



MINISTÈRE
DE L'AGRICULTURE
ET DE L'ALIMENTATION

*Liberté
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FOOD CHAIN SURVEILLANCE



2020 Overview
Surveillance
and control plans

DECEMBER 2021

SURVEILLANCE AND CONTROL PLANS: WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES?

WHAT ARE THEIR ROLES IN THE FOOD SAFETY SYSTEM?

The General Directorate for Food (DGAL) applies two types of controls to ensure food safety for the consumer throughout the food supply chain:

1 controls of production facilities and food distributors, in order to ensure that their operations comply with regulations (good hygiene practice, product self-monitoring, etc);

2 controls of products (French and imported), based on product sampling programmes called “surveillance plans” and “control plans”.

Surveillance plans and control plans relate to two different, mutually complementary strategies. Using random samples representative of production or consumption, surveillance plans provide an evaluation of consumers’ exposure to a given risk and thereby an identification of the measures needed to control that risk.

Where **control plans** are concerned, these relate to food products targeted as subject to an increased risk of contamination, thus providing an evaluation of the efficacy of the management measures applied.

The DGAL leads the surveillance and control plans system and coordinates its implementation with the other competent government ministries⁽¹⁾.

IT ENSURES SURVEILLANCE OF:

Contamination

in primary animal production and food products of animal origin, both French and imported, at every stage in the food supply chain



Contamination in primary plant production (at farms)



Contamination of animal feed



WHICH CONTAMINANTS?

Chemical contaminants and residues, residues of medicines such as antibiotics, residues of banned substances such as chloramphenicol and trace metals such as lead, organic pollutants as dioxins.

Biological contaminants, bacteria such as Salmonella, viruses such as hepatitis E and toxins such as mycotoxins, parasites – *Anisakidae* species for example.

Physical contaminants, radionuclides.

Such contaminants have confirmed or suspected impacts on consumers’ health, leading to **short-term** (e.g.: foodborne outbreak linked to Salmonella) or **long-term** consequences (chronic toxicity resulting in cancer or endocrine disorders).

⁽¹⁾ General Directorate for Competition Policy, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control (Ministry of the Economy): fair and honest commercialisation of plant products when placed on the market. General Directorate for Health (French Ministry of Health): bottled water for human consumption.

MAIN RESULTS 2020

→ 16 surveillance and control plans implemented in 2020 by the DGAL

Despite the crisis linked to the CoVID-19, the overall achievement rate of surveillance and control plans remains satisfactory, thanks to the constant work of decentralized service agents and laboratories.

The majority of the **58 000 samples** in 2020 was related to primary production, and more particularly the **meat livestock sector**, which accounted for 56% of all samples (58% in the cattle sector) and the **poultry sector**, which accounted for 21% of all samples. Next came **fisheries products** – 6% of all samples.

THREE OBJECTIVES

① Avoid non compliant products in the market

② Identify bad practices and misuses of certain substances (veterinary medicine, phytopharmaceutical products)

③ Improve knowledge of levels of contamination in animal and plant primary production, feed and animal origin food products

→ Targeted contaminants



In **animal production**, targeted contaminants or residues are **banned substances and growth promoters** (34% of all samples taken), chloramphenicol and steroids, plus **residues of veterinary medicines** (33%), or antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs.

The research of **other chemical contaminants** (trace metals and persistent organic pollutants) and **biological contaminants** accounted respectively for 12% and 3% of all samples taken.

In 2020, antimicrobial resistance continued to be a major public health issue (6% of samples).



For **plant production**, surveillance and control plans related largely to efforts to detect **residues of phytopharmaceutical products**. All in all, 1 439 samples were taken in 2020 in order to detect unauthorised active substances at the harvest time and to check plant compliance with the maximum residue levels authorised by legislation.

→ High compliance levels

In 2020, the majority of the **58 000 samples carried out were compliant** with the contamination limits laid down in EU regulations.



For **animal primary production**, the **compliance levels found were high, between 98% and 100%**, except for control of trace metals in game products, for which non-compliant results were estimated at 15%.



For **primary plant production**, **compliance level reached 84% for the surveillance plan and at 92% for the control plan**. Non-compliance involved consist of exceeding of authorised maximum limits or presence of unauthorised substances.

The data collected **are used as input for national and european risk assessment studies** in order to improve knowledge of consumer exposure to foodborne hazards. If necessary, the data also allow changes to regulations, involving for example the implementation of specific regulations or consumer recommendations.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF APPLICATION?

Applied within the DGAL's official field of competence, the surveillance and control plans cover **the entire food supply chain – following the “from farm to fork” principle – from primary production to the placing on**

the market. Sampling is also carried out at **entry to the EU** at border posts in order to check imported products' compliance with European requirements.



WHICH CONSEQUENCES AFTER A NON-COMPLIANCE?

Where non compliant results are detected, officials take appropriate and proportionate action such as:

- official reminder of the regulatory requirements (e.g. hygiene indicator);
- withdrawal and/or recall of production batches (*Listeria monocytogenes* detection);
- isolation of herds and herd production (e.g. for contamination with dioxins trace metals, slaughter (banned substances), crop destruction (plant protection product residues in plants);
- investigations to determine the reasons for non-compliance, with stringent official compliance orders and involvement of the French National Veterinary and Phytosanitary Investigation Brigade (for banned substances for example);
- implementation of specific regulations (setting maximum residue levels, prefectural orders) and consumer recommendations (e.g. ANSES recommendation linked to the risk of mercury contamination in fish);
- enhanced controls and application of safeguard measures if a non compliance is detected in imported products.

HOW ARE THE RESULTS USED?

Surveillance and control plans are key tools for protecting the public health and promoting French farm and agrifood exports.

The results are transmitted to :

- **the European Commission**, as evidence of the application of EU regulations in France concerning the sanitary monitoring of foodstuffs;
- **the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety (ANSES) and the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA)**, for exposure risk assessment at EU level. These data are thereafter used to establish and which use them for food safety control measures.