Code, the Public Health Code, the Environment Code and the Consumer Code**, the provisions of which derive in large part from EU and international instruments.

It notably draws on the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the Codex Alimentarius and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

Those regulatory texts are regularly reviewed and adjusted to take account of changes in scientific and technical knowledge and societal expectations.

Every year, the DGAL implements a series of surveillance plans and plans for the control of microbiological and chemical contamination of food and feed.

This control policy is harmonised at EU level in order to guarantee a high level of sanitary safety across the single market.

The DGAL applies its controls based notably on the expertise of the national risk assessment bodies (ANSES - the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety – and *Santé Publique France*, the national public health agency).

Attribution of competencies for the organisation of controls and the management of alerts

Three government ministries are responsible for controls on foodstuffs in the event of public health alerts:

The DGAL (Ministry of Agriculture and Food):

Animal products and food containing them, plants up to harvest, veterinary drug residues in all products; control of GMOs, especially imported seeds;

The DGCCRF (General Directorate for Competition Policy, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control -

Ministry of the Economy): plant-based products, special foods (e.g. dietary products, infant formula); additives, GMOs, allergens, unauthorised substances (e.g. melamine), materials in contact with foodstuffs for all products (animal or plant);

DGS (the General Health Directorate – Ministry of Solidarity and Health):

all products where individuals are affected ("human cases") or where a major risk is present.

Platforms for more effective crisis prevention

Epidemiological surveillance platforms have been set up for plant health and food chain surveillance. The epidemiological surveillance platform for animal health, created in 2011, has been consolidated.

These platforms are based on partnerships between private- and public-sector actors. Their objective is to provide sanitary and biological surveillance across the country. The aim is no longer simply to ensure the surveillance of, and monitor changes in the diseases already present, but to detect the appearance of new diseases and health hazards as early as possible.

Epidemiological surveillance enables:

- **detection** of the appearance of an emerging disease or health hazard,
- **assessment** of its sanitary impact and economic consequences,
- **prioritisation** of the various control measures,
- **evaluation** of the effectiveness of the measures implemented.





Offering responses to society's expectations

The ECOPHYTO Plan to reduce the use of plant protection products

The goal of the Ecophyto II Plan is a **50% reduction in the use of plant protection products by 2025**. On the ground, pilot farms, now numbering 3,000, have shown that it is possible to reduce such treatments without affecting yields or the farm's economic performance.

In order to extend the take-up of these results, the number of holdings using only low levels of these products needs to be multiplied by a factor of 10 in order to build a network of 30,000 farms. They now contain nearly 5,000 agricultural holdings. These groupings will have priority for calling on an extra annual funding envelope of €30m to be made available at regional level.

Seeds and plants for sustainable agriculture

As a major tool for promoting the **adoption of sustainable farming methods**, the selective breeding and production of seeds and plants is a **sector of especial excellence** in France. With sales of €3.3bn, France is **the leading global exporter and the leading European producer of seeds**.

The new version of the "Seeds and plants for sustainable agriculture" plan makes varietal improvement and seed and plant quality central to meeting the agroecological challenge.

Combating antimicrobial resistance: the Ecoantibio Plan

Antimicrobial resistance is a major global challenge to public health, **leading to medical treatment that is less effective or completely ineffective** for certain human and animal conditions. An initial 2012-2017 national plan was implemented to **reduce the use of antibiotics in veterinary medicine**. The reduction stood at 39% after six years across all livestock farming and pet sectors.

An Ecoantibio 2 Plan for 2017-2021 has been launched to ensure that the reduction in animals' exposure to antibiotics is sustained over time. It is based on communication and training programmes, access to alternatives to antibiotics and improvements in the prevention of animal diseases. The Plan is part of **a holistic "One Health" approach** and complies with EU and international recommendations (WHO, FAO, OIE).

An animal welfare strategy 2016-2020

Citizens and consumers are **paying increasing attention to animal welfare**. They are asking industry professionals and government for explanations and action. The welfare of farm livestock is a factor in improved performance and enhances farmers' safety and quality of life.

It is increasingly a key factor for business competitiveness. Working with all actors in agriculture, health and society, the DGAL has constructed **an ambitious strategy for all animals, both farm livestock and pets**. A roadmap with five key focuses was rolled out in 2017. As a condition to be met for the success and adaptation of sustainable livestock farms, this animal welfare strategy has been made an integral part of the agroecology policy.

The National Food Programme (PNA)

Four priorities:

- social justice,
- food education for young people
- regional roots close to the general public,
- combating food waste.

There are two levers for action in the coming years: **institutional catering and local regional food projects**.

Local regional food projects (PATs) aim to improve the quality of food and bring producers closer to consumers. The task is to energise local regions by encouraging new entrants to farming, short distribution channels, local products in canteens, organic production, and more. PATs can receive official recognition awarded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food.



Combating sanitary crime and managing crises

France's national unit for veterinary and phytosanitary investigations (BNEVP), is a task force that can be brought to bear at short notice anywhere in the country.

The BNEVP conducts investigations into organised crime in the sanitary field and provides technical back-up for sanitary inspection staff, especially in times of crisis. The BNEVP's powers therefore cover the entire range of veterinary and phytosanitary domains.

Its assigned tasks fall into three categories:

- Combating organised criminal activities in the sanitary and phytosanitary fields;
- Conducting national investigations on behalf of the DGAL;
- Providing technical back-up to sanitary inspection services.

The DGAL (Sanitary Emergency Unit (MUS) is one of the two national points of contact for **RASFF** (European Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed) and the national point of contact for **INFOSAN** (the International Food Safety Authorities Network, dealing with the same issues).

Management of alerts and crises: a support unit for the sanitary control activities of the decentralised services.

The DGAL's Sanitary Emergency Unit (MUS) is responsible for the management of sanitary alerts, emergencies and crises, most notably in the food domain within the official remit of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Alerts originate in:

- Inspections conducted by the sanitary authorities,
- Self-inspections conducted by sector professionals,
- Consumer complaints,
- etc.

An alert will lead to a range of investigations of products and/or on animals.

Food-related alerts managed by the DGAL

- involving products of animal origin and foodstuffs containing them (whether or not they lead to human health issues such as foodborne illness),
- involving plants where these are still in the fields,
- involving animal feed of animal origin,
- involving animal or plant health.





THE DGAL'S EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL OUTREACH

The DGAL takes part in the work done by EU institutions in the sanitary and phytosanitary domains, most notably the negotiation of free trade agreements between the European Union and third countries. It tracks the sanitary and phytosanitary aspects of the agreements reached.

Internationally, it tracks negotiations relating to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

The Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) is France's permanent delegate

to the World Organisation for animal health (OIE): it contributes to the work of the OIE on standards and regulations. In the phytosanitary domain, the Chief Officer of Plant Health Service (COPH) represents France in the proceedings of the International Plant Health Convention (IPPC) and its regional body for Europe (EPPO).

The DGAL is also responsible for bilateral negotiations with third countries on sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to trade. With a view to opening up markets,

it hosts numerous delegations from third countries on visits to inspect French firms or audit our sanitary and phytosanitary system.

The DGAL also runs cooperation and partnership programmes with many countries. It shares its experience and raises the profile of its technical expertise by welcoming foreign delegations (Algeria, South Africa, Kosovo, Morocco, and others) and deploying French experts on missions to such countries (e.g. Turkey, China).

A network of experts, nationwide coverage

Expert networks

The DGAL's department of veterinary and phytosanitary expertise (DEVP) has 40 national expert referents and 121 resource persons. These members of staff, in post in directorates in the regions or the *départements*, provide back-up for internal specialist capacity for the management of veterinary and phytosanitary risks. The system is adaptive and expertise requirements are reassessed on a regular basis.

Quality-led management

Engaged in a quality-led management approach with a focus on processes, the DGAL is continuing its programme in this area with a view to making quality a tool for continuous improvement of the operation of its organisational entities.

Local quality managers (RQL), regional quality leaders (CRAQ), process leads and the office for quality-led management and control coordination at the DGAL provide support to directors and to the entire working community for the implementation of the system of quality-led management.

Outside and across the whole of France

40 expert referents

121 resource individuals

Key figures 2018

Budget:
€552.4 million



Around **4,800** staff in the central administration and decentralised services

14,000 government-approved sanitary veterinarians **30** national reference laboratories and **150** specialist test laboratories



Control of the use and marketing of plant protection products

Number of inspections: **7,500**
Number of plant samples taken: **1,300**



Controls on imports

- **42,530** batches of animals and animal products
- **53,550** batches of plants and plant products

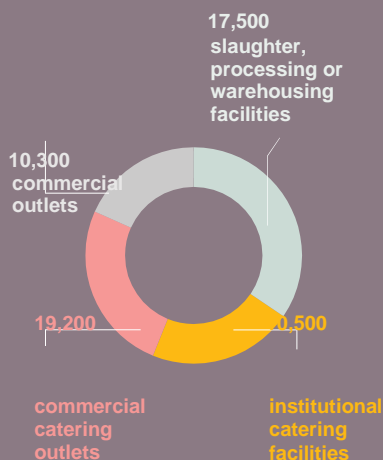


In total, 60,000 tests were scheduled on foodstuffs

under the annual programme of surveillance of contamination in primary production, food and feed

Over **400,000** processing, distribution and catering facilities and **500,000** agricultural holdings to be inspected

57,500 inspections of those facilities under the food safety system.



Total cost of sanitary inspections: €335 million



Nearly **400,000** sanitary and phytosanitary certificates issued for shipments to other countries.

Approximately **75** delegations hosted, meetings held and/or negotiations conducted.



Food policy

33 projects supported with funding of **€1.5 million**



Animal health and protection

12,800 inspections for the purposes of animal protection

19,130 inspections for animal health purposes
173,000 sanitary visits to livestock farms



Food-related alerts

1,270 alerts relating to products and **1,305** to cases of collective foodborne illness



40 new cases in 2018 in the context of action by the national unit for veterinary and phytosanitary investigations (BNEVP) in connection with the prosecution of organised crime.

Publication director

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