



**MINISTÈRE
DE L'AGRICULTURE
ET DE LA SOUVERAINETÉ
ALIMENTAIRE**

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*

Food chain surveillance



2021 OVERVIEW
**Surveillance
and control plans**

Surveillance and control plans: scope and 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 insures 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 (at national and border control post level)



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 2021

The majority of the **57 703 samples** in 2021 was related to primary production, and more particularly the **meat livestock sector**, which accounted for 63% of all samples (36% in the cattle sector) and the **poultry sector**, which accounted for 15% of all samples. Next came **fisheries products** – 8% of all samples.

-  **21** surveillance and control plans
-  **57 703** samples from farm to fork
-  **+ de 200** targeted substances and contaminants (chemical, biological, physical)


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**, as chloramphenicol and steroids, and **residues of veterinary medicines** (69%), 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 6% of all samples taken.


In 2021, antimicrobial resistance continued to be a major public health issue (3% of samples).

 For **plant production**, surveillance and control plans related largely to efforts to detect **residues of phytopharmaceutical products**. All in all, 1 595 samples were taken in 2021 in order to detect unauthorised active substances at the harvest time or to check plant compliance with the maximum residue levels authorised by legislation.

→ High compliance levels

In 2021, the majority of the **57 703 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 20%.

 For **primary plant production**, compliance level reached **86%** for the surveillance plan and at **94%** 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 control posts in order to check imported products' compliance with European requirements.

57 703
samples



13 M€
budget



1600
officers deployed
across the country
and at its borders



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 official compliance orders and possible 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.