

HEALTH MONITORING OF ANIMAL AND PLANT PRODUCTS

2016 OVERVIEW

MONITORING AND CONTROL PLANS



Liberté • Égalité • Fraternité
RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

MINISTÈRE
DE L'AGRICULTURE
ET DE
L'ALIMENTATION

CONTROL AND MONITORING PLANS: WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES?

▶ WHAT ARE THEIR ROLES IN THE FOOD SAFETY SYSTEM?

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

➔ **controls of production facilities and controls of distribution outlets**, in order to ensure that their operations comply with regulations (good hygiene practice, product self-monitoring, etc);

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

Monitoring plans and control plans relate to two different, mutually complementary strategies. Using samples representative of production or consumption, **monitoring plans provide an evaluation of consumers’ overall 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 PSPC programme and coordinates its implementation with the other competent government ministries⁽¹⁾.

It ensures monitoring for:

- 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 (on farms);
- contamination of animal feed.

▶ WHAT ARE THE CONTAMINANTS?

➔ **Chemical contaminants** (veterinary medicines such as antibiotics, banned substances such as chloramphenicol and trace metals such as lead, organic pollutants as dioxins and pesticides).

➔ **Biological contaminants** (bacteria such as Salmonella, viruses such as hepatitis and toxins such as mycotoxins, parasites – echinococcus species for example).

➔ **Physical contaminants** (radionuclides).

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

▶ WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF APPLICATION?



Applied within the DGAL’s official field of competence, the monitoring and control plans cover **the whole of the food supply chain – following the “from farm to fork” principle – from initial production to 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.

(1) General Directorate for Health (French Ministry of Health); bottled water for human consumption. 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.

2016 OVERVIEW IN FIGURES

60,000
SAMPLES



€12m
BUDGET



1,600
OFFICERS DEPLOYED
ACROSS THE COUNTRY
AND AT ITS BORDERS



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.

Where necessary, the data also allow changes to regulations, involving for example the implementation of specific regulations or consumer recommendations.

TARGETED CONTAMINANTS

In **animal production**, targeted contaminants are mainly **banned substances and growth promoters** (36.4% of all samples taken), such as processed animal protein, chloramphenicol and steroids, plus **residues of veterinary medicines** (27.1%), e.g. antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs. The targeting of **other chemical contaminants** (trace elements and persistent organic pollutants) and **biological contaminants** accounted respectively for 13.6% and 9.7% of all samples taken.

In 2016, **antimicrobial resistance** continued to be a major public health concern (6.9% of samples).

For **plant production**, monitoring related largely to efforts to detect **residues of plant protection products**. All in all, 1,216 samples were taken in 2016 in order to detect active substances not authorised at the stage of harvesting and to check plant compliance with the maximum residue levels permitted by regulations.

There are three objectives: to avoid the placing on markets of non-compliant products, to identify poor practice in the application of plant protection products and to improve knowledge of levels of contamination in plant production at harvest.

THE RESULTS

In 2016, the vast majority of the **60,000 samples carried out were compliant** with the contamination limits laid down in EU regulations.

Where animal production was concerned, the compliance levels found in the plans were high, between 98% and 100%, with the exception of the plan for monitoring of levels of heavy metals in fisheries products at the retail distribution stage, for which anomalous results were estimated at 4%, and monitoring of chemical residues in game products, showing 23% non-compliance.

In plant production, compliance level stood at 94% for the monitoring plan and at 93% for the control plan for plant protection product residues. Non-compliance involved constitute exceeding of authorised maximum limits or the presence of substances not authorised for a given type of crop.

▶ WHAT STEPS ARE TAKEN FOR NON-COMPLIANCE?

Where results are non-compliant, officials take appropriate and proportionate steps such as:

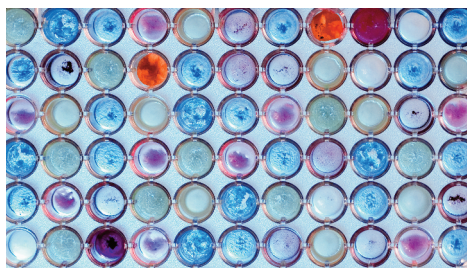
- official reminder of the regulatory requirements (e.g. hygiene indicator microorganisms);
- withdrawal and/or recall of production batches (e.g. presence of *Listeria*);
- isolation of herds and herd production (e.g. for contamination with dioxins or heavy metals), slaughter (banned substances), crop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

▶ HOW ARE THE RESULTS USED?

Monitoring 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)**, which use them to assess the level of risk exposure of the consumer at EU level. This is in turn used to establish and revise food safety control measures.



▶ SECTOR ALLOCATION

18 monitoring and control plans were implemented across all sectors and at the various stages in the supply chain from initial production to placing in the market, acting within the scope of the DGAL's official field of competence.

Typical plans: detection of residues of veterinary medicines in farmed fish, Shiga Toxin-producing E. coli (STEC) in minced meat, histamine in fisheries products, plant protection product residues in plants and dioxins in livestock feed.

The majority of the **60,000 samples** in 2016 was related to primary production, and more particularly the **meat livestock sector**, which accounted for 58.2% of all samples (of which 58.1% were in the beef sector) and the **poultry sector**, which accounted for 25.2% of all samples.

Next came the **dairy industry** - 4.3% of samples - and **fisheries products** - 3.6% of all samples.

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