

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS



WORLD
HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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Agenda Item 4

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME FAO/WHO REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE

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FOOD LEGISLATION AND FOOD CONTROL ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION (Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden)

1) UPDATED SURVEY OF NATIONAL FOOD LEGISLATION AND FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS, CODEX CONTACT POINTS AND NATIONAL CODEX COMMITTEES

ESTONIA

(i) Official Agencies

Responsibilities of different ministries (including responsibilities for drafting legislative acts) and their subordinate bodies are described in *the Government of the Republic Act*.

According to the above-mentioned *Act* the responsibilities of the Ministry of Agriculture include drafting of legislative acts in phytosanitary, animal nutrition and veterinary fields, as well as in the whole foodstuffs sector, and the coordination of implementation of these acts. Should the responsibilities for inspection in some areas be divided between the subordinate bodies of different ministries (for example, in case of foodstuffs, between the Ministries of Agriculture, Social Affairs and Economic Affairs and Communications), cooperation is developed with these ministries and subordinate bodies for the development of such drafts, and the approval of final texts from respective ministries is sought. According to general principle, the ministry is responsible for analysing the current situation, planning of development and formation of policies in areas mentioned above as well as in some other areas. The ministry drafts the legislative acts, develops plans and other documents as necessary. Day to day inspection is done by subordinate bodies (inspectorates and boards). At the same time the subordinate bodies are included in the process of development of legislative acts to ensure the use of practical experiences in the drafting process and hence more effective implementation of the acts.

The Codex Contact Point is at the Veterinary and Food Department of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The official control tasks in the foodstuffs sector are divided between the Veterinary and Food Board, the Health Protection Inspectorate and the Consumer Protection Board. The scope of their responsibilities is established with the *Food Act* as follows.

The duty of the Health Protection Inspectorate is to carry out control over retail businesses and mass caterers. Over all other food businesses, the control will be carried out by the Veterinary and Food Board. The duty of the Consumer Protection Board is to control correctness of labelling in the retail and wholesale stage.

Estonia has two levels inspection system. In general, all control authorities consist of central authority and local units that are in direct administrative subordination to the central authorities. There is on-line command system between central authority and local units of it. Usually the central authority is responsible for coordination and supervision of work of inspectors of local units. For every food control agency the local district units (15) respond directly to the head office.

Concerning border inspection, the Veterinary and Food Board is responsible for veterinary border inspections of animals and foodstuffs of animal origin imported from third countries. In general, food of non-animal origin is checked in the place of destination of consignment in the course of day-to-day control. If there is a reasonable doubt of possible importation of non-conforming food of non-animal origin, the Tax and Custom Board has rights to perform control of those foodstuffs at the place of importation.

The Veterinary and Food Board is subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture, the Health Protection Inspectorate is subordinated to the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Consumer Protection Board to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications.

Since 1 July 2000 only official laboratories authorised by the Minister of Agriculture for particular analyses are eligible for testing samples taken in the course of official control. From 1 January 2002 only laboratory accredited for particular analyses can be authorised. In the foodstuffs sector there are 17 laboratories accredited and authorised for different foodstuffs analysis in Estonia. Accreditation is based on the standard EVS-EN ISO/IEC 17025:2000, which is the standard on the general requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories.

(ii) Food Legislation

The foodstuffs sector in Estonia is regulated by the national *Food Act*, secondary legislative acts of this *Act* and directly applicable regulations of the European Community. The *Food Act* entered into force on 1 January 2000. The Estonian food legislation is harmonised with the EC legislation.

IRELAND

Official Agencies

Ireland has an extensive framework of legislation and official controls in place to ensure food safety. The establishment and continuous updating of these controls and their enforcement involve the combined activities of a number of departments and agencies operating at both national and local level augmented by a wide spectrum of medical, veterinary and scientific experts who provide specialist support services. In general, responsibility for food safety policy rests with central government departments while these, together with a number of other national/regional/local agencies, undertake food safety enforcement activities on behalf of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI).

The FSAI, which was established in 1998 and commenced operations on 1 January 1999, is a statutory, independent, science-based body dedicated to protecting public health and consumer interests in the area of food safety and hygiene. It comes under the aegis of the Minister for Health and Children. It has a board of 10 and is supported by a 15 member Scientific Committee and a 22 member Consultative Council.

The FSAI is responsible for the enforcement of all food safety legislation in Ireland. It carries out its enforcement functions through 'service contracts' with official agencies. These contracts outline an agreed level and standard of food safety activity that the agencies must perform as agents of the Authority. The agencies are certain Government Departments (Department of Agriculture & Food, the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources), the local authorities (33 County Councils and Corporations), the Health Boards, the Marine Institute and the Office of the Director of Consumer Affairs. The Authority also co-operates with the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland in regard to the monitoring of radioactivity levels in food - where both bodies have statutory duties - and with the Revenue Commissioners in respect of activities at border inspection posts.

A brief overview of the present structure and organisation of the official agencies involved and the roles they play is given in Annex I while a breakdown of the laboratories providing food analysis services is described in Annex 2.

Activities of Codex Contact Point and National Coordinating Committee

The Irish Codex Contact Point function is discharged by an officer of the Department of Agriculture and Food who actively undertakes the 9 Core Functions of CCP's discussed at the 14th session of the Codex Committee on General Principles and set out in the report of that meeting (ALINORM 99/33A, Appendix V) and subsequently noted by the CAC at its 23rd session.

A broadly based National Codex Committee comprising all the main stakeholders was re-established in Ireland in 2001. It meets on a regular basis and provides a forum to enable all relevant Departments, NGO's, consumers and industry bodies to make known their views, in a structured way, for consideration in the formulation of the official national position on all Codex issues.

Food Legislation

In Ireland the responsibility for food safety legislation policy resides with the relevant government departments in particular the Department of Health & Children, the Department of Agriculture and Food, and the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. In common with other western countries, Ireland has an extensive framework of arrangements in place for ensuring food safety. It is based

on a number of distinct elements, viz.:

- Designation of standards critical to public health which must be observed in relation to food and to the people, animals and processes involved in the different areas of the food chain.
- A system of controls - based on approval, licensing, inspection, testing and scientific analysis - to ensure adherence to prescribed standards.
- An administrative framework staffed by appropriately qualified and skilled personnel to monitor and enforce the prescribed standards.
- Effective legal, financial and other sanctions for failure to observe the standards.

The control system in place has grown up piecemeal over the years and owes its origins, broadly, to two sets of influences:

- food safety threats as perceived nationally over the years at different stages of our economic and social development and the response thereto by Government Departments and other relevant authorities as dictated by evolving public health standards and in response to trade requirements. The food safety standards and control systems resulting from these developments have been given statutory expression in domestic legislation in order to ensure their effectiveness.
- our membership of the EU where the drive to harmonise technical standards has served to focus increased attention on food safety in member states both collectively and individually. In Ireland these EU derived standards and control arrangements take effect either directly, in the case of Regulations, or indirectly in the case of Directives, following their transposition into domestic legislation within a specified period. The body of Irish food law stemming from this process is and continues to be strongly influenced by developments in Codex as a result of the historical participation in Codex over the years by Ireland, other member states and the EU as a whole.

Arising out of the above a complex and comprehensive body of food law is in place in Ireland which is too voluminous to describe here. This is constantly changing and evolving in response to a variety of internal, EU and internationally derived factors. The FSAI has compiled a compendium of food legislation in Ireland and maintains this on its website, www.fsai.ie/legislation/index.asp

ANNEX 1

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY OF BODIES CONCERNED WITH FOOD SAFETY

<u>Body</u>	<u>Areas of concern</u>
Food Safety Authority of Ireland	Enforcement of all food safety legislation through service contracts with Govt. Departments, Health Boards & Local Authorities. Co-ordination of Irish input into the EU programme of Scientific Co-operation in Europe (SCOOP). Irish Contact Point for the EU Rapid Alert System for Foodstuffs (RASFF). Certification for Export of non-animal derived food produced in Health Board approved premises. Competent Authority for novel foods. Operation of the Food Safety Training Council setting standards for training in retail, food-service and manufacturing businesses.
Food Safety Promotion Board	All-Island body with over-arching responsibility for communicating/promoting food safety information to consumers.
Department of Agriculture and Food.	Regulation of plant protection & biocidal products. Control of illegal substances and monitoring harmful residues in various foods. Animal health; use of veterinary medicines. Export approved meat processing plants covering fresh meat, poultry meat, meat products, minced meat and meat preparations. Imported meat products. Eggs & egg products. Milk processing plants and farms supplying them, including all aspects of processing, handling, storage and placing on the market. Cereals, potatoes, fruit and vegetables, sugar, jams/jellies/marmalades, cocoa, coffee, fruit juices, spirit drinks, wine. Animal feed – all aspects. GM - feed & seed.
Department of Health & Children and Health Boards	General food safety, hygiene, composition including food additives and contamination (e.g. baby milks). Food retailing/wholesaling outlets, manufacturing, packing, distribution and catering trade. Sale of un-pasteurised milk. Labelling. Processing of foods which are not the responsibility of other Departments. Bottled flavoured waters including soft drinks, brewing and distilling industries. Bottled water.
Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources	In relation to both domestic and export markets - fishing vessels, wholesale and auction markets, fish processing establishments, shellfish purification centres, transportation and labelling of fish products, shellfish production areas and aquaculture installation. On-farm controls where drinking milk product for direct sale; licensing of dairymen. Abattoirs and meat processing plants catering for domestic market.
Local Authorities (Veterinary Service)	Public drinking water supplies. Potable water Directive.
Department of the Environment, Local Authorities & Environmental Protection Agency	Food products - producers of raw materials and finished product (under Consumer Protection Legislation). Material in contact with foodstuffs. Substances in veterinary medicines.
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment & Office of the Director of Consumer Affairs	Ionising radiation levels in individuals, animals, fauna, poultry, eggs, crops, fish, seaweed, or any food, soil, minerals, air or water.
Irish Medicines Board	
Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland	

LABORATORIES PROVIDING FOOD ANALYSIS SERVICES

Laboratory	Foods Monitored	Range of Tests
Public Analysts Laboratory (3 labs)	All foodstuffs	Contaminants, additives, residues, food authenticity, public complaints, toxins
Pesticide Control Service	Meat, milk, fruit, vegetables, cereals	Pesticide residues
Marine Institute	Fish, shellfish	Contaminants, natural toxins, drug residues, micro-organisms
Central Meat Control Laboratory	Meat	Drug residues, additives, micro-organisms
Food Microbiology Laboratories (7 labs)	All foodstuffs	Micro-organisms
Dairy Science Laboratories (3 Labs)	Milk , Dairy products	Drug residues, contaminants micro-organisms
Regional Veterinary Laboratories (2)	Milk and water.	Micro-organisms
Central Veterinary Research Laboratory	Dust samples from egg farms.	Salmonella.
Local Authority Laboratories (2 labs)	Meat	Drug residues, micro-organisms
Radiological Protection Institute	All foodstuffs	Radioactivity
State Laboratory	Milk, cereals, veg., animal feed	Nutrients, drug residues, additives and contaminants

LATVIA

(i)Official Agencies

Food legislation and enforcement in Latvia is the responsibility of two ministries – The Ministry of Agriculture and The Ministry of Health.

The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for developing agricultural policy and drafting legislation in phytosanitary, agriculture, veterinary and food sectors.

The Ministry of Health together with its subordinating body Latvian Food Centre organises elaboration of scientifically grounded proposals concerning problem solution in the field of food safety and nutrition as well as deals with issues concerning food additives, food contaminants, drinking water, GMO and novel foods.

A single administrative body – **Food and Veterinary Service (FVS)** that is subordinate to the Ministry of Agriculture, since January 1st, 2002, carries out the overall official food circulation control and surveillance, including food hygiene and pesticide residues. FVS was established by emerging State Sanitary Inspection, State Veterinary Service and State Plant Production Control Service in such a way developing unified food control system, improving the overall traceability of food products, simplifying administration and providing more efficient enforcement of legislation. The main goals of Food and Veterinary Service are to assure circulation of safe and high-quality food, eliminating any risks, promoting trade and protecting the interests of consumers.

The Law on Supervision of Handling Food lays down the main functions of FVS. The main functions are to supervise and control at all stages of the handling of food the conformity of food products (from “farm to fork”) with the requirements prescribed by regulatory enactments and to perform risk factor research and analysis.

Food and Veterinary Service consists of several structural units:

- Territorial structural units;
- Laboratories;
- Sanitary Border Inspection;
- State Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Centre.

Latvia is divided into 26 districts and in every district there are FVS territorial structural units that carry out the inspection inside the country.

Sanitary Border inspection in accordance with the procedures prescribed by regulatory enactments supervise and control at State border control points, as well as in free zones, free warehouses and customs warehouses the importation of food into the State, the exportation or the transit of products subject to veterinary supervision as well as other goods and products.

State Veterinary Medicine Diagnostic Centre (SVMDC) is accredited laboratory performing laboratory investigation in the diagnostics of animal diseases, circulation of veterinary drugs, veterinary pharmaceutical products, industrially produced animal feed and feed additives and food products. The SVMDC has also 12 regional laboratories. The laboratories of SVMDC have undergone and implemented quality assurance system in accordance with LVS EN ISO 17025.

The Codex Contact Point is at the Veterinary and Food department of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia. However, the reasonable and more efficient system of the circulation of Codex documents to all concerned parties and compilation of received comments is still under preparation.

(ii) Food Legislation

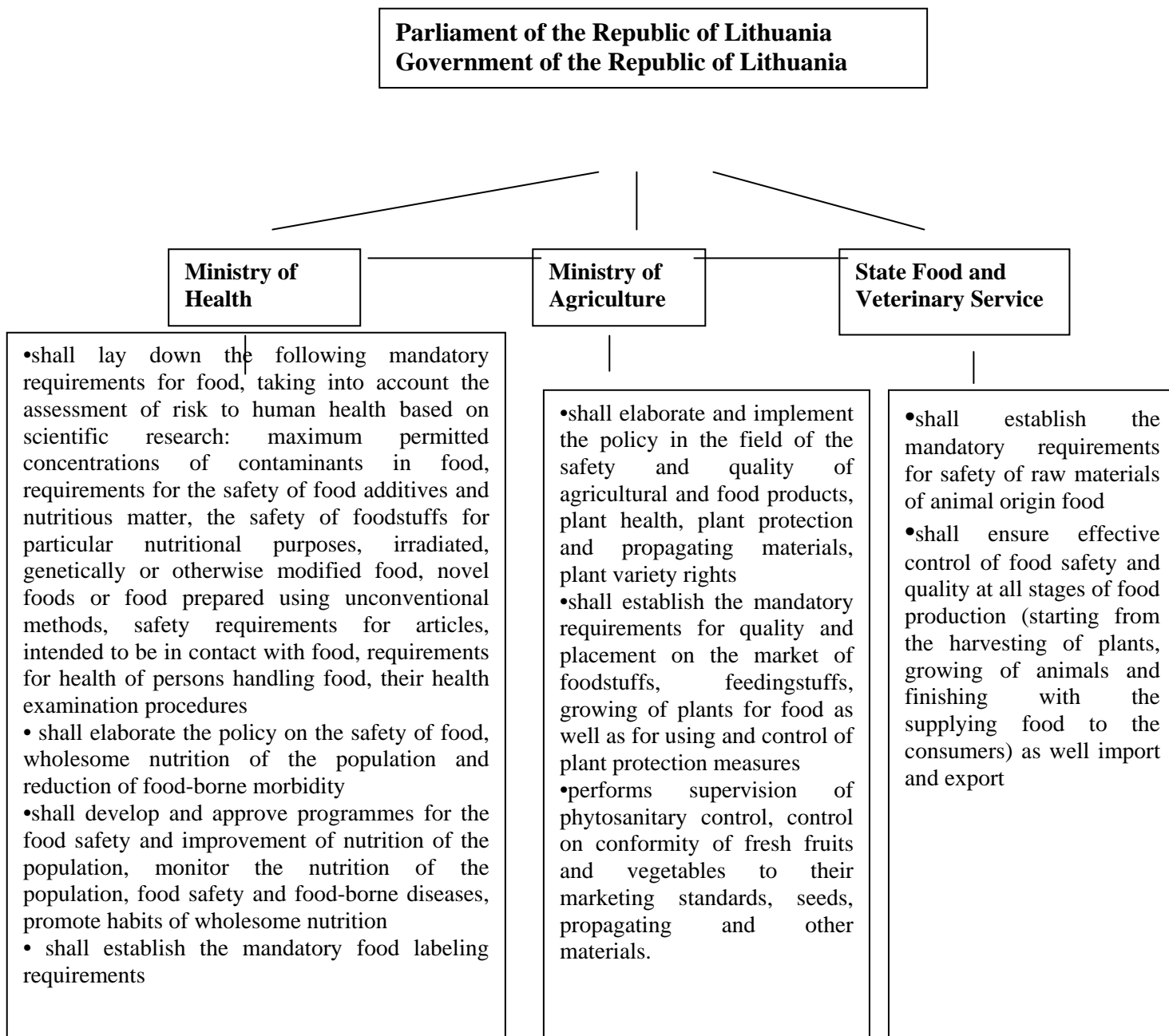
The food circulation in Latvia is regulated by the Law “Supervision of Handling of Food” (20.03.1998) and the “Law of Veterinary Medicine” (26.04.2001) and is harmonised with EU legislation. Number of national rules (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers) in food and veterinary sector are elaborated in accordance with these laws as well as harmonized with EU legislation.

LITHUANIA

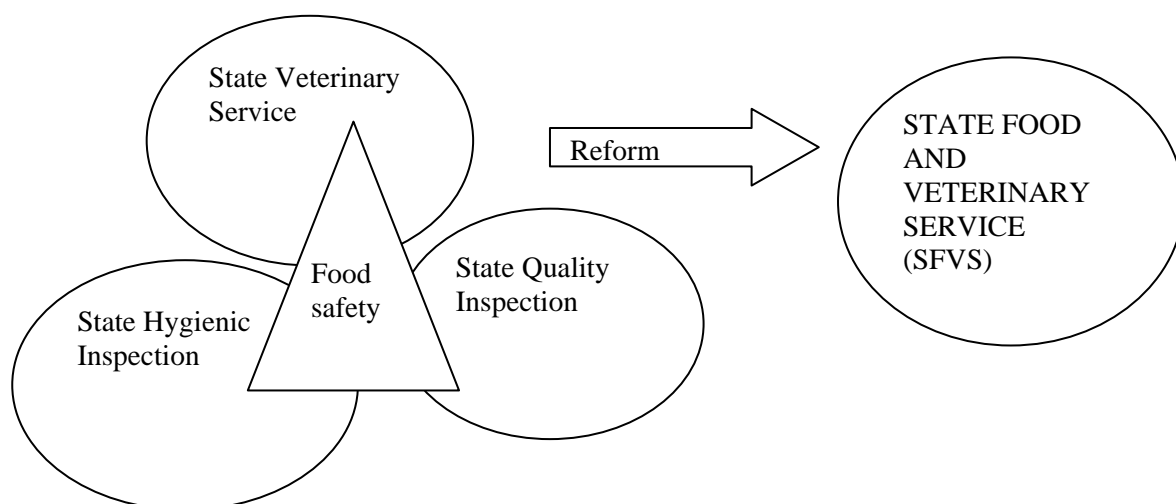
Food safety activities in Lithuania cover the entire food production chain ranging from animal health and plant health to the labelling of the food products, as well as animal welfare.

(i) Official Agencies

Responsibilities of different ministries and institutions are described in the Law on Food. Responsibility for food safety including import/export in Lithuania is divided in following way:



REORGANIZATION OF FOOD CONTROL INSTITUTIONS OF LITHUANIA WAS PERFORMED IN 2000:



SFVS is a governmental institution implementing State policy in food and veterinary fields. Structure of the organization is:

PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

↓
CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICER

↓
**HEADQUARTERS OF STATE FOOD AND VETERINARY SERVICE;
COUNTY SFVS – 10, CITY SFVS – 4, DISTRICT SFVS – 34;
BORDER VETERINARY INSPECTION POSTS-12, NATIONAL VETERINARY LABORATORY
AND REGIONAL LABORATORIES**

LABORATORIES:

National Veterinary Laboratory (NVL) has been accredited according to EN ISO/IEC 17025:2000;

National Public Health Centre Laboratory (NPHC) has been accredited according to EN ISO/IEC 17025:2000;

County laboratories are located in each county.

The National Nutrition Center under the Ministry of Health was nominated as a **National Codex Contact point** on 10 of July 1992 by the Resolution No 668 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

In Lithuania Codex standards are in spread use particularly in the areas being imprescriptible by EU regulations. Codex standards are transposed into national standardization system by responsible institution– Lithuanian Standards Board. Lithuanian Standards Board was established on the 25th of April 1990 as an institution of the executive force of the Republic of Lithuania, within its province taking part in establishing and implementing the policy of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania within standardization, quality assurance fields and carrying out other functions provided by the Laws of the Republic of Lithuania and Government Resolutions.

- Technical Committees under the Lithuanian Standards Board are:

- “Meat and Meat Products”
- “Fruit and vegetables products”
- “Cereals, cereal products and animal feedingstuffs”
- “Bread and Confectionery”
- “Food analysis – Horizontal Methods”
- “Fermentation Products”
- Codex Alimentarius Committee and others

National Codex Alimentarius Committee was established on the 18th of December 1997 by the order of Director of Lithuanian Standards board. The main objectives of its activity are:

- Formulating the country response to the proposals of the Codex Alimentarius Commission
- Represent the country at various Codex meetings and events
- Advising the government on the best possible decision as regards Codex standards and their implementation
- Improving the state policy of health quality among Lithuanian population
- Improving the quality of food and health
- Review and, as necessary, revision of existing standards

National Codex Alimentarius Committee comprises from representatives of:

- National Nutrition Center under the Ministry of Health
- Kaunas Technological University
- State Food and Veterinary Service
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Economy
- Institute of Food of the Kaunas Technological University
- Fishery Department under the Ministry of Agriculture
- Association of Lithuanian Consumers
- Association “Eurochem – Lithuania”
- Food Engineering Center

(ii) Food Legislation

Food safety is being regulated by major laws of the Republic of Lithuania:

Law on Products Safety (approved on 1 July 1999);

Law on Food (approved on 4 April 2000);

Law onVeterinary (approved on 7 October 1999).

The Ministry of Health is a main institution laying down the mandatory requirements for food safety, taking into account the assessment of risk for human health based on scientific research, is responsible for health and safe foodstuff consumption of inhabitants.

The National Nutrition Centre (NNC) under Ministry of Health is a headquarters for food legislation issues and responsible for coordination of healthy and wholesome nutrition of population. The National Nutrition Center drafts legal acts in area of food and nutrition and responsible for risk assessment. The Minister of Health signs the legal acts drafted by the National Nutrition Center. The institution headed by the Director, it consists of 22 persons and has following divisions: Food Safety Division, Nutrition Division, Hygiene Expertise Division, Drinking Water Division and General Affairs Division.

SWEDEN

(i) Official Agencies

In Sweden, the National Food Administration, an autonomous government agency reporting to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, is the central administrative authority for matters concerning food.

Sweden is divided into counties (21) and municipalities (290). Food control at the local level is the responsibility of the relevant municipal committee(s), usually the Environment and Health Protection Committee. The County Administrations are responsible for co-ordinating food control within each county.

The National Food Administration (NFA)

The NFA deals with all types of foodstuff, including drinking water. The meat inspection organisation is part of the NFA.

In the interests of the consumers, the NFA works towards three goals:

- safe foods of high quality;
- fair practices in the food trade and
- healthy dietary habits.

In order to achieve these goals, the NFA

- issues food standards and other food regulations;
- carries out supervision according to the Food Act and leads and co-ordinates food control in Sweden;
- keeps the Government informed about developments in the food sector;
- assists the Government with and participates in EU work and other international activities in the food area;
- carries out investigations and practical scientific studies on foods and dietary habits and develops methods for food control;
- informs consumers and other interested parties in the food chain about current legislation and other important matters related to food;
- participates in the implementation of the regional development policy;
- works for the development of the country's school meals;
- co-ordinates questions concerning infant nutrition, including breast-feeding.

The NFA takes measures aimed at

- achieving effective and equivalent food control throughout the country;
- increasing the public's, especially young people's, knowledge about good and safe food so that they can make informed choices;
- increasing the public's, especially young people's, knowledge about the connection between diet and health.

The NFA's work is based to a large extent on international co-operation, especially within the European Union.

The **Board** of the NFA, which consists of 11 members, with the Director-General of the NFA as chairman, meets about eight times a year. It makes decisions on regulations issued by the NFA, budget proposals and the annual report submitted to the Government.

The Director General and the five heads of department are responsible for the day-to-day running of the NFA, which has a staff of about 300 at its headquarters in Uppsala. In addition, about 75 veterinarians and 105 meat inspection assistants work in the meat inspection organisation and are stationed at slaughterhouses throughout Sweden. The present organisation of the NFA in Uppsala is shown in the attached diagram.

Expert scientific advice for the NFA's work is provided by the NFA's own scientific divisions and experts and by external advisers and expert committees. The scientific staff includes a high proportion of graduate scientists, over 35 of whom have doctorates. Two professors on the staff provide expert advice on microbiology and nutrition, respectively. Scientific experts from the NFA take an active part in the work of the scientific advisory bodies of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the Council of Europe, FAO/WHO and other international organisations.

The NFA has about 45 external scientific advisers who are leading scientists working at universities, university hospitals or research institutes. The NFA has two external scientific advisory committees – on diet and health and paediatric nutrition, respectively.

The Food Standards Department contains the Swedish Contact Point for the Codex Alimentarius. The Research and Development Department contains the secretariat of the Swedish National Committee of the Nordic Committee on Food Analysis (NMKL).

The Food Control Department is the contact point for the European Community (EC) Rapid Alert System for Food (RASFF).

Other organizations

The NFA co-operates with other government agencies with responsibilities in related areas, including:

- Swedish Board of Agriculture (agriculture, including animal health and welfare, the veterinary services and animal feed);
- National Chemicals Inspectorate (pesticide registration and use);
- Medical Products Agency (registration of drugs for human and veterinary use);
- Environmental Protection Agency (environmental pollution and protection);
- Swedish Consumer Agency (consumer information, marketing);
- National Institute of Public Health (information on alcohol, tobacco, diet and health);
- National Board of Health and Welfare (health statistics and health services);
- Institute of Infectious Disease Control (epidemiology and control of foodborne diseases);
- National Veterinary Institute (animal diseases, feed control, national zoonosis centre);
- National Board of Fisheries;
- Swedish Board for Accreditation and Conformity Assessment (laboratory accreditation);
- Swedish Institute for Food and Agriculture Economics.

(ii) Food Legislation

In Sweden, food legislation is made at three levels:

- the **Food Act**, issued by the Swedish Parliament, is a frame law, containing definitions and principles concerning *inter alia* food composition, handling, labelling, offering for sale, personnel hygiene, food premises, supervision/ control, penalties and appeals. It also empowers the Government, or an agency appointed by the Government, to issue regulations on food.
- the **Food Decree**, issued by the Government, develops the rules of the Food Act in some greater detail and gives the National Food Administration the power to issue further regulations in the food area and to approve food premises in certain types of establishment. The Decree also appoints supervisory authorities for all kinds of establishments handling food.
- **Ordinances**, issued by the National Food Administration, contain detailed regulations on *inter alia* food standards, labelling, food handling, additives, contaminants (pesticide residues, veterinary drug residues, heavy metals, mycotoxins etc.), supervision and internal control, food premises, personnel hygiene, drinking water, veterinary food control, export control, import control, food control laboratories and material for food contact use. The NFA issues binding regulations and provides information about regulations.

Sweden joined the European Union (EU) on 1 January 1995 and has harmonized its food legislation with that of the EC. As a member of the EU, Sweden takes part in the development of new EC legislation in the food area. **European Community Regulations** apply directly in Sweden. **European Community Directives** are transposed into NFA Ordinances.

Food Control

The National Food Administration is responsible at the national level for enforcing the Food Act and regulations issued under the provisions thereof. The County Administrations have responsibility for co-ordinating food control at the regional level and the municipal Environment and Health Protection Committees have responsibility for food control at the local level.

The organisation and financing of food control in Sweden is currently under review.

National level

The NFA inspects slaughterhouses, dairies, egg product establishments, export-controlled establishments and other very large food-producing establishments (in all some 600 establishments). In addition, the NFA provides advice to the regional and local supervisory authorities and to the food industry and trade. It also initiates food control projects, which are carried out by the local authorities and follows up the results of food control carried out at the municipal level.

The NFA organises the control of pesticide residues in fruit, vegetables and cereals. Samples are collected at ports of entry or wholesale markets. They are analysed at laboratories working under contract to the NFA. The results of the control of pesticide residues are published annually and are available on the Administration's web site.

The NFA also organises the control of veterinary drug residues in foods of animal origin, mainly meat. Samples are collected at farms, slaughter-houses or ports of entry and are analysed at the NFA or at laboratories working under contract to the NFA.

The NFA has overall responsibility for export control. For food from countries outside the EU, inspection and sampling for microbiological (salmonella, etc.) examination as part of import control is carried out by the NFA at Border Inspection Posts.

Regional level

Each of the 21 County Administrations in Sweden is responsible for co-ordinating food control at the regional level, but they do not usually carry out any direct food control work.

Municipal level

The municipal Environment and Health Protection Committees carry out food control at all food handling establishments except those under the supervision of the NFA, including food production establishments, wholesalers, retailers, catering establishments and waterworks, altogether about 52 000 establishments.

Approximately 1 000 inspectors are involved in food control at the municipal level. However, some of these only work part-time with food control and the personnel involved in food control correspond to about 300 full-time inspectors.

Food samples collected by the municipal food control authorities are usually analysed by private laboratories accredited by the Swedish Board for Accreditation and Conformity Assessment (SWEDAC). At present there are about 50 such laboratories in Sweden, 25 of which work mainly with analysis of drinking water.

Financing of control, etc

The work of the NFA is financed partly by an annual appropriation from the Government (ca. 145 million Swedish crowns, SEK, for 2004), partly by fees paid by slaughterhouses and the food industry and trade (ca. 188 million SEK in 2004) and to a small extent by research grants, etc (17 million SEK in 2004) – in all ca 350 million SEK. The meat inspection service is financed entirely by fees collected from the slaughterhouse operators. Municipal food control is financed partly by local taxes and partly by fees collected from the food industry and trade for sampling and analysis. All establishments producing or handling foods (except very small operations) are required to pay an annual food control fee to the supervisory authority, i.e. the NFA or the municipal food control authority.

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2) COOPERATION ACTIVITIES IN FOOD CONTROL AND TRAINING

ESTONIA

(iii) Cooperation activities

In 1993 Nordic Council of Ministers formed project group "Nord Balt" consisting of representatives of 5 Nordic countries and 3 Baltic countries. Main objective of the project group was to have closer co-operation between Nordic and Baltic countries in the food safety area. This project group is still active and has regular meetings and seminars at least two times a year.

Since 1995 more than 10 different EU-supported projects have been initiated regarding food safety issues. The main objective of these projects has been to exchange information and experiences and to increase the level of institutional and technical capacity of the food control system in Estonia. Estonian partners in those projects have been European countries, for example, France, Finland, Ireland etc. One of the last co-operation projects related to food safety, "Strengthening of Food Inspection System in Estonia", was initiated in 2002. Project counterpart was Denmark and project was concentrated to the topics like conformity of Estonian food safety legislation with relevant EC legislation, training of food control inspectors, elaboration of the food inspection manual and voluntary hygiene guides, development of food control laboratories etc.

IRELAND

At Central Government level, officials have regular contact with their colleagues in other member states of the EU. Some contact is also made through participation in the various committees in Codex. Occasionally bilateral meetings are held with other countries such as the USA. In addition, Ireland regularly plays host to visiting groups of food control officials from many countries including those from the broader European region.

Irish food control officials operating at local/regional level maintain contact with their overseas counterparts mainly through meetings, conferences, workshops, seminars, study tours, etc. held by the following organisations:-

- (a) Food Law Enforcement Practitioners - FLEP
- (b) International Federation of Environmental Health - IFEH
- (c) Environmental Health Officers Association (EHOA) - Irish EHO professional body
- (d) Chartered Institute of Environmental Health - CIEH

Officials also take part in study tours to a number of countries in Europe and temporary workplace exchanges are arranged from time to time whereby officials from other European countries spend time working with one of the regulatory agencies in Ireland and vice versa.

Irish laboratory staff maintain regular contacts with their counterparts in other countries via networks such as FLEP, through participation in proficiency test schemes and through informal exchanges.

LATVIA

Latvia together with other Baltic states has a close cooperation with Scandinavian countries in a project "Nord Balt" the aim of which is to exchange opinions, participate in trainings and enhance the co-operation in the food safety area. The inspectors of Food and Veterinary Service participate in different training groups and European projects to improve their qualification mainly in food safety and control area. The main partners are European countries, such as, Denmark, Netherlands, Finland. The Government officials occasionally take part in several meetings and workshops held together with other countries to exchange the views on better harmonisation of regulatory acts and other urgent matters.

LITHUANIA

Lithuania works in close collaboration with FAO and since 2000 participates in CEECFOODS programme (Cooperation of Central and East European Countries in Food Composition Activities) and NordBalt network (exchange of food safety information between Nordic and Baltic Countries). Since 2003 relevant institutions of Lithuania take part in international MATRA project of Netherlands "Strengthening of Food Surveillance and Food Safety". The NNC cooperates with UNICEF in the area of breastfeeding promotion and of elimination of Iodine deficiency disorders in Lithuania. Since the beginning of 2003 SFVS together with German twinning partners implements PHARE project "Strengthening of Food Safety Control, Food Control Laboratories in Lithuania", which will last for 16 months.

SWEDEN

Sweden has certain cooperation with the Baltic countries. The NFA has provided expert advice, seminars and also technical support to the Baltic countries for several years.

Sweden has three times arranged a training program for participants from developing countries. The managing organisation in Sweden is SIDA (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) sida@sida.se. This training programme will be held in the beginning of October this year, this time for participants from southern and northern Africa and from the near East.

The overall objectives of the programme are:

To provide awareness, information and training to the relevant governmental officials and economic operators regarding the new principles and requirements related to food safety, international trade in food and agricultural products.

The programme therefore aims to provide participants with a more in-depth understanding of:

- International trade based on the WTO-TBT agreement. Introduction, content and effect. Relation to the WTO-SPS agreement.
- The WTO-Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures, WTO-TBT agreement.
- Food legislation and enforcement (Veterinary and public health aspects). Principles and concepts covering food safety, animal health, plant health, additives and substances in contact with food, additives in feed, GMOs, nutrition, contaminants, residue monitoring, animal welfare. Risk analysis.
- European Union food safety systems.
- International standardisation work in the food area, Codex Alimentarius, International Animal Health Organisation, International Plant Protection Convention.
- Food Labelling
- The concept of quality
- HACCP training
- Accreditation. Methodology, procedures, use of accreditation nationally and internationally
- Laboratory testing. Requirements, quality systems, traceability of measurements, preparation for accreditation.

The training programme is designed to cover all major issues related to the preparation, adoption and application of technical regulations covering food, issues related to the SPS and TBT agreement, national enforcement mechanisms and issues related to the national quality infrastructures development for food safety and quality.

The programme is structured as a three step approach:

1. International training course to be conducted in Sweden.
2. Project-work to be performed at home base.
3. Follow-up training course to be conducted in one of the countries participating in the course.