

# codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS



WORLD  
HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION

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Agenda Item 8

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

Twenty-third Session  
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### FOOD LEGISLATION AND FOOD CONTROL ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION

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

#### 2) COOPERATION ACTIVITIES IN FOOD CONTROL AND TRAINING

#### GOVERNMENT COMMENTS (SWEDEN)

#### SWEDEN

#### Official Agencies

#### The National Food Administration (NFA)

The NFA deals with all types of foodstuff, including drinking water. The veterinary 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.

The NFA takes measures aimed at

- achieving effective and equivalent food control throughout the country;
- increasing the citizens', especially childrens' and youths', knowledge about good and safe food so that they can make informed choices;

- increasing the citizens', especially childrens' and youths', 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 12 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 and major policy issues.

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 310 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.

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 Commission, the Council of Europe, FAO/WHO and other international organisations.

The NFA has about 40 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 pediatric 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;
- Board for Accreditation and Conformity Assessment (laboratory accreditation);
- Swedish Institute for Food and Agriculture Economics.

### **Food Control**

The National Food Administration (NFA) is responsible at the national level for enforcing the Food Act and regulations issued under the provisions there-of. 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. This review includes the question of the division of responsibility for food control between the NFA and the municipalities.

## **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) and also food premises in railway carriages, air-craft and certain ships. 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 300-350 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 60 such laboratories in Sweden, 47 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. 120 million Swedish crowns for 2001) and partly by fees paid by the food industry and trade (ca. 150 million SEK in 2001) - in all ca 270 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.

## **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, penal-ties 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.

For foods sold in Sweden, the standards and other regulations which apply are the same or equivalent for domestically-produced and imported foods. If the importing country so demands, special standards or regulations may apply for foods produced in Sweden for export to that country.