

Food safety: feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules, official controls

2003/0030(COD) - 05/02/2003 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to propose new controls on official feed and food. **CONTENT** : the proposed Regulation will streamline and reinforce the existing control system with added bite, consisting of stricter enforcement mechanisms. The proposal aims to cure weaknesses in current legislation by improving the efficiency of control services performed by both Member States and the Commission. It defines tougher enforcement measures, including criminal sanctions. The proposal also creates a framework to support developing countries in meeting EU import requirements and provides for a financial framework to organise activities that enhance food and feed safety. More specifically, it lays down the rules to be respected by the competent authorities responsible for carrying out official controls as well as the tasks of the Commission with regard to the organisation of those controls. It is the result of a review of the existing Community rules on the subject, which were adopted separately for the animal feed sector, the food sector and the veterinary sector. It covers the entire range of activities covered by feed and food law, which includes feed and food safety but also other aspects that relate to consumer protection, such as feed and food labelling. The present proposal aims to create such Community framework of national control systems by merging and completing existing rules for national and Community controls within the EU, at the borders and in third countries. Special attention is paid to enforcement measures and in particular the imposition of sanctions at national and Community level. For that purpose, the proposal contains minimum requirements on criminal sanctions to be imposed by the Member States with regard to serious offences that are committed intentionally or through serious negligence. The proposal also contains new tools for the Commission to enforce the implementation of Community feed and food law by the Member States. The proposal takes into account the principles of food safety that are spelled out in the Commission's White Paper on Food Safety, and in particular that: - food safety policy must be based on a comprehensive, integrated approach, - feed and food businesses operators have the prime responsibility for feed and food safety, whilst the competent authorities monitor and enforce this responsibility through the operation of national surveillance and control systems; the Commission's control services concentrate on evaluating the ability of competent authorities to deliver these systems through audits and inspections, - feed and food safety policy must be risk-based, - the farm to table policy, covering all sectors of the food chain, including feed production and animal feeding, primary production, food processing, storage and distribution, animal health and animal welfare, needs to be systematically implemented.